Diversity Policy, Social Dominance, and Intergroup Relations: Predicting Prejudice in Changing Social and Political Contexts

Serge Guimond
Clermont Université, Université Blaise Pascal

Richard J. Crisp
University of Sheffield

Pierre De Oliveira
Université de Bourgogne

Rodolphe Kamiejski
Université de Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense

Nour Kteily
Harvard University

Beate Kuepper
Bielefeld University

Richard N. Lalonde
York University

Shana Levin
Claremont McKenna College

Felicia Pratto
University of Connecticut

Francine Tougas
Université d’Ottawa

Jim Sidanius
Harvard University

Andreas Zick
Bielefeld University

In contrast to authors of previous single-nation studies, we propose that supporting multiculturalism (MC) or assimilation (AS) is likely to have different effects in different countries, depending on the diversity policy in place in a particular country and the associated norms. A causal model of intergroup attitudes and behaviors, integrating both country-specific factors (attitudes and perceived norms related to a particular diversity policy) and general social-psychological determinants (social dominance orientation), was tested among participants from countries where the pro-diversity policy was independently classified as low, medium, or high (N = 1,232). Results showed that (a) anti-Muslim prejudice was significantly reduced when the pro-diversity policy was high; (b) countries differed strongly in perceived norms related to MC and AS, in ways consistent with the actual diversity policy in each country and regardless of participants’ personal attitudes toward MC and AS; (c) as predicted, when these norms were salient, due to subtle priming, structural equation modeling with country included as a variable provided support for the proposed model, suggesting that the effect of country on prejudice can be successfully accounted by it; and (d) consistent with the claim that personal support for MC and AS played a different role in different countries, within-country mediation analyses provided evidence that personal attitudes toward AS mediated the effect of social dominance orientation on prejudice.
when pro-diversity policy was low, whereas personal attitudes toward MC was the mediator when pro-diversity policy was high. Thus, the critical variables shaping prejudice can vary across nations.

Keywords: diversity policy, social dominance, culture, prejudice, intergroup relations

Leading theories of intergroup relations in social psychology, such as realistic group conflict theory (Sherif, 1966), social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1986), and social dominance theory (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999), all propose some general principles that can explain prejudice across different nations. Such a “global approach” (Chiu & Hong, 2006) is in keeping with the scientific goal of uncovering universal principles of human behavior. However, with the identification of broad cultural dimensions on which nations around the world vary (Hofstede, 1980), researchers have become concerned with the extent to which theories (and experimental findings) originating within a particular culture are valid within other cultures (see Amir & Sharon, 1987; Hilton & Liu, 2008; Markus & Kitayama, 1991; Nisbett, 2003; Triandis, 1989). Thus, a major challenge for experimental social psychology is to devise general principles of human behavior that can retain explanatory and predictive value in changing historical, cultural, and political contexts.

To address this challenge, we propose a theoretical model that takes into account important features of the changing sociopolitical context in the explanation of prejudice. The model pools together two types of explanatory factors: general social-psychological determinants of prejudice that operate in the same way across countries and country-specific determinants that can operate differently in different countries. This article presents an empirical test of this model and its ability to explain variations in prejudice in a large-scale study involving four western countries that differ in their diversity policy.

Universal Theories of Intergroup Relations

Research has been successful in identifying determinants of prejudice that operate in a similar manner across various nations. For example, in a study testing the “universality hypothesis,” Pettigrew et al. (1998) found consistent support for several psychological determinants of prejudice across diverse societies such as the Netherlands, West Germany, the United Kingdom (U.K.), and France. More recently, studies using measures of a wide variety of constructs expected to predict prejudice showed that, as proposed by social dominance theory (SDT), social dominance orientation (SDO) is one of the most potent predictors across many different countries (see Altemeyer, 1998; Duckitt, 2001; Guimond & Dambrun, 2002; Kteily, Ho, & Sidanius, 2012; Käpper, Wolf, & Zick, 2010; Pratto, Sidanius, & Levin, 2006; Sidanius, Feshbach, Levin, & Pratto, 1997; Thomsen et al., 2010; Van Hiel, Pande-laere, & Duriez, 2004). In studies using local measures of ethnic prejudice, sexism, and discrimination, Pratto et al. (2000) found support for the predictive role of SDO in Canada, Taiwan, Israel, and China (Shanghai). There is also experimental and longitudinal evidence supporting the view that SDO has a causal impact on intergroup attitudes (see Guimond, Dambrun, Michinov, & Duarte, 2003; Kteily, Sidanius, & Levin, 2011). Thus, current work suggests that the SDO-prejudice relation is a good example of a general theoretical principle that is probably valid in most if not all cultures.

In contrast, there is only sparse knowledge about country-specific processes, and major theories of intergroup relations often disregard such a “focal approach” (Chiu & Hong, 2006). Yet, it seems reasonable to consider that prejudice may result from the operation of processes that are found in certain cultural settings but not in others (i.e., emic), in addition to processes that are found to be common across cultures (i.e., etic). As noted by Fiske and Cuddy (2006), “Some overarching principles of prejudice and stereotyping may be pancultural, while some of their manifestations are culturally idiosyncratic” (p. 255). In fact, the identification of country-specific processes may be useful to better understand how general principles can be valid despite changing cultural, historical, or political conditions.

Culture, Sociopolitical Context, and Intergroup Relations

Culture is a product of environmental adaptations (Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 1992). Different environments introduce different problems that humans must deal with, leading to different traditions and ways of living (Matsumoto, 2007). In recent years, with dramatic changes in international migration, many concerns related to cultural, ethnic, or religious diversity have become the main topic of debates and political discussions in various nations (Kamiejski, De Oliveira, & Guimond, 2012; Sidanius, Levin, Van Laar, & Sears, 2008). Much of these debates has been concerned with two opposite ways of dealing with diversity: assimilation (AS) and multiculturalism (MC). AS represents one of the most pervasive ideological frameworks guiding cross-cultural relations. It suggests that ethnic and cultural minorities in general and immigrants in particular should adopt the language, customs, and values of the dominant group and leave their own cultural characteristics behind (Gordon, 1964; Moghaddam, Taylor, & Wright, 1993; Sidanius et al., 1997). As a policy, it implies governmental efforts to homogenize the population and to reduce diversity. As such, countries advocating this approach have been classified as “low” in terms of their pro-diversity policy (Banting & Kymlicka, 2003; Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006; Brubaker, 2001; Meuleman & Reeskens, 2008). However, in the 1970s, MC emerged as an alternative to AS. MC seeks to recognize and promote cultural diversity as a positive national feature (see Berry, 2005, 2006; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; Guimond, 2010; Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut, Garnett, Buffardi, & Sanchez-Burks, 2011). Countries advocating this approach have been classified as “high” in terms of their pro-diversity policy (see Banting & Kymlicka, 2003; Berry et al., 2006; Bloemraad, Korteweg, & Yurdakul, 2008).

Social psychologists have studied people’s attitudes toward these policies as “intergroup ideologies” (Vorauer, Gagnon, & Sasaki, 2009). They found that support for AS is related to higher levels of prejudice and ethnocentrism, whereas support for MC is...
associated with more positive intergroup attitudes (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Brown, 2010; Davies, Steele, & Markus, 2008; Kamiejski, Guimond, De Oliveira, Er-Rafiy, & Brauer, 2012; Park & Judd, 2005; Plaut, Thomas, & Goren, 2009; Ryan, Hunt, Weibe, Peterson, & Casas, 2007; Wolsko, Park, & Judd, 2006). Experimental research has confirmed such findings (e.g., Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005). Thus, it seems clear that these diversity policies play an important role in intergroup relations. However, because little experimental work has been conducted across nations, there is a shortage of knowledge about the actual impact of these policies on intergroup relations.

This shortage can be illustrated by considering the paradigm created by Wolsko, Park, Judd, and Wittenbrink (2000) that has guided much recent research. In this paradigm, participants are randomly assigned to a condition in which they are led to believe that a particular policy such as MC is the best one to deal with intergroup relations. Stereotyping and prejudice are measured as dependent variables. Studies using this paradigm suggest that MC is more effective than other models at reducing racial or ethnic prejudice, although there are various moderating conditions (see Correll, Park, & Smith, 2008; Morrison, Plaut, & Ybarra, 2010; Park & Judd, 2005; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004, Verkuyten, 2005; Wolsko et al., 2000). These studies offer a fundamental contribution by allowing us to identify the causal effect of a given diversity policy on intergroup relations. Nevertheless, a notable limitation is that these experiments are all single-nation studies (see also Gutiérrez & Unzueta, 2010; Verkuyten, 2011; Vorauer et al., 2009). Are we to consider, for example, that an experiment testing the effect of a multicultural ideology with participants from the United States (U.S.) reveals a general principle of human behavior or an outcome that is tied to and mainly dependent on the cultural and sociopolitical context of the U.S.? Single-nation experimental studies measuring ethnic or racial prejudice do not rule out the possible effects of the wider social and political context in which the study was conducted. Before concluding, with Gergen (1973), that our theories of social behavior “are primarily reflections of contemporary history” (p. 309), a number of ideas should be considered, such as the possibility that the effect of these intergroup ideologies on intergroup relations can vary in systematic and predictable ways across nations. One important aim in the present research is therefore to clarify this issue by conducting the same study in several countries that differ in their diversity policy. Given previous correlational and experimental research showing that MC decreases prejudice (e.g., Verkuyten, 2005), one can expect that the stronger the pro-diversity policy in a given country, the less prejudice toward outgroups people from that country will display. Confirmation of this hypothesis could provide further support for the effectiveness of MC as an intergroup ideology. However, confirmed or not, a test of this hypothesis would also raise the more fundamental question of why people from different countries, with varying diversity policies, may differ in their level of prejudice. Thus, we need to ask when and how do diversity policies have an impact on intergroup relations and how can these country-specific factors be combined with more general social-psychological processes in the explanation of prejudice. We consider each of these questions in turn.

Understanding the Impact of Diversity Policies on Intergroup Relations

There is increasing evidence suggesting that culture’s influence on human cognition and behavior is not as fixed and permanent as once thought (Hong, Morris, Chiu, & Benet-Martínez, 2000; Oyserman & Lee, 2008). Recent investigations have shown, for example, that cultural differences often boil down to differences in cultural norms (Becker et al., 2012; Chiu, Gelfand, Yamagishi, Shteynberg, & Wan, 2010; Fischer et al., 2009; Shteynberg, Gelfand, & Kim, 2009; Zou et al., 2009). We propose similar ideas in order to understand the effect of diversity policies such as AS and MC. These ideas are summarized in Figure 1.

As shown in Figure 1, we suggest first, that the diversity policies that are found in various countries will generate distinctive cultural norms of integration; that is, general expectations about the level of support for various intergroup ideologies. These cultural norms can be considered as an important feature of the sociopolitical context that can vary considerably across nations and across time but that nevertheless plays an important role in the explanation of intergroup attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the same variable (e.g., personal attitude toward MC) may be more or less potent as a predictor of intergroup attitudes and behaviors, depending on the

![Figure 1. Conceptual framework showing the interplay of potentially universal and culture-specific determinants of intergroup attitudes and behaviors. SDO = social dominance orientation.](image-url)
cultural norm of integration in a particular setting, as it is perceived by the individual. This proposition rests on an important distinction between personal attitudes toward a given diversity policy on the one hand and cultural norms relating to that diversity policy on the other—a distinction that has been overlooked thus far.

In fact, from the first national survey on MC conducted by social psychologists (Berry et al., 1977) up to recent experimental studies (i.e., Verkuyten, 2011), researchers have focused on personal attitudes, or the extent to which people personally endorse the policy, model, or ideology. A central principle of social psychology is that what people around us believe in has the power to shape what we ourselves believe in (Crandall, Eshleman, & O’Brien, 2002; Jetten, Spears, & Manstead, 1996; Sechrist & Stangor, 2001; Zou et al., 2009). Studying cultural norms that relate to a given diversity policy may help us understand the variations in personal attitudes/endorsement of that policy and the impact of this endorsement on intergroup attitudes and behaviors (see Figure 1).

This distinction between cultural norms and personal attitudes connects with an evolving interdisciplinary framework described by Mesoudi (2009) in which culture is defined as being essentially “socially transmitted information” (p. 929). One of the major theorists behind this approach, Sperber (1996), has argued for a distinction between cultural representations and mental representations that resonate with the one outlined above. He observed that within any human group, one finds a large stock of mental representations (individual beliefs, attitudes, memories) that are located within individual minds. A small number of these beliefs will be communicated to others. Those beliefs that are repeatedly communicated and that become widespread within a social group are called “cultural representations.” Using an epidemiological metaphor, Sperber (1996) suggests that explaining culture is, in effect, explaining how and why certain beliefs become “contagious” in the sense that they come to invade a group of minds (see also Norenzayan & Atran, 2004). This is of course closely related to the defining concerns of social psychology as a field of study (see Mesoudi, 2009; Smith & Semin, 2006). Many social psychologists have reached a similar conclusion about the importance of distinguishing between individual cognition and socially shared ones (Guimond, 2010). For example, to contextualize person perception, Smith and Collins (2009) have argued for a new perspective that shifts the focus “from the content and structure of impressions as mental representations within the individual perceiver to the distribution of impressions within a group” (p. 343). We propose that an understanding of the role of intergroup ideologies in intergroup relations may similarly benefit from studying the interplay between personal beliefs and attitudes (i.e., mental representations) and cultural norms (i.e., cultural representations).

In summary, basic intergroup ideologies, of which AS and MC are the two most important examples, can be considered as culture-specific variables. As such, their influence can vary across countries, and much of their impact may derive from the extent to which they are perceived as widely distributed in the society or not. Note that according to the framework displayed in Figure 1, supporting a given intergroup ideology (e.g., personal endorsement) is expected to have a direct effect on outgroup prejudice, with support for AS leading to an increase in prejudice and support for MC leading to a decrease, consistent with past research. However, being raised in a country that has adopted an official policy of MC (or AS) is not expected to have any simple and direct effect on personal attitudes toward these policies. Rather, the model predicts that participants from countries that differ in their official or “objective” diversity policy will differ in a consistent manner in the perceived norms related to AS and MC but not necessarily on their personal attitudes. This prediction, if confirmed, may help resolve a significant problem in current research on MC. As van de Vijver, Breugelmans, and Schalk-Soekar (2008) concluded from their extensive review of research, “There is no evidence for the assumption that multiculturalism and policies are related” (p. 101). In other words, people from countries where there is a prevailing multiculturalism policy have not been found to differ reliably in their attitudes toward MC compared to people from countries where there is a different policy. We argue that these inconsistent findings stem from the fact that research has focused on personal attitudes toward MC and that when perceived norms related to MC are considered, strong and reliable relations will be observed.

The importance of the distinction between cultural norms of integration and personal attitudes also comes from the fact that it allows one to understand that people who are equally supportive of MC can differ in the extent to which this level of support gets translated into more positive views of another ethnic or religious group. When an individual’s attitude is anchored in a supportive normative context, that attitude is expected to acquire predictive strength in terms of that individual’s intergroup attitudes or behaviors. In other words, a given attitude or belief can have very different implications in different contexts. Classic work on the concept of frame of reference (Festinger, 1950; Sherif, 1953) as well as more recent research on social norms (see Arrow & Burns, 2004; Chiu & Hong, 2006; Sechrist & Stangor, 2001) suggests that a shared belief tends to be perceived as more valid than one that is not shared. As Festinger (1950) argued, “An opinion, a belief, an attitude is ‘correct,’ ‘valid,’ and ‘proper’ to the extent that it is anchored in a group of people with similar beliefs, opinions, and attitudes” (pp. 272–273). Therefore, when people learn that other people share their belief or attitude (i.e., when a cultural norm is made salient), the personal belief or attitude in question should become a major factor guiding behavior. Consistent with this analysis, Sechrist and Stangor (2001) showed that “consensual validation of one’s intergroup attitudes strengthens them such that they become more predictive of behavior” (p. 646). Thus, we suggest that the role of personal attitudes toward MC and AS in the explanation of prejudice will vary in importance according to the diversity policy in a particular country and the associated norms.

### Combining General Principles and Country-Specific Processes: A Mediation Hypothesis

As noted earlier, research has shown that there are processes that operate in similar ways across countries. Thus, our model suggests that SDO will predict prejudice in all countries, regardless of their diversity policy (see Figure 1). Even in countries with a strong pro-diversity policy, such as Canada, one still finds the existence of an ethnic hierarchy with the dominant majority group, English Canadians, enjoying more prestige than ethnic minorities and immigrants, with Arabs, Muslims, and Pakistanis being at the bottom of the “evaluative” hierarchy (see Berry, 2006). Those who support this group-based social hierarchy are expected to display more prejudice toward ethnic outgroups in order to justify their
dominant position. Whereas this SDO–prejudice relation has been well documented, the mediating factors involved have received little attention (Levin et al., 2012). One reason why the identification of country-specific determinants of prejudice might be important is that it may allow one to better understand why certain processes, such as the SDO–prejudice relation, can be of such wide applicability.

Indeed, Sidanius and Pratto (1999) have developed this argument as part of the subtheory of ideology within SDT (see also Pratto, 1999; Pratto, Tatar, & Conway-Lanz, 1999). Using the concept of legitimizing myths (LMs), they outline how SDO can contribute to hierarchy-enhancing or hierarchy-attenuating consequences. Two classes of LMs are distinguished: ideologies that reinforce group-based inequality, called hierarchy-enhancing legitimizing myths (or HE-LMs), and those that, to the contrary, reinforce group-based equality, called hierarchy-attenuating legitimizing myths (or HA-LMs). Furthermore, two specific criteria must be met in order to classify these ideologies. First, SDO should correlate positively with HE-LMs and negatively with HA-LMs. Second, Sidanius and Pratto (1999) argued that “a given belief . . . can be classified as an LM if and only if it is found to have a mediational relationship between the desire for group-based dominance on the one hand and support for HE or HA social policy on the other hand” (p. 48).

Using American college students, Levin et al. (2012) conducted one of the first systematic investigations of the relationships between SDO, intergroup ideologies, and prejudice. Considering three intergroup ideologies, AS, MC, and colorblindness (CB), they found, consistent with the first criterion, that SDO correlated positively with attitudes toward AS and negatively with attitudes toward MC and CB. Moreover, AS, MC, and CB were all significant predictors of prejudice and, together, fully mediated the SDO–prejudice relation (second criterion). This model fit the data better than an alternative model in which SDO directly predicted prejudice, which then predicted the intergroup ideologies. These results, consistent with the longitudinal data of Zaglauka, Brown, and Gonzalez (2009), suggest that intergroup ideologies such as AS, MC, and CB are more likely to be antecedents of prejudice than consequences of it.

Building on this work, our aim is to go one step further. If indeed attitudes toward AS and MC are culture-specific ideologies, one should find that their mediating role depends on the cultural setting in which the study is conducted. In a country where the pro-diversity policy is low and the dominant model is AS, attitudes toward AS should mediate the SDO–prejudice relation, especially when cultural norms of integration are salient. However, in a country where the pro-diversity policy is high, attitudes toward MC should mediate the SDO–prejudice relation, especially when norms of integration are salient. If this is the case, then this would be strong evidence that AS and MC are culture-specific processes in that they play a different role in different cultural settings. Moreover, this would illustrate the idea that “SDO orients people to find the most socially acceptable way of rationalizing inequality” (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999, p. 88). Thus, in a society where AS is normative, SDO would lead people to use AS to justify being more prejudiced, whereas in a society where MC is normative, SDO would lead people to use opposition to MC to justify being more prejudiced. Finally, in societies where the diversity policy is medium and no single integration norm predominates, such as the U.S. (see Plaut, 2002), the SDO–prejudice relation may be mediated by attitudes toward AS and by attitudes toward MC, as suggested by Levin et al. (2012).

Overview and Hypotheses

We tested the effect of supporting AS and MC on prejudice with participants from four different countries that have been classified as being low (Germany), medium (U.K., U.S.), or high (Canada) in terms of their pro-diversity policies. This classification, developed by Banting and Kymlicka (2003) and validated by Berry et al. (2006), takes into account nine “objective” criteria to categorize the policy of each country (i.e., the existence of a national policy promoting MC, adoption of MC in the school curriculum, ethnic representation in the media, and so on). To the extent that diversity policy is indeed an important element of the sociopolitical context having an impact on intergroup relations, our first hypothesis (H1) is that prejudice toward ethno-religious outgroups will be lower when the pro-diversity policy in a country is high.

The perceived level of support for AS and MC in each country (or perceived norm) was measured, in part, to check on the validity of the classification of countries in terms of their diversity policy. As explained above, we do not expect that personal attitudes toward MC will necessarily be consistent with the diversity policy. Rather, we predict (H2) that the perceived level of support for MC (or perceived norm) will be highest in Canada, the country classified as high in pro-diversity policy; lowest in Germany, the country classified as low in pro-diversity policy; and in between in the U.K. and the U.S., the countries rated as medium in pro-diversity policy. The study was also designed to explore the effect of a subtle manipulation of norm salience by randomly assigning half of the participants in each country to a condition making the norms of integration salient or not. Thus, the basic design is a 4 (country) by 2 (condition) factorial design. Past research has shown that norms are more impactful when they are contextually salient (Cialdini, Kallgren, & Reno, 1991). Thus, our general expectation here is that the condition of norm salience will enable us to observe more clearly the processes at play in each sociopolitical context.

Given evidence that the effects of culture and norms on cognition and behavior are variable, as noted above (i.e., Hong et al., 2000), we can expect that the effect of the perceived MC and AS norms will be more potent in the norm-salient condition than in the norm-not-salient condition. On this basis, we predict (H3) that our model, summarized in Figure 1, will account for our findings especially well in the norm-salient condition. This means that the effect of country (diversity policy) on prejudice will be accounted for by the perceived norms and personal attitudes toward MC and AS, the perceived norms having a direct effect on personal atti-

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1 With regard to Canada, it should be noted that our focus in this study will be on the MC policy and English-speaking Canadians from outside of Québec for two reasons: (a) the province of Québec, representing the majority of French-speaking Canadians, has developed its own diversity policy that is different from that found in the rest of Canada (see Gagnon & Iacovino, 2007); the analysis of the effect of this policy is the topic of a separate study (De la Sablonnière & Guimond, 2012); and (b) this allows us to better control for linguistic differences between countries by using the same English-language instrument in three of the four countries examined in the current study.
tudes, and the personal attitudes having a direct effect on prejudice. Research on the effect of cultural norms (i.e., Becker et al., 2012; Zou et al., 2009) would also predict a direct effect of the perceived norms on prejudice. In addition and regardless of the salience of cultural norms, SDO is expected to have both a direct effect on prejudice and indirect effects via personal attitudes toward MC and AS (see Figure 1). This implies that SDO will predict prejudice in a similar way in all countries but that personal attitudes toward diversity policy are expected to be more predictive of prejudice when the normative context supports those attitudes. As a result, when norms are salient, we predict (H4) that personal AS will mediate the effect of SDO on prejudice when pro-diversity policy is low (Germany) but that personal MC will be the mediator when pro-diversity policy is high (Canada).

Method

Participants

A total of 1,525 university students participated in the study of which 293 were excluded because they were not born in a target country, leaving 1,232 participants in the final sample. Foreigners were excluded because in order to assess the effect of a particular diversity policy, it is essential that the participants experienced this policy for several years. Conversely, all citizens of each of the four target countries were included in the final sample without excluding any other participants. The final sample includes 219 German participants, 336 British students, 408 American students, and 269 (English-speaking) Canadian students. Approximately half of the German participants came from eastern Germany; the other half came from western Germany. Although analysis of the differences between east and west Germans could reveal important findings, the present study was not designed to examine subgroup differences. The British students attended the University of Kent, whereas approximately half of the Canadian students came from York University in Toronto and the other half came from the University of Ottawa. The American students came from three states: California, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. The racial composition of the American sample (collected only in the U.S.) was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%). Our concern in this research was as follows: Native Americans (1%), White/Caucasian (75%), Black/African Americans (5%), Asians (10%), Latinos (4%), Multiracial (3%), and None/missing (2%).

Support was found for a four-factor structure, with two normative factors (one MC and one AS) and two personal attitudes factors (one MC and one AS). On average, this four-factor structure fits well within each specific country and in analyses across the whole data set. When data from all countries were combined, though the four-factor solution did not reveal a perfect fit with the data, χ²(98, N = 1,232) = 444.90, it nevertheless yielded acceptable goodness-of-fit indices (non-normed fit index = .943, comparative fit index = .954, root-mean-square error of approximation = .054).

Table 1

Reliability Coefficients (by Country) and Number of Items for All Scales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Canada</th>
<th>U.K.</th>
<th>U.S.</th>
<th>Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDO</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>.87</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.88</td>
<td>.82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation (personal attitudes)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism (personal attitudes)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice (Arabs/Muslims/Turks/Pakistanis)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assimilation norm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.82</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiculturalism norm</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation.
Generally, the majority of groups and were asked to indicate their general attitude toward
Levin et al., 2012

In each of them on a 7-point scale (1 = very unfavorable attitude to 7 = very favorable attitude). Four groups that are the target of
problems as they occur.

It was also better than a two-factor model, \( \chi^2(2456, \text{ with a } p < .001) \). It was also better than a two-factor model, \( \chi^2(103, \text{ with a } p < .001) \), reinforcing the
four-factor interpretation. The factor loadings of all items are displayed in Table 2.

SDO was assessed with a 10-item scale taken from Sidanius and Pratto’s (1999) work, with five items measuring group-based dominance and five items measuring opposition to equality. Finally, anti-Muslim prejudice was measured as the main dependent variable of the study with an instrument, similar to a thermometer rating, validated in many past studies (Dambrun & Guimond, 2001; Esses, Haddock, & Zanna, 1993; Guimond et al., 2003; Levin et al., 2012). Participants were presented with a list of 15 groups and were asked to indicate their general attitude toward each of them on a 7-point scale (1 = very unfavorable attitude to 7 = very favorable attitude). Four groups that are the target of prejudice and discrimination in many western countries were included in that list in random order: Arabs, Pakistanis, Turks, and Muslims (see Echebarria-Echabe & Guede, 2007). The ratings of these four groups, being strongly intercorrelated, were averaged to form a scale. Scores on this measure were recoded such that higher scores indicated less favorable attitudes or greater prejudice. Zero-order correlations among all the variables in the study are presented in Table 3.

**Experimental Manipulation**

Participants were randomly assigned to a condition making the integration norms salient or not. In the norm-salient condition, the first section of the questionnaire informed participants that they would be presented with opinion statements and that their task was to indicate to what extent these views were more or less shared by Germans/British/Americans/Canadians. The measures of cultural norms followed, with a list of items referring to what most people in [Germany/U.K./U.S./Canada] believe. It contained five items measuring the dominant norm in the country (AS in Germany, MC in Canada) followed by five items measuring the other norm (MC in Germany, AS in Canada).
The results showed that diversity policy and prejudice are strongly related. For the two countries classified as medium in terms of diversity policy, one received the same order as in Germany (the U.S.) and the other received the same order as in Canada (the U.K.). Thus, in the norm-salient condition, all participants were first led to think about the views that they perceived to be widespread in their country, making the integration norms salient. The next section of the questionnaire required that participants indicate their personal views on various issues by rating their level of agreement with a series of statements. In the norm-not-salient condition, this order was reversed. Personal beliefs and attitudes were measured first, before the perceived norms. SDO was measured thereafter, and anti-Muslim prejudice, as the main dependent variable of the study, was measured last.

### Results

#### Diversity Policy and Prejudice

The claim that diversity policy is an important element of the sociopolitical context having an impact on intergroup relations is first examined by testing the effect of country on the level of prejudice. Our hypothesis (H1) is that participants from the country where the pro-diversity policy is high, Canada, should display a lower level of prejudice. A 4 (country) × 2 (condition: norm-not-salient vs. norm-salient) analysis of covariance on the measure of prejudice, with age and sex as covariates, yielded a significant main effect of country, F(3, 1209) = 8.29, p = .001, ηp^2 = .02. There was no main effect of condition (F < 1), and no interaction (F = 1.27, p = .28). As expected, the lowest level of prejudice was observed in Canada (M = 3.16, SD = 1.49) and the highest level was observed in Germany (M = 3.63, SD = 1.27); the difference between these mean scores was significant (p = .001). The mean score in the U.K. (M = 3.62, SD = 1.28) did not differ from that in Germany but was marginally higher than that in the U.S. (M = 3.34, SD = 1.35, p = .052). The level of prejudice was significantly lower in the U.S. than in Germany (p = .03) but did not differ from that in Canada (p = .42). In short, participants from Canada and the U.S. are relatively more tolerant, whereas participants from Germany and the U.K. are relatively less tolerant. It should be noted that there is no effect of country on prejudice among the participants excluded because they were not born in the target country (F < 1), ruling out the fact of answering the questionnaire in the different countries or in the different languages as an explanation for the effect.

#### Perceived Norms and Personal Attitudes

We next examined variations in perceived norms and personal attitudes for both AS and MC. These ratings were submitted to a Country (Canada/ U.S./U.K./Germany) × Condition (norm-not-salient vs. norm-salient) × Type (personal attitude vs. perceived norm) × Issue (AS vs. MC) analysis, with the last two factors as within-participants variables and the first two factors as between-participants variables. Table 4 displays the mean scores and standard deviations.

We predicted differences between countries consistent with diversity policy on perceived norms but not necessarily on personal attitudes (H2). Overall, the results confirmed that expectation. There was a significant Country × Condition × Type × Issue interaction, F(3, 1222) = 2.86, p = .03, ηp^2 = .01. This interaction was decomposed by looking at the issue of MC (norms and attitudes) separately from the issue of AS (norms and attitudes). For MC, the Country × Condition × Type analysis with repeated measures on the last factor yielded a significant interaction between Country and Type of measures, F(3, 1223) = 48.29, p = .001, ηp^2 = .11. As shown in Figure 2a, the results for the perceived MC norm are entirely consistent with the classification of countries in terms of their diversity policy, with Canadians being on top (high diversity policy), followed by the countries classified as medium in diversity policy (U.S. and U.K.), followed by Germany (low diversity policy). Figure 2a also shows that this is not the case when personal support for MC is considered. Particularly striking is the fact that Canadians (high diversity policy) are only slightly more positive than Germans (low diversity policy) in their personal attitudes toward MC.

This effect was qualified by a three-way interaction involving Condition, F(3, 1233) = 4.71, p = .003, ηp^2 = .01. This interaction, localized among participants from Canada and the U.K. who reacted differently to the manipulation of norm salience, did not change the ordering of countries in terms of the MC norm (see Table 4). In Canada, the MC norm was perceived as significantly stronger in the norm-salient condition (M = 4.60) than in the norm-not-salient condition, M = 4.32, F(1, 265) = 4.48, p = .035, ηp^2 = .02. The reverse was observed in the U.K. The MC norm was perceived as significantly weaker in the norm-salient condi-

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**Table 3**

**Correlations Between the Variables for All Participants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Country</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Perceived MC norm</td>
<td>.42***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Perceived AS norm</td>
<td>-.28***</td>
<td>-.43***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Personal AS</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.25***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Personal MC</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.19***</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.43***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. SDO</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.08*</td>
<td>.44***</td>
<td>-.39***</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Anti-Muslim prejudice</td>
<td>-.11***</td>
<td>-.13***</td>
<td>.13***</td>
<td>.33***</td>
<td>-.31***</td>
<td>.32***</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Countries are coded as low (1 = Germany), medium (2 = U.K. and U.S.), or high (3 = Canada) in pro-diversity policy following Berry et al. (2006). MC = multiculturalism; AS = assimilation; SDO = social dominance orientation.

* p < .05. *** p < .001.
Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Condition</th>
<th>Multicultural norm</th>
<th>Assimilation norm</th>
<th>Multicultural personal</th>
<th>Assimilation personal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Norm-not-salient</td>
<td>4.49 (1.19)</td>
<td>4.00 (1.20)</td>
<td>4.77 (1.09)</td>
<td>4.36 (0.99)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norm-salient</td>
<td>4.04 (1.21)</td>
<td>4.19 (1.31)</td>
<td>4.66 (1.05)</td>
<td>3.71 (0.95)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Higher mean scores on a 7-point scale indicate greater (perceived) support for multiculturalism or assimilation.
Within-Country Analyses: Combining General and Country-Specific Predictors

Within-country analyses were conducted to test the notion that whereas some variables in our model operate in the same way in all countries, other variables (country-specific determinants) operate differently. To examine our mediation hypothesis regarding the SDO–prejudice relation (H4), we used SEM to perform a set of multigroup analyses testing the indirect effect of SDO on prejudice (Zhao, Lynch, & Chen, 2010). In order to test the significance of the mediational paths, we specified an additional parameter in LISREL (see Jöreskog & Sörbom, 2001, pp. 347–348), representing the multiplication of the path from SDO to the relevant personal attitude (personal attitude toward MC or AS, respectively) and the path from the relevant personal attitude to prejudice. Other types of mediation analyses, such as bias-corrected bootstrap (Preacher & Hayes, 2008), revealed the same results as those reported. Table 5 provides an overall summary of these analyses, pointing out variations in the extent to which attitudes toward AS and/or attitudes toward MC mediate the effect of SDO on prejudice.

We first considered the German data. When pro-diversity policy is low, our hypothesis was that personal AS would be a more important factor for explaining prejudice than would personal MC, especially when the dominant norm is salient, such that personal AS and not personal MC should mediate the SDO–prejudice relationship. Indeed, neither personal attitudes toward MC nor personal attitudes toward AS significantly predicted prejudice (once SDO was considered). Indeed, neither personal attitudes toward MC (unstandardized indirect effect = .05, z = 0.92, ns) nor personal attitudes toward AS (unstandardized indirect effect = .06, z = 0.81, ns) was a significant mediator of the SDO–prejudice relationship. In the norm-salient condition, personal attitudes toward AS was a significant predictor of prejudice; moreover, it significantly (and fully) mediated the SDO–prejudice relationship in this condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .20, z = 2.53, p = .01; see Figure 4). Consistent with the norm-not-salient condition, however, personal attitudes toward MC was neither a significant predictor of prejudice nor a significant mediator of the SDO–prejudice relationship (unstandardized indirect effect = .02, z = 0.69, ns; see Figure 4). Thus, when pro-
diversity policy is low, SDO is a significant predictor of prejudice but attitude toward MC is not. However, when norms are salient, personal AS becomes a stronger predictor and mediates the effect of SDO on prejudice.

When pro-diversity policy is high (Canada), the reverse was predicted. Because the normative context supports MC, personal MC should become the main predictor of prejudice, especially when norms are salient, and should mediate the effect of SDO on prejudice. In Canada, as in Germany, SDO was a significant predictor of prejudice in both conditions. However, whereas personal attitude toward MC was not a significant mediator of the SDO–prejudice pathway in the norm-not-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .05, z = 1.31, p = .19), it was a significant mediator in the norm-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .25, z = 3.10, p = .002). On the other hand, personal attitude toward AS was not a significant mediator of the SDO–prejudice path in either the norm-not-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .07, z = 1.19, p = .23) or the norm-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .03, z = 0.59, p = .55). When pro-diversity policy is high and the norms are salient, a lower score on SDO predicts a more positive attitude toward MC and this attitude predicts less prejudice (see Figure 5).

It is useful to consider now the same process in countries where the diversity policy is medium; that is, in the U.K. and the U.S. (see Table 5). In the U.S., in the norm-not-salient condition, personal attitudes toward AS was a mediator of the SDO–prejudice relationship (unstandardized indirect effect = .10, z = 2.40, p = .02). Moreover, personal attitudes toward MC was also a significant mediator of the SDO–prejudice relationship (unstandardized indirect effect = .07, z = 2.04, p = .04) in this condition. We next examined the norm-salient condition and found similar results. Personal attitudes toward AS significantly mediated the SDO–prejudice relation in the norm-salient condition, as it had in the norm-not-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .18, z = 3.75, p < .001). Personal attitudes toward MC also significantly mediated the SDO–prejudice relationship in the norm-salient condition (unstandardized indirect effect = .14, z = 3.18, p = .002). In sum, in the U.S., the pattern of results is identical to that represented in Figure 5 for Canada with the important exception that the link between personal AS and prejudice is significant in the U.S. but not in Canada.

In the U.K., in the norm-not-salient condition, we found no support for personal attitudes toward MC mediating the effect of SDO on prejudice (unstandardized indirect effect = 0.00, z = .04).

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Multiculturalism</th>
<th>Assimilation</th>
<th>Multiculturalism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>z</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>z</td>
<td>p</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>ns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>.001</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>U.K.</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>ns</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. SDO = social dominance orientation; ns = nonsignificant.
In the norm-salient condition, however, personal attitudes toward MC was a significant mediator of the SDO → prejudice pathway (unstandardized indirect effect = .14, \( z = 2.32, p = .02 \)). With regard to AS in the U.K., in the norm-not-salient condition, personal attitudes toward AS was a significant mediator of the SDO → prejudice path (unstandardized indirect effect = .11, \( z = 2.4, p = .02 \)). In the norm-salient condition, the same indirect effect was marginally significant (unstandardized indirect effect = .09, \( z = 1.85, p = .06 \)). Thus, somewhat like in the U.S., there is evidence that the SDO–prejudice relation in the U.K. is mediated by both personal AS and personal MC, although the mediating effect of personal MC was observed only when norms were salient.

We tested the extent to which the mediation path observed in the norm-not-salient condition differed significantly from that in the norm-salient condition, in each country. In general, experimental condition did not moderate the size of the indirect effect in a significant manner. The only exception was in Canada. For attitudes toward MC in that country, the difference in the relative strengths of the mediational pathway between the norm-salient and norm-not-salient conditions was statistically significant (difference in unstandardized indirect effects = .20, \( z = 2.32, p = .02 \)), suggesting that the mediational role of personal attitudes toward MC on the SDO → prejudice path was indeed stronger when norms were salient. Similarly, in comparing mediations across countries, we found that in the norm-salient condition, the multicultural mediation in Canada is significantly stronger than the same mediation in Germany (difference in unstandardized indirect effects = .26, \( z = 2.55, p = .01 \)).

**Discussion**

All societies are multicultural to some extent, but not all societies have developed a policy designed to promote cultural diversity as a national goal. The results of the present study considering four countries that have taken different positions on the MC–AS debate are consistent with previous research in suggesting that a national policy that takes pride in cultural diversity is effective in improving intergroup relations (Berry & Kalin, 1995; Berry et al., 1977; Levin et al., 2012; Park & Judd, 2005; Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004; Verkuyten, 2005). As predicted (H1), the lowest level of prejudice toward ethno-religious outgroups was observed in Canada, and the highest level was observed in Germany; levels in the U.S. and the U.K. were between these extremes. However, going beyond past research, the current study is the first to test a model seeking to elucidate the psychological processes that explain why this is the case.

Our results showed that country differences in prejudice can be explained not simply by the fact that personal support for MC is higher in Canada or the U.S. than elsewhere but mainly by the fact that the sociopolitical context in Canada and to some extent in the U.S. is characterized by a more powerful multicultural norm that values cultural diversity than is found in the U.K. and Germany.
The results of SEM revealed, in the norm-salient condition, an adequate fit with a model suggesting that (a) diversity policy has a direct effect on the perceived MC and AS norms; (b) the normative context that values MC and lower scores on the SDO scale indicating support for social equality lead to a personal commitment toward MC that results in more tolerance and less anti-Muslim prejudice; whereas (c) the normative context that values AS and higher scores on the SDO scale indicating support for social inequality and group-based dominance lead to personal support for AS that results in less favorable attitudes toward ethno-religious outgroups. Consistent with Hypothesis 3, these predictions were clearly supported in the norm-salient condition but much less so in the norm-not-salient condition, reinforcing the view that the perceived normative context is a pivotal element of the proposed model. Regardless of country and sociopolitical context, there was also, as hypothesized, a direct effect of SDO on prejudice.

Our model, accounting for country differences in prejudice, builds on and is consistent with previous research. However, it allows us to resolve a number of problems that led researchers to wrongly believe that the immigration and integration policy that is developed in a country does not, after all, have much impact. Thus, as in past research (see van de Vijver et al., 2008), relying on personal support for MC (or AS), one would have to conclude from the present study that there are in fact very few consistent differences between people from countries that are assumed to differ strongly in their institutional policy. This type of evidence can lead one to conclude that the diversity policy in a country, if it exists, is of little importance for understanding the psychology of the individual. People seem simply not to respond to such an impersonal and distant consideration as a government policy dealing with diversity. In fact, the results of SEM in the norm-salient condition (see Figure 3) indicate a negative effect of country on personal attitudes toward MC and a positive effect of country on attitudes toward AS. Because country is coded from low to high in pro-diversity policy, this is exactly the opposite of what one would expect.

By introducing the concept of cultural norms of integration, this study allows us to reach a much better understanding of the social and psychological effects of diversity policies. As predicted (H2), strong differences between countries were uncovered when considering the perceived norms related to MC/AS, not personal support for MC/AS. In addition, these differences were consistent with how social scientists have independently categorized the diversity policy in each country on objective grounds (Berry et al., 2006). Importantly, the results of SEM supported the proposition that there are two sets of factors that, independently, shape personal attitudes toward MC and AS: a country-specific factor, the perceived norms, and a general social-psychological factor, SDO. The striking fact is that SDO is a strong predictor of personal support for AS (a hierarchy-enhancing ideology) and a strong predictor of personal opposition to MC (a hierarchy-attenuating ideology). However, SDO is only weakly related, if at all, to the perceived AS and MC norms (see Table 3). Furthermore, SDO is not related to the ordering of countries in terms of their level of pro-diversity policy. These results suggest a first reason why country differences on personal attitudes toward AS and MC can be weak and inconsistent with the actual diversity policy in a country. Personal attitudes can be influenced by factors that have little or nothing to do with the existence of a particular diversity policy in a country.

Using the average population as a point of reference for one’s own attitude is another factor that can account for some inconsistencies in personal attitudes when comparing countries that have different policies (see Guimond, Chatard, & Kang, 2010). As Kelley (1952) argued, reference groups have not only a normative function but also a comparative one. Because the German population was perceived as not very supportive of MC according to our data on the perceived norms, our German participants may very well feel and report that they personally support MC quite strongly in comparison. Similarly, because Canadians were generally perceived as strongly supportive of MC, our Canadian participants may very well feel and report that they support MC but not that strongly in comparison with others. Consequently, when comparing the mean scores of German and Canadian participants, one can find, as in the norm-salient condition in the present study (see Figure 3), that participants from a country where the pro-diversity policy is low (Germans) are significantly more positive toward MC than are those from a country where the pro-diversity policy is high (Canadians).

In sum, the evidence strongly supports the contention that perceived norms and personal attitudes related to MC and AS are distinct constructs. This is an original contribution of the present research. It illustrates the value of the distinction put forward by Sperber (1996) between mental representations (personal attitude) and cultural representations (perceived norm). Psychologically, this distinction allows one to appreciate the fact that whereas German students may be as favorable as Canadian students toward MC, they live in very different normative contexts. Such a normative context puts psychological pressures on the individual. Indeed, all the evidence obtained in this study suggests that the perceived norms have an effect on personal attitudes, but we found little indication that the reverse was the case. In other words, the diversity policy in a country may not have a direct effect on personal attitudes, accounting for the fact that there is often little consistency between the two. It has a direct effect on the perceived norms, and this normative context has direct implication for personal attitudes. This is another major point to note from the present study. As Morrison and Chung (2011) recently commented, “Not much is known about the antecedents of nonminorities’ attitudes toward multiculturalism” (p. 165). Yet, this is a critical issue, because multicultural ideologies can have important consequences for intergroup relations. Our findings concerning the role of integration norms as antecedents of personal attitudes thus provide a novel contribution regarding this important question.

This contribution, showing the importance of the perceived cultural norms, is in line with several cross-cultural studies showing that, in the area of individualism-collectivism research, distinguishing cultural norms from personal attitudes is of central theoretical importance (see Fischer et al., 2009; Shteynberg et al., 2009; Zou et al., 2009). For example, in their study among 21 cultural groups, Becker et al. (2012) concluded that there were “effects of living within a particular cultural context—indeed of one’s personal, internalized values and beliefs” (p. 850). Similarly, in the present study, the perceived MC norm was found to have, in the norm-salient condition, not only an indirect effect via personal attitudes but also a direct and significant effect on prejudice. Thus, living in a country with a strong pro-diversity policy...
(or the reverse) may shape intergroup attitudes and beliefs to some extent directly through the normative context and not necessarily via one’s strongly held personal beliefs about the policy. Of course, the critical point of previous research, as well as the present one, is not that personal attitudes and beliefs are irrelevant. It is that considerable theoretical leverage is obtained when considering the power of the perceived cultural/normative context in and of itself (see Chiu et al., 2010). Indeed, much of the results of the present study does indicate that the effects of perceived norms can occur via personal attitudes. For example, SEM revealed that the perceived AS norm did not produce any direct effect on prejudice even within the norm-salient condition. To better understand this result, we conducted post hoc analyses. Interestingly, we found that there were significant (positive) correlations between the perceived AS norm and prejudice but only within the norm-salient condition and only in countries where the pro-diversity policy is low or medium. Moreover, these relations became unreliable once the role of personal attitudes toward AS was taken into account. Nevertheless, the conclusion to be drawn here, we believe, is that the perceived AS norm does play an important role.

This viewpoint can be further illustrated by considering other theoretical approaches that would have expected the reverse of what we found. For example, according to the social projection model (Krueger, 2007), people would deduce what the outside world is from their own personal and idiosyncratic point of view. We found, contrary to such a model, that students in Germany, who were personally favorable toward MC, estimated that most people in Germany were not. These results do not confirm the paramount role of a self-serving bias that would lead people to project their own view on others. Rather, they are in harmony with the fact that Germany does not have a strong diversity policy. Thus, when Canadian students who are equally favorable toward MC estimated that most people in Canada were also favorable toward MC, this is similarly consistent with the existence of a strong MC policy in Canada, not with a self-serving bias or a hypothetical social desirability bias. These results cannot be fully predicted on the basis of the social projection model.

Perceived Norms as Descriptive Information

These perceived norms of MC and AS have explanatory value, but it is worth noting also their importance as descriptive information. The fact that Canada is a strong multicultural state is widely recognized, and our results on the perceived norms confirm that. Of the four countries considered, Canada is the only one where the MC norm is perceived to be stronger than the AS norm. However, the nature of the diversity policy in other countries is often a topic of debate. Our data on the perceived norms provide a piece of evidence that may be useful in this regard. Thus, when German Chancellor Angela Merkel stated in October 2010 that multiculturalism has been a failure in Germany, this suggested implicitly that there was a multiculturalism policy in Germany. Our results do not support that claim. They suggest, along with other analyses (see Zick et al., 2001), that the diversity policy in Germany is some form of AS, not MC. Similarly, the U.K. is an interesting case. It is still considered by many to be a multicultural state (e.g., Bertossi, 2007). Yet, since 2001—and much as in the Netherlands (see Verkuyten, 2011)—MC has been the target of considerable criticism in the U.K., to the point where the country has shifted away from MC (see Joppke, 2004; Kepel, 2008). Several observers noted that there were clear signals of the end of British multiculturalism by 2004, something that did not occur in Canada (Esteves, 2011; Kepel, 2008). This shift away from MC in the U.K. (but not in Canada) is clearly reflected in our results. For example, our manipulation of norm salience had opposite effects regarding the perceived level of support for MC in the two countries. The fact that British students perceived the MC norm as significantly less widespread in the norm-salient condition than in the norm-not-salient condition is in line with Joppke (2004)’s thesis of a retreat from MC in the U.K. Such is not the case in Canada, where the opposite effect was significant.

Finally, the precise nature of the national policy in the U.S. is not easy to describe. The country has historically been associated with a strong assimilationist policy (Moghaddam et al., 1993). Yet, for several decades now, diversity has been a prominent social and political topic (Plaut et al., 2011). In this context, it is interesting to note that whereas the MC norm is perceived as more potent in the U.S. than in the U.K. or in Germany, it is significantly weaker than in Canada. Moreover, in the U.S., the AS norm is perceived to be as strong if not stronger than the MC norm. This simple descriptive consideration of the perceived norms suggests that both MC and AS are important intergroup ideologies in the U.S., relative to other countries, and our within-country analyses focusing on this country confirms this.

Within-Country Dynamics

Our manipulation of norm salience did not affect prejudice. However, this manipulation proved useful to highlight different within-country dynamics. Consistent with our hypothesis that SDO operates in the same way across countries, analyses showed that in each country, those who score high on SDO are significantly more likely than others to express negative attitudes toward ethnic and religious outgroups. These results illustrate a general principle and confirm a long series of studies supporting SDT (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). They also suggest that our measure of prejudice is equally valid for all four countries. In Germany, in the U.S., in the U.K., and in Canada, expressing negative attitudes toward Muslims is intimately connected with one’s general orientation toward group-based inequality. Why is SDO so consistently related to prejudice? Relatively little is known about this basic question (see Levin et al., 2012). One of the main contributions of the present research is to show that the variables that mediate the SDO-prejudice relation can vary substantially across nations. More important, it is to demonstrate that one can specify and predict the nature of this mediating mechanism on the basis of the diversity policy that is dominant in a country.

When pro-diversity policy was low (e.g., Germany) and norms were salient, attitudes toward AS, not attitudes toward MC, mediated the effect of SDO on prejudice. When pro-diversity policy was high (e.g., Canada) and norms were salient, attitudes toward MC, not attitudes toward AS, mediated the effect of SDO on prejudice. When pro-diversity policy was medium (U.S. and U.K.), there was evidence that both attitudes toward AS and attitudes toward MC mediated the effect of SDO on prejudice, although this came out more clearly in the U.S. than in the U.K.

These results advance our understanding of the reason why SDO can predict prejudice in widely different social and political con-
texts. Whereas all complex societies are structured as systems of group-based hierarchies, the ideologies supporting this hierarchy in one society can differ considerably from those in the next. Apparently, people with high SDO are flexible in the ideologies they can use in order to justify prejudice. This elasticity means that SDO should be relevant across a large number of social and political contexts. Thus, we found that in Germany, those with high SDO are more prejudiced largely because they strongly support AS, whereas in Canada, those who are low in SDO are less prejudiced largely because they strongly support MC. This suggests that the determinants of prejudice vary according to the diversity policy in a country and the associated norms. Personal attitudes toward AS are a powerful predictor of prejudice, but this is not observed in Canada. Personal attitudes toward MC are a powerful predictor of lower prejudice, but this is observed especially in Canada. Our results indicate that these variations can be explained, at least in part, by the normative context. This provides support for our major argument: Theories of prejudice and intergroup relations in social psychology should be sensitive both to factors that are common across cultures and to factors that are specific to a particular society.

Limitations and Future Direction

Further research is needed to address the main limitations of the present research and to examine issues that we have neglected. First, there is a need to test the model presented here and the mediating mechanism of the SDO–prejudice relation in countries other than those considered. Given the inherent difficulties involved in assessing mediation (Bullock, Green, & Ha, 2010), our results should be interpreted with care. SEM can test the fit of causal hypotheses to empirical data, but it cannot demonstrate causality as experimental studies might. Our results suggest that experiments testing the effect of intergroup ideology such as MC and AS should manipulate not simply the extent to which participants are personally supportive of a given ideology but also the extent to which ingroup members are largely supportive or not.

Second, our samples of students are not representative of the nations concerned. This is an important limitation but not necessarily in terms of the assessment of the impact of a national context. Straus (2009) showed that, paradoxically, using student samples is a valid means of testing for national context effects. Nevertheless, it would be important to examine the extent to which the perceived norms of integration vary across age or educational level in studies using representative samples. Our hypothesis here is that there should be more variations across age and educational level in personal attitudes than in perceived norms, a hypothesis that received support in a national survey carried out in France (Guimond & Streith, 2013).

Third, further research is needed to examine subgroup differences within a particular country. Cultural norms of integration may be perceived quite differently by cultural minorities than by majority group members or by different cultural groups within the same country (e.g., Whites vs. African Americans). Ultimately, the effectiveness of a given diversity policy depends on the reactions of all groups concerned, not only those of majority group members. Fourth, there are several areas in which our analysis is limited or incomplete. For example, if one assumes that the same content has the same meaning in all countries, our manipulation of norm salience can be seen as confounded with the order of measurement of the MC and AS norms. Fortunately, there was little indication in the results that the first-measured issue (i.e., AS vs. MC norms) was higher across the board or that it led invariably to stronger mediation involving the same content area. Indeed, in the U.S. and in the U.K., despite different order of measurement of the AS and MC norms, there is evidence that the SDO–prejudice relation is mediated by AS regardless of the norm salience manipulation. One may assume that AS is naturally more salient in these countries, but it is not clear why exactly this would be so. Similarly, our results support the idea that the collective (or cultural) nature of MC and AS must be recognized and studied. Yet, little is known about how beliefs related to MC or AS become more or less widely distributed in a society or how they spread from one society to another. The positive effect of the multiculturalism policy in Canada on intergroup attitudes, clearly confirmed in our results, may ultimately rest in the successful creation of a norm that values diversity. The present research does not explain how such a norm is created or why a norm against MC can develop. More research is needed on these issues, not only to develop more sophisticated theories of intergroup relations but also to better understand how social-psychological principles can be transformed into effective policies.

References

CULTURAL NORMS AND PREJUDICE


