Social Status and Anti-Immigrant Attitudes in Europe: An Examination from the Perspective of Social Dominance Theory

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A full test of the Social Dominance Theory model addressed immigration as one of the most prominent current intergroup conflicts in Europe. The hypothesis that members of high status groups tend to discriminate members of low status groups because they are more prone to Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) and refer more to legitimising myths such as prejudice was tested using representative samples from eight European countries (N = 1000 each), considering income and migrant background as social status indicators, SDO, anti-immigrant prejudice and diversity beliefs, and the intention to discriminate immigrants. The results confirm that individuals with higher SDO are more likely to discriminate immigrants, partly because of stronger anti-immigrant prejudice and partly because they believe less in diversity. However, the results question the role of social status. Contrary to the expectations of Social Dominance Theory, individuals with lower income are more prone to SDO and have stronger anti-immigrant attitudes and weaker diversity beliefs. The impact of migrant background was weak and ambivalent. We suggest reconsidering the role of social status to stress status maintenance and enhancement as general social motives. Regardless of their social position, people seemingly try to enhance their relative position by devaluing lower status groups.

Intolerance of diversity, prejudice, and discrimination represent challenges to a modern Europe that is experiencing increasing heterogeneity as a result of immigration. *Social Dominance Theory* (Pratto et al. 1994; Sidanius and Pratto 1999; Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006) understands prejudice, beliefs, ideologies, and attributions as *legitimising myths* that serve to justify discrimination of members of low status groups and preferential treatment of members of high status groups with the aim of maintaining and enhancing group-based hierarchies. Social Dominance Theory has won increasing importance since it was established some fifteen years ago, and numerous studies have supported the Social Dominance Theory, mostly in the United States but also in other parts of the world. However, empirical proofs have mostly been restricted to specific proposed relations, whereas the full theoretical model has been tested surprisingly little to the best of our knowledge. The present paper aims to fill this gap.

We tested the Social Dominance Theory model within the frame of immigration in eight European countries that differ with respect to several aspects related to the topic, such as the level of equality, the overall level of *social dominance orientation* (SDO), and the prevalence of intergroup conflicts between native citizens and immigrants. Our study contributes additional knowledge in three respects: a) a full-model test, b) a cross-country comparison of the model, and c) using probability samples (instead of student samples).

1. The Social Dominance Theory

Social Dominance Theory perceives group-based hierarchies as a major source of intergroup conflicts. Depending on their ingroup's position, individuals have different amounts of material resources, political power and influence, personal privileges and options, and institutional access and participation at their disposal. Members of dominant, high status groups have more resources, power and access than members of subordinate, low status groups that are more likely to face devaluation, discrimination and exclusion. The main psychological assumption of Social Dominance Theory is that members of high status groups are more likely to endorse group-based hierarchies than members of low status groups. They are also held to agree more strongly with prejudice and other ideologies, beliefs, and attributions that function as legitimising myths justifying the existence of group-based hierarchies. Group-based hierarchies are held to be realized through discrimination of low status groups and preferential treatment of high status groups. Figure 1 shows the Social Dominance Theory model as hypothesized and tested here.

Social status is defined as the relative position of an individual's own group compared to other groups in a given social system. Status groups are defined by race, ethnicity, cultural background, religion, gender, education, or socio-economic status.

SDO is defined as "the degree to which individuals desire and support group-based hierarchy and the domination of 'inferior' groups by 'superior' groups" (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, 48). Individuals differ in their level of SDO. It is argued that many psychological and ideological forces tend to produce higher SDO in dominants (Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006, 280). Therefore, members of dominant, high status groups such as older individuals, men, whites, and native citizens are held to endorse group-based hierarchies in general more strongly, i.e. they are more social dominance orientated than members of low status groups such as younger individuals, women, blacks, and immigrants.

Group-based hierarchies are justified by *legitimising myths* that assert that an individual holds the position he or she deserves within the social hierarchy; i.e. legitimising myths offer plausible reasons for equal or unequal distribution. Legitimising myths are defined as "consensually held values, attitudes, beliefs, stereotypes and ideologies" (Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006, 275). Social Dominance Theory distinguishes between hierarchy enhancing legitimising myths (HELMs) and hierarchy attenuating legitimising myths (HALMs). Prejudices such as racism, sexism, anti-Semitism, and anti-immigrant attitudes serve as HELMs to justify the subordinate position of Blacks, women, Jews, and immigrants, etc.; the same role is played by ideologies such as nationalism, the protestant work ethic or free-mar-

Figure 1: Social Dominance Theory: Theoretical model and tested links
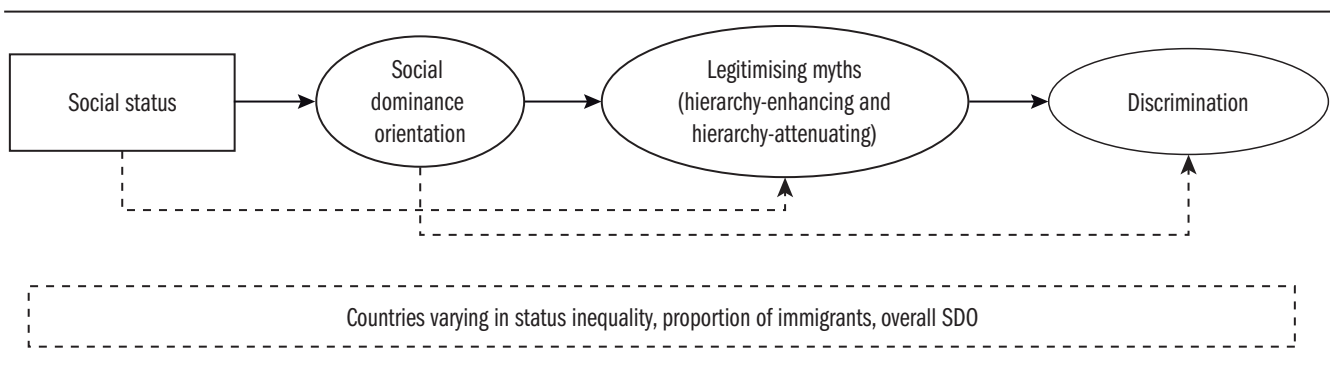
Note: Based on Sidanius and Pratto (1999, 48).

ket liberalism (Sidanius, Pratto, and Bobo 1996). Examples of HALMs are solidarity, socialism, Christian brotherhood, universal human rights, and multiculturalism (as expressed in the belief in ethnic, cultural and religious diversity. For example, anti-immigrant prejudice helps to legitimise denying immigrant children the support they need to improve their language abilities and gain more success in education. Conversely, multiculturalism and diversity beliefs help to justify interventions such as special language courses designed to improve educational achievement and ultimately to enhance equality between native citizens and immigrants. SDO should correlate positively with HELMs and negatively with HALMs. Nevertheless, HELMs are shared to some extent by low status groups as they have become deeply embedded into "cultural knowledge" and low status groups need to cooperate with high status groups if they are not to be excluded themselves (e.g. older women help to suppress young women to serve a patriarchy they themselves benefit from to some extent). This is considered to be one reason for the remarkable stability of social hierarchies.

Legitimising myths are adopted to justify hierarchies created through individual and institutional *discrimination* of low status groups and preferential treatment of high status groups. Sidanius and Pratto (1999) also refer to asymmetric behaviour as an additional form of discrimination, pointing to self-devaluative and self-destructive behaviour carried out by members of low status groups.

To sum up, Social Dominance Theory proposes that prejudices and ideologies determined by the individual's SDO function to justify differential treatment of high and low status groups (discrimination). As hierarchies tend to serve the interests of high status groups, they are more likely to endorse them. Hence, high status groups tend more towards HELMs and less towards HALMs, at least partly because they are more prone to SDO; i.e., SDO is held to mediate the relation between social status and legitimising myths. In addition, high SDO individuals are more likely to discriminate low status groups, at least partly because they are able to legitimise their behaviour; i.e. in empirical terms, legitimising myths mediate the relation between SDO and discrimination.

2. Empirical Evidence
Although very many empirical studies have been conducted to test the predictions made by Social Dominance Theory, most have concentrated on particular selected aspects.

2.1. SDO, Prejudice, and Discrimination.
Numerous studies in a range of countries confirm the *strong link between SDO and prejudices*, such as prejudice against minority ethnic groups, women, homosexuals and immigrants (e.g., Pratto et al. 2000; Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin 2006). Moreover, some studies find that SDO predicts a common core of several types of prejudices (generalized prejudice) (Zick et al. 2008; Ekehammar et al. 2004). Fewer studies focus on the *link between SDO and discrimination*, but that link is nonetheless clearly supported. SDO was found to predict factual discriminatory behaviour in the justice system (Kemmelmeier 2005) and at the workplace (Machinov et al. 2005; Parkins, Fishbein, and Ritchey 2006), and racially biased selection of job applicants was shown to be influenced by the selecting individual's SDO (Umphress et al. 2008). SDO was also found to correlate with positive allocation for the ingroup and negative discriminatory allocation for the outgroup (Amiot, and Bourhis 2005; Sidanius et al. 2007).

Studies on attitude-behaviour relations show a strong and positive *link between prejudices and discrimination* (discriminatory intentions) (see meta-analyses by Schütz and Six 1996). Those who more strongly endorse prejudices are also more inclined to support discrimination. This has been tested with respect to prejudices and discrimination towards several outgroups, e.g. immigrants in Europe (Pettigrew 1998), Muslims (Doosje et al. 2010), and women (Feather and Boeckman 2007).

Even though the authors of the Social Dominance Theory explicitly formulate a *mediation between SDO and discrimination by legitimising myths* as mediating factor (Sidanius and Pratto 1999, 105), this has relatively rarely been tested. In a simulated job selection situation Michinov and colleagues (2005) find that subjects with high SDO less often choose job candidates with a North African background compared to native French candidates for a top position, but more often for lower ranking positions within a team,

whereas such bias was not found in subjects with low SDO. The impact of SDO on the biased assignment of North African candidates was fully mediated by generalised prejudices towards immigrants from North Africa. Drawing on representative data Zick and colleagues (2008) show that SDO not only predict discriminatory intentions towards immigrants, but that this link runs via a common core of several different types of prejudice. Mediation effects by legitimising myths are also reported for the link between SDO and discrimination at the workplace (Parkins, Fishbein, and Ritchey 2006), and with respect to policies on social welfare, military programs, and the death penalty (Pratto, Stallworth, and Conway-Lanz 1998).

2.2. The Impact of Social Status
Numerous studies reveal systematic discrimination of low status groups by high status groups, e.g. in education (Kozol 1991; Jacobs 1996) and justice (Mauer 1999). There is also evidence supporting a *link between social status and SDO and/or prejudice*. Members of high-status groups tend more towards SDO and prejudice than members of low status groups; this has been shown for ethnic, religious, and national groups, as well as for groups defined by age, and by education (Sidanius and Pratto 1999), groups differing in socioeconomic status (Sidanius et al. 2000), and gender (e.g. Pratto, Sidanius, and Bobo 1994; Pratto et al. 2000, but see contrary findings on gender and SDO by Küpper and Zick 2010). There is also evidence for a causal connection between social position and prejudice where *SDO acts as mediator* (Guimond et al. 2003); this was tested in students in terms of perceived status differences in the professional area and in business.

However, the *impact of social status* when defined by education and income, or by gender, remains rather unclear. Whereas several studies find men to be more sexist than women (e.g., Eagly et al. 2004), the impact of gender on homophobia (see meta-analysis by Oliver and Hyde 1993) and racism (e.g., Ekehammar, Akrami, and Araya 2003) was less clear. Contradictory to the assumptions of Social Dominance Theory, most empirical studies show higher prejudices among lower educated than higher educated individuals (e.g. Schuman et al. 1997/2005; Hello, Scheepers, and Gijsbert 2002). Overall, findings show as well prejudice

decreasing with income, although the effect is stronger if the overall economic conditions are good (Kunovich 2004). Moreover, income is negatively related to exclusionary attitudes towards low status immigrant groups, but positively to what are seen as higher status immigrants (Green 2009). These findings are not in line with the propositions of Social Dominance Theory.

To sum up, Social Dominance Theory's second part, the link between SDO, prejudice and discrimination is largely confirmed by existing studies, even though the mediation aspect has been studied comparatively rarely. But the first part of the Social Dominance Theory concerning the impact of social status is less clearly supported and previous empirical findings are rather ambivalent; there is little hard evidence for the mediation effect by SDO. The evidence is hard to assess since there has never been a full test of the theory considering all factors and proposed links. This is frustrating, given that Social Dominance Theory claims to explain the prevalence of inequality in modern societies.

3. A Test of the Social Dominance Theory in Europe
Every year about two million immigrants from outside Europe come to the European Union, most legally but some illegally, most often from poorer countries, e.g. the former Soviet Union, the Middle East or Africa. These immigrants are often not made very welcome; national and EU anti-immigrant policies go hand in hand with discrimination in several spheres of life (Gauci 2009) and widely shared negative attitudes towards immigrants across Europe (e.g., Küpper, Wolf, and Zick 2010).

In this context two indicators of social status are of particular relevance: First, an individual's migrant background (membership of the dominant majority group of native citizens) and second, the individual's material resources as indicated by income. Whereas migrant background represents an arbitrary and socially defined status specifically related to the topic, income is a more general and factual indicator of social status commonly associated with other indicators of status such as age, gender, and education. Further, we considered anti-immigrant prejudice and belief in ethnic-cultural-religious diversity to be the most relevant legitimising myths justifying discrimination of immigrants

and group equality respectively. Within the limitations of a survey study, we finally considered the intention to discriminate immigrants. As the Social Dominance Theory claims universal validity, the model as shown in Figure 1 should fit in all countries regardless of macro- and micro-level differences.

3.1. Measures

All measures were pretested in extended versions in all countries (N = 150 each country); items with the best measure quality were selected for the main survey. Social status was operationalized by income and migrant background. *Income* was measured as equivalent household net (net income weighted by household members) on a 10-point scale from low to high adjusted for each country. We defined *migrant background* to include first-, second-, and third-generation migrants regardless of citizenship. Respondents with no migrant background were considered members of a high status group (coded +1), respondents with migrant background as members of a low status group (coded -1).

To keep the Social Dominance Theory model as simple as possible for this test, we decided to focus solely on the group-based dominance dimension of *SDO*. Items were selected from a larger sample based on Sidanius and Pratto (1999) after pretests in all countries: 1. *Inferior groups should stay in their place*; 2. *It is probably a good thing that certain groups are at the top, while others are at the bottom*. Cronbach's $α$ was acceptable with $α$ = .57 (varying from .62 to .47).

Anti-immigrant attitudes were covered by four items: 1. *There are too many immigrants in [country]*; 2. *When jobs are scarce, [native citizens of the country] should have more rights to a job than immigrants*; 3. *Because of the number of immigrants I sometimes feel like a stranger in [country]*; 4. *Immigrants enrich our culture* (reverse coded). Cronbach's $α$ was satisfactory with $α$ = .74 (varying from .81 to .64).

Diversity beliefs were measured with two items addressing cultural and religious diversity: 1. *It is better for a country if there are many different religions*; 2. *It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions*

(reversed coded). Cronbach's $α$ was not satisfactory, with $α$ = .44 (varying from .56 to .44, with even lower values in France, .35, and Hungary, .18).

Four items addressed *discriminatory intentions*, addressing both individual discrimination and support for institutional discrimination: 1. *I would be reluctant to send my children to a school where the majority of pupils are immigrants* (for respondents without children, the interviewer added the introduction: *Please imagine you have children*); 2. *I would be reluctant to move into a district where many immigrants are living*; 3. *In the next elections, I will vote for parties that want to reduce the further influx of immigrants*; 4. *An employer should have the right to employ only native [citizens of country]*. Cronbach's $α$ was satisfactory with $α$ = .73 (varying from .80 to .68).

Respondents were asked to indicate agreement or disagreement with all items on a four point scale ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *somewhat disagree*, 3 = *somewhat agree* to 4 = *strongly agree*.

3.2. Countries and Data

We conducted the analyses on survey data collected in 2008 in Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy, Portugal, Poland and Hungary by the Group-Focused Enmity project (Küpper, Wolf, and Zick 2010). These countries provide a spectrum of size of immigrant population, immigration history, major immigrant groups, immigration policy, and debates on immigration and integration. The Gini index shows the overall level of social inequality to be comparably low in Germany followed by Hungary, the Netherlands, Italy, France, Britain, and Poland, with the greatest inequality in Portugal. The percentage of immigrants (with and without citizenship) is quite low in Poland, Hungary, and Italy, intermediate in Portugal, and comparably high in Britain, the Netherlands, France, and Germany. The major immigrant groups and their legal status vary remarkably across Europe depending on the host country's colonial, economic and military history. Table 1 summarizes basic features of the samples and countries including regions/countries of origin of the major immigrant groups.

Table 1: Sample charactaristics and relevant features of the countries

Country	N	Gender (% men/women in the sample)	M Age	Respondents without migrant background (%)	M SDO	Level of inequality (Gini Index) [a]	Immigrants in the country [b] (%)	Main regions/countries of origin
Britain	1000	48.3/51.7	46.8	79.4	1.23	34	9.1	South-East Asia, Caribbean islands
France	1007	48.0/52.0	46.5	68.1	1.11	33	10.4	Maghrib states, e.g. Algeria
Germany	1000	48.3/51.7	48.4	84.3	1.35	27	12.3	Turkey, former Soviet Union, Eastern Europe
Netherlands	1011	49.0/51.0	46.3	91.3	1.28	31	10.1	Indonesia, Surinam, Morocco, Turkey
Italy	1001	48.1/51.9	47.6	97.4	1.25	32	4.3	Balkan states, Africa
Portugal	1007	47.8/52.2	46.6	92.6	1.33	39	7.3	former African colonies, Ukraine
Poland	1000	47.7/52.3	44.2	91.8	1.41	35	1.8	Eastern Europe
Hungary [c]	1000	44.5/55.5	46.4	90.4	1.47	28	3.1	ethnic Hungarians from Romania
Total	8026	47.7/52.3	46.6	86.9	1.30			

Notes: N = sample size M = Mean.
[a] Source: CIA factbook, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook
[b] Sources: Migration Policy Institute. OECD Database, UN Migration Database (2005)
[c] The majority of immigrants in Hungary are ethnic Hungarians who became citizens of Romania after border changes.

Data was generated by computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) lasting on average 36 minutes. In each country the sample comprises 1,000 representative citizens aged sixteen and above; in total 48 percent were male and 52 percent were female. The mean age of the combined European sample was 47 years. Altogether, 87 percent of respondents had no migrant background.

4. Results

Data analyses were conducted with AMOS V.18. Data sets were weighted for probability criteria before correlation matrices were calculated.

4.1. Cross-cultural Check of Measures

Before testing the model we verified the quality and cross-cultural comparability of all measures (their invariance across countries) by simultaneous confirmatory factor analyses across all eight countries followed by multiple group confirmatory factor analysis. Here, as in the follow-

ing, we tested all measurement models with increasing constraints. However, we rejected the option to compare model fits by chi-square difference test as this can lead to unjustified rejection of well-fitting models in large samples. Instead, we relied on goodness-of-fit indices as recommended by Cheung and Rensvold (2002). Our findings revealed the measures for SDO, anti-immigrant attitudes, diversity beliefs (tested together with SDO) and discrimination to be reliable and adequate for further cross-cultural analysis, as all models showed at least partial measurement invariance; i.e., the construct meanings can be assumed to be the same in all countries.

In addition, we tested the dimensional structure of anti-immigrant prejudice and discriminatory intentions as both constructs seemed to be very close in item wording. Two plausible modifications had to be introduced in order to achieve a reasonable fit of the uni-dimensional model, χ^2 (160) = 1376.506, p < .001, χ^2/df = 8.603, GFI = .959,

CFI = .939, RMSEA = .031. However, the model fit of the two factor model is good (and better compared to a one-factor model); χ^2 (144) = 893.108, p < .001, χ^2/df = 6.202, GFI = .973, CFI = .963, RMSEA = .026. Modification indices suggest a reasonable error correlation between two items capturing individual discrimination (item 1 and 2), and a rather critical one between anti-immigrant item no. 2 and discrimination item no. 4, that questionings the distinctiveness of the two constructs; χ^2 (136) = 648.810, p < .001, χ^2/df = 4.771, GFI = .981, CFI = .974, RMSEA = .022. This correlation is plausible as on the one hand the error correlation taps a substantive commonality between the two items; they both argue for preferential treatment of native over immigrant employees. On the other hand, the two items also share methodological variance as the wording is very similar and this makes it more likely that the same answer will be given (Saris and Gallhofer 2007).

We conducted an additional empirical test to discover whether the two concepts are really distinct. We constructed a two dimensional model in which the covariance between the two concepts is freely estimated and a second model in which the covariance was set to 1 (thus both concepts are assumed to be the same). In six of the eight countries (all except Britain and the Netherlands) the model in which the covariance was set to 1 was significantly worse. If we take the two dimensional model with two modifications as base model for this comparison, even in Britain the restricted model turned out to be significantly worse (p <.05) than the model with freely estimated covariance. Thus, although the second modification in the two dimensional model is somewhat critical, the results support a two-dimensional structure, i.e. anti-immigrant prejudice and discriminatory intentions are confirmed as two distinct though highly correlated constructs.

An ANOVA on the SDO sub-dimension of group-based hierarchy yielded a small, but significant country effect, F (7, 7411) = 58.57, p < .001, eta^2 = .05. A post-hoc test (Duncan) indicated a relatively low level of SDO in France, somewhat higher levels in Britain, Italy and the Netherlands, followed by Portugal and Germany, and the highest

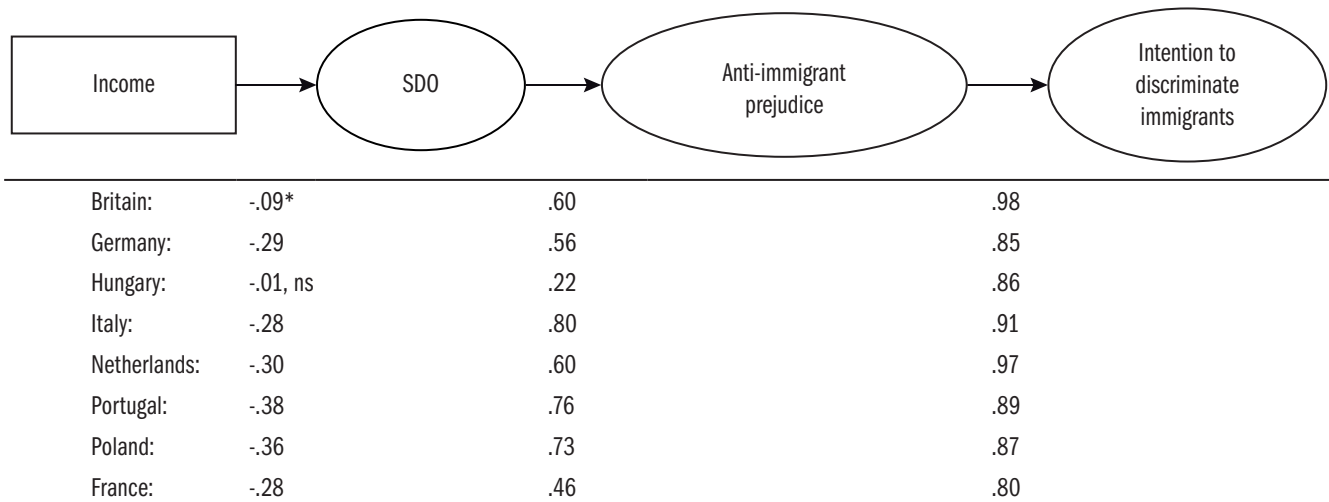levels in Poland and Hungary; Table 1 provides the mean SDO values by country.

4.2. Test of the Full Social Dominance Theory Model Across Europe

We analysed the full mediated model as described above and shown in figure 1 by structural equation modelling followed by multiple group comparisons to test for the cross-country comparability of the model. All variables except income and migrant background were introduced as latent constructs. We tested four alternative models separately, considering alternatively income or migrant background as indicator of social status, and alternatively anti-immigrant prejudice or diversity beliefs as legitimising myth. Direct paths were inserted from income or migrant background to SDO, from SDO to anti-immigrant attitudes or diversity beliefs, and in turn from anti-immigrant attitudes or diversity beliefs to discrimination. Finally, we tested mediations by SDO and mediations by anti-immigrant attitudes and by diversity beliefs following the multiple regression mediation procedure outlined by Baron and Kenny (1986) across countries and separately for each country with SPSS. All indicated beta coefficients are significant with p < .001 if not otherwise stated.

4.2.1. Model 1: Income, SDO, Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Discrimination

The basic model treating income as indicator of social status, SDO, anti-immigrant attitudes and discrimination fitted fairly well to the data, but was very much improved by the two modifications referred to above, χ^2 (320) = 1946.72, p < .001, χ^2/df = 6.08, GFI = .957, CFI = .933, RMSEA = .025. All direct paths were highly significant and in the expected direction. SDO was associated with higher anti-immigrant attitudes (from β = .22 in Hungary to β = .80 in Italy) and anti-immigrant attitudes with more discriminatory intentions (from β = .80 in France to β = .98 in Britain). In addition, there was a significant path from income to SDO in all of the countries except Hungary (from β = -.09 in Britain to β = -.36 in Poland); however, contrary to Social Dominance Theory, this effect was negative, i.e. the level of SDO decreased as income increased. Figure 2a presents the final model.

Figure 2a: Tested model 1, beta coefficients for all countries

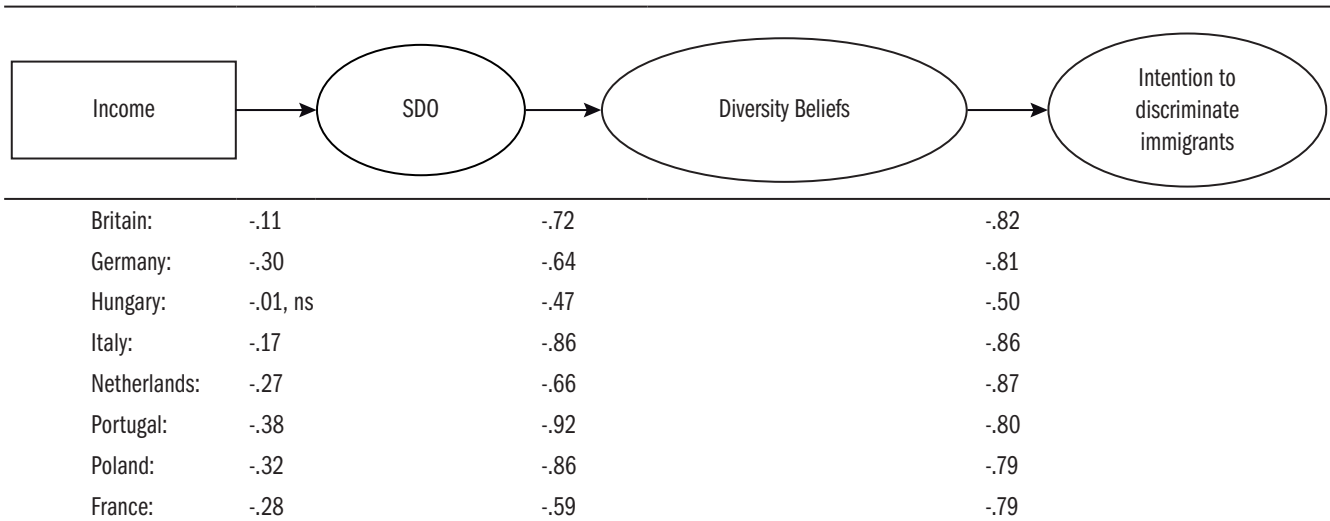|			
Britain:	-.09*	.60	.98
Germany:	-.29	.56	.85
Hungary:	-.01, ns	.22	.86
Italy:	-.28	.80	.91
Netherlands:	-.30	.60	.97
Portugal:	-.38	.76	.89
Poland:	-.36	.73	.87
France:	-.28	.46	.80

Notes: SDO, anti-immigrant prejudice and the intention to discriminate immigrants are inserted as latent constructs. All beta coefficients are significant with p < .001, unless otherwise indicated.

Fit indices indicated a good overall model fit of the measurement invariance model that was only slightly worse than the unconstrained model, χ^2 = 2441.56, p < .001, χ^2/df = 6.62, GFI = .947, CFI = .915, RMSEA = .027. Results suggest measurement invariance of model 1. Moreover, the multiple group comparison revealed that all models up to the structural covariances were acceptable, i.e. the beta coefficients can be assumed to be equal, NPAR = 131, χ^2 = 2697.88, df = 397, p = .001, χ^2/df = 6.78, GFI = .941, CFI = .906, RMSEA = 0.27. Thus, in all eight countries the paths between the variables have the same weights if we look at the model as a whole. Altogether, individuals with lower income were more prone to SDO, leading to higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes, and in turn to higher tendencies to discriminate immigrants.

4.2.2. Model 2: Income, SDO, Diversity Beliefs and Discrimination
Model 2 differed from model 1 in considering diversity beliefs in place of anti-immigrant attitudes. The basic model already fitted well to the data. Again, an error correlation between discrimination item 1 and 2 was suggested. This modification greatly improved the overall model fit, χ^2 (200) = 1131.28, p < .001, χ^2/df = 5.656, GFI = .969, CFI = .932, RMSEA = .027. Beta coefficients of most paths are considerable and in the expected direction: SDO predicts less diversity beliefs (from β = -.47 in Hungary to β = -.92 in Portugal), and diversity beliefs in turn predict less discriminatory intentions (from β = -.50 in Hungary to β = -.87 in the Netherlands; see figure 2b). However, the beta coefficients from income to SDO again pointed to a negative relation (from β = -.11 in Britain to β = -.38 in Portugal; again Hungary's path is not significant).

Figure 2b: Tested model 2, beta coefficients for all countries

	Income	SDO	Diversity Beliefs	Intention to discriminate immigrants
Britain:	-.11	-.72		-.82
Germany:	-.30	-.64		-.81
Hungary:	-.01, ns	-.47		-.50
Italy:	-.17	-.86		-.86
Netherlands:	-.27	-.66		-.87
Portugal:	-.38	-.92		-.80
Poland:	-.32	-.86		-.79
France:	-.28	-.59		-.79

Notes: SDO, diversity beliefs and the intention to discriminate immigrants are inserted as latent constructs. All beta coefficients are significant with $p < .001$, unless otherwise indicated.

The cross-cultural comparison showed that not only was a measurement invariance model across the eight countries acceptable, NPAR = 125, χ^2 (235) = 1430.22, p = .001, χ^2/df = 6.086, GFI = .961, CFI = .912, RMSEA = .025, but also a structural covariances model that turned out to be even better than a structural weights model, NPAR = 104, χ^2 (256) = 1511.23, p = .001, χ^2/df = 5.90, GFI = .958, CFI = .908, RMSEA = 0.25. Again the paths of the model are invariant across the eight countries.

4.2.3. Model 3: Migration Background, SDO, Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and Discrimination

The basic model considering migrant background as the indicator of social status fitted fairly acceptably to the data. However, again the two modifications from model 1 were suggested and increased the model fit, χ^2 (320) = 1471.09, p < .001, χ^2/df = 4.60, GFI = .968, CFI = .951, RMSEA = .021. All paths in the second part of the model turned out to be significant and in the expected direction; as expected, beta coefficients were very similar to those in model 1. However, the beta coefficients of the newly inserted path from migrant background to SDO were rather weak to non-significant or even negative, varying from β = -.08, p < .05, in Poland up to β = .15, p < .01, in France, with no significant prediction of SDO in Germany (β = -.03, ns.) or Hungary

(β = .03, ns.). In Britain (β = .08, p < .05), Italy (β = .08, p < .05), Netherlands (β = .11, p < .01), Portugal (β = .11, p < .01) the effects are positive, but rather small. Hence, migration background is weak and differs in nature between countries. The multiple group comparison still yielded cross-cultural comparability on the measurement level, NPAR = 159, χ^2 (369) = , p = .001, χ^2/df = 5.41, GFI = .956, CFI = .931, RMSEA = .024, and on the level of structural weights, NPAR = 145, χ^2 (383) = 2142.57, p = .001, χ^2/df = 5.59, GFI = .953, CFI = .925, RMSEA = .024, but not on the level of structural covariances.

4.2.4. Model 4: Migration Background, SDO, Diversity Beliefs and Discrimination

The model fit was acceptable in the first place and increased after considering the known error correlation between the two discrimination items, χ^2 (200) = 914.02, p < .001, χ^2/df = 4.57, GFI = .975, CFI = .945, RMSEA = .021. As already known from model 2, there were significant paths from SDO to less diversity beliefs, and from diversity beliefs to more discrimination. However, now the path from migrant background to SDO was significant and negative in each country, varying between β = -.08, p < .05, in Hungary to β = -.21 in Britain. As in model 3, the multiple group comparison showed that we can accept the measurement

weights, NPAR = 111, χ^2 (235) = 1217.789, p = .001, χ^2/df = 5.18, GFI = .967, CFI = .925, RMSEA = 0.23, and structural weights model, NPAR = 111, χ^2 (249) = 1303.88, p = .001, χ^2/df = 5.24, GFI = .964, CFI = .919, RMSEA = 0.23.

4.3. Test of the Mediations
4.3.1. Mediation by Anti-Immigrant Attitudes and by Diversity Beliefs
The link between SDO and discrimination was mediated significantly by anti-immigrant attitudes across countries; the effect of social dominance orientation on discriminatory attitudes was reduced to half from β = .33 to .14 (Sobel test for change in beta: z = 30.39, p < .001) when anti-immigrant attitudes were taken into consideration. There was no reverse mediation, i.e. the effect of anti-immigrant attitudes on discriminatory intentions remained nearly stable when SDO was considered (β = .76 to .72). A similar pattern occurred in each single country (all sobel tests p < .01); absolute mediation was particular strong in Italy (β = .49 to .26), Britain (β = .40 to .09) and the Netherlands (β = .37 to .11), but rather weak in Hungary (β = .17 to .13). These results suggest that people with higher social dominance orientation to some extent have more discriminatory intentions because they hold more anti-immigrant attitudes.

The link between SDO and discrimination was also partly mediated by diversity beliefs across countries and within each country, although the mediation effect of diversity beliefs across countries was not very strong (beta reduction from β = .33 to .27, z = 18.72, p < .001) with strongest effects again in Italy (β = .49 to .39), Britain (β = .40 to .29) and the Netherlands (β = .37 to .26), but again weak in Hungary (β = .17 to .13). Thus, individuals with higher social dominance orientation have more discriminatory intentions against immigrants partly because they hold more negative diversity beliefs. However, also a reverse mediation by SDO was observed (beta reduction across countries from β = -.33 to -.26, z = 6.64, p < .001).

4.3.2. Mediation by SDO
Although the effect of income on anti-immigrant attitudes and diversity beliefs was the exact opposite of what was predicted by Social Dominance Theory, we nevertheless demonstrated a mediation by SDO. Indeed, the link between income and anti-immigrant attitudes and between income and diversity beliefs was to some extent mediated by SDO across countries (beta reduction from β = -.22 to -.19, z = -11.32, p < .001) and in certain individual countries, with strongest effects in Portugal (β = -.34 to -.26) and no significant mediation in Britain and Hungary. Similarly, SDO mediated the link between income and diversity beliefs across countries (beta reduction from β = .11 to .08, z = 10.61, p < .001) with comparably strongest effects in the Netherlands β = .07 to .02, ns.), but again no mediation in Britain and Hungary, and no significant path from income to diversity beliefs in Italy. There was hardly any link between migrant background and anti-immigrant attitudes, and therefore only a slight mediation by SDO. The mediation effect reached nevertheless significance across countries (beta reduction from β = .11 to .08, z = 10.61, p < .001), but not in any single country. There was no significant mediation of the link between migrant background and diversity beliefs by SDO either (z = 1.82, ns.).

5. Discussion
Social Dominance Theory is an established approach that explains social hierarchies in terms of prejudice and discrimination. We tested the proposed model within the frame of immigration, taking up a controversially debated intergroup conflict in Europe. The full Social Dominance Theory model was tested within representative samples of eight European countries. We considered two alternative indicators of social status (income and migrant background) and two alternative operationalisations for legitimising myths (anti-immigrant attitudes, a widely shared hierarchy enhancing legitimising myth, and diversity beliefs that can be used to attenuate group-based hierarchies).

Results confirm Social Dominance Theory to be a strong theory with respect to its second part. The important role of SDO as a predictor for discriminatory intentions was supported, and also the role of prejudices (and to some extent that of diversity beliefs) as legitimising myths. The results are somewhat limited by the empirical closeness of the two constructs of anti-immigrant prejudice and discriminatory intentions as measured in the present study. At the same time, the results suggest reconsidering the first part of Social Dominance Theory referring to the impact of social status.

5.1. The Role of Prejudice and Diversity Beliefs as Legitimising Myths

In all observed countries results showed that individuals scoring comparably higher on SDO hold more negative attitudes towards immigrants and are more likely to show intentions to discriminate immigrants. Moreover, anti-immigrant attitudes partly mediate the link between SDO and the intention to discriminate; in other words, individuals who score high on SDO are more ready to discriminate because they legitimise hierarchies between native citizens and immigrants. The similarity of the role of anti-immigrant prejudice in all countries is remarkable considering their very different cultural contexts with respect to immigrant groups, immigration history and politics. Effects were smallest in Hungary where the majority of immigrants are ethnic Hungarians who are widely accepted as equals. Here, our study is limited to the extent that we were only able to consider discriminatory intentions, but not actual discriminatory behaviour.

Whereas the model was also confirmed for anti-diversity beliefs, the mediating effect of diversity beliefs was less clear. We suggest reconsidering the role of diversity beliefs as legitimising myths and conceptualising them as a possible counterpart of SDO instead. Both constructs offer a general view on the structure of societies: Whereas SDO refers to the vertical structure of different social groups, diversity beliefs define on a horizontal dimension the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a society, i.e., which social groups should be accepted as members of the society.

5.2. The Role of Social Status for Intergroup Conflicts

The general importance of income for prejudice and discrimination was confirmed. However, the impact of income was the exact opposite to the prediction of Social Dominance Theory; we found that the higher an individual's income, the lower his or her SDO. At the same time SDO was found to slightly mediate the link between income and anti-immigrant attitudes and to a lesser degree also that between income and diversity beliefs in most of the countries. That means that individuals with lower income tend to agree more with anti-immigrant attitudes and somewhat less with diversity beliefs because they are on average more social dominance orientated. Our findings contradict Social Dominance Theory but are in line with previous findings

on the impact of income on prejudice (e.g. Kunovich 2004) and with prominent theories that focus on resources conflicts as a major cause of intergroup conflicts (e.g. LeVine and Campbell 1972; Olzak 1992). These theories suggest that individuals who objectively or subjectively compete with an outgroup react with outgroup hostility. Low-income (and less educated) native citizens are the most likely to objectively or subjectively compete with immigrants over work, houses, public space, etc. as immigrants predominantly hold low-paid jobs. There is evidence that the direction of the link between income and prejudice varies with the targeted outgroup (e.g. skilled or less-skilled) and also with popular debate, i.e. with perceived competition (Green 2009). This may explain diverging findings on the relationship between income and SDO and between income and anti-immigrant attitudes in different cultural contexts.

When it comes to migrant background as an indicator of social status, our results revealed a fairly weak and rather ambivalent impact: Whereas in some countries SDO was – as predicted – slightly higher among individuals without migrant background, in others no relation or even the opposite was found. Neither with respect to anti-immigrant attitudes nor diversity beliefs did SDO play a mediating role. Unlike to previous findings in the United States that revealed higher levels of racism among whites (as high status group) than among ethnic minorities (as low status groups), we did not find considerably higher anti-immigrant attitudes in dominant native citizens compared to individuals with immigrant background in all considered countries.

It must be remembered that immigrants in Europe are far from being a homogeneous group, but differ enormously with respect to their country of origin, duration of stay, and level of integration. As we categorized migrant background in a broad sense, and were able to interview only immigrants with adequate language competence, our sample of immigrants is likely to be better integrated and educated than the immigrant population as a whole, i.e. presumably of higher objective and subjective status compared to immigrants in general. The diverging findings between countries might reflect the varying status positions of different immigrant groups within a given country compared to native citizens but also to other immigrant groups.

5.3. Reconsidering Social Dominance Theory

One of the major propositions of Social Dominance Theory – the assumption that higher social status is related to higher levels of SDO, HELMs and discrimination (but lower levels of HALMs) – was not confirmed. This is particularly crucial as Social Dominance Theory claims to explain the dynamics of status maintenance and enhancement. We suggest slightly adjusting the aspect of social status in the theory.

We would stress that social status mirrors relative position within a *multi-group society*. Considering this, low income respondents and those with migrant background in our sample share some notable characteristics. The vast majority of low income respondents in our representative surveys are native citizens. Even though low income native citizens are perceived as members of a low status group, this group is still of comparably higher status than immigrants in terms of both economical and legal facts and of subjective perceptions (Gauci 2009). The same can be assumed to apply to the specific immigrant group interviewed in our study compared to immigrants in general.

Considering the divergent theoretical propositions and the rather ambivalent empirical findings on the impact of social status on SDO, prejudice and discrimination, it seems likely that both relations are true: SDO and legitimising myths are likely to increase but also to decrease with social status, depending on the outgroup involved and depending on how promising they are for the goal of maintaining and enhancing one's own group's position. Obviously, generally individuals with high SDO tend to discriminate lower status outgroups such as immigrants and to legitimise status differences by prejudice regardless of their status. We assume that the motivation to maintain and enhance ingroup status is not limited to members of high status groups, but also shared by members of low status groups. Depending on the ingroup's social position, different outgroups are salient for an intergroup comparison that

promises a positive output, such as a positive social identity and a comparably better status position. In terms of Social Dominance Theory, one could assume that both low income native citizens and well integrated immigrants are particular motivated to maintain and enhance their own status compared to that of "ordinary immigrants" in their country. This should be less true for immigrants in Hungary as they can rely on ingroup solidarity also supported by nationalist propaganda. For both groups ordinary immigrants represent a comparably lower status group that is a promising comparison group for a downward comparison to maintain and enhance their relative status within a multiple-group society (or in other words, to reach positive distinctiveness; Brewer 2003).

This interpretation suggests understanding an individual's orientation towards group-based hierarchies as a rather unstable variable depending on the context defined by intergroup comparisons (Guimond et al. 2007), not as a rather stable general orientation (Schmitt, Branscombe, and Kappen 2003). Pratto, Sidanius, and Levin (2006) themselves agree that low status groups can also be interested in maintaining social hierarchies, but still believe that this is more likely for high status groups. We share this assumption, but would like to add that it is more likely for *comparably* higher status groups with respect to *comparably* lower status groups. To maintain and enhance their status, groups draw on promising strategies that are available for the purpose of comparative status enhancement. Therefore, if prejudice and discrimination towards lower status groups such as immigrants seem to be promising, rather low status groups like low income native citizens and comparably well-integrated immigrants also take this option. We propose that each social group, regardless of their actual social position, tends to devalue comparably lower status groups if devaluation seems to be a reasonable (and possible) strategy for maintaining and enhancing their own social position.

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