

Determinants of Experience of Discrimination in Minorities in Germany

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This study examines perceived ethnic discrimination (as opposed to “objective” discrimination). It includes a discussion of definitions of discrimination and attempts to measure it, and a review of findings on the distribution of discrimination experiences among minorities. The aim of the study is to determine the influence of factors that increase the risk of exposure to situations in which discrimination can take place (exposure hypothesis), and those that sensitize perceptions and give rise to different frequencies of subjective feelings of discrimination (sensitization hypothesis). A standardized questionnaire was administered to a random sample of German-born persons of Turkish and Greek origin and Aussiedler (ethnic Germans born in the former Soviet Union) (total N = 301). Minorities of non-German, especially of Turkish origin reported significantly more discrimination than Aussiedler in a set of nineteen everyday situations. A bivariate correlation was found between number of incidents reported and employment status with homemakers reporting the fewest incidents. However, multiple regression analysis yielded no significant effect, thus lending no clear support to the exposure hypothesis. Frequency of contacts with German friends has no effect and seems not to entail an increase in exposure opportunities, but may lead to a desensitization to discrimination due to the erosion of the relevance of ethnic categories. On the other hand, an influence through intra-ethnic contacts clearly occurs, as frequency of contact with co-ethnic friends exerts a strong positive effect on experienced discrimination. A similar effect was found for ethnic self-awareness. The latter finding confirms the sensitization hypothesis.

1. What is Discrimination?

This article sets out to show that when young people with migrant backgrounds experience discrimination this is not by chance but is embedded in certain social backgrounds and displays categorizable features. The aim is to show the *influences* that come into play in the experience of discrimination. Before examining this question, however, one must first critically analyze the subject itself. Although social actors, including some scientists, are quite happy to use the term discrimination without a second thought, closer observation shows that it is hard to arrive at a precise idea of what discrimination actually *represents*. This article focuses especially on the situation of minorities in Germany. Germany is a special case because, despite a long history of immigration, it has developed only a weak legal and institutional structure for monitoring and penalizing discrimination compared with other European and non-European countries.

It seems easy to define discrimination as unequal treatment on the basis of criteria for which no objective justification exists, especially unequal treatment to the detriment of an individual or a group. Traditional definitions of the concept, such as that of Antonovsky (1960 : 81), who speaks of “effective injurious treatment of persons on grounds rationally irrelevant to the situation,” are worded along these lines. The weaknesses in this type of conceptualization are not hard to identify. First, for instance in caste-type stratified structures, discrimination may indeed be “objectively” justified by a certain class of actors, in fact it may even be “rational” if it serves to defend privileged access opportunities to status hierarchies. Paradoxically, Antonovsky himself cites some pertinent examples. Generally, however, he seems to assume the validity of a socially shared *material* rationality in the Weberian sense (Weber 1964 : II, §9) which requires collectively uniform goals and overlooks the omnipresent conflict in modern societies over asserting the legitimacy of *formal* (egoistical, individual) claims to ratio-

nality that sometimes run counter to material ones. Social psychologists (for example Bourhis 1994 : 172 following on from Tajfel and Turner 1986) explain discrimination in an analogous manner as the striving of social groups for positive social identity. Specific rationality, if one wants to use this term here, exists in that prejudice toward the outgroup (at least cognitively) and discrimination (sometimes in real terms) are very effective at generating favorable status differences between the ingroup and the outgroup, thereby helping to strengthen the individual's social identity. Moreover, sooner or later the discussion must disengage from actors' situative actions and take on structural dimensions. For if genetic causes are not to be held ultimately responsible for social inequalities that remain stable over time, the structures must contain embedded mechanisms that regulate the allocation of status positions even without intentional acts (for an overview of this discussion see Pettigrew and Taylor 2000). What this position ultimately boils down to is that *all* social inequality is the result of past discrimination, or discrimination occurring in parallel function systems. Consequently, society should not stop at superficial antidiscrimination interventions, but should adopt targeted affirmative action measures to redress the situation.

1.1 Contingency of the Phenomenon

Yet apart from the enormous political conflict potential of calling for something like this, which would entail considerable costs (not only financially), the underlying positions on which such calls are based often suggest a clarity about the existence of inequality that does not actually exist in practice, as Pettigrew and Taylor (2000) demonstrate by means of examples. Since supposedly disadvantaged groups are multi-dimensionally different from others, it is often unclear whether differences exist *ceteris paribus* and therefore represent disadvantages. The decomposition approach, which involves the use of statistical methods to differentiate the proportion of legitimate and illegitimate inequality numerically, is also ultimately based on value choices on the part of the researcher. Finally, though legislative provisions often have considerable normative influence, they only reflect social trends and power relations without contributing anything intrinsic to the concept of discrimination. Thus, locally specific ordinances are enacted as regards women, gays and disabled people, but not

left-handed people or vegetarians. Moreover, without public pressure no ordinances at all are passed. Germany has managed to delay implementation of European Union anti-discrimination law for years, even though no-one seriously maintains that no discrimination takes place here. These comments are intended to show that when it comes to the question of what discrimination is we are always skating on thin ice because the definition must take many factors into account. Yet the very contingency of the phenomenon suggests that social scientists ought to investigate the conditions that give rise to the *perception* of discrimination.

1.2 Illegitimacy at the Heart

This is not the place to develop a comprehensive theory of this subject, because at the social level that would necessitate taking into account inter alia historic changes, pressure groups, democracy potentials, the efficiency of the welfare state and, at the interaction level, the actors' intentionality and other elements. Rather, I plan to develop some ideas on discrimination against migrants and ethnic minorities and on its cognitive presence in the victims that can be taken to exemplify discrimination experiences in general. My deliberations pick up on the above definition but emphasize the central role of the *idea of legitimacy* and I do not attempt to arrive at my own substantial and complete definition of discrimination itself. I regard it as indisputable that in modern societies ascriptive disadvantages such as those based on origin are commonly regarded as illegitimate because the merit principle is meant to be the only factor determining social position. Again, the linking of a perception of discrimination to ascriptively characterized phenomena is certainly contingent on social history, because the grounds for this kind of unequal treatment are not regarded as illegitimate in every society. Thus, in feudal societies it was generally accepted that access to positions of leadership was made difficult for, or denied to, persons of lowly origin, regardless of their ability or merit. Only in the modern age did bourgeois classes question the nobility's ascriptive privileges. In caste societies, mobility beyond inherited boundaries is still hardly possible, yet this circumstance does not give rise to extensive tensions within society because it is not perceived as discrimination. Thus it seems to me to be justified to conclude that illegitimacy is the key factor that gives rise to the experience of discrimination. Some types of breach of the principle of equal treatment are

almost indisputably illegitimate and objectionable and are consequently monitored. For example, most western states have established institutions to monitor and enforce rules on gender equality. However, the fundamental feature of legitimacy is that it is subject to change and negotiation – as clearly demonstrated by the historic development of the question of women’s equality, for example. Age discrimination, for example in recruitment practice, is still widely tolerated, and although placing disabled people at a disadvantage is frowned upon in many areas of life, in Germany it was not open to legal challenge until recently.¹

1.3 The Position of Members of Minorities in Germany

The treatment of minorities in Germany is an interesting case. I would like to discuss it briefly because no consistent set of opinions has yet emerged from discrimination discourse in Germany, which is in any case behind the times, and the ambivalent attitude of society and politicians inevitably has repercussions on the sensitivity of minorities to inequality and their appreciation of the right to equal treatment. The situation in this country is particularly complex in that a contradictory system combining elements of legally backed disadvantage and codified precepts of equality (the latter for instance in many pieces of special legislation such as the German Works Council Constitution Act; for an overview of these regulations, see Mahlmann 2002) coexists with a situation of informal ideals of equal treatment that conflict with widespread practice of unequal treatment. A major basis for the way society deals with these groups is the legal categorization into Germans versus foreigners, which largely removes the withholding of political rights from social negotiation and as a result largely predetermines a categorization into ingroup and outgroup that would in principle be avoidable. This situation is exacerbated by Germany’s comparatively very restrictive naturalization practice. That cognitive categorization almost inevitably leads to discriminatory behavior has been known since Sherif, White, and Harvey’s study on minimal groups (1955) and Tajfel’s work on the link between social identity and outgroup attitudes (Tajfel 1974, 1982; Tajfel and Turner 1986, Tajfel, Billig, Bundy,

Flament 1971). If the law defines groups of individuals as not belonging to the nation, social outgroup attributions based on physiognomical features or other ascriptive characteristics are more likely to become established. Ironically, Germany deems its historical “national minorities” (Danes, Frisians, Sinti and Roma, and Sorbs) as worthy of special protection under the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the constitutions of some federal states (Länder) make special provision for these minorities, yet the state “has left numerically much larger ethnic groups without any specific protection, in particular, members of those ethnic groups who have long-term residence status or who have become German citizens” (CERD 1997: 2). We must assume that in Germany both the majority society and the non-protected minorities have to a considerable extent internalized the idea that Germans and foreigners do not have equal value. This surely has enormous bearing on the perception of inequality as discrimination.

The intention here is to discuss discrimination in everyday interactions between individuals; interactions that do not necessarily attain justiciable dimensions but fall into the category of *daily hassles* (Lazarus and Folkman 1987) and are in the nature of *ethnic harassment* (Schneider, Hitlan, and Radhakrishnan 2000). There is a further problem with conceptualizing or recording them. If contentious supraordinate legitimacy aspects make it difficult to judge the admissibility of a type of unequal treatment in principle, in individual cases this makes it difficult or impossible for individual actors and observers to attain knowledge of the situative circumstances. For it is by no means a rare exception for the recipient of unequal treatment (the individual at risk of discrimination) to possess both ascriptive and merit-related treatment characteristics that may determine the action of the potential discriminator. For example, if a job applicant of Turkish origin is rejected in favor of an autochthonous German, it is not easy to tell whether his/her origin or professional capability was the deciding factor, because, despite certificates, the evaluation of job-related competence is largely at the employer’s

¹ Comprehensive anti-discrimination legislation (Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz) was passed by the Bundestag in August 2006.

discretion. The viewpoints of recipient and discriminator may systematically diverge in that the recipient is more inclined to assume ascriptive motives to avoid admitting his/her own responsibility, while the discriminator in a decision-making situation may, in case of doubt, either rely on a supposedly reliable ascriptive characteristic or unconsciously make a discriminatory choice. In the worst case, he/she may discriminate for instrumental and strategic reasons, but in any case will generally cite the recipient's behavior, rather than ascription, to justify his/her actions. Yet the viewpoint of potential discriminators must be omitted from the following deliberations because that is usually impossible to access in a survey of recipients who are potentially discriminated against and our interest must be limited to the *impression* the recipient gains of a situation. One cannot usually talk about more than an impression because the person who suffers unequal treatment sees only the result of an action, along with a supposed motive. Information about the backgrounds to action is always incomplete, and there is scarcely any opportunity for clarification. For the purposes of reality, it is necessary to always assume a greater or lesser degree of uncertainty about potentially discriminatory events, which nonetheless lead to a real and definite perception.

1.4 Can One Survey Discrimination?

This extensive relativism is not intended to deny the existence of some undoubted (that is, inter-individually agreed-on) discrimination nor to rule out categorically that it could be measured for social science purposes, for instance in covertly staged experimental conditions (situation testing, Bovenkerk 2000). However, one can only talk about objective discrimination in this sense if agent, recipient, and observer agree in their fundamental assessment and specific knowledge of the case, and if assessment is not complicated by pretexts and rationalizations on the part of the discriminators or by strategic exploitation of the victim status. It is doubtful whether these conditions can often be met in the real world. One must therefore warn against making the naive assumption that unilateral interviews, the standard medium of survey research, could be used to come to grips with a phenomenon that is subject to such diverse social flexions. On the other hand, the elaborate process customarily practised by the courts, *audiatur et altera pars*, must be reserved for case studies. A

survey will have to take its lead from the political realities: An action is not discriminatory per se but only becomes so through social discourse. Thus Lange (1997: 21) does not go far enough in citing “incorrect perceptions” as a source of error when surveying discrimination. Though incomplete information may impair a respondent's ability to judge and in this sense – only – produce an incorrect perception, the main problem is that sensitivity to discrimination and thus the threshold of perception are closely linked with ideas of legitimacy. Talk of incorrect perception may be dangerously open to misunderstanding, something that is surely alien to Lange, because it could also refer to a person's basic way of thinking, which is something that social scientists are not entitled to judge. This realization injects epistemological confusion into empirical research when it comes to assessing the accuracy of survey findings on discrimination. The question of accuracy is misplaced if for no other reason than because it is per se impossible to validly measure an unclearly defined object.

The complex of reasons for examining discrimination also provides a good argument for making subjective assessment the central focus of interest. The interest of both politicians and social scientists in curbing discrimination has always fed on the fear that it may cause a withdrawal into the ethnic (reaction formation, Antonovsky 1960: 87) and create obstacles to the integration of minorities. The German council of experts on immigration and integration (Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration 2004: 385) has stressed that disadvantage based on ethnic origin can render integration in central areas of life considerably more difficult, or even prevent it entirely. Moreover, as Heitmeyer, Müller, and Schröder (1997: 162), for instance, surmise, “[experience of discrimination in the public sphere] produces a tendency to withdraw” into one's own ethnic group. Dutch anti-discrimination legislation expresses the fear that disadvantage will result in members of minorities becoming aggressive and isolated and that, as fertile ground for extremist and fundamentalist groups, they will become a threat to society at large (Goldschmidt 2004: 66). Yet necessary as clear orientation points might be politically, general standards of justice are immaterial unless violations of them are registered by relevant groups of people. Conversely, certain discrimination experiences are marked by a feeling that there has been a

deliberate failure to codify minority rights (such as equal legal status for non-Christian religious communities). Admittedly, in the medium term political compromises such as the differentiated definition of discrimination in European Union Directive 2000/43 on equal treatment (Council of the European Union 2000) will impact on ideas of legitimacy, but in the final analysis only discrimination that is understood as such can have a social impact. Without consensus regarding the perception of legitimacy, any attempt to lay down what discrimination is in a factual definition at best runs the risk of being “ahead of time,” and in the worst case of being discredited as exaggerated and illegitimate (merely exploiting a minority position for tactical reasons). Besides, compromise clauses such as that in the EU directive permitting unequal treatment for what are said to be objective reasons does not exactly help to clarify the issue because whether a credible case can be made for the need to exclude categories of people from insurance, turn down job applicants, or otherwise discriminate on the basis of ascriptive criteria is ultimately only a matter of the extent to which “legitimate interests” can be asserted. While this may reinforce the tendency to legitimize unequal treatment, an opposite viewpoint claims that the mere failure to promote groups of individuals with unfavorable status distributions compared with society as a whole constitutes discrimination (Sachverständigenrat für Zuwanderung und Integration 2004:388).

This article will not deal with concepts such as *indirect discrimination* (see, for example, the aforementioned EU directive) or *institutional discrimination* (Gomolla and Radtke 2002). Given the statistical evidence from the field of education, the labor market, etc., arguments that certain groups, though formally accorded equal treatment, are disadvantaged due to unequal starting conditions, cannot be dismissed out of hand. Yet the extent to which ethnically unequal distributions are perceived and, if so, whether they are felt to be unjust, is usually unclear. When this happens because of a public debate on social inequality this process certainly contributes toward a generalized conviction that discrimination is occurring.

1.5 Object of the Study: Subjective Experience of Discrimination

The above considerations have led to the conclusion that it is not meaningful to try to survey discrimination as *such*,

at least outside controlled laboratory conditions. Rather, the object of this study will be personal experience of discrimination resulting from an uncertain perception of events and based on subjective ideas of legitimacy. From a sociological point of view, this question is no less exciting because it is then a matter of which social factors impact on this experience. The experience of discrimination is a prime example of the effect known as the Thomas theorem (Thomas 1923, Thomas and Thomas 1928), according to which peoples’ actions are guided by what they perceive as real. This – and not objective circumstances – is what they react to; the social environment shapes patterns of perception (in Thomas’ terminology, the definition of situations).

As an aside, one can also add that at the level of social discourse analogous unclarity exists as to whether discrimination represents a social problem. In this respect, discrimination is a completely typical example of a social problem (Albrecht 1999:769f), because social problems always pass through an interwoven process of constitution, only at the *end* of which are they seen as such. During the course of this process they are turned into objects of scandal and discredited (even by researchers) because, even more than in other social areas, individual group interests are promoted or questioned. Social scientists argue over the power of definition with those affected and with powerful social actors who realize that recognizing a phenomenon as a social problem inevitably entails establishing resource-intensive bodies for dealing with and monitoring that problem.

Returning to our research, logically this should begin with exploratory studies to establish what incidents are felt to be discriminatory. We chose a pragmatic way of doing this and drew up a shortlist based on everyday experience and incidents discussed in the literature. We then measured how persons with a migration background assessed these. Discrimination against migrants can assume different forms, all of which, according to Antonovsky’s definition, involve unequal treatment to a person’s disadvantage on the basis of that person’s origin. This may involve holders of official posts or actors in economic life withholding resources or access to positions of status. In addition, we had to take into account the complete range of incidents in private intercourse from subtle to blatant, from minor slights

to grievous physical injury. Here the strategy chosen is to ask about exemplary experiences with a finite number of typical incidents (more on this in Section 3). As originators, we consider only the “established” population, that is, those who claim membership of the ingroup of Germans and potentially derive privileges from it. Discrimination between members of different minorities is not dealt with, nor is discrimination against members of the majority by members of a minority.

1.6 Putative Determinants

We assume two classes of determinants of the extent of experienced discrimination. The first is factors that increase the risk of exposure, that is the probability of becoming involved in situations in which discrimination can take place. Second, we assume that certain social and personality-structure influences shape patterns of perception and give rise to different frequencies of subjective feeling of discrimination.

The risk of exposure increases in line with the extent first to which contacts with potential discriminators take place and second to which the individual plays the role of an outgroup member in interactions. In this, interethnic contact patterns, especially the circles in which people move, work and engage in leisure activities, and the scope and make-up of personal networks come into play, as does the physical and/or physiognomical visibility of the migration background. I discuss indications as to the impacts of this last factor in Section 2.

The question of which factors influence perception is comparatively less trivial. First, one can probably expect a change in comparisons drawn and rights claimed to take place between the first and second generation of migrants because those who grow up in the host country as descendants of the actual migrants are more likely to lay claim to equal treatment with those who regard themselves as established as a matter of course than do people who were born abroad, especially those who were recruited for a temporary job, who do not yet acknowledge that they have become immigrants, and who adopt a fundamentally “deferential” attitude that concedes sweeping privileges to the autochthonous population (Esser 1980). Ethnicity in general, that is the awareness of belonging to a group by

descent (Weber 1964:307), ought to be associated with an increased propensity to categorize the social world from the point of view of origin. This attitude provides interpretation models for ambiguous situations and steers the attribution of causes to ethnic origin if no clear indications of other reasons exist. Similarly, an effect of the generalized conviction that there is discrimination can be expected. Anyone who believes that his group of origin is generally disadvantaged will in an individual instance be more likely to see himself as a mere personification of a social breed that is discriminated against. Similar considerations are raised by Sellers et al. (2003:304) and Sellers and Shelton (2003:1079), who see discrimination as a stressor and explain the link between ethnicity and increased incidence of stress by greater sensitivity of perception. However, the causal connection is unclear. Certainly, an attitude-forming generalization takes place on the basis of experience. Dion (2002:4), on the other hand, argues that effects take place not at the individual, but at the group level. He states that an external threat to the ingroup regularly leads to increased identification with this group. Thus if discrimination is seen as a form of threat to a social category, ethnicity, which after all constitutes emphatic identification with the respective ingroup, can also be interpreted as a *consequence* of generalized perception of discrimination. These two causal models are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, in line with the contact hypothesis (Allport 1954, Amir 1969), regular interethnic interactions should not only lead to a reduction in general prejudices toward members of outgroups, but also to a reduced willingness to impute discriminatory intentions in ambivalent confrontations. Thus the role of intergroup contacts is obviously ambivalent, since on the one hand it ought to reduce discrimination experiences by making outgroup attitudes more reconcilable, while on the other increasing such experiences due to increased risk of exposure.

2. State of Research

What is known about the spread of discrimination experiences among migrants and members of minorities? Representative surveys conducted by the German Federal Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs of recruited migrants and their families, and surveys of migrants of Turkish origin conducted by the Center for Turkish Studies in Essen,

reveal, first and foremost, considerable sociodemographic variation. The nationwide survey conducted by the Ministry of Labor in 1995 (Mehrländer, Ascheberg, and Ueltzhöffer 1996: 320 ff) found that Turks were twice as likely to be subjectively affected by insults, abuse, threats, and physical attacks than Italians and Greeks. Former Yugoslavs (not differentiated by post-break-up citizenship) were also more frequently affected than Italians and Greeks, but less frequently than Turks. In all groups, men were more likely to report such incidents than women, and younger people (under 24s) were more likely to do so than older people. Young male Turks are identified as the preferred targets of xenophobic acts. Overall, one in four Turks and one in eight Greeks and Italians had suffered insults, while in each group the proportion reporting having experienced the more severe varieties of incidents in the twelve months preceding the survey was markedly less than 10 percent. The difference between the groups narrows when it comes to everyday experiences of discrimination, for example being refused admission to bars or discotheques or being disadvantaged on the labor and housing markets, though Turks and Yugoslavs usually report more frequent adverse experiences.

A further survey of a comparative random sample asking the same questions in summer 2001 (Venema and Grimm 2002: 72 ff) found that the number of discrimination experiences reported had hardly changed, nor had the relative distribution by ethnic origin, gender, and age range. However, while the incidence of individual everyday types of incident such as refusal of entry increased, in the case of Turks and Yugoslavs the frequency of insults and abuse decreased, in some cases notably. This suggests that the difference in visibility of the migration background explains the different experiences of discrimination in different groups of origin. Canadian surveys support this assumption. There, members of “visible” minorities, especially Black and South Asian, perceive discrimination twice as frequently (Dion 2002: 5; Jedwab 2004, 2005). US data (Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999: 213), while based on a different methodology, confirms this trend impressively, particularly in the case of black people.

In a German study of 15- to 21-year-olds of Turkish origin in North Rhine-Westphalian cities, Heitmeyer, Mül-

ler, and Schröder (1997) asked about unequal treatment of Germans and foreigners in different areas of daily life and used factor analysis to categorize their findings into public and private spheres. Discrimination occurs more frequently in the public than in the private sphere. The proportion affected by incidents in public offices, housing, at work or school, in contacts with the police, with German youth groups, in discos, and in their neighborhood ranged between 30 and 40 percent, while the figures for sports clubs and youth clubs were below 20 percent. Young males were more likely than females to experience unequal treatment from public authorities and the police, though not at school or at work. The authors attribute this to marked gender-specific role patterns and to the greater assertiveness of this sub-group.

The Center for Turkish Studies in Essen conducts an annual multi-topic survey of people of Turkish origin in North Rhine-Westphalia. This includes a question without temporal reference about personal experience of unequal treatment of Germans and foreigners in various areas of life (Goldberg and Sauer 2004). The wording of the question is somewhat unfortunate for the present purpose of comparison, because it does not distinguish clearly between experiencing for oneself and observing in one’s personal environment on the one hand, nor between the interviewee’s own ethnic group and “foreigners” in general on the other. The general trend, however, can still be clearly recognized. From 1999 to 2001, 2002 and 2003 there was evidently a sharp increase in all types of discrimination experience, for instance from 38.8 to 56.6 percent of the random sample at the workplace or during training, and from 31.3 to 48.6 percent in public authorities. The proportion of those affected on more than one occasion rose from 51.8 to 70.5 percent. In 2004, incidents declined again markedly in most fields of life and overall. The steep rise around the turn of the millenium is surprising since there are no indications of a sudden change of behavior in the German environment between 1999 and 2001 that would be of significance to discrimination (roughly half the increase took place during this period). Obviously, an increase in discriminatory behaviour following September 11, 2001, cannot be ruled out. At the same time, given the increase in the attention paid by the media to anti-Muslim resentment and assaults follow-

ing the attacks in New York, it appears that there was an increase in sensitivity in people of Turkish origin, which is now returning to its previous level. As regards the cross-sectional sociodemographic variation in discrimination experience, the authors found their expectations borne out only to a limited extent. The authors expected second- and third-generation family members to be more sensitive to disadvantageous treatment on account of their internalization of principles of equality and their partial integration with German society (Goldberg and Sauer 2004:137ff). For the same reason, they assumed that experiences would decline with age. To a certain extent this was true of women, but among men, who are generally more frequently affected, it was the middle-aged groups who reported the highest rate of harassment, and the numbers only dropped markedly among those aged 60 and over. Moreover, second-generation men reported discrimination experiences more *rarely* than those in the first generation. There is no linear relationship with schooling. Worst affected were graduates of the *Realschule*, the middle of the three streams in the German secondary school system, followed by graduates of the *Gymnasium* (the school type leading to university entrance qualifications). Individuals who graduated from the bottom stream (*Hauptschule*) and those who failed to gain any school-leaving qualifications felt least affected. In this respect, the ratios resembled those among Mexican immigrants in the United States (Finch, Kolody, and Vega 2000:300). Finally, attitudes had some interesting bivariate impacts. Religious people with traditional cultural attitudes and those attached to their native country reported more discrimination than their respective opposites. The authors attribute this to different aspirations to equal treatment and to the fact that the appearance of these groups is more conspicuous to German eyes (Muslim dress code).

Anders Lange presented an important European study in 1997. In Sweden, he interviewed a range of immigrants from numerous countries in Africa and Asia, and from former Yugoslavia. A clear ranking of reported incidences of unequal treatment on the ground of geographical origin emerged. Africans were targets almost twice as frequently as Yugoslavs, while the rates for Arabs and Asians lay between these two. Men were always worse affected than women. In addition, Lange (1997:11) found that more

discrimination was felt in metropolitan areas than in rural residential environments. Increasing age and duration of stay usually had a slight negative impact, education tended to be positive though not consistently so, and income almost without exception had no effect.

In Britain, the Fourth National Survey of Ethnic Minorities (Modood et al. 1997:259 ff.) looked at experience of racial harassment in four major immigrant groups. The survey did not deal with everyday discrimination. It found no clearly contoured origin-related differences in the perceived incidence of acts of violence against the person or against property. On the other hand, this survey again revealed a clear gender difference along the lines described above. A steep decline in rates was noted in the 45-plus age group. Tenants were more exposed to harassment than homeowners, which could be an effect of the social environment of the residential location. The differences observed in Sweden according to urbanity of the residential location did not emerge. Finally, persons in residential areas with low proportions of migrants (less than 5 percent) were especially at risk, while only half as many incidents were registered in localities where the local minority concentration was more than 50 percent. This can be assessed as indicating the effects of opportunity structure.

At the European level we have the Eurobarometer 57, which was commissioned by the European Union and collected data in 2002 in fifteen countries (Marsh and Sahin-Dikmen 2003). This survey looked at whether the participants had personally been victims of a discriminatory incident. In many respects, this data is not comparable with the other findings referred to here, because only EU nationals were questioned, thus, one assumes, not the very people who are most frequently victims of discrimination (and those participants who were from minorities that suffer particular discrimination were not identified separately). Nonetheless, since this survey looked at discrimination not only on the grounds of ethnic origin but also for other reasons, it is possible to draw comparisons between these reasons. By far the most frequently reported form of discrimination was discrimination on grounds of age. Incidents of discrimination on grounds of race and ethnicity were only half as frequent, but were much more

widespread than discrimination on grounds of religion, mental or physical disability, or sexual orientation. Thus it is clear that racial discrimination is of considerable significance internationally. There were practically no differences between genders, but the figures for younger age groups were very much higher. Fifteen- to 34-year-olds were five times as likely to report incidents as the over 55s. People on the political left were twice as likely to report discrimination as those on the political right. Dion (2001:1) reports a marked increase in perceived discrimination in Canada between 1980 and 1990. He also confirms that young people in particular regard discrimination as a problem, and assumes that claims to equal treatment are increasing and that the willingness to tolerate inequality is decreasing. The significance of these findings is discussed further below.

3. Data and Method

The analyzed data was collected in summer 2004 within the framework of the teaching research project “Discrimination Against Migrants” in Bielefeld. The target groups were persons of Turkish and Greek origin born in the Federal Republic of Germany, regardless of their current citizenship, and *Aussiedler* aged between 18 and 35 who were born in Russia, Kazakhstan or Kyrgyzstan.² There were practical reasons for limiting the random sample to a specific age group and to second-generation migrants. First, the researchers used a German-language instrument. Second, given the size of the sample, the aim was to avoid additional heterogeneity. The survey was based on a random sample from the register of residents of the city of Bielefeld (details in Salentin 2005). Face-to-face interviews were conducted using a standardized 35-page instrument. With a response rate of approximately 30 percent, the net sample realized was 301 cases.

Experienced discrimination and severity of situations. With a subject like discrimination, which is a political issue and prominently relayed by the media, it is naturally difficult to separate collectively formed convictions from individual experiences. The label discrimination as such is unsuitable for survey purposes on account of the hazy

way it is used in everyday life. For this reason and to avoid priming effects, this term was not used at all in the questionnaire. Instead, the concept presented above, which sees discrimination as unequal treatment based on origin, was verbalized. A conceptual distinction was drawn between experienced discrimination on the one hand and generalized perception of discrimination on the other. Experienced discrimination was surveyed with reference to concrete incidents, while the items on generalized perception of discrimination referred to a social category. Experienced discrimination was surveyed in two stages so as to simplify the cognitive demand on the respondents and to lend sharper contours to the conceptual separation between unequal treatment for whatsoever reason and ethnically based discrimination. The subjects were first presented with sixteen descriptions of everyday situations in which unequal treatment of this kind occurs (see Table 1). The items were drawn up during pretests on the basis of press reports and descriptions by migrants. It was important that the situations selected for the questionnaire be situations that were experienced frequently. Respondents were asked to state whether they had experienced a situation on one occasion, more than once, or never. Since subjectively these events could be explained in different ways, in the cases where the respondent had been affected at least once, this supplementary question was asked: “Do you believe that happened to you because you were seen as a foreigner [or an *Aussiedler*]?” The possible answers were “yes, in one case | yes, in all cases | yes, in some cases | never.” The present analysis takes into account the sum total of only those incidents that were experienced on one or more occasions and at least one of which was attributed to the respondent’s origin.

Severity of situations. A subsequent question presented the above concrete incidents of discrimination in the same wording and asked the subjects to rate the severity of these situations on a seven-point scale ranging from “not at all bad” (1) to “very bad” (7). A total index was produced from the items on severity (Cronbach’s alpha 0.87). *Generalized perception of discrimination.* A total index

² *Aussiedler* are ethnic German immigrants from the countries of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet

Table 1: The situations

Situation	Severity	Experience
You are refused admission to a discotheque.	X	X
A club or association you want to join won't admit you.	X	X
An employer turns you down when you are searching for a job.	X	X
You are "eyed up" when you enter a room.	X	X
A colleague is paid more money for the same work.	X	X
You are passed over for promotion.	X	X
A teacher wrongly gives you a low grade.	X	X
A trainer supervises you poorly.	–	X
You are treated impolitely in a shop.	X	–
You receive inadequate medical care from a doctor.	X	–
A public authority makes decisions to your disadvantage.	X	X
A landlord gives preference to another candidate for an apartment.	X	X
Neighbors fail to return your greeting.	X	–
On a public transport journey your ticket is checked for longer than normal.	X	X
In a public place, the police ask you to produce your ID for no apparent reason.	X	X
When crossing a border, you are checked at customs for no apparent reason.	–	X
An insurance company refuses to insure you.	X	X
You are given an insulting nickname.	X	X*
You are threatened.	X	X

* Wording altered slightly.

X surveyed. Severity and experience were not surveyed for all situations.

made up of the following items was used to analyze perceived discrimination against the own group of origin: "To what extent do you think the following statements are true? In German schools, children of Turkish origin [Greek origin/children of *Aussiedler*] get worse grades for the same performance. A German employer only employs persons of Turkish origin for poorly paid work.

Germans don't want persons of Turkish origin to rise in society. The German police control persons of Turkish origin more strictly than Germans. In Germany, persons of Turkish origin have worse opportunities to get on than Germans. In German discotheques, persons of Turkish origin are often refused admittance. German landlords prefer German tenants. Even with a German passport, persons of Turkish origin are treated as foreigners in Germany. In really important matters, persons of Turkish origin in Germany will always be excluded from decisions. Unjust treatment of persons of Turkish origin has increased in Germany in recent years. Persons of Turkish origin are disadvantaged in Germany.³ Germans are interested in the culture of persons of Turkish origin (recoded). Germans regard persons of Turkish origin as an enrichment for German culture (recoded). German politicians take sufficient notice of the problems of persons of Turkish origin in Germany (recoded). Germans only want persons of Turkish origin to do the work that they consider themselves too good for. Germans want nothing to do with persons of Turkish origin. Persons of Turkish origin are only tolerated in Germany because they are needed as labor." Cronbach's alpha for this index is 0.89.

Ethnic identity. From nine items, a total index for identification with the group of origin and the country of origin was calculated: "I have a lot in common with most Turks [Greeks/*Aussiedler*]. I am interested in events in Turkey. Turks have typical characteristics that I share. It is important to me to belong to an ethnic group because it reflects who I am. The way I see myself has always to do with the fact that I am of Turkish origin. It is important for me as a person to be of Turkish origin. I prefer the company of Turks to Germans. It is important to me to be able to speak Turkish." A four-point response scale ranging from "agree completely" to "don't agree at all" was used. Cronbach's alpha for this total index is 0.82.

Social demography. All the different types of school certificates were recorded, but for the sake of clearer presentation they were reduced to the dichotomy of *Abitur* (including

3 Differing scale

4 *Abitur* is the school-leaving qualification required for university entrance.

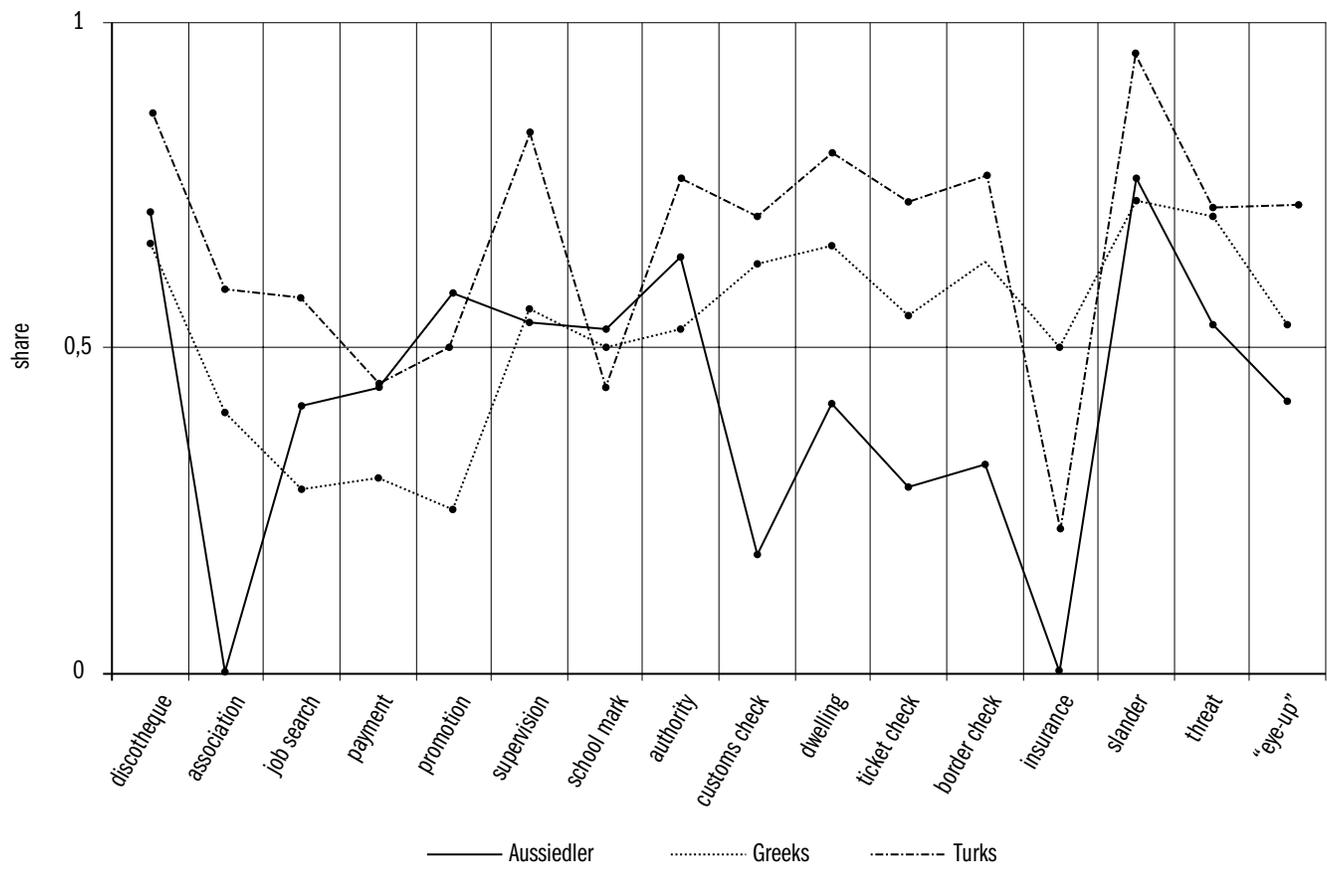
Fachabitur) versus all other certificates (including the category “no school certificate”).⁴ In the case of persons still in education, the qualification they were working toward was recorded. The age is the person’s age at the time of the interview. Employment status distinguishes between full-time, part-time, and marginal employment, persons undergoing training (school, vocational training, higher education), persons in training/retraining, those on maternity or parental leave, short-time workers, unemployed persons, housewives and househusbands, and others.

Social contacts. Since close communication can be expected to be found primarily in elective contacts, contacts

with friends are drawn on as indicators of personal networks. The questions were: “How often do you meet with friends of Turkish origin?” and “How often do you meet with friends of German origin?” and the answer scale was “every day,” “several times a week,” “once a week,” “occasionally,” and “never.”

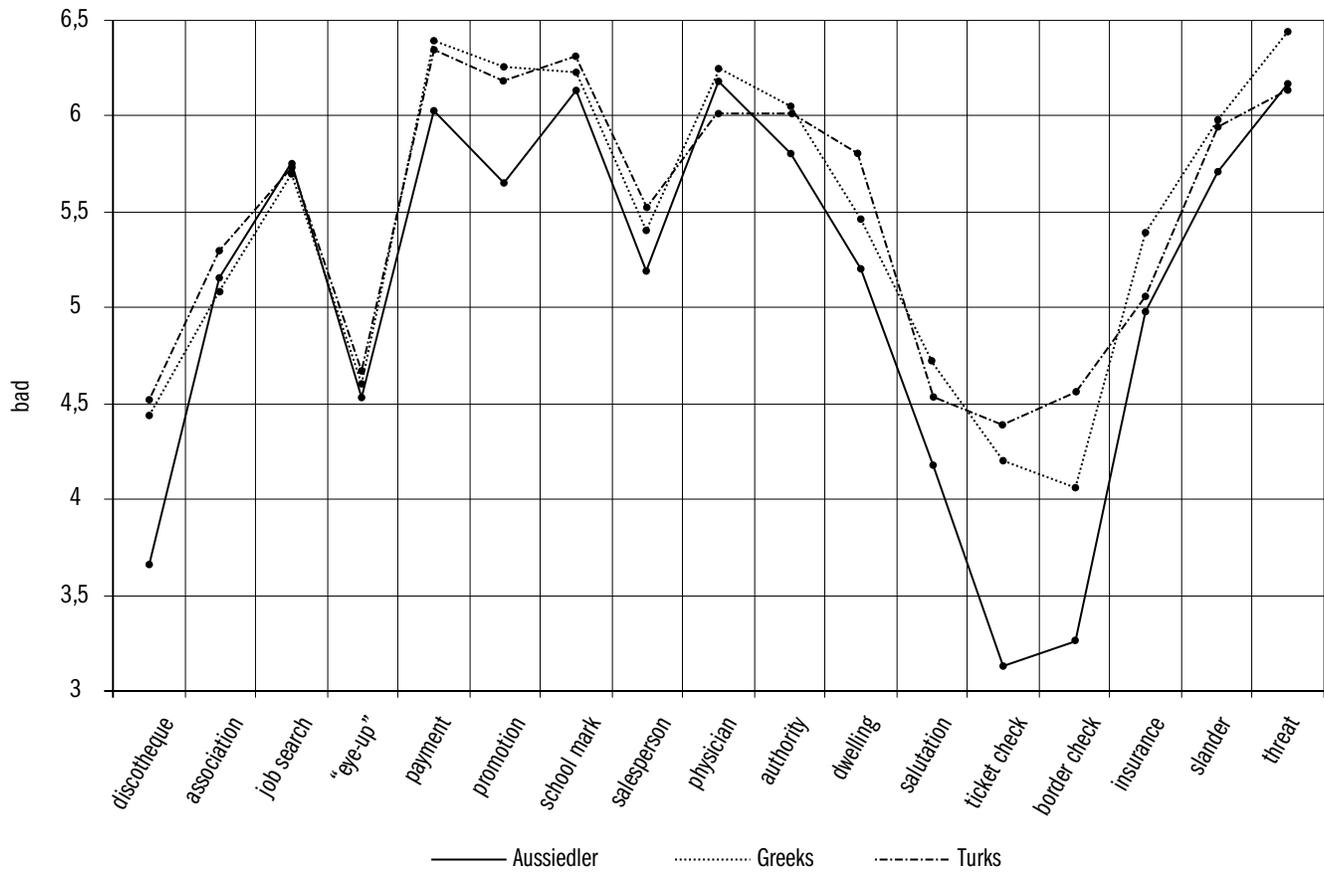
Since prior calculations for subsamples produced some differences in level but for the most part no serious differences in effects, the further analysis was carried out using the total sample. Differences between *Aussiedler* and the two other subsamples were represented using dummies.

Figure 1: Number of incidents experienced, by subsample



⁴ *Abitur* is the school-leaving qualification required for university entrance.

Figure 2: Severity of incidents, by subsample



4. Results

4.1 Extent to which Groups are Affected and Severity of Situations

Let us start with an initial overview (Fig. 1) showing the proportion of respondents who said they had experienced the situation at least once. The proportion fluctuates considerably from situation to situation, but also from group to group. Approximately four out of five participants in the survey have been refused admission to a discotheque at least once. The rarest experience was refusal of insurance (27 percent being the mean for all samples), which is probably connected with the young age of the interviewees. Incidents of this kind can be expected to be more widespread in older age groups, because the opportunity structure (the wish to take out insurance) changes as people move into later stages of their lives. Nonetheless, the bulk of the different types of incident had been experienced by two thirds of respondents, and on average 58 percent of respondents had been affected by the discrimi-

nation experiences outlined. Marked differences come to light when we examine the extent of discriminatory incidents differentiated by origin. Most incidents happened far more often to people of Turkish origin (dotted line) than to other persons, and *Aussiedler* generally had to undergo fewer such experiences than Greeks. On average, 66 percent of people of Turkish origin, 53 percent of those of Greek origin and 42 percent of the *Aussiedler* experienced the individual situations. However, there is no consistent pattern of differences. Thus the Turks, for instance, feel insulted, badly looked after, and turned away from discotheques noticeably more often than the two other subsamples, while a larger proportion of respondents of Greek origin feel that they had been turned down for insurance. No *Aussiedler* reported being turned down for insurance or having the impression that they had been rejected by a club. In contrast, a consistent one in two of every subsample reported having received unfair grades in school.

The second overview shows the perceived severity of the incidents presented (see Fig. 2). A physical threat, inferior treatment in relation to payment (at work), promotion, grading, visits to the doctor, and appointments with public authorities are felt to be especially bad. The average values are close to the “very bad” end of the scale (7.0). The subjectively most harmless incidents, extended ticket and passport checks and refusal of admission to a discotheque, still score above the middle of the scale (4.0) with people of Turkish and Greek origin. *Aussiedler* experience these situations less negatively, while in other respects assessment does not differ substantially between the subsamples.

4.2 Frequency of Discrimination

A central question that this article aims to clarify is what factors impact on the extent of perceived discrimination. To do this, the following analysis examines the number of incidents presumed to have occurred because of origin. In line with the considerations outlined above, it is assumed that both indicators associated with increased risk of exposure and those associated with sensitization will lead to a rise in the incidence of experienced discrimination. The exposure risk is tracked here by age, origin, frequency of encounters with German friends, and employment status. In the present sample the probability of experiencing certain situations at all increases with age, as the aforementioned example of insurance shows. Younger people necessarily have more rarely had occasion to be treated unequally in this particular way. While all three groups of origin are partially recognizable as immigrants due to the way they speak and their non-German-sounding names, many Germans identify persons of Turkish origin as “foreigners” on the basis of physiognomical traits. Combined with the prevailing reservations about Islam, with which all Turks are stereotypically associated in Germany, experiences of discrimination are to be expected most frequently in this group. Meeting with German friends always also means spending time in environments where one encounters longstanding residents who are not one’s own friends and are potential discriminators. To a certain extent, the same surely applies to the friends themselves.

Yet there are problems involved in applying an analytical categorization into exposure versus sensitization to ob-

servable circumstances, since ambivalences sneak in. Contact with German friends certainly increases the risk of also coming into contact with persons who discriminate, but at the same time it promotes familiarity with members of outgroups and could thus lessen the salience of origin as a determinant of the way a situation is interpreted. It is a similar case with language fluency. If this is limited, it undeniably discloses the migration background, if it is well developed it makes it possible to recognize subtle discrimination that would otherwise be hidden.

Employment status is expected to have an impact because it has a lasting and determining effect on how long a person regularly spends in which social environment. Housewives and persons on maternity or parental leave (who often move in ethnically homogeneous circles) have least contact with longstanding residents and should therefore display the lowest incidence of discrimination. Perceived discrimination should be highest among job seekers, who are permanently in a labor-market-related state of competition with Germans (and others), which can incidentally lead to a generalized sensitization. All other employment status manifestations should rank between housewives and househusbands and those bringing up children on the one hand and the unemployed on the other. A count of the number of experienced situations by employment status confirms a close connection with the number of experienced incidents (Table 2). Unemployed people and

Table 2: Number of incidents by employment status

Employment status	N	Mean value
Full-time employment	84	3.31
Part-time employment	55	4.64
Marginal employment	8	(2.88)
Apprenticeship, higher education, school	78	3.50
Training, retraining	1	(0.00)
Maternity, parental leave	22	2.73
Short-time working	3	(0.33)
Unemployed, seeking employment	22	5.50
Housekeeper	14	2.36
Other	3	(4.33)
Total	290	3.64

N = 290, F = 2,567 p = .007

Figures in brackets: cell content N < 10

job seekers experienced discrimination most frequently, with a value of 5.5, and housewives and mothers (2.36 and 2.73) least frequently. Since employment status is a categorical variable, dummies are inserted for unemployed people, housewives and mothers in the following regression. A possible connection with the means of transport used most frequently for everyday journeys was investigated but not confirmed empirically.

Increased sensitization is to be expected in those with a strong ethnic awareness, those who are particularly aware of their own ethnic origins. They will be more likely to associate the behavior of longstanding residents toward them with their ethnic origin. Anyone with a high level of school education (*Abitur* or *Fachabitur*) can be expected to pay more attention to the principle of merit than the poorly educated and to expect equal treatment and be alert to ascriptive discrimination. Finally, it is presumed that interaction in one's own ethnic milieu, recorded here by the frequency of interaction with friends from the country of origin, can steer attention to problems of equality, because a wide range of everyday problems are dealt with in these milieus and co-migrants' experience of similar problems and discourse about them suggest causal attribution to the alien origin. For women (as against men) and for Turkish and Greek origin (as against the *Aussiedler* category), 1/0-coded dummies were included in a linear regression on the number of incidents attributed to origin. The results are shown in Table 3. First, the significant impact of gender, which had only been included in the regression equation for control purposes, is surprising: women experienced almost one situation less ($b = -0.81$). It is unlikely that this can be explained by broad implementation of the principle of equal treatment toward women with a migration background. It is more likely, first, that women have lower expectations, which conflict with reality more rarely than those of men. Second, the differences in employment status between men and women, which are only incompletely contained in the model, and which also entail unequal exposure risks, are reflected in the gender effect. The gender effect observed here tallies with the findings of Heitmeyer, Müller, and Schröder (1997) and with US findings (Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams 1999: 224; Finch, Kolody, and Vega 2000: 300) but cannot be described as universal because according to Canadian

data (Jedwab 2005: 4) women almost always see themselves as more burdened. However, a precise comparison of the findings is not possible due to differences of methodology. Kessler, Mickelson, and Williams (1999) assume that women tend to deny discrimination because discrimination stigmatizes, as noted by Allport (1954). Given the contradictory findings, however, a comprehensive theory of gender-specific perception of discrimination is yet to be developed.

Age has a clearer impact. Older people reported more frequent experiences of discrimination than younger people ($\beta = 0.18$). There is a clear difference between people of Turkish origin on the one hand and those of Greek origin and *Aussiedler* on the other. This effect is the strongest in the model ($\beta = 0.56$). Thus the trend suggested by Fig. 1 is confirmed in multivariate analysis. Even when other unfavorable factors are controlled for, persons with a Turkish background see themselves as treated unequally significantly more frequently. There is no significant difference between Greeks and *Aussiedler*. Schooling has no impact, which may be due to the fact that although highly educated people may on the one hand feel that they are treated unequally in comparison with longstanding residents who are formally of the same rank, on the other hand they always also see themselves as privileged in relation to co-migrants. While the bivariately obvious impact of unemployment has been lost, the impact of the role of

Table 3: Number of incidents (OLS regression)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	Sig T
Female	-0.81	0.34	-0.13	0.02
Age	0.12	0.04	0.18	0.01
Highly educated	-0.50	0.34	0.01	0.88
Turkish	3.72	0.46	0.56	0.00
Greek	-0.18	0.41	-0.03	0.66
Ethnicity	0.93	0.28	0.17	0.00
Unemployed	0.97	0.63	0.08	0.13
Housewife	-0.90	0.54	-0.09	0.10
Contact, friends from country of origin	0.54	0.16	0.21	0.00
Contact, German friends	0.09	0.14	0.03	0.54
(Constant)	-4.49	1.36		0.00

N = 290, R² .34

Reference category: *Aussiedler*, male

housewife and mother shows the expected trend but is not significant. Contact with German friends has no impact. Apparently, it does not entail, or at least not exclusively, an increase in exposure opportunities, but possibly leads to a desensitization due to the erosion of the salience of ethnic categories. The presumed sensitization through intraethnic contacts is clearly confirmed, because the second-strongest effect (0.21) is computed for this covariate. Finally, there was a positive connection between ethnicity and perceived discrimination (beta 0.17).

4.3 The Subjective Severity of Discrimination

An unweighted average was calculated from the assessment of the severity of individual situations (17 items, Cronbach's alpha 0.906). The following analysis deals with factors associated with this assessment. Given the very similar subsample distributions (see Table 2) a group effect is not to be assumed. With more advanced school education a greater degree of sensitivity is, however, assumed, as also with people with a strong sense of ethnicity. Frequent confrontation with experiences of discrimination might lead to habituation, but sensitization cannot be ruled out. That is why the number of situations experienced is included in the regression model. Finally, a generalized conviction of being subject to discrimination seems likely to lead to a strong sense of unequal treatment

Table 4: Severity of incidents (regression result)

Variable	B	SE B	Beta	Sig T
Female	0.14	0.14	0.06	0.31
Age	0.00	0.01	0.02	0.75
Highly educated	0.20	0.13	0.09	0.11
Turkish	-0.05	0.17	0.02	0.78
Greek	0.35	0.17	0.14	0.04
Ethnicity	-0.03	0.11	0.01	0.81
Generalized conviction of discrimination	0.80	0.17	0.36	0.00
Number of situations expected	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.50
(Constant)	3.00	0.60		0.00

N=293, R² .15

Reference category: *Aussiedler*, male

of all kinds. In this connection a higher assessment of the severity of the situation is to be expected. The results of regression are in Table 4.

First, contrary to expectations, membership of the Greek group has an impact. In otherwise identical conditions, Greeks assess the incidents as somewhat more severe than Turks and *Aussiedler*. Further analyses also revealed that this impact is lost when oral language fluency is controlled for, for Greeks speak the best German on average.⁵ Since the ability to speak German is an indicator of cognitive assimilation, the effect is plausible. As assimilation increases, so does the expectation of equal treatment and violations are taken correspondingly severely. The extent of experienced discrimination has no impact. Consequently the data proves neither habituation nor sensitization. In contrast, the impact of generalized conviction of discrimination is enormous. As presumed, it amplifies the perceived severity of incidents.

4.4 Experience of Discrimination and Generalized Perception of Discrimination

Cross-sectional data sheds no light on the extent to which stable attitudes shape acute perceptions and, reciprocally, attitudes emerge under the impact of everyday experiences. The framing of a regression model is subject to the fundamental problem of whether to postulate a causal impact of generalized conviction of discrimination on the situative perception of discrimination or vice versa, for both seem to be able to lay claim to a certain plausibility. On the one hand there will be real, intense, low-level incidents of unequal treatment (singular or cumulative) that shape expectations and at some time or other lead to a stable conviction regarding discrimination. On the other, perception does not consist solely of a purely physical reception of environmental stimuli but always includes selection, interpretation, and evaluation. Thus the stability of an initially “naively” developed world view can sometimes feed on what is then a selective perception of events that now only permits consistent experiences and is self-perpetuating.

⁵ The effect of language proficiency is then beta = 0.15 at a significance level of 0.023.

Empirically, however, this gives rise to the question – to be answered at least in cross-section – as to the degree of independence of conviction and perception. The number of discrimination situations experienced at least once correlates with the index of discrimination conviction to $r = 0.63$ ($p = 0.000$). This very strong interrelation casts doubt on the possibility of realizing a conceptual differentiation between attitude and experience at the level of empirical measurement. Obviously, either the recorded experience is clearly colored by a discrimination-related attitude, or the latter is shaped very directly by experiences undergone – or both. If only a part of the variance of the “own” experiences recorded is explained by underlying patterns of perception, one will have in any case to abandon the now naive-seeming idea that questionnaire surveys record what outsiders would understand by discrimination.

A regression model of discrimination experience that uses generalized perception of discrimination as a covariate (similar to Table 3), thus produces a much higher proportion of explained variance ($R^2 = 0.55$ in contrast to 0.34 previously, further details not included here for reasons of space) but in terms of content hardly any additional insight. In contrast, it is interesting to track how the new predictor changes the impacts of the other explanatory variables. While the betas of the sociodemographic characteristics hardly change, the impacts of Turkish origin and of ethnicity drop sharply, although both remain significant. Apparently, persons of Turkish origin report personal experience of discrimination so frequently partly because they are convinced that their own group is generally discriminated against, while ethnic consciousness in the surveyed groups is accompanied per se by the conviction that discrimination takes place. Nonetheless, in addition to these factors there must be other circumstances to account for the Turks’ marked sense of discrimination.

5. Discussion

In view of the fundamental epistemological problems of addressing the concept of discrimination, which on close inspection is highly contingent, this article has not tried to translate the author’s own substantiation into an operationalization, but has raised the contingency itself into a subject. Based on this premise, we did not record phenomena in which *discrimination* is manifested, but

identified factors that are connected with the *experience* of discrimination. In view of the very existence of impacts of distal attitudes known from the literature and calculated here, and in view of the strength of the impact of sociodemographic variables on reported discrimination, we must abandon the idea of being able to record inter-individually valid “genuine” discrimination using the simple means of survey research. For instance, it is hard to explain why (according to the Eurobarometer) individuals who are politically on the left are discriminated against twice as frequently as those on the right and young people five times more often than old people by differences in behavior or other features that correspond to the risk of exposure. Yet quite obviously sensitivity to equal rights varies along with these factors and the threshold of tolerance for violations is more easily crossed in the younger generation and with correspondingly egalitarian political education. Thus Marsh and Sahin-Dikmen (2003:17) also conclude: “Attitudes to discrimination may be expected to be influenced by political ideology, but the actual experiences of individuals would not necessarily be expected to differ by their political views. Nevertheless, this may suggest that those on the left perhaps are more likely to acknowledge that discrimination exists and therefore more able to recognise and report it.”

This realization may initially disappoint the reader interested in social policy. Nonetheless, I am convinced that the findings help, first, in better understanding the minority viewpoint and variations within it. Second, social policy makers *must* be interested in whether their clientele *assumes* discrimination or the absence thereof as a reality because this is an important index of subjective integration, albeit no substitute for taking an inventory of origin-dependent social inequality.

Determinants of the experience of discrimination were separated analytically into circumstances that impact on the risk of exposure on the one hand and those that heighten sensitivity to equal treatment on the other. Although this is plausible, many measurable variables tend to have a dialectic effect on the explanandum, displaying contradictory impacts. Still, it was possible to show that employment status has a significant impact and that the level of ethnicity and close contact with persons of the

same origin make it more probable that a member of a minority will report discriminatory experiences. People of Turkish extraction consistently feel personally discriminated against more frequently, even when the circumstance that they display a stronger ethnic self-image and generally are more likely to think that their own group is socially disadvantaged is statistically controlled for. Yet it remains the case that to a considerable extent second-generation Greeks and *Aussiedler* of German origin also feel disadvantaged in everyday life on account of their origin.

Theoretical and empirical deficits became apparent, which will have to be dealt with by further research. A strong correlation was established between the perception of individual occurrences of discrimination and attitudes about general prevalence of discrimination. There are grounds for assuming that this is due to an interaction. Attitudes are modified not least under the impact of experiences, while the perception of events always takes place under specific, attitude-dependent prior assumptions (frames, Esser 1996). What is lacking is, first, a theoretical model of the impact of experiences on attitudes and then an investigation of this and the opposite impact using longitudinal data. Second, the question has been thrown up as to how, under the above fundamental epistemological considerations, it may be possible to optimize scales for recording interviewees' own experiences. For there are several possible explanations for the close correlation between generalized conviction that discrimination exists and reported experience of discrimination, and they are not mutually exclusive: 1. Personal experiences shape the attitude. 2. Operationalization through questions about specific events activates real personal experiences that had been previously encountered and interpreted against the background of specific attitudes. 3. Operationalization does not penetrate as far as concrete personal experiences but only taps opinions and the extent of the experience is simply estimated. Version 1 is unproblematic for measuring experiences. An improved survey instrument cannot solve the problems resulting from Version 2. However, Version 3 leaves room for progress in minimizing the greater or lesser proportion of attitude component measured involuntarily in the experiences. Thus it is presumably advisable to avoid wording associated with attitudes as far as possible. The term discrimination itself should

not be used on account of its effect in activating attitudes. One should refer expressly to contemporary, concrete, and personal situations. It is necessary to examine whether precise recording of additional parameters such as the reasons why respondents conclude that motivation was racist will lead to more independent measurement.

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