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Migration Observatory
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**The ethnic hierarchy in hiring discrimination:
Evidence from a harmonized field experiment in six countries**

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Labour market as key domain for integration

- Linked to integration in other domains: e.g., residential, social, etc.
- Carry-over impact on family members
- Ever more important as a requirement for long-term residence and access to citizenship

- However, second generations often report even higher levels of discrimination than the foreign-born: integration paradox? Policy failure?
- Discrimination hard to measure: field experiments as clear and convincing evidence

State-of-the-art on ethnic discrimination in hiring

- Pervasive and persistent ethnic discrimination in hiring: meta-analyses (Zschirnt & Ruedin, 2016; Heath & Di Stasio, 2019; Lippens et al., 2023; Quillian et al., 2019; Quillian & Lee, 2023)
- Majority/minority focus of most field experiments does not reflect the increasing diversity of the immigrant population
- 'Most-likely' cases: sizeable, salient, socio-economically disadvantaged

A consensual ethnic hierarchy?

- Theories of social distance, with majority group followed by Europeans, Asians, MENA, Africans (Bogardus, 1925; Hagendoorn & Hraba, 1995)
- Social psychological literature: different immigrants, different types of negative stereotyping and prejudice → realistic and symbolic threats (Stephan et al., 1998)
- Perceived status/agency vs. perceived warmth/cultural foreignness (Abele et al., 2021; Fiske et al., 2007; Koch et al., 2016; Zou & Cheryan, 2017)
- A common rank order?

The GEMM study



Cross-nationally harmonized

Role of institutional and
political contexts

Benchmarking for policy
recommendations



Multi-group comparison

Testing ethnic hierarchies
and ingroup favoritism

Role of cultural and
economic distance variables



Factorial experimental design

Testing intersectionality
theories and mechanisms

Linguistic, religious, cultural,
phenotypical diversity of
EU/US immigrant population

Data and method

- GEMM field experiment on hiring discrimination
- Data collected in 2017/18 in six countries: DE, ES, NL, NO, UK, US
- 1.5 and 2nd generations
- 22-26 years old
- 6 occupations: cook, receptionist, store assistant, payroll clerk, software engineer, sale rep
- 30 minority groups

- N = 15'541 applications
- Same design, fielded simultaneously

The ancestry signal

Foreign-sounding names

1 name per country

No other cue (e.g. religion)

Native fluency in origin country language

Mentioned in CV

Bilingual profiles

Sentence in cover letter

Domestic human capital

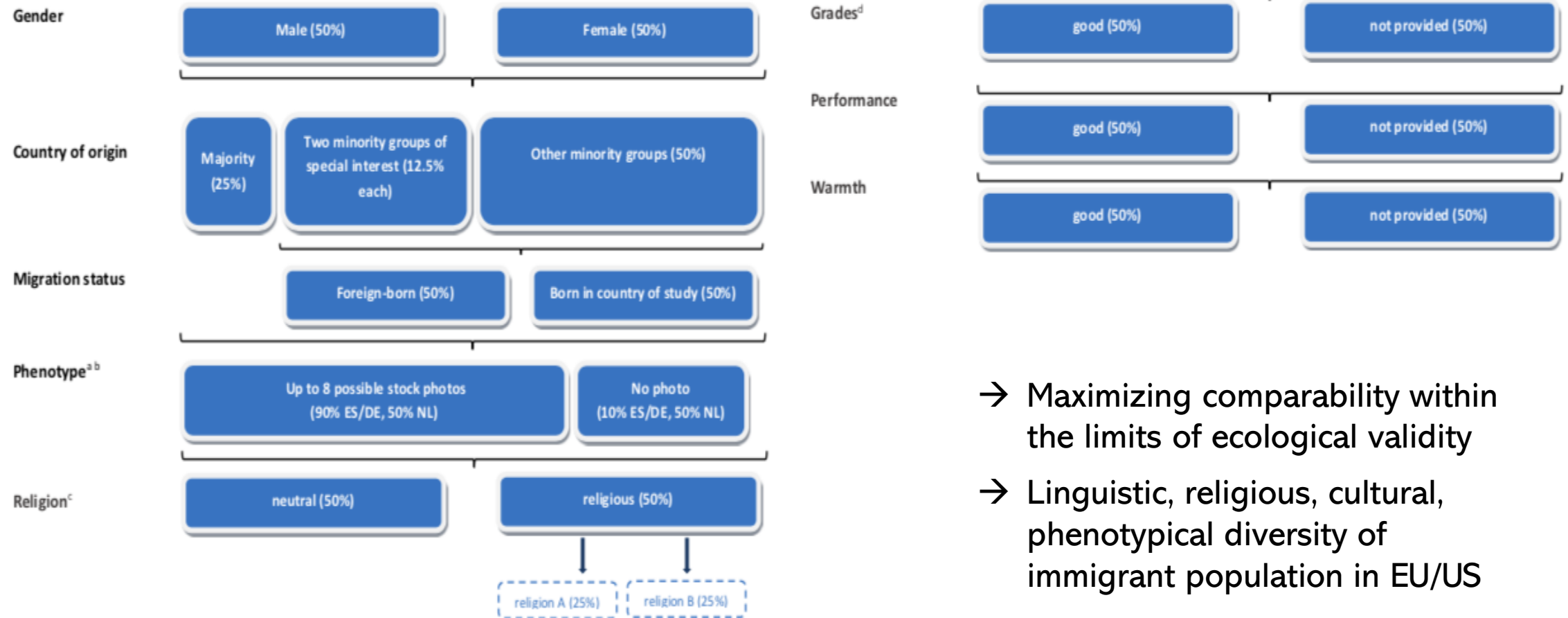
Clarifying the signal

Country of study/ majority (25%)	1 st oversampled minority (12.5%)	2 nd oversampled minority (12.5%)
Britain	Pakistan	Nigeria
Germany	Turkey	Lebanon
Netherlands	Morocco	Turkey
Norway	Pakistan	Somalia
Spain	Morocco	Ecuador
United States	African American	

Country of study/ majority (25%)	1 st oversampled minority (12.5%)	2 nd oversampled minority (12.5%)	Minority groups common to all countries	Minority groups specific to country of study
Britain	Pakistan	Nigeria	Albania, Britain, Bulgaria, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Greece, India, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Japan, Lebanon, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, Nigeria, Norway, Pakistan, Poland, Romania, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Turkey, Uganda, USA, Vietnam	Bangladesh, Ireland, Jamaica, Somalia, Trinidad & Tobago
Germany	Turkey	Lebanon		Dominican Republic, Macedonia, Malaysia, South Africa
Netherlands	Morocco	Turkey		Antilles, Belgium, Macedonia, Malaysia, Suriname
Norway	Pakistan	Somalia		Bosnia, Denmark, Eritrea, Lithuania, Philippines, Sweden
Spain	Morocco	Ecuador		Bosnia, Catalonia, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Portugal, Ukraine
United States	African American			Cuba, El Salvador, Philippines, Puerto Rico

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Germany	Turkey	Lebanon		Dominican Republic, Macedonia, Malaysia, South Africa
Netherlands	Morocco	Turkey		Antilles, Belgium, Macedonia, Malaysia, Suriname
Norway	Pakistan	Somalia		Bosnia, Denmark, Eritrea, Lithuania, Philippines, Sweden
Spain	Morocco	Ecuador		Bosnia, Catalonia, Dominican Republic, Philippines, Portugal, Ukraine
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Unpaired, factorial design



- Maximizing comparability within the limits of ecological validity
- Linguistic, religious, cultural, phenotypical diversity of immigrant population in EU/US

Estimation

- Focus on any positive interest from employers (callback)
- Discrimination ratios (DR) from linear probability models, adjusted for compositional differences in occupations and gender, separately by minority group
- Two-step regression using DR as dep. variable, with FGLS (greater weight to more reliable estimates)

- Group-level distance measures:
 - secular and emancipative values (EVS/WVS)
 - socio-economic development of origin country (HDI)
 - linguistic distance

- Size of Muslim population in origin country
- Relative group size, employment ratio, tertiary education ratio in GEMM country

Widespread discrimination

	Callback rate (%)		Discrimination ratio	Confidence interval
	Majority	Minority		
United Kingdom	24	15	1,58***	1.38 - 1.8
Spain	21	19	1,11~	0.98 - 1.25
Germany	53	45	1,19***	1.11 - 1.27
Norway	31	23	1,37***	1.2 - 1.57
The Netherlands	52	43	1,21***	1.14 - 1.29
United States	26	17	1,55***	1.31 - 1.82

Note: The discrimination ratio is the predicted probability of callback of the majority, divided by the predicted probability of callback of the minority. Predicted probability of callback is adjusted for compositional differences in occupational and gender. Test of significance: one-tailed. ~ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

- Meta-analysis benchmarks: 1.55 (Ruedin & Zschirnt, 2016); 0.95 for White minorities in NL – 2.02 for Blacks in FR & 2.80 for MENA in US (Quillian et al., 2019)

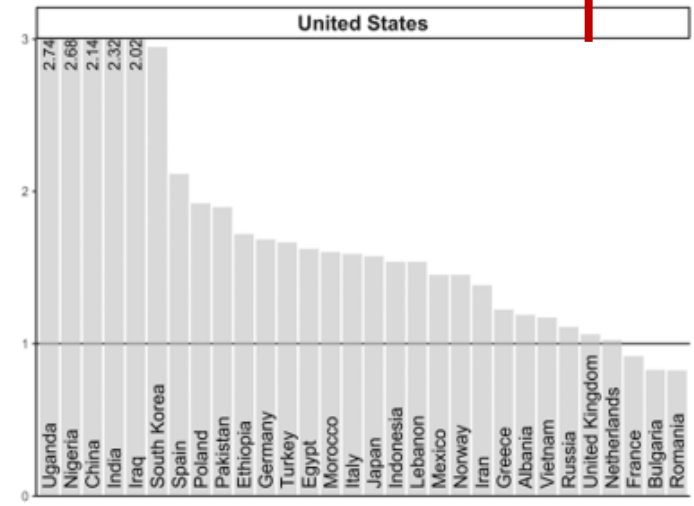
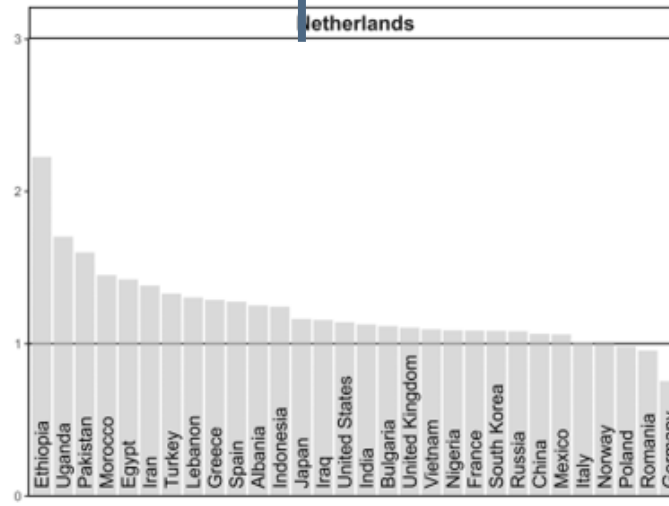
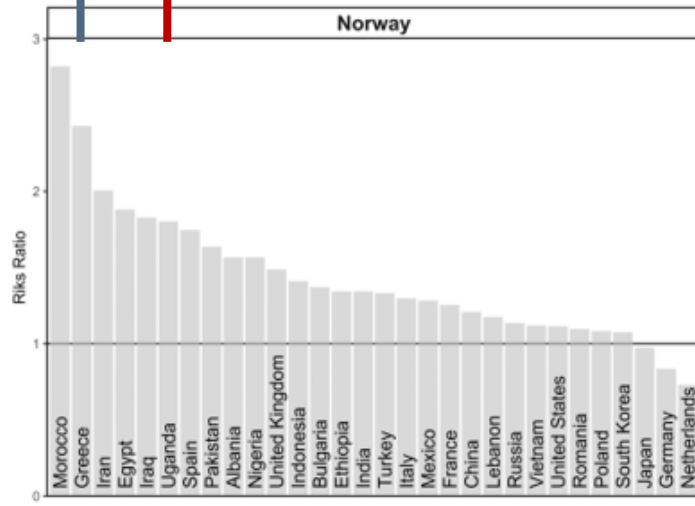
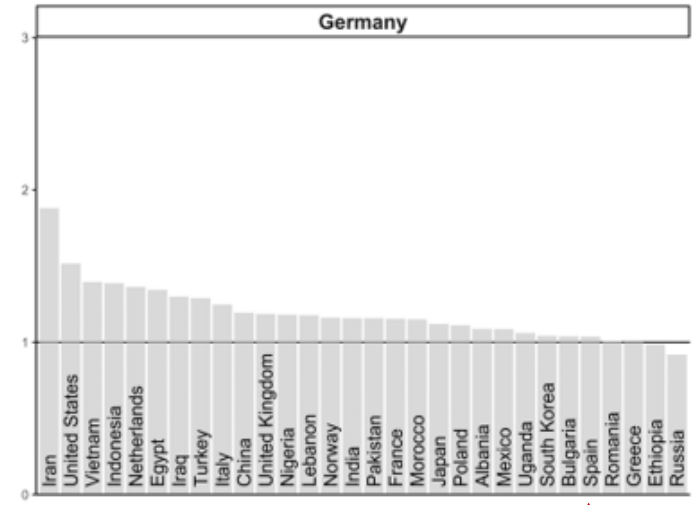
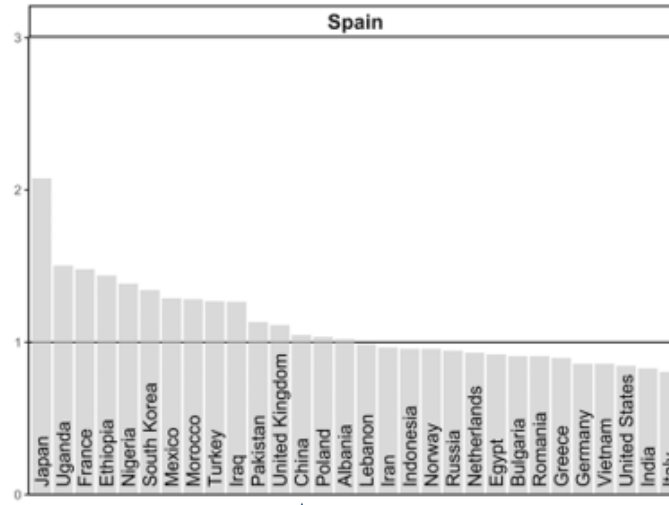
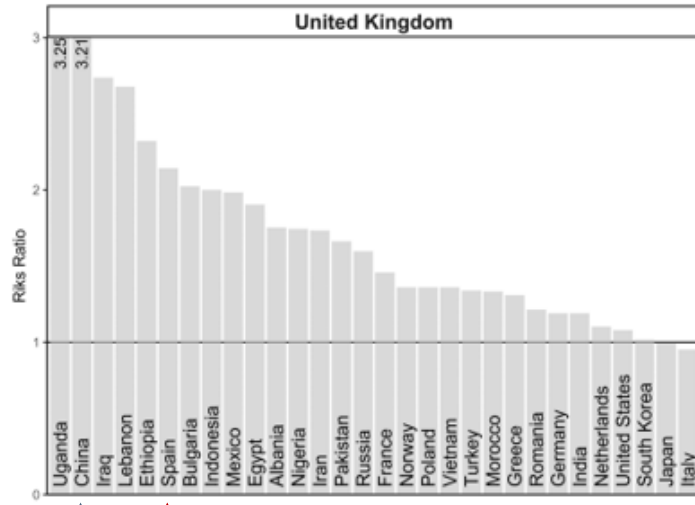
A tripartite model?

	Discrimination ratio	Confidence interval
Western Europe and US	1.14***	1.07 - 1.21
Eastern Europe and Russia	1.11***	1.03 - 1.18
South America	1.22***	1.06 - 1.41
South Asia	1.31***	1.21 - 1.43
South East and East Asia	1.25***	1.15 - 1.35
MENA	1.42***	1.34 - 1.51
Africa	1.45***	1.33 - 1.59

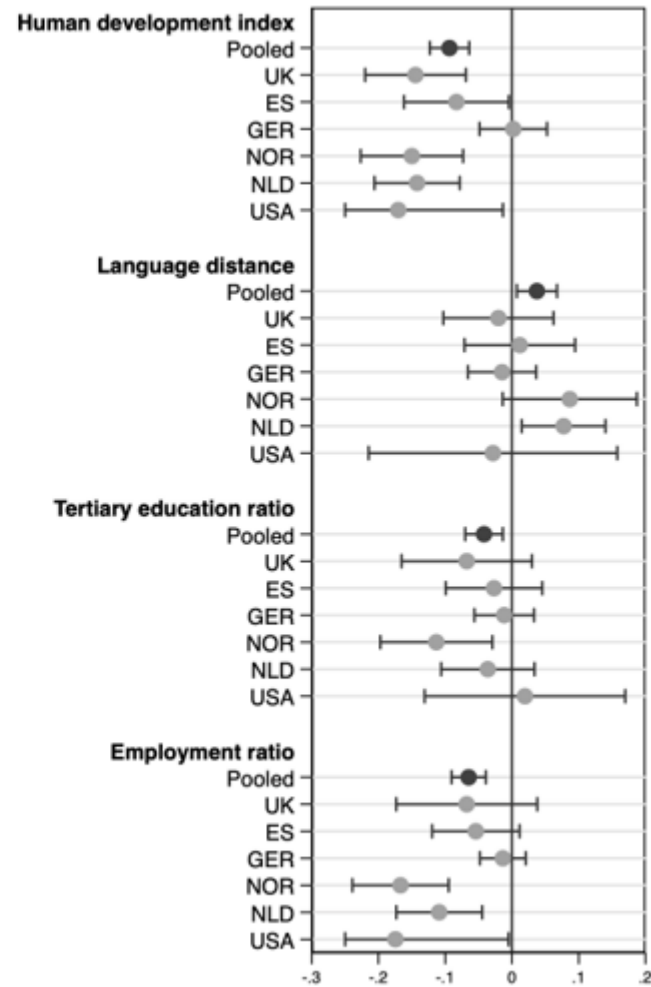
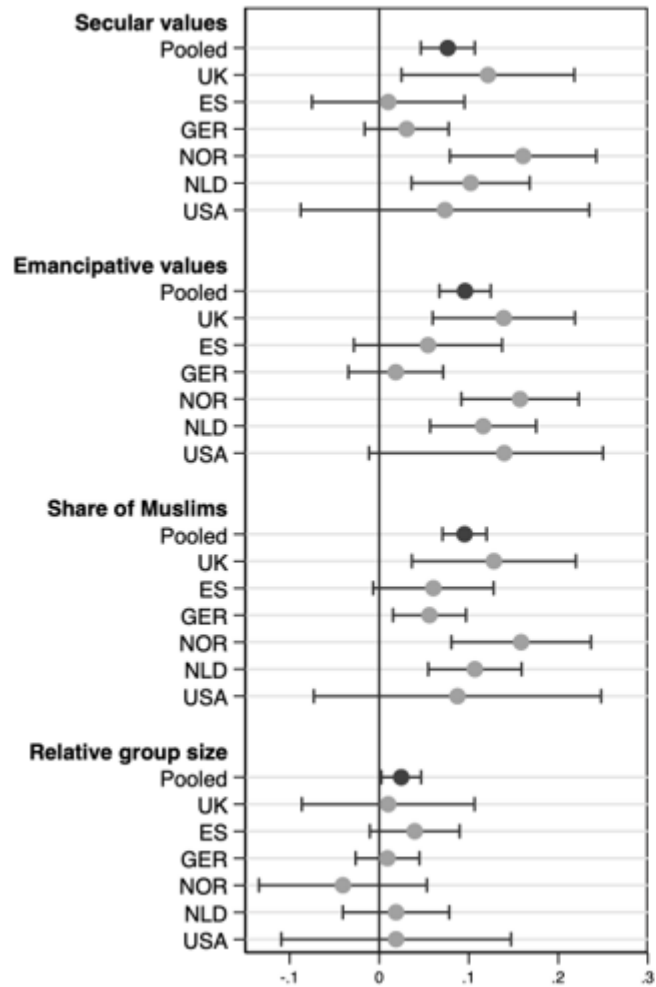
Note: The discrimination ratio is the predicted probability of callback of the majority, divided by the predicted probability of callback of the minority. Predicted probability of callback is adjusted for compositional differences in occupational and gender; models include country fixed effects. Test of significance: one-tailed. ~ $p < .1$, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

- Middling group consisting of (South-)East Asians and South Americans
- However, low and non-significant pairwise correlations among the group-level DR for each country pair; significant for UK/US, UK/NL, NL/NO

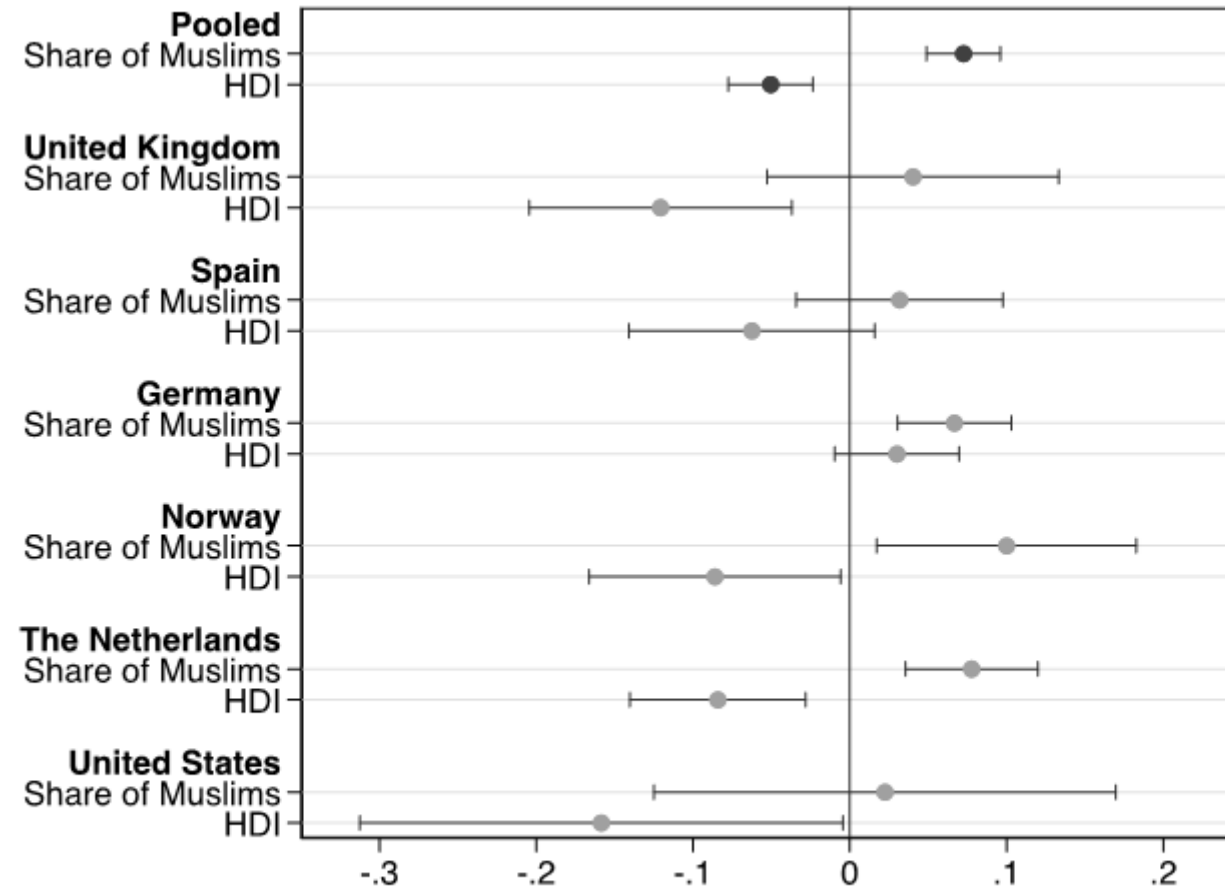
The steepness of ethnic hierarchies in the 6 countries



Economic AND cultural explanations



But different salience in different countries?



Note: FGLS estimation; dependent variable is the discrimination ratio adjusted for occupation and gender. Pooled model includes country fixed effects. 95% confidence intervals. $N_{\text{Muslims}}=180$; $N_{\text{non-Muslims}}=30$.

Limitations

- Only one name per country, not pretested
- Data collected in 2017/18
- Only indirect support (proxies) for economic & cultural explanations

Main take-aways



Consistent hierarchy in broad strokes

European minorities vs. MENA/African minorities

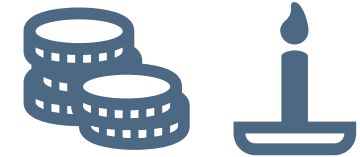
Muslims are a racialized minority in Europe



Varying steepness and granular variation

Pronounced ethnic hierarchy in UK/NO, less in DE

More variation at more granular level of country of ancestry: not fully consensual hierarchies



Economy & Culture both important

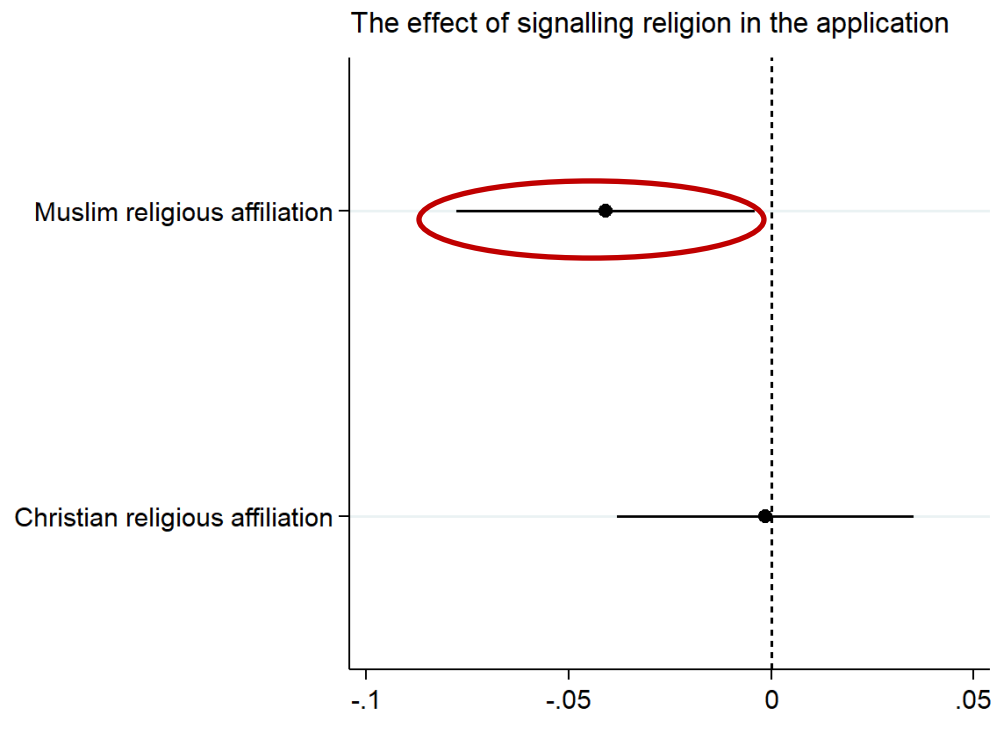
Twofold explanation: status/beliefs, competence/warmth, realistic/symbolic threats

Cultural explanations more salient in continental EU: Islam as bright boundary

**Thank you
for your attention!**

Hiring discrimination is, at least in part,
due to an anti-*Muslim* bias

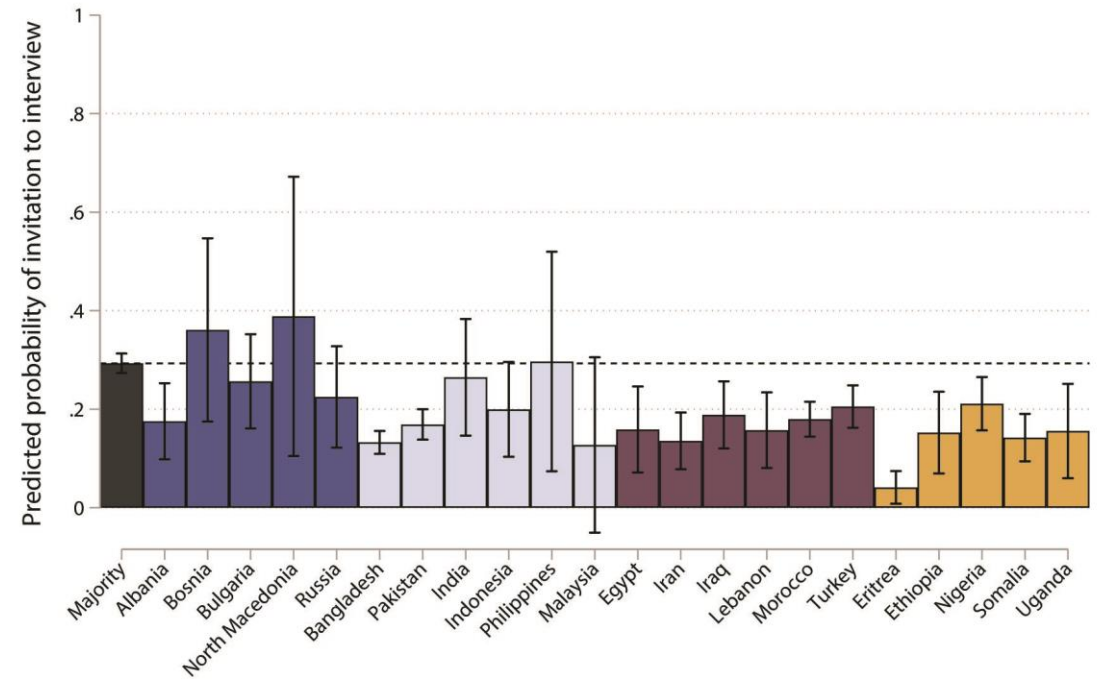
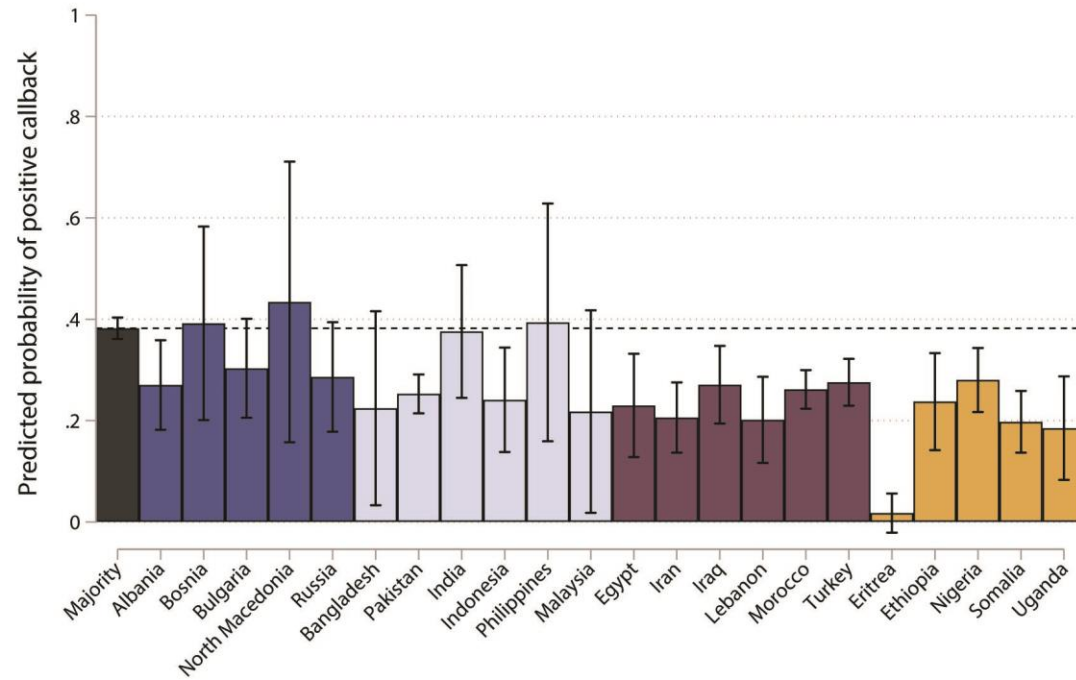
Muslims less likely to be called
back **compared to Christians of
same ethnic origin**
(see also Valfort, 2020)



Note: The analysis is limited to minority applicants from Albania, Bulgaria, Egypt, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Lebanon, Nigeria, Russia, Uganda (N=2783). Minority applicants who did not mention any religious affiliation are the reference category. 95% confidence intervals.

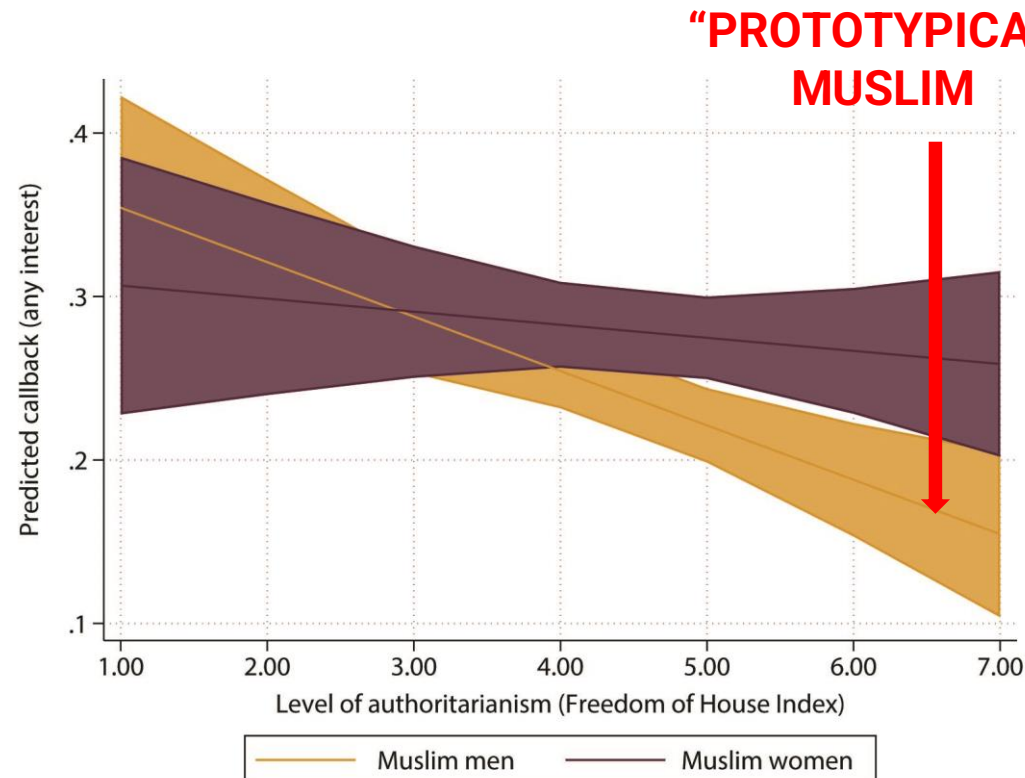
Di Stasio, Lancee, Veit and Yemane (2021).
“Muslim by default or religious discrimination? Results from a cross-national field experiment on hiring discrimination.”
Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 47(6): 1305-1326.

Large variation in callbacks among Muslims



Di Stasio & de Vries (2023, Online First).
 “Same Religion, Different Treatment: The Role of Origin Country Characteristics in Employers’ Hiring Decisions.”
Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2286212>

Lower probability of callback, the more authoritarian and gender unequal the origin country of Muslim applicants



Predicted callbacks ranged from 30.2% for Muslims originating from free countries (India) to 20.5% for Muslims originating from unfree countries (Somalia, Eritrea); for interview invitations, the drop was from 23.1% to 13.1%.

Muslim men from authoritarian contexts are the most penalized

Di Stasio & de Vries (2023, Online First).
“Same Religion, Different Treatment: The Role of Origin Country Characteristics in Employers’ Hiring Decisions.”
Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2023.2286212>

One caveat: Muslim women face strong discrimination when veiled

Fernandez-Reino, Di Stasio & Veit (2023).
“Discrimination Unveiled: A Field Experiment on the Barriers Faced by Muslim Women in Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain.”
European Sociological Review. Online First.



- Strong hijab penalty in DE and NL, also compared to unveiled Muslims
- Only in service-oriented occupations: taste-based discrimination/aversion to public displays of religion?



INTEGRATION DEBATE OFTEN A DEBATE ON THE INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS

“The Annual Report on Integration presents an overview of convergence processes between people with a migration background and those with a native Dutch background.”



INTEGRATION DEBATE OFTEN A DEBATE ON THE INTEGRATION OF MUSLIMS

**Jaarrapport
Integratie**

2018



Jaarrapport Integratie 2008



- <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2016/47/jaarrapport-integratie-2016>
- <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2014/47/jaarrapport-integratie-2014>
- <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2012/51/jaarrapport-integratie-2012>
- <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/publicatie/2008/45/jaarrapport-integratie-2008>

Phenotypical discrimination

Polavieja, J. G., Lancee, B., Ramos, M., Veit, S., & Yemane, R. (2023). In your face: a comparative field experiment on racial discrimination in Europe. *Socio-Economic Review*, 21(3), 1551-1578.

