



Does Discrimination in Childhood Reduce Trust and Participation Among Adult Immigrants?

RESEARCH

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ABSTRACT

Trust is an important determinant of well-functioning democratic societies. Immigrants, however, often have lower trust than the majority population. Experienced discrimination might be a factor in reducing trust levels among immigrants. In this study, we use data from a survey of young adults in Norway to investigate the relationship between experienced discrimination in childhood and trust as an adult among immigrant minorities and the majority population. We also investigate how trust and experienced discrimination are related to attachment to Norway, participation in voluntary organizations, and employment. We find that experienced discrimination in childhood is related to lower levels of both social and institutional trust. Discrimination does not, however, affect levels of participation or employment. Our findings support the view of both institutional and social trust as dynamic concepts that are shaped through experiences in life. Further, our results indicate that discrimination is likely to contribute to lower levels of trust among minorities.

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Trust is an important determinant for a well-functioning society (Fukuyama 1996; Luhmann 2017). In particular, the literature finds relationships between trust and successful democratic systems (Almond & Verba 1963; Bäck & Christensen 2016; Putnam 1993). Murphy (2004) shows that trust plays an important role in tax compliance, which is a crucial determinant for building and maintaining a tax-financed welfare system. The recent pandemic has also shown the importance of trust to ensure compliance with infection prevention guidelines (von Soest et al. 2020).

Immigrant minorities often have both lower institutional and social trust than the majority population (de Vroome, Hooghe & Marien 2013; Ziller 2017). Erdal et al. (2019) show that the same phenomenon exists among young adult immigrant minorities in Norway. Brochmann et al. (2017) state the importance of integration and trust in the Norwegian society: 'If the Norwegian society does not succeed with the integration of immigrants and refugees from countries outside Europe, there is a risk that growing economic inequality may play together with cultural differences and weaken the basis for unity, trust and the legitimacy of the social model' (Brochmann et al. 2017: 11). Although a vast literature explores the implications of lower trust among immigrant minorities, few empirical studies investigate the underlying factors determining lower trust.

People of minority background are also more likely to experience discrimination compared to the majority (Erdal et al. 2019). Experience of discrimination might be an important factor causing lower trust. According to Brochmann et al. (2017), work against discrimination helps to build trust, as the experience of discrimination is likely to reinforce low levels of recognition and attachment, which again creates mistrust. Drawing on this, discrimination can also reduce the level of trust through other factors, such as less attachment to the country of residence. Participation, both on the job market and in the community, is also likely to play an important part in this picture. On one hand, participation can help build trust by creating social relationships across different social backgrounds (Putnam 2000). On the other hand, participation can also increase exposure to discrimination or to non-trustworthy behavior in general, which again harms the feeling of trust and belonging.

The level of discrimination that immigrants meet in society is likely to vary between different social arenas. Immigrants are less likely to meet discrimination in ethnic or religious groups consisting of people from their own minority group, compared to arenas consisting mainly of the majority population. Experience of mistreatment might therefore decrease the willingness to participate in arenas dominated by the majority, while it may increase the willingness to participate in isolated groups, separated from people who previously revealed discriminating attitudes. Participation in such isolated groups may also reinforce the feeling of mistrust. Hence, the determination of trust and feelings of belonging among minorities is complex, and these concepts may be mutually dependent on participation and discrimination.

We investigate how experience of discrimination is related to the levels of both institutional and social trust among young adults of immigrant background using survey data on young adults in Norway. The data includes both immigrants ($n = 728$), descendants of immigrants ($n = 1,009$) and a sample from the majority population ($n = 699$). The survey contains data on the respondents' experience of discrimination in school and thus provides an opportunity to reduce the simultaneity bias created by the likely mutual relationship between experienced discrimination and stated trust.

The reported experience of discrimination in school is assumed to be less affected by the level of trust today than what recent experience of discrimination is. To gain a better understanding of the complexity of factors determining trust, we also investigate the relationship between trust, attachment, and participation, as well as how discrimination affects these factors. Viewing these aspects collectively provides a more holistic picture of the determinants of trust compared to previous research on this field.

Our results from a series of linear multivariate regressions show a negative relationship between discrimination in childhood and both institutional and social trust. Discrimination in childhood is also connected to a lower attachment to Norway among young adults of immigrant background. These results are in line with theoretical predictions, indicating that individual trust is dynamic and shaped through personal experiences through life. We find little evidence of a link between trust and participation in the minority sample, either through employment or participation in voluntary organizations. We also find no relationship between discrimination and various participation categories. These findings imply a distinction between the partly subjective concepts of stated trust, attachment, and experiences of discrimination and people's practical choices related to participation in different arenas of society. While experienced discrimination seems to be an important determinant of both social and institutionalized trust and attachment to Norway, none of these concepts seem to be important determinants for employment or participation in society as such.

THEORY AND PREVIOUS RESEARCH

SOCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL TRUST

Different aspects of trust are discussed in the literature. In this paper, we separate between social trust and institutional trust. Social trust, also referred to as generalized trust, defines one's conception of the trustworthiness of the average person (Lewis & Weigert 1985; Yamagishi & Yamagishi 1994). The concept of social trust thus reflects trust in people one does not know and has never met. This stands in contrast to knowledge-based trust, which is one's trust in particular objects, persons, or institutions and is shaped by one's experience of the trustworthiness of the particular object (Yamagishi & Yamagishi 1994). There has been a discussion in the literature on how the different concepts of trust arise and develop and to what extent social trust and institutional trust are related.

Uslaner (2002) argues that social trust is a moral value that is learned during childhood and stabilized during adulthood. In this view, social trust is seen as a psychological, or to some extent, even genetical, trait that is more or less fixed during a lifetime. On the other hand, Putnam (1993b) argues that one's level of social trust may also evolve constantly, as experiences of successful cooperation and social networks can build social trust. According to this theory, the concepts of social trust, cooperation, and social networks are dynamic, and the three concepts tend to be self-reinforcing. In this view, participation in voluntary organizations is likely to build trust through shared norms embedded in the social structure of the organization. Norms of cooperation increase the predictability of other people's actions and thus the trustworthiness of other people, which eventually is the main factor driving social trust (Paxton 2007).

Recent empirical findings suggest that both social trust and institutional trust are dynamic concepts in the sense that they develop over time and are shaped by one's experiences in life (Dinesen & Sønderskov 2016; Newton, Strolle & Zmerli 2018; Wu 2020). Wu (2020) finds that social trust is negatively affected by experiences of gun violence, both at the individual and societal level, but that trust levels can also be recovered by positive experiences later in life. Dinesen and Sønderskov (2016) study the dynamics of social and institutional trust over a period up to 18 years using panel data from Denmark. They find that both concepts vary with time. Further, they show that institutional trust is the most likely predictor of social trust and not the other way around. This is in line with theories pointing to the importance of institutional settings as providers of social trust. Efficient state institutions, such as the judiciary, the police, and politicians, signals that unfair behavior is uncommon and will be sanctioned. This increases the likelihood that some unknown other will behave according to the rules, and thus it is also likely that it increases one's generalized trust in others, referred to as social trust (Rothstein & Stolle 2008). Newton, Strolle and Zmerli (2018) point to falling levels of institutional trust in Sweden, Finland, New Zealand, and Japan, seemingly driven by periods of economic and political problems, while social trust has remained stable. They argue that institutional trust develops according to shifting governments and institutions, but that continuous shifts in institutional trust might also affect social trust in the longer run, as there is a risk that bad institutions and low levels of institutional trust over time also increase levels of conflict between groups and thus erase social trust, the social glue that holds societies together.

There is a vast theoretical literature pointing to the positive impact of both social and institutional trust on general participation and contributions to public goods in societies. As Putnam argues, social trust is an important premise for a well-functioning democracy as it enables people to act together in order to obtain shared interests (Putnam 1993a). Those who generally trust the system, more frequently join associations based on common interests (Uslaner 2002). Further, institutional trust can be considered as a prerequisite for political participation, as individuals expect their engagement to lead to positive outcomes. However, the empirical evidence of a relationship between social trust and political participation is not particularly strong.¹ The relationship between institutional trust and political participation seems to have a stronger empirical support (Grönlund & Setälä 2007; Harris 2014; Hooghe & Marien 2013; Zafirović, Matijević & Filipović 2021), in line with the hypothesis that institutional trust is more context-dependent than social trust.

The empirical literature has not been able to confirm the theory that participation builds social trust. Bekkers (2012) finds a positive relationship between trust and volunteering in the Netherlands, which is mainly explained by the selection of trustful individuals into volunteering. Similar findings from other panel studies confirm these results (Ingen & Bekkers 2015), suggesting that social trust works as a driver of civic engagement, but that civic engagement in turn does not affect social trust.

Social and institutionalized trust is typically lower among population segments with greater poverty and little education (Smith 2005, 2010; Verba, Schlozman & Brady

¹ Some studies find a positive relationship between social trust and political participation (Benson & Rochon 2004; Fennema & Tillie 2001; Kaase n.d.; Norris 2002; Putnam 1993a), while others find a weak or unclear relationship (Bäck 2011; Bäck & Christensen 2016; Pattie, Seyd & Whiteley 2003; Rothstein, 2003; Uslaner & Brown 2005).

1995). Trust can therefore be interpreted as yet another asset mainly held by society's privileged. This picture of trust fits well with findings of lower trust levels among minorities compared to the majority population (Ziller 2017). This is also seen in Sweden, in which the level of trust in the general population is relatively high while it is considerably lower among immigrants (Puranen 2019). Vroome, Hooghe and Marien (2013) conclude that the differences in trust levels between immigrant minorities and the majority population in the Netherlands are associated with the economic and social integration of immigrants in society. Participation in the social as well as the political arena assumes a certain degree of trust in other people. Trust is thus seen as a factor determining the successful integration of minorities and their participation in the community at large.

Several studies have investigated whether the level of trust among immigrants is the result of cultural heritage from the country of origin or institutional quality in the new homeland. Uslaner (2008) finds that generalized trust levels in the country of origin influence the trust passed over to the children and grandchildren of immigrants. Dinesen (2013) examines to what degree generalized trust among immigrants is affected by the culture of their country of origin versus the institutional quality of their new home country. He finds that both factors have significant effects on trust levels among immigrants in Western Europe. In contrast, Nannestad et al. (2014) find that cultural background does not have a significant effect on generalized trust among non-western immigrants in Denmark. The findings are thus somewhat mixed but indicate that the level of trust among immigrants is partly driven by the culture in the country of origin and partly driven by the culture in the new home country. This supports the theoretical prediction that social trust is a dynamic concept that is affected by the social and institutional context one lives under, also for immigrants in the process of integrating into a new society.

DISCRIMINATION AND PARTICIPATION

Minorities often face discrimination. Among minorities in Norway, people with background from Somalia or Iraq most often report experiences of discrimination (Søholt, Tronstad & Bjørnesen 2014). These groups in general have less education and lower employment levels, indicating that discrimination might be related to marginalization. However, discrimination may also be an important determinant of marginalization by reducing one's level of trust, and thus, one's motivation and ability to participate in the different arenas of society. Being subject to discrimination from the majority can be interpreted as a confirmation of not being accepted as a valid member of the larger group. This, in turn, may spur mistrust of the majority group. According to Wilkes and Wu (2019), individuals who regularly experience discrimination 'must always be on their guard, and cannot therefore, afford to trust'. Further, experiences of discrimination might also have negative spill-over effects, such that experiences of discrimination in one arena will decrease trust in others also in other arenas (Kumlin & Rothstein 2007).

There are some studies investigating the relationship between trust and discrimination among immigrants. Discrimination is found to be related to lower trust in institutions among immigrants in Finland (Kääriäinen & Niemi 2014; Liebkind & Jasinskaja-Lahti 2000), lower trust in the government among Latino immigrants in the United States (Schildkraut 2005), and lower generalized trust among immigrants in Canada (Wilkes & Wu 2019). In contrast, Dinesen (2010) does not find effects of early experiences of discrimination on generalized trust among immigrants in Denmark.

To the extent that discrimination reduces generalized trust, we also expect that discrimination reduces one's willingness to participate in social arenas. Experiences of discrimination will impose expectations of being met in the same manner the next time one participates, either in the same arena or in other arenas with a similar type of people. Building on the literature on trust and participation, as mentioned above, experiences of discrimination in arenas connected to society at large may, however, increase one's willingness to participate in arenas with a more isolated group. In particular, it may increase one's willingness to participate in groups in which one does not fear to meet the very same type of people who previously revealed discriminating attitudes. Hence, experience of discrimination is likely to decrease participation in organizations connected to the larger society, while it is likely to increase participation in isolated groups.

DATA AND METHODS

THE GOVCIT SURVEY

The study is conducted using data from the project Governing and Experiencing Citizenship in Multicultural Scandinavia (GOVCIT) by the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), provided to us by the Norwegian Centre of Research Data (NSD).² The data can be made available on order for approved research institutions by the Research Council of Norway or Eurostat. The survey was conducted in 2018, comprising young adults (age 20–36) of immigrant background and the native majority in Scandinavia. This study uses the Norwegian sample of the survey, which was conducted by Statistics Norway. The following three subsamples are included in the study: immigrants immigrated before the age of eleven ($n = 728$), descendants of immigrants ($n = 1,009$), and a control group consisting of a random sample of the majority Norwegian population between the age 20 and 36 ($n = 699$). Participants are defined as descendants of immigrants if their parents immigrated to Norway. The Norwegian sample also contains a subsample of immigrants who immigrated after the age of 16 with a residence of at least 7 years in Norway. We do not include this subsample as their experience of discrimination in school (which is one of our independent variables) is assumed to refer to experiences from their country of origin. This experience of discrimination is likely to stem from other factors than an immigrant background, which is the kind of discrimination we seek to measure in this analysis.

The immigrants and descendants of immigrants were collectively drawn from six ethnic minority groups in Norway: Iraq, Pakistan, Poland, Somalia, Turkey, and Vietnam. For descendants of immigrants, both parents come from the same country. The six countries of origin were selected based on both the size of the groups and the variation across migrant categories, which include older labor migrant groups, refugee groups, and more recent labor migrants (Erdal et al. 2019). A total of 3,600 respondents, 600 were randomly drawn from each group. The response rates were between 47% and 51% for each group; 1,348 were randomly drawn from the majority population with a response rate of 51%. A total of 7,948 respondents in the age between 20 and 36 were drawn to participate in the survey, and the response rate was 50.7% in total. A full overview of the gross and net sample is provided in Table A-1. The survey was

² Now renamed to the *Norwegian Agency for Shared Services in Education and Research* (Sikt).

conducted in two rounds: first, the participants received an e-mail or SMS with a weblink to the survey or a paper version of the questionnaire. Participants who did not answer received several reminders. Second, a subsample of the non-respondents was contacted and interviewed by phone. Both the web- and paper-based surveys had Norwegian as the default language, but were also available in English, Somali, Arabic, Polish, Turkish, and Urdu. The phone interviewer had competence in the language of the respondent's country as well as in Norwegian (Erdal et al. 2019).

CONSTRUCTION OF VARIABLES

The construction of variables and the question formulation in the survey is summarized in Table 1.

Table 1 Description of variables.

VARIABLE	QUESTIONS	RANGE	RESPONSE RATE
Institutional trust	To which extent do you personally trust the following institutions (in your country of residence): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government• Police• Parliament• Politicians	0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust)	95%
Social trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you believe most people can be trusted or that you cannot be too careful when dealing with other people?• Do you believe most people will try to take advantage of you if they get the chance, or will they try to treat you reasonable and fair?• Do you believe most people are helpful, or do most people look out for themselves?	0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust)	94%
Attachment	To which extent do you feel an attachment to Norway?	0 (no attachment) to 10 (complete attachment)	86%
Participation	Are you a member of: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A sports team or group for physical activity?• A political party or group?• An aid organization or charity?• A religious group?• A cultural or ethnic organization?	1 (Participate in the activity) to 0 (do not participate in the activity)	100%
	Employed/not employed	0 (not employed) to 1 (employed)	100%
Discrimination in school	During your time at primary and secondary school, how frequent will you say the following is true: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• My classmates accepted me for who I was• My teachers accepted me for who I was• The teachers respected all students equally regardless of their cultural background• I felt like I had to be a different person at school than at home• The teachers gave all the students the opportunity to express their culture• The teacher put students with migrant background in the same category	0 (never) to 5 (very often)	90%

VARIABLE	QUESTIONS	RANGE	RESPONSE RATE
Recent discrimination	<p>During the last 12 months, have you experienced being treated differently due to your religion or ethnic background in any of the following situations?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In contact with the police • By employees of public office • At the work/study place • In restaurants, cafés, or similar • In a store or bank • On public transport • By strangers on the street 	0 (has not experienced discrimination) to 1 (has experienced discrimination)	100%

Trust

The trust variables, institutional trust and social trust, are constructed as indexes based on responses to a set of questions related to these topics (see [Table 1](#)). The questions on institutional trust address to which extent one personally trusts each of the following institutions: government, police, parliament, and politicians. The questions on social trust address the trustworthiness, fairness, and helpfulness of ‘most people’, in line with the standard definition in the literature of social trust as one’s conception of the trustworthiness of people in general. Response categories take values from 0 (no trust at all) to 10 (complete trust). The institutional trust variable and the social trust variable are constructed as the means of all response values from the questions on institutional trust and social trust, respectively. The indexes thus range from 0—no institutional or social trust, to 10—complete institutional or social trust.

Attachment

The attachment variable is based on the respondents’ answers to the question ‘To which extent do you feel attachment to Norway’. The variable takes values from 0 (no attachment) to 10 (complete attachment). This variable is related to the similar concept ‘feeling of belonging’, which is used in the literature. However, an important difference is that the question used in this study addresses attachment to Norway in particular and not attachment in general or attachment to other particular groups.

Participation

Participation is represented in the analysis through a set of six dummy variables, based on five questions about membership in particular types of organizations and one question about employment. The variables take the value 1 (one) if the respondent is a member/employed, and 0 (zero) otherwise.

Employment is to our knowledge not included in the general concept of participation in the literature. However, in this study, we take a broader look at participation and argue that employment is an important aspect of the participation concept, especially when we talk about the integration of immigrants. The theoretical predictions about the relationship between trust and participation, imply that the same mechanisms should also hold for the relationship between trust and employment. Thus, we include employment in our discussion of participation. However, it is important to keep in mind that the concept of employment reflects a very different aspect of participation than membership in voluntary organizations. When we refer to participation in this study, we generally refer to membership in organizations and employment separately.

Discrimination

We use two variables of discrimination in this study. Our main variable on discrimination is referred to as discrimination in school, which is based on the respondents' reported experience of discrimination in primary and secondary school. This variable is constructed as an index comprised of the average response to six questions on experiences in school (see Table 1). The questions do not ask directly about discrimination, instead, they address experiences of being accepted, being treated equally, and feeling that one could be oneself. All questions have five possible responses (values 1–5), but the various questions are constructed in different directions. A response of 5 implies a high level of discrimination in two questions and no discrimination in four questions. Hence, we have flipped the scale of the four variables, in which 5 indicates no discrimination, by replacing values of 1 with 5, 2 with 4, and so on.³ Then, the six variables are collapsed into an index, defined by the mean of all response values. The discrimination index thus ranges from 1—no experience of discrimination, to 5—high experience of discrimination.

In addition, we use a variable reflecting recent experiences of discrimination. This variable is constructed as an index, comprised of seven questions addressing experiences of discrimination in seven particular situations during the last 12 months. These questions do not directly include the concept of discrimination, but they address whether one has been treated differently due to one's religion or ethnic background in the particular situations. The index is constructed as the mean of the response values of these questions, which ranges from 0—has not experienced discrimination, to 1—has experienced discrimination.

Control Variables

We include a set of background variables to control for factors other than discrimination that impacts trust, attachment, and participation. The control variables are age, gender, marital status, highest completed educational level, subgroup (i.e., whether the individual is an immigrant or a descendant of immigrants), and country of origin. The age variable is separated into four groups: 20–24, 25–28, 29–32, and 33–36 years, due to the structure of the survey data. Marital status is categorized as either married or not married. The highest completed educational level is coded into three separate dummy variables: (i) secondary school, (ii) high school, and (iii) college/university. The two subgroups included are (i) immigrants that immigrated before the age of 11 and (ii) descendants of migrants. To investigate whether the effect of discrimination varies across these two groups, we also include an interaction term that combines discrimination and subgroup. Country of origin refers to the six ethnic minority groups in the sample: Iraq, Pakistan, Poland, Somalia, Turkey, and Vietnam.

DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

Summary statistics of the dependent and independent variables, as well as control variables, are shown in Table 2. The table displays both significantly lower institutional and social trust, as well as attachment among minorities compared to majorities.

³ The following four questions were originally coded in the direction of no discrimination and were thus flipped: 'My classmates accepted me for who I was', 'My teachers accepted me for who I was', 'The teachers respected all students equally regardless of their cultural background', and 'The teachers gave all the students the opportunity to express their culture', which indicates no discrimination.

Table 2 Descriptive statistics.

Note: *The age groups are 1 = 20–24, 2 = 25–28, 3 = 29–32, and 4 = 33–36, the variable immigrant is opposed to descendants of immigrants.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

	MINORITY			DIFF.			MAJORITY			DIFF. MIN/MAJ
	IMMIGRANTS			DESCENDANTS OF IMMIGRANTS						
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		
Institutional trust (score)	5.15	2.30		5.06	2.21		0.09	5.7	2.0	−0.60***
Social trust (score)	4.55	2.33		4.66	2.16		−0.12	5.6	2.2	−0.98***
Attachment (score)	8.32	2.29		8.51	2.12		−0.19	8.8	2.0	−0.42***
Employed (share)	0.66	0.48		0.68	0.47		−0.02*	0.76	0.42	−0.10***
Participation in sports (share)	0.33	0.47		0.33	0.47		0.00	0.36	0.48	−0.03
Participation in political party (share)	0.06	0.24		0.05	0.22		0.01*	0.05	0.22	0.01
Participation in aid organization or charity (share)	0.20	0.40		0.25	0.43		−0.05*	0.19	0.39	0.04*
Participation in religious group (share)	0.06	0.24		0.14	0.34		−0.07*	0.07	0.25	0.04**
Participation in cultural/ethnic organization (share)	0.08	0.28		0.11	0.31		−0.03	0.05	0.23	0.05***
Discrimination in school (score)	2.44	0.74		2.32	0.71		0.12**	2.20	0.70	0.17***
Recent discrimination (score)	0.59	0.49		0.60	0.49		−0.01	0.28	0.45	0.32***
Control variables										
Age (categories*)	1.50	0.70		1.62	0.72		−0.13***	2.47	1.13	−0.90***
Secondary school as highest completed educational level (share)	0.38	0.49		0.25	0.43		0.13***	0.16	0.37	0.14***
High school as highest completed educational level (share)	0.41	0.49		0.39	0.49		0.02	0.33	0.49	0.07**

(Contd.)

	MINORITY			DIFF.			MAJORITY			DIFF. MIN/MAJ
	IMMIGRANTS			DESCENDANTS OF IMMIGRANTS						
	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION		
University/college as highest completed educational level (share)	0.19	0.39		0.34	0.47		-0.15***	0.41	0.49	-0.13***
Married (share)	0.10	0.30		0.16	0.36		-0.06***	0.22	0.42	-0.09***
Male (share)	0.49	0.50		0.49	0.50		0.00	0.47	0.50	0.02
Iraq (share)	0.33	0.47		0.04	0.20		0.29***	-	-	-
Pakistan (share)	0.05	0.23		0.25	0.43		-0.20***	-	-	-
Poland (share)	0.25	0.43		0.13	0.34		0.12***	-	-	-
Turkey (share)	0.07	0.25		0.24	0.43		-0.17***	-	-	-
Vietnam (share)	0.06	0.23		0.26	0.44		-0.20***	-	-	-
Somalia (share)	0.24	0.43		0.08	0.27		0.16***	-	-	-

In addition, there is a significant difference between the level of institutional and social trust among the minority, but this is not the case for the majority. There is no significant difference in either institutional trust, social trust, or attachment across immigrants and descendants of immigrants.

The employment rate is significantly lower among the minority. On the other hand, the minority participates in aid organizations and charity, religious groups, and cultural/ethnic organizations to a greater extent than the majority.⁴ Further, the minority has experienced discrimination in school to a significantly greater extent than the majority, and the same applies for recent experiences of discrimination. The experience of discrimination in school is also significantly higher among immigrants compared to descendants of immigrants, but this difference does not apply to recent discrimination. The distribution of the variables institutional and social trust, attachment, and discrimination is shown in Figure A-1.

Further, the control variables show that the minority is younger, has completed lower levels of education, and is more often unmarried compared to the majority. About half of both the minority and majority samples is male.

RESULTS

TRUST, ATTACHMENT, AND PARTICIPATION

In the first part of the analysis, we study the relationships between trust, attachment, and participation among the minority. We study to what extent attachment and the different measures of participation are related to both institutional and social trust by using a linear regression model with individual institutional and social trust levels as dependent variables. We control for the individual background variables age, education, gender, marital status, a dummy for immigrant (in contrast to a descendant of immigrants), and country of origin.

The results are shown in Tables A-2 and A-3 and reveal a strong positive relationship between attachment and both institutional and social trust after controlling for background variables. The relationship between attachment and institutional trust appears somewhat greater than the relationship between attachment and social trust. However, this difference is not statistically significant. The results suggest that a feeling of attachment to the country of residence is closely related to trust. Table A-4 displays the results from a similar model with individual attachment as the dependent variable. The strong positive relationship between both institutional and social trust and attachment is also evident in this model. In addition, there is a positive relationship between participation in sports groups and attachment.

There is no clear relationship between participation and trust, neither through employment nor through other participation in other arenas of society. The exception is participation in aid organizations or charity, which is positively related to social trust.

⁴ This picture is somewhat different when the older immigrants are included (immigrants who immigrated after the age of 16). This group has a lower participation rate in all categories, decreasing the mean participation rate of the minority group below the mean of the majority, except for participation in religious group and cultural/ethnic organization, where the minority participation rate is still higher.

Higher levels of education are related to higher levels of both institutional and social trust. Completing a university/college degree may contribute to building trust, or trustful people are more likely to attend university/college than people who are less trustful. This finding is in line with previous empirical findings in the literature, suggesting that trust is linked to typical measures of success.

We also see a negative relationship between age and institutional trust, while we do not see this relationship for social trust. The negative relationship between age and institutional trust holds when we control for country of origin, as well as the difference between immigrants and descendants of immigrants. Hence, the results imply that older immigrants in our sample (i.e., immigrants in their 30s as opposed to immigrants in their 20s) report lower institutional trust.

Tables A-5 and A-6 show the results of the same analysis conducted using the majority sample. The results are similar, showing a strong positive relationship between attachment and both institutional and social trust. In addition, there is a positive relationship between participation in political party and participation in cultural and/or ethnic organizations and social trust, which is not present among the minority. The positive relationship between participation in aid organizations or charity and social trust that we see in the minority sample is not present among the majority. The majority sample further differs from the minority by showing a negative link between employment and institutional trust, implying that majority Norwegians who are employed express lower levels of institutional trust than non-employed majority Norwegians. This is contrary to what would be expected based on theory.

The positive relationship between education and trust found in the minority is also present in the majority. The same applies for the negative link between age and institutional trust, which applies for both samples. However, the relationship is reversed when we look at the relationship between age and social trust among the majority, implying that older majority Norwegians in our sample report lower levels of institutional trust, but higher levels of social trust compared to the younger majority sample. Further, there is a positive relationship between being married and institutional trust among the majority, which is not present among the minority.

We have further analyzed whether trust, attachment, and participation among the minority vary with the immigrants' country of origin. The results reveal significant differences across the minority groups in their levels of trust and attachment and their participation rate in the various arenas (results are shown in Table A-7). Immigrants of Polish origin stand out, with significantly higher levels of social trust compared to the other groups, even when controlling for background variables such as employment and education. Opposite, immigrants of Turkish origin possess significantly lower levels of social trust compared to the other groups. When comparing the levels of institutional trust, there are few differences between the groups, except for immigrants of Somali origin, who possess significantly lower institutional trust compared to the other groups.

There are no significant differences between the groups when it comes to attachment to Norway. However, there are some differences between the groups in their level of participation in different arenas. Immigrants of Turkish origin report a significantly higher employment rate compared to the other groups. Immigrants from Pakistan are less likely to be members of sports groups, while there are no significant differences within the immigrant groups in membership in political parties. Immigrants from Somalia are more likely to be members of aid or charity organizations, while

immigrants from Poland are less likely to be members of cultural/ethnic organizations. The type of participation in which the immigrant groups differ mostly by country of origin is membership in religious groups. Immigrants from Pakistan and Somalia are more likely to be members of such groups, while immigrants from Iraq, Poland, and Vietnam are less likely to be members of such groups.

EFFECT OF EXPERIENCES DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL

Characteristics of Minorities Who Report Discrimination in School

What characterizes people who report experiences of discrimination in childhood? To gain a better understanding of their life situation, we study the characteristics of minorities who report experienced discrimination in school (see [Table 3](#)). Minorities who report higher levels of discrimination in school are more likely to be immigrants as opposed to descendant of immigrants, and they are more likely to be of Iraqi or Somali origin. Minorities of Polish origin report significantly lower levels of discrimination in school compared to the other minority groups, which are all of non-European origin.

Further, we test whether people who report discrimination in school also report discrimination later in life. The results are shown in [Table A-6](#). We find that experienced discrimination in school is a sharp predictor of recent experiences of discrimination.

Discrimination, Trust, and Attachment

The fact that the minority group possesses lower trust and attachment compared to the majority might stem from experiences of discrimination based on immigrant background. To test this hypothesis, we regress the reported experience of discrimination on the dependent variables, institutional trust, social trust and attachment, controlling for age, educational level, marital status, gender, subgroup, and country of origin. The results are displayed in [Table 4](#).

[Table 4](#) reveals a strong and significant relationship between having experienced discrimination and a feeling of trust and attachment. To test whether discrimination partly or solely explains the gap in trust levels between the minority and majority samples, we have also regressed the minority variable on both institutional and social trust, using the entire sample of both minorities and majorities. The difference in trust levels is still present after controlling for discrimination. However, the gap is reduced, suggesting that discrimination in childhood partly explains the difference in trust levels between immigrants and the majority population. The correlation between discrimination and institutional trust is significantly greater than the correlation between discrimination and social trust. Further, the negative relationship between discrimination and social trust is significantly greater among immigrants compared to descendants of migrants, suggesting that trust levels among immigrants are more responsive to discrimination than trust levels among descendants of migrants. However, the negative correlation between discrimination and both institutional trust and attachment does not seem to depend on subgroup.

Again, the results reveal a negative relationship between age and the level of institutional trust and a positive relationship between higher education and trust. These relationships even hold when we control for experienced discrimination. However, as opposed to trust, attachment is not related to higher educational levels.

Table 3 Results from linear regressions of background variables on discrimination, minority.

Note: The variable immigrant is opposed to descendants of immigrants. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

	(1) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	(2) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	(3) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	(4) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	(5) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL	(6) DISCRIMINATION IN SCHOOL
Iraq	0.11*					
	(0.06)					
Pakistan		0.05				
		(0.05)				
Poland			-0.18***			
			(0.04)			
Turkey				0.01		
				(0.05)		
Vietnam					-0.06	
					(0.05)	
Somalia						0.14*
						(0.06)
Age	0.00	-0.00	0.00	-0.00	-0.00	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)
Male	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03	-0.03
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Immigrant	0.09*	0.13***	0.14***	0.12**	0.11**	0.10**
	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
N	1,559	1,559	1,559	1,559	1,559	1,559

	(1)	(2)	(3)
	INST. TRUST	SOCIAL TRUST	ATTACHMENT
Discrimination in school	−0.91*** (0.10)	−0.68*** (0.10)	−0.50*** (0.11)
Age	−0.29*** (0.09)	0.02 (0.09)	0.13 (0.09)
High school as the highest completed educational level	0.13 (0.13)	0.14 (0.13)	0.10 (0.15)
University/collage as the highest completed educational level	0.38* (0.15)	0.70*** (0.15)	0.32 (0.17)
Married	0.17 (0.17)	0.03 (0.17)	−0.13 (0.19)
Male	−0.32** (0.11)	−0.03 (0.11)	−0.35** (0.12)
Immigrant	0.46 (0.37)	0.61 (0.37)	−0.03 (0.40)
Discrimination in school * immigrant	−0.11 (0.15)	−0.31* (0.15)	−0.06 (0.18)
Control for country of origin	x	x	x
N	1,559	1,559	1,484

Table 4 Results from the linear regression of discrimination on individual levels of trust and attachment, minority.

Note: The variable immigrant is opposed to descendants of immigrants. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table A-8 shows similar results using the majority sample. These findings imply that discrimination is negatively linked to trust and attachment, independent of the type of discrimination one is exposed to.

Discrimination and Participation

To investigate the effect of discrimination on participation, we regress the experience of discrimination in school on the various participation variables, controlling for age, educational level, marital status, gender, subgroup, and country of origin.⁵ The results, presented in Table 5, show no evident correlation between discrimination and the various participation categories.

Looking at the background variables, higher education is positively related to being employed and participation in both sports and cultural/ethnic organization. Being married is positively linked with participation in religious groups, yet negatively linked to participation in cultural/ethnic organizations. Men participate to a greater extent in sports and political parties, whereas women to a higher degree are represented in cultural/ethnic organizations.

⁵ The regressions are also conducted with fewer controls, and the results are robust across the different models.

Table 5 Results from a linear regression of discrimination on participation, minority.

Note: The variable immigrant is opposed to descendants of immigrants. Robust standard errors in parentheses.

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
EMPLOYED	PARTICIPATION IN SPORTS	PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PARTY	PARTICIPATION IN AN AID ORGANIZATION OR CHARITY	PARTICIPATION IN A RELIGIOUS GROUP	PARTICIPATION IN A CULTURAL/ ETHNIC ORGANIZATION
Discrimination in school	-0.03 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)	-0.01 (0.02)	0.03 (0.02)
Age	0.04* (0.02)	-0.04 (0.02)	-0.00 (0.01)	-0.03* (0.01)	0.03 (0.02)
High school as the highest completed educational level	0.04 (0.03)	0.08** (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.02 (0.02)	0.05 (0.03)
University/collage as the highest completed educational level	0.21*** (0.03)	0.10** (0.03)	0.01 (0.02)	0.01 (0.02)	0.13*** (0.03)
Married	0.06 (0.03)	-0.04 (0.04)	0.00 (0.02)	0.06* (0.03)	-0.09** (0.03)
Male	0.02 (0.02)	0.21*** (0.02)	0.02* (0.01)	-0.01 (0.02)	-0.06** (0.02)
Immigrant	-0.01 (0.08)	-0.02 (0.08)	-0.03 (0.04)	-0.05 (0.05)	-0.09 (0.08)
Discrimination in school* immigrant	0.02 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)	0.02 (0.02)	0.00 (0.02)	0.01 (0.03)
Control for country of origin	x	x	x	x	x
N	1,559	1,555	1,555	1,555	1,555

In spite of the common understanding of trust as a crucial determinant of well-functioning societies, there is limited empirical evidence on how trust evolves in societies in general and among immigrant minorities in particular. In this article, we investigate how experience of discrimination is related to levels of both institutional and social trust among young adults of immigrant background in Norway. To gain a better understanding of the complexity of factors determining trust, we also investigate the relationship between trust, attachment, and participation, as well as how discrimination is related to these factors. Viewing these aspects collectively provides a more holistic picture of the determinants of trust compared to previous research on this field.

Our results support the hypothesis that lower trust and attachment among minorities may partly be explained by experience of discrimination. We find that reported discrimination in childhood is negatively linked to both institutional trust, social trust, and attachment to Norway. The negative relationship between discrimination and both institutional and social trust is strong and robust across different models. We find a negative relationship between discrimination and social and institutional trust, both among the minority and the majority sample. This suggests that the negative link to discrimination not only holds for discrimination on ethnical or cultural grounds, but that it also holds for other types of discrimination (e.g., based on obesity, sexuality, or 'being different' in some way). However, this finding is particularly relevant for immigrants, as this group experiences discrimination to a greater extent than the majority population and also have lower trust.

There are good reasons to believe that our results imply that discrimination reduces trust, but we cannot rule out other potential mechanisms explaining the results. First, we cannot be certain that this relationship is not driven by other confounding factors. Possible confounding factors, which we are not able to control for in this study, are socio-economic background or marginalization. These factors are likely to affect one's trust and one's likelihood of being discriminated, even if these two factors do not affect each other directly. Second, the relationship may go the other way around, as one's trust level may affect one's exposure to discrimination. We reduce this endogeneity problem to some extent by using experience of discrimination in childhood as our independent variable when we try to explain current levels of trust. By using this time dimension, we are to some extent able to separate the experience of discrimination from the current feeling of trust. However, our measure of discrimination in childhood is reported in retrospect, and both the time lag in itself and experiences later in life are likely to affect the reporting. Low levels of trust and negative experiences in adult life might make you more inclined to perceive experiences in childhood as discrimination and thus report discrimination in school. To fully separate the experience of discrimination from the feeling of trust, we need data from natural experiments or time-series data. Our results still point clearly in the direction that discrimination and trust are negatively linked, which supports the theoretical prediction that discrimination reduces trust levels among immigrants.

The findings support the view of trust as a dynamic concept that is shaped through experiences in life. This is likely to be particularly true for people with immigrant background, who experience larger shifts in their cultural and institutional surroundings through life compared to the majority. We show that the negative relationship between discrimination and institutional trust is of a larger magnitude compared to

the relationship between discrimination and social trust. This is in line with previous findings in the literature of institutional trust as more dynamic than social trust and also supports the theory that institutional trust is an important provider of social trust. Discrimination, in particular, can be interpreted as a lack of protection from relevant institutions, reducing one's institutional trust. Over time, a lack of institutional protection and experiences of social exclusion may also reduce one's social trust.

We find no relationship between discrimination in childhood and participation among immigrant adults, either at work or in other organizational arenas. The relationship between participation and trust is also limited, which is in line with previous empirical studies. There is no relationship between social or institutional trust and participation in either the job market, sports, political parties, cultural/ethnic groups, or religious groups among the minority. We only find a positive link between social trust and participation in aid organizations and charity. Our study cannot determine the causal direction of this relationship, but previous research indicates that this may be driven by the selection of trustful people into such organization rather than participation as such being a driver of trust.

The study shows that people's subjective experience of discrimination, trust, and attachment, which are all found to be connected, differ substantially from their practical choices related to participation in voluntary organization and employment. This may have some important policy implications. Building trust cannot necessarily be viewed as a tool to achieve participation, and vice versa. Discrimination, trust, and attachment might need to be treated separately from participation in the integration policy targeting young immigrants. If the goal is to build trust among the immigrant population, measures to reduce minority-based discrimination might be of greater significance than facilitating participation. On the other hand, if participation is the main goal of integration, building trust might be of lesser importance. However, as trust is seen as one of the key pillars of the Norwegian society, we believe our study point to the importance of implementing and strengthening measures to reduce discrimination. This is particularly important as our results indicate that discrimination does not only have short-term negative effects but is also negatively related to trust several years after. Further research could explore effective measures to prevent discrimination and thereby help to build trust.

The findings of this study should be viewed in the context of the Norwegian society, which is homogenous with a relatively clearly defined minority and majority population. at this point, the Norwegian population differs from several other countries, primarily non-Nordic countries. A negative effect of discrimination on trust may be larger when the social exclusion is perceived as the general opinion of fellow citizens rather than a single opinion or the opinion of a smaller subgroup. In this view, our findings may be more applicable to homogeneous societies. In countries with greater diversity in the population, one can therefore assume that the relationship between discrimination and trust is less clear. Our findings may therefore be of greater relevance to the other Nordic countries as opposed to non-Nordic countries.

ADDITIONAL FILE

The additional file for this article can be found as follows:

- **Appendixes.** Tables A-1 to A-9 and Figure A-1. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.618.s1>

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COMPETING INTERESTS

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

All authors have contributed to the project design and to the writing and revision of the work. The authors have also provided final approval. In addition to this, Julie Willerslev Kjær has carried out the initial restructuring of the data, Ingeborg Sofie Fretheim has carried out the data analysis, and both Ragnhild Haugli Bråten, Arne Holm, and Guro Landsend Henriksen have made crucial contributions to the theoretical framework.

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