Who should receive welfare in a diverse society? Experimental evidence on the impact of ethnicity and foreign birth on willingness to provide welfare in Britain

Abstract

We use experiments embedded in a representative survey to test how ethnicity and migrant status influences the willingness of white majority Britons to assist welfare claimants. We find that white British respondents are consistently less willing to provide assistance when the recipient is non-white or foreign born. The effects of outgroup status cumulate, so claimants who are both non-white and foreign born suffer a larger disadvantage. Several mechanisms play a role in explaining these discriminatory outcomes: economic insecurity encourages sympathy to white native claimants, but not to immigrant or minority claimants; perceptions that welfare claimants are undeserving depress support for minority claimants more than white claimants; and prejudice against a group reduces willingness to assist claimants from that group.

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1. Introduction

The European welfare state is an unusually altruistic set of institutions. Voters in West European societies consent to having a significant portion of their income diverted into a common pool, which is paid out to fellow citizens facing various kinds of misfortune such as illness, unemployment, old age. Public support for such systems requires a degree of solidarity between contributors and recipients, a feeling of "there but for the grace of God go I". Recently, several authors have argued that rising ethnic diversity generated by mass migration to Europe could undermine this solidarity, and hence erode public support for welfare state institutions, because voters will not feel the same sense of mutual obligation to those who are ethnically or religiously different to them, or who have been born and raised outside the country.\(^1\)

This contention has important political implications, as diversity has been rising rapidly in West European democracies. Mass immigration inflows have sharply increased the share of the population born abroad, now above 10% in many West European countries.\(^2\) Europe's migrant populations tend to be more economically and socially deprived than the native born, and therefore more likely to need welfare assistance. The ethnic minority populations of many countries are often even larger - migrant communities in West Europe societies are now well established, and a native born but ethnically distinct "second generation" population has emerged, who also often suffer economic and social disadvantage.\(^3\) The problem of solidarity is therefore not an abstract one: the populations served by Europe's welfare systems are diversifying rapidly, and in many countries immigrants and minorities are over-represented among the claimant population, but under-represented among the more affluent contributor population.

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\(^1\) Alesina and Glaeser, 2004; Banting and Kymlicka (eds) (2006); Putnam (2007); Harell and Soroka (2010)

\(^2\) Castles and Miller, 2009

\(^3\) Heath, Rothon and Kilpi, 2008
Will citizens from Europe's native majority ethnic groups remain willing to support generous welfare policies as the population they assist becomes increasingly different from them in birthplace, appearance and belief? Research in the United States has shown that social solidarity often does not cross ethnic lines, and as a result white Americans' support for welfare policies often depends on whom they are perceived to benefit. American whites often oppose the poverty assistance policies labelled as "welfare", because these are perceived to benefit African Americans disproportionately. Conversely, white Americans strongly support "social security" (federal government assistance for pensioners), in part because this policy is perceived to mainly benefit older whites. These differences manifest themselves despite both policies being ostensibly race-neutral; when explicit targeting of state assistance to minorities is proposed white opposition is even stronger. Beyond specific welfare policies, white Americans' lack of solidarity with African Americans may be an important factor explaining the overall weakness of America's social safety net: because the poor are divided by race, it is difficult to build a winning electoral coalition for redistributive social policies. One prominent study has argued that around half of the difference in the generosity of American and European welfare systems may result solely from this diversity effect.

The argument that rising diversity could undermine support for welfare assistance is intuitive, and supported by empirical evidence from the United States. However, studies examining this argument in Europe have yielded mixed evidence. When looking at state spending on welfare, some have found weaker state spending growth when immigration levels are high while others

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4 Gilens, 1999; Winter, 2006
5 Bobo and Kluegel, 1993; Feldman and Huddy, 2005
6 Alesina and Glaeser, 2004. This claim has, however, been contested - e.g. Pontusson, 2006.
7 Crepaz, 2008, ch.2 provides a good overview
8 Soroka, Johnston and Banting, 2006
argue this link is weak and contingent upon other factors. Similarly ambiguous findings emerge when looking at broader public support for welfare policies. Some studies suggest lower support for redistributive welfare policies when migrant minority populations are high, or among those who hold negative attitudes about immigrants or ethnic minorities. However, others have found little evidence that rising diversity is depressing support for welfare provision.

Researchers focussing on attitudes to immigrant welfare claimants specifically have found strong native opposition to providing immigrants with state assistance but others have found that solidarity between natives and immigrants does emerge, but only after migrants have demonstrated a commitment to their new country, through working or obtaining citizenship.

One explanation for these ambiguous findings is that previous studies have tended to conflate two issues: the willingness of individuals to assist minority groups and the perception that welfare state spending is directed towards minorities. Showing that Europeans living in diverse countries do not, at present, support welfare less than those in homogenous ones does not demonstrate that support for welfare policies is unaffected by the ethnicity of recipients. Citizens in diverse countries may believe that most welfare resources predominantly go to "people like them", and support welfare provision on this basis. Analysing the links between diversity and welfare spending by the state adds a third link in the causal chain, between public opinion and spending outcomes. While state spending frequently is responsive to shifts in public opinion, considerable lags may operate, for example due to the path dependence of complex welfare institutions or because political elites and interest groups resist cuts to welfare spending. Any

10 Mau and Burkhardt, 2009
11 Eger, 2010
12 Senik, Stricknoth and Van Der Straeten, 2009
13 Ford, 2006
14 Evans, 2006
15 Bommes and Geddes, 2000; Van Oorschot, 2006
16 Reeskens and Van Oorschot, 2012
17 Soroka and Wlezien, 2010
18 Esping-Anderson, 1990
19 Any
erosion in public support for welfare provision due to rising diversity may take a long time to manifest itself in policy decisions and spending patterns. There is evidence of such pressures beginning to emerge, in particular through the rise of radical right parties who often campaign heavily on the issue of immigrant and minority groups "abusing" generous welfare systems. 20

The very first link in the causal argument about diversity and welfare is that voters from the ethnic majority group should be less willing to support claimants from minority groups. We focus on this link, using randomised experiments embedded in a representative British national survey to examine how the social identity of a welfare claimant affects the willingness of respondents from the white majority group to assist them. We find evidence that both ethnic difference and foreign birth reduce willingness to assist welfare claimants, and that the effects of markers of difference cumulate, so a claimant who is both foreign born and ethnically different receives less support than someone belonging to just one of these categories. However, we find no evidence that the degree of discrimination relates to the diversity of the population claiming a particular benefit - discrimination against minorities is as prevalent when respondents are asked about pensions or disability benefits, where minorities are under-represented among claimants, as when they are asked about housing or unemployment benefits, where minorities are over-represented.

We propose and test three theoretical mechanisms to explain these discriminatory responses: that solidarity with welfare recipients does not travel across group boundaries, that claimants from minority groups are regarded as less deserving of help and that racial and xenophobic prejudice in the majority population depress support for minority claimants. We find evidence of

19 Pierson (ed), 2002, esp parts II and III.
20 Crepaz, 2008, ch.3; see also Bale (2003) for discussion of the adoption of similar themes by the mainstream right
all three mechanisms operating, though only prejudice against minorities has a consistent negative effect in all the experiments.

Immigration, diversity and the welfare state in Britain

The blueprint for the modern British welfare state was laid out in the Beveridge report\(^{21}\) which called for a comprehensive system of state social insurance and benefit provision. The post-war Labour government implemented many of Beveridge’s main proposals, and since this time social security has been one of the principal items of government spending. In 2009/10, £188 Billion was spent on social security, and around 30 million Britons receive some form of benefit from the system.\(^{22}\) The largest categories of spending are assistance in old age (42% of the total); poverty relief (22%), benefits for families with children (18%); benefits for the sick and disabled (15%) and support for the unemployed (3%).\(^{23}\)

The British welfare system is currently the subject of sustained political reform efforts by a Conservative lead Coalition government looking to reduce welfare spending and increase incentives to work. Reforms being implemented include indexing the state pension age to life expectancy; capping the maximum level of housing benefit; compulsory medical fitness to work assessments for disability benefit recipients; and sanctions for unemployment benefit recipients who fail to search for work or take up job offers.\(^{24}\) In the political and media debate surrounding these reforms welfare recipients were frequently criticized as irresponsible, undeserving or in receipt of unacceptably high levels of state assistance\(^{25}\), a view often shared by the wider

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\(^{21}\) Beveridge, 1942  
\(^{22}\) Jin, Levell and Phillips, 2010  
\(^{23}\) ibid, p.5  
\(^{24}\) These reforms are detailed in the Welfare Reform Act (2012) and the Pensions Act (2011).  
\(^{25}\) Deacon and Patrick (2011)
electorate, as Britons have become steadily less sympathetic towards welfare claimants over the past two decades. 

Large scale migration to Britain began in the 1950s, as citizens of Britain’s former colonies in the Caribbean, Africa and the Indian subcontinent moved in search of work. The British Nationality Act 1948 granted residents of former colonies full British citizenship rights, so Commonwealth migrants could work, vote and claim resources from the state from the day they arrived in Britain. The arrival of large numbers of non-white migrants evoked strong opposition from the white British electorate, and in response to this governments steadily restricted migration rights in a series of reforms starting in 1962, and ending with the Thatcher Government’s British Nationality Act in 1981, which effectively ended the settlement rights of residents in the former colonies. By the time Britain closed the door on colonial immigration, the black and South Asian minority population was around 1.6 million (3% of the total British population). This grew fast during the 1980s and 1990s despite restrictions on primary migration, through family reunion and natural increase. The ethnic minority population passed 3 million in the 2001 Census, 8% of the total. As Britain’s minorities have become more established, the native born share of the total ethnic minority population has risen, doubling from less than 20% in 1981 to around 40% in the most recent data.

Since the late 1990s rapid economic growth and liberalisation of the migration system has resulted in the settlement of a second wave of migrants, from a wider range of countries than the first. As well as continued inflows from the former colonies of the Indian subcontinent, large numbers have come from Central and Eastern Europe following the granting of settlement rights to new members of the EU in 2004, and there has been a sharp increase in migration from

26 Rowlingson, Orton and Taylor (2011)
27 For a detailed review of Britain’s migration experience, see Layton-Henry (1993)
28 Dustmann and Theodoropolous (2010)
Africa, including large numbers of refugees from conflict zones such as Somalia and Zimbabwe. As before this migrant inflow has stimulated a negative public reaction, with voters naming immigration more frequently than any other issue except the economy as the nation's "most important problem"\(^{29}\), and support for fringe right parties campaigning for radical cuts in immigration, and restriction of welfare benefits to natives, hitting an all time high.\(^{30}\) This accelerated inflow of migrants has also been accompanied by continued rapid natural increase in established minority populations, and as a result the past decade produced a very rapid increase in both the foreign born and ethnic minority populations in Britain.

Britain's immigrants and ethnic minorities differ in their economic and social circumstances. Some groups have been relatively prosperous and socially mobile, while others have high levels of poverty and welfare dependence\(^{31}\). Some groups have high rates of residential integration and inter-marriage with whites, but other groups live in relatively segregated communities and seldom inter-marry with the majority population\(^{32}\), leading to concerns about communities leading "parallel lives"\(^{33}\) The group most frequently portrayed as problematic on both counts is the British Muslim community, which is predominantly of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin and around half immigrant and half native born. This group has low education levels, low female labour force participation, large family sizes and high residential segregation, which all combine to produce relatively high rates of deprivation, social isolation and dependence on state welfare benefits.

\(^{29}\) Ford, Morrell and Heath, 2012  
\(^{30}\) Ford and Goodwin, 2010; Ford, Cutts and Goodwin, 2012  
\(^{31}\) Dustmann and Theodoropolous (2010)  
\(^{32}\) Muttarak and Heath, 2010  
\(^{33}\) Cantle, 2001
Patterns of discrimination: Theory and hypotheses

The combination of a complex welfare state under financial pressure and facing reforms designed to restrict access and reduce costs; a diverse ethnic minority population including large migrant and native born minorities; and salient political debates over access to benefits, make Britain an excellent case study for testing the impact of diversity on support for welfare assistance. Our four experiments look at the most expensive benefit in each of the four main categories of state assistance to adults (old age, poverty, disability and unemployment)\(^{34}\): the basic state pension (29% of total welfare spending); housing benefit (11%); disability living allowance (6%) and job seeker's allowance (3%). Taken together, these four benefits cover nearly half of all welfare spending in Britain. The ethnic diversity of the claimant pools for these benefits varies widely - British ethnic minorities are on average younger and (as a consequence) healthier\(^{35}\) than the white population; have large families, tend to live in regions such as London with high housing costs and are more likely to be unemployed. As a result, minorities are over-represented among claimants for housing benefit and jobseeker's allowance, but under-represented among claimants for disability living allowance and the basic state pension.

We focus on four hypotheses about overall willingness to provide assistance to welfare claimants from ethnically different or foreign born minorities, and three hypotheses about the predictors of these reactions. Our first group based hypothesis is that support for assisting claimants from a minority group will always be lower than support for the majority (H1). Any major symbolic barrier between claimant and respondent will throw up barriers, and these will always tend to reduce support for assisting claimants.

\(^{34}\) We focus on adult welfare provision, as the mechanisms we propose for discrimination - lack of solidarity, perceptions that a group is undeserving and prejudice against a group - may operate very differently (or not at all) if the recipient is a child.

\(^{35}\) Ethnic minorities are healthier solely due to their relative youth - they are in fact more likely to suffer health problems than whites of a similar age (Nazroo, 2003)
We also expect differences in how minority groups are perceived to have a significant impact on the patterns of discrimination: *claimants from groups who are perceived to be more different to the majority group will receive less assistance (H2)*. We focus on three group characteristics which should influence such perceptions. Firstly, native born claimants will be perceived as having a stronger claim to assistance than foreign born claimants, as native born individuals are perceived both to be more similar to the majority and to have a stronger normative claim to equal treatment than those born abroad.  

Secondly, we expect British Muslim claimants to suffer stronger discrimination than other minority claimants, owing to the perception that British Muslims are a "problem" or "pariah" minority: overly dependent on economic benefits and poorly integrated into British majority society and its values. Thirdly, we expect white immigrants to be preferred to non-white immigrants, as white European migrants will be perceived as more culturally similar to the majority.

We also compare the effects of combining two markers of difference - ethnicity and foreign birth, and here we expect *claimants who are foreign born AND ethnically different will suffer a larger disadvantage than claimants with only one of these characteristics (H3)*. A large research literature has built up in the United States looking at the interacting effects of race and gender, and showing how disadvantage on each of these dimensions can exert an independent effect, leaving an individual who belongs to two stigmatised groups suffering a double disadvantage. We hypothesise that a similar dynamic will operate on welfare claimants in Britain.

We also take advantage of the complexity of the British benefits system to test whether patterns of discrimination are dependent on the ethnic diversity of the claimant pool. Our expectation is

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36 Miller, 2000; Blinder, Ford and Ivarsflaten, 2012
37 Modood, 2005
38 See Browne and Misra (2003) for a review
that a general perception that minorities gain disproportionate assistance will encourage white voters to discriminate against minority claimants, and such perceptions should be more likely when a higher share of minorities claim a benefit. We therefore expect that white Britons will be more prone to discriminate against minorities when minorities are over-represented in the claimant pool (H4).

We propose and test three explanatory theories for discrimination against minority welfare claimants. These mechanisms are not mutually exclusive, so it is possible that all play a role. Our first theory is that sympathy is ethnically bounded (H5). Factors which promote sympathy towards a white native welfare claimant should not have the same effect on a minority claimant. We put this idea to work in two ways. Firstly, we hypothesise that a general commitment to generous welfare policies will have a stronger positive effect on views of white native claimants than minority claimants; pro-welfare whites will be committed to strong welfare systems for co-ethnics, but not for minorities. Secondly, direct experience of poverty and economic insecurity, or a perception that times are hard, will encourage sympathy towards welfare claimants, but only when they are fellow white natives.

Respondents' willingness to assist welfare claimants may also be driven by perceptions of deservingness: non-white or foreign born claimants will be offered less help because they are regarded as less deserving than white majority claimants (H6). Deservingness perceptions have strong, robust effects on willingness to provide assistance to claimants, and may be rooted in deep seated and automatic cognitive processes driving altruistic impulses39. We hypothesise that a belief that welfare claimants generally do not deserve help will have a stronger negative effect on reactions to minority claimants, as ethnic difference or foreign birth will function for some respondents as a signal that a claimant is less deserving of help.

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The third mechanism we test is prejudice: *white majority respondents will be less willing to assist minority claimants when they are prejudiced against the group(s) to which they belong* (H7). Although there is evidence that prejudice against ethnic minorities is declining in Britain, such hostilities are still held by a significant section of the white electorate\(^{40}\), and hostility to immigrants is more widespread.\(^{41}\) Even if unprejudiced whites treat minority claimants equally, discriminatory treatment from the prejudiced section of the population could produce a significant aggregate difference in the treatment of claimants.

**Data and methods**

The data for this study come from an internet survey conducted by YouGov as part of the Academic Omnibus, a survey which fields multiple question modules from different researchers. YouGov operate an opt-in panel design, with large and demographically balanced panel of over 350,000 respondents, which has been tested extensively to ensure it is fully representative and produces robust results equivalent to those conducted by alternative methods\(^{42}\) (Sanders et al, 2007). Respondents were approached by email to complete the study in July 2011, and a total of 2,117 completed the survey.\(^{43}\) Demographic weights are applied throughout, but have little substantive effect on the results.

Respondents read four short vignettes about individuals who receive welfare benefits, covering the most widely claimed benefit in each of the main categories of welfare spending on adults. These were designed as two pairs with identical experimental manipulations. In each pair, we ask

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\(^{40}\) Ford (2008)  
\(^{41}\) Ford, Morell and Heath (2012)  
\(^{42}\) Sanders et al (2007)  
\(^{43}\) YouGov use a complex algorithm to assign respondents to one of multiple available surveys when they respond to emails requesting participation. As a result, per survey response rates cannot be calculated. Overall response rates to YouGov’s survey requests average 21%. Further details of YouGov’s methodology are provided in the Appendix.
about one benefit which is more frequently claimed by British minorities and one which is less frequently claimed. In the first pair we ask about housing benefit (11% non-white claimants)\textsuperscript{44} and the basic state pension (4% non-white)\textsuperscript{45}. The housing benefit experiment describes a lifelong London resident with five children, who currently receives £500 a week in benefits, and spends £400 of this on rent. Respondents were randomly allocated to one of three treatment conditions - "white", "black", or "Muslim Asian". Ethnic variations were introduced using names and heritage. In the white condition, the respondent is introduced as "David Caitland", while his heritage is summarised by saying "his parents came to London from Sunderland before he was born". In the Muslim Asian condition, the respondent's name is "Mohammed Quereshi", whose parents came to London from Pakistan before he was born while the Black Caribbean claimant is "Joseph Bravo" whose parents came to London from Jamaica. Both elements act as cues about the claimant's ethnicity: minorities in Britain have recognisable names, and the link between ethnicity and origin country is strong - those with roots in Pakistan or Bangladesh are likely to be identified as Muslim Asians, while those with roots in the Caribbean are likely to be recognised as black. After reading the vignette, respondents were asked whether they feel the level of benefits the claimant receives is too high, about right or too low, giving answers on a five point scale ranging from "much too high" to "much too low".\textsuperscript{46} We code these responses on a 0-1 scale.

The pensions experiment describes a man of fifty who is angered by the rise in the state pension age from 65 to 67. He is described as having worked his whole life and never claimed benefits, which should encourage respondents to view him as deserving. Respondents were randomly assigned to one of three treatment conditions: "white", "black" and "Muslim Asian", with the

\textsuperscript{44} Family Resources Survey 2006-9
\textsuperscript{45} Calculated by authors from ONS estimates of ethnic breakdown of population over state pension age of 65
\textsuperscript{46} Respondents were also asked what sum of benefits they themselves would award (in increments of £10). This yielded very similar results.
ethnic identity of the claimant signalled as before by name and family origin. Respondents were asked whether they would support or oppose providing the claimant with a pension at 65, "even if it means higher taxes for those still working", thus making it clear that early retirement comes at a potential cost to others. Once again five response categories were available, from "strongly support" to "strongly oppose", which are recoded on a 0-1 scale.

The second pair of experiments look at unemployment benefit (16% ethnic minority claimants) and disability benefit (7%). They feature four treatment conditions: "white native"; "white immigrant", "Asian Muslim native" and "Asian Muslim immigrant". The disability experiment describes a claimant registered as unfit to work owing to back pains following a car accident. We use an invisible medical condition of ambiguous severity to maximise response variance: it would be difficult to justify refusing benefits if the disabling condition were more severe and visible. The name of the claimant is manipulated as before to be either prototypically white British (David Caitland) or South Asian Muslim (Ahmed Khan). The respondent is also described as either a lifelong resident or a migrant - from Ireland (white immigrant condition) or from Pakistan (Muslim immigrant condition) - who arrived five years ago and recently gained citizenship. This last wording maximises the potential for equal treatment by making it clear that the claimant is a long term resident with full legal rights to claim benefits. Respondents were told the disability benefit the claimant receives - £66.35 a week - and asked whether they feel this payment is "too high", "about right", or "too low". Five response categories were provided and answers coded on a 0-1 scale.

47 We did not employ black treatments in these experiments as the increase in the number of treatments would have reduced statistical power.
48 Ireland is used because this enables a realistic manipulation of migrant status to be made while keeping the name of the claimant constant: Irish often have very similar names to British natives, and have long formed a significant stream of migration to Britain.
49 Blinder, Ford and Ivarsflaten, 2012
50 Benefit awards are derived from standard British government payments for Disability Living Allowance and Jobseeker's Allowance.
The unemployment benefit experiment describes a 35 year old claimant who lost his job six months ago. Once again prototypical British and South Asian Muslim names were used, and immigration status is manipulated in the same way as in the disability experiment. Respondents were again told the benefit the claimant receives - £65.50 a week - and asked whether they feel this payment is "too high", "about right", or "too low". Five response categories were provided and answers recoded on a 0-1 scale. Table 1 summarizes the manipulations undertaken in each vignette.

Table 1: Summary of experimental manipulations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Welfare benefit</th>
<th>First manipulation</th>
<th>Second manipulation</th>
<th>Dependent variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pair 1: Ethnicity only</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>View of benefit level (too low or too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing benefit</td>
<td>Ethnicity: signalled by name and parents' birthplace</td>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11% ethnic minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claimants</td>
<td>Conditions: white, black, South Asian Muslim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensions</td>
<td>Ethnicity: signalled by name and birthplace</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Support for providing government pension to claimant at 65, even if means higher taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4% ethnic minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claimants</td>
<td>Conditions: white, black, South Asian Muslim</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pair 2: Ethnicity and</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>migrant status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disability benefit</td>
<td>Ethnicity: signalled by name</td>
<td>Immigration status</td>
<td>Benefit level (too low or too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7% ethnic minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claimants</td>
<td>Conditions: white, South Asian Muslim</td>
<td>Conditions: native born, immigrant arrived 5 years ago with citizenship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment benefit</td>
<td>Ethnicity: signalled by name</td>
<td>Immigration status</td>
<td>Benefit level (too low or too high)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16% ethnic minority</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>claimants</td>
<td>Conditions: white, South Asian Muslim</td>
<td>Conditions: native born, immigrant arrived 5 years ago with citizenship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Respondents were additionally asked if they would support providing the claimant with extra training to help them find work. The findings from this question were similar to those from the main benefits question. Full question wordings are provided in the Appendix.
The first analysis section presents the experimental treatment effects, testing the first four hypotheses about patterns of discrimination. As respondents are randomly assigned to conditions, the treatments are uncorrelated with respondents’ demography and attitudes, so there is no need to control for confounding variables as is typical in regression analysis of observational data\(^{53}\). As Mutz (2011) observes: “Investigators are generally better served by relying on the simplicity and elegance of the experimental design rather than formulating highly complex multivariate models….Random assignment to conditions means that the very notion of “control” variables makes no sense because control is already embedded in the design itself.”\(^{54}\)

The second section tests the three theories of discrimination, by introducing moderating variables which are interacted with the treatment effects.\(^{55}\) To test the sympathy mechanism, we employ a scale of support for an expansive welfare state\(^{56}\) and three different economic measures: incomes in the bottom quartile, perceptions of personal economic circumstances and perceptions about the state of the national economy. To test the deservingness mechanism, we employ a scale measuring the deservingness of welfare claimants in general.\(^{57}\) To test the prejudice mechanism, we employ measures of social distance from black and Muslim minorities in the first two experiments, and social distance from Muslims and hostility to immigrants in the second two experiments.\(^{58}\)

\(^{53}\) Mutz, 2011; Shadish et al, 2002  
\(^{54}\) Mutz, 2011: p.127  
\(^{55}\) Details of all variables, and the scales constructed from them, are provided in the Appendix  
\(^{56}\) Cronbach’s alpha 0.82  
\(^{57}\) Cronbach’s alpha 0.86  
\(^{58}\) Social distance measured using two items for each group - opposition to a minority boss (0-10 scale) and opposition to relative marrying a minority (0-10 scale). Hostility to immigrants measured using a four item scale (Cronbach’s alpha 0.84)
Treatment effects: ethnicity, migrant status and "double disadvantage"

Figure 1: Perceptions of housing benefit levels, by treatment condition

![Figure 1: Perceptions of housing benefit levels, by treatment condition](chart.png)

Figure 1 shows the pattern of white responses by treatment condition in the housing benefit experiment. We find a clear, and highly significant $^{59}$ difference between the Muslim condition and the white condition, but no difference between the white and black conditions. This supports hypothesis 2 is supported - white Britons are more discriminatory towards the more different Muslim minority - but not hypothesis, as white Britons do not discriminate against all minorities. The discrimination against the Muslim claimant is substantial - the proportion of respondents saying the housing benefit payment to "Mohammed Quereshi" is too high is 53% - 12 percentage points higher than the figures in the black and white treatments. In a follow up question where respondents were asked how much money they would be willing to pay the

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$^{59}$ $p<0.001$ for differences between Muslim condition and both others. Bonferroni multiple comparison test in one-way ANOVA is applied here and in all subsequent significance testing of differences between conditions.
claimant, the average sum offered to the Muslim claimant was more than 10% lower than the average offer to the other two claimants.

The pattern of effects in the pensions experiment, shown in Figure 2, is strikingly different. Recall our expectation that ethnicity should have less effect, as black and Muslim Britons constitute a much smaller proportion of state pension recipients (H4). The responses do not support this expectation. White respondents are significantly more negative about allowing either the black or the Muslim worker to retire at 65 than about an identically described white worker.\textsuperscript{60} Once again the effects are substantively important as well as statistically robust: support for providing the worker with an early pension at 65 drops from 52% in the white condition to 41% in the black condition and 37% in the Muslim condition. While Muslims are singled out for discriminatory treatment in the housing benefit experiment, in pensions, an area where race is less salient, blacks and Muslims are both discriminated against, and to a near-equal extent. This unexpected finding may be due to the social distribution of prejudice against minorities - pensions are an issue of special concern to the old, who are also much more likely than the young to be prejudiced against minorities. If we split our sample by age we find support for this idea - whites who are below the median sample age of 48 are less supportive of early pension provision overall, but treat all three claimants equally. Whites who are above the median age discriminate strongly in favour of the white claimant.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{60} p<0.001 for differences between each non-white condition and the white condition. The difference between the black and Muslim conditions is not significant (p>0.5)

\textsuperscript{61} Difference between white claimant and both minority claimants significant p<0.000 among those over 48, insignificant p>0.5 among those 48 and under.
The second set of experiments examine the effects of ethnicity and migrant status, and how they interact. Figure 3 plots the responses in the disability benefit experiment by treatment condition. We find evidence in support of three hypotheses here. Firstly, all minority claimants are treated significantly worse than the white native claimant (H1) - the difference ranges from 11 to 25 percentage points and is always statistically significant. Secondly, groups that are more similar to the white majority are consistently favoured (H2). The native born are favoured over immigrants: 62% think the disability benefit payment is "too low" when the claimant is a white native, but only 43% feel this way when the claimant is a white immigrant; 51% think the native born Muslim Briton receives too little, this drops to 37% for a Muslim immigrant claimant. Both

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62 p<0.003 or lower for all comparisons
differences are statistically significant\textsuperscript{63} Respondents also favour whites over Muslims: the proportion saying the Muslim native receives too little is 11 points below the figure for the white native; for Muslim and white immigrants the difference is five points. Again, both differences are statistically significant.\textsuperscript{64} Thirdly, the Muslim migrant claimant suffers a cumulative "double disadvantage"(H3): support for assisting him is significantly lower than for a claimant who is Muslim, but native, or white, but an immigrant.\textsuperscript{65}

\textbf{Figure 3: Perceptions of disability benefit levels, by treatment condition}


\textsuperscript{63} p<0.001 for both comparisons
\textsuperscript{64} p<0.003 for white native vs Muslim native comparison; p<0.001 for white immigrant vs Muslim immigrant comparison
\textsuperscript{65} p<0.001 for both comparisons
A similar pattern of effects is found in the unemployment benefit experiment, shown in Figure 4. The white native claimant again receives significantly better treatment than any minority claimant (H1) - the proportion thinking the white native's unemployment benefit is "too low" is 62%, 11 points higher than for any other group. The more "deserving" groups are also consistently preferred (H2) - natives are treated better than immigrants, and white claimants are regarded more positively than Muslim claimants. We also again find that disadvantage cumulates, so the Muslim immigrant claimant faces a "double disadvantage" (H3). However, we do not find much evidence to support the idea that discrimination will be more intense when minorities are over-represented among claimants (H4): the pattern of responses in the unemployment benefit experiment, where minority claimants are over-represented among claimants, is very similar to the disability benefit experiment, where minority claimants are under-represented.

---

66 The differences are all significant at p<0.01 except the difference between white native and white immigrant where p=0.06.
67 This difference is highly significant for Muslims (p<0.001) but only borderline significant for whites (p=0.06)
68 p<0.01 for natives, p<0.001 for immigrants
69 The Muslim migrant claimant is treated significantly worse than all three of the other claimants (p<0.001 in all three tests)
Drivers of discrimination: sympathy, desiringness and prejudice

All four experiments have shown a robust pattern of discrimination against immigrant and ethnic minority welfare claimants by white Britons. We now turn to testing possible mechanisms generating these patterns of discrimination, using ordered logistic regression models which interact these explanatory factors with the treatment conditions. Table 2 summarises the findings. We find that prejudice against minorities is the most consistent predictor of discriminatory behaviour: significant prejudice-treatment interactions were found in all four experiments (H7). We also find evidence for the sympathy mechanism (H5) in the two immigration experiments, where negative views about the national economy were associated with
greater generosity towards white native claimants, but not towards minority claimants.\textsuperscript{70}

However, we do not find any evidence for the second sympathy mechanism: pro-welfare attitudes does not increase sympathy towards white claimants more than towards minority claimants in any of our experiments. Those who favour higher welfare spending are consistently more generous to claimants regardless of ethnicity or birthplace. Finally, we found evidence that those who perceive welfare claimants as undeserving are harsher on minority claimants in three of the four experiments (H6), although in one case the interaction is no longer significant once prejudice interactions are introduced.

**Table 2: Overall pattern of effects in the four experiments**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mechanism</th>
<th>Housing</th>
<th>Pensions</th>
<th>Unemployment</th>
<th>Disability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Sympathy</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i) Pro-welfare whites more willing to help co-ethnics than minorities</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(ii) Economically insecure whites more willing to help co-ethnics than minorities</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES (national economy)</td>
<td>YES (national economy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. Deservingness</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perception that welfare claimants are undeserving depresses support for minority claimants more than white claimants</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>YES*</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>3. Prejudice:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility to minorities depresses support for non-white claimants, but not for white claimants</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>YES</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textsuperscript{*}Interactions significant in model with sympathy, but become insignificant when prejudice controls added

\textsuperscript{70}The other economic measures we tested had no significant effect and so were dropped from the final models
We now turn to the detailed results, starting with the housing benefit experiment, presented in Table 3. We find support for the prejudice and deservingness mechanisms: those who express more desire for social distance from Muslims discriminate more strongly against the Muslim claimant, while those who regard welfare claimants in general as less deserving are also harsher on the Muslim claimant. We do not find evidence for the sympathy mechanism - measures of economic insecurity have little effect on attitudes in any of the treatments, so they are dropped from the final models. However, we do find evidence than those in the lowest income quartile discriminate against Muslims more than those with higher incomes.

The factors driving discriminatory reactions to the Muslim claimant - prejudice, hostility to welfare recipients, and higher discrimination by the poor - do not have the same effects in the black condition. The interaction effects with the black condition are smaller and fall short of statistical significance in the combined model. This would support the view that groups who are more different from the majority - or more politically salient - are more likely to be the target of discrimination. One possible contributor to this is negative media stories focussing on Muslim housing benefit claimants, either claimants making very large claims due to a large family, or claims made by Muslims with links to terrorist groups. This may explain the low income interaction: those on low incomes may regard Muslims as particularly threatening competitors for access to scarce state housing assistance.

71 All the presented results come from ordered logistic regression models. We also ran OLS regressions for all the presented models, with unchanged results. These OLS models are used for presenting the graphical illustrations of the interaction effects, as they are easier to present and interpret.
Table 2: Perceptions of benefit provision to housing claimant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Perception of housing benefit provision (5 point 0-1 scale; higher scores = more positive)</th>
<th>Model 1: Prejudice</th>
<th>Model 2: Deservingness</th>
<th>Model 3: Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>-1.66 (0.12)**</td>
<td>-3.29 (0.25)**</td>
<td>-3.56 (0.27)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 2</td>
<td>-0.45 (0.11)**</td>
<td>-1.97 (0.25)**</td>
<td>-2.21 (0.26)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 3</td>
<td>1.28 (0.12)**</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.24)</td>
<td>-0.20 (0.25)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 4</td>
<td>3.00 (0.17)**</td>
<td>1.83 (0.26)**</td>
<td>1.65 (0.27)**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Treatment condition (ref: white claimant)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Black claimant</th>
<th></th>
<th>Muslim claimant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Black condition</td>
<td>0.22 (0.15)</td>
<td>1.04 (0.31)**</td>
<td>0.86 (0.33)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim condition</td>
<td>-0.06 (0.16)</td>
<td>0.08 (0.05)</td>
<td>0.81 (0.38)*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prejudice

| Social distance from black Britons (0-1 scale) | 0.28 (0.44) | * | 0.24 (0.43) |
| Social distance from Muslim Britons (0-1 scale) | -1.12 (0.38)** | * | -0.55 (0.39) |

Prejudice*Treatment interactions

| Black condition*Social distance from blacks | -0.66 (0.41) | * | -0.62 (0.51) |
| Muslim condition*social distance from Muslims | -1.01 (0.41)* | * | -1.11 (0.44)* |

Deservingness of welfare recipients

| Welfare recipients undeserving (0-1 scale) | * | -2.85 (0.41)** | -3.06 (0.44)** |

Deservingness*Treatment interactions

| Black condition*undeserving | * | -1.44 (0.51)** | -1.01 (0.54) |
| Muslim condition*undeserving | * | -1.93 (0.59)** | -1.37 (0.64)* |

Income

| Self-reported income in lowest quartile | 0.52 (0.26)* | 0.30 (0.27) | 0.24 (0.28) |

Income*Treatment interactions

| Black condition*lowest income quartile | -0.47 (0.36) | -0.39 (0.37) | -0.35 (0.38) |
| Muslim condition*lowest income quartile | -1.21 (0.39)** | -1.23 (0.38)** | -1.34 (0.41)** |

Pseudo R squared

| 0.03 | 0.08 | 0.10 |

N

| 1682 | 1765 | 1670 |

Ordered logistic regression, standard errors in parentheses.
Significant coefficients in bold: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

Table 4 presents the results for the pensions experiment. We expected less racialised reactions to pensions, given that minorities are under-represented amongst pensioners, but in fact we find that prejudice is the only significant mechanism driving discrimination, although the
Deservingness interactions come close to significance when included on their own. The absence of a deservingness effect may reflect a general tendency to regard pensioners as particularly deserving of state assistance.\textsuperscript{72} The main effect of social distance from black Britons is also significant, and positive, meaning that higher levels of social distance from black Britons are associated with higher support for the white claimant. This may be due to the age distribution of prejudice against blacks: older whites are more positive about early pensions, but are also more prejudiced against blacks.

**Table 3: Support for provision of early pension benefits**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for early pension provision (5 point 0-1 scale)</th>
<th>Model 1: Prejudice</th>
<th>Model 2: Deservingness</th>
<th>Model 3: Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>-2.14 (0.12)**</td>
<td>-2.88 (0.23)**</td>
<td>-2.90 (0.23)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 2</td>
<td>-0.68 (0.10)**</td>
<td>-1.40 (0.22)**</td>
<td>-1.40 (0.22)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 3</td>
<td>0.13 (0.10)</td>
<td>-0.59 (0.23)**</td>
<td>-0.58 (0.22)****</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 4</td>
<td>1.74 (0.12)****</td>
<td>1.05 (0.22)**</td>
<td>1.06 (0.22)****</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Treatment condition (ref: white claimant)*

| Black claimant                                         | -0.25 (0.13)        | -0.06 (0.34)           | -0.07 (0.35)      |
| Muslim claimant                                        | -0.30 (0.15)*       | -0.04 (0.31)           | -0.03 (0.31)      |

*Prejudice*

| Social distance from black Britons                     | 0.94 (0.36)**       | *                      | 1.02 (0.36)****   |
| Social distance from Muslim Britons                   | 0.31 (0.28)         | *                      | 0.54 (0.29)       |

*Prejudice*\*Treatment interactions*

| Black condition*Social distance from blacks            | -1.85 (0.54)**      | *                      | -2.01 (0.54)****  |
| Muslim cond*social distance from Muslims              | -1.26 (0.37)**      | *                      | -1.19 (0.38)****  |

*Deservingness of welfare recipients*

| Welfare recipients undeserving (0-1 scale)             | -0.85 (0.40)*       | -1.34 (0.39)**         |

*Deservingness*\*Treatment interactions*

| Black condition*undeserving                            | -0.70 (0.58)        | -0.18 (0.59)           |
| Muslim condition*undeserving                           | -1.04 (0.54)        | -0.54 (0.56)           |

*R squared                                              | 0.01                | 0.02                   | 0.02              |

*N*                                                     | 1687                | 1778                   | 1676              |

Source: YouGov Academic Omnibus, June 2011

Standard errors in parentheses.

Significant effects in bold: ** p<0.01, * p<0.05

\textsuperscript{72} Van Oorschot, 2006
Table 4 presents the results from the disability experiment. We find evidence that all three theoretical mechanisms are contributing to discrimination here. Prejudice against immigrants or Muslims significantly reduces support for the Muslim migrant claimant, but not the other claimants. The perception that welfare claimants are undeserving operates similarly, having a significantly larger impact on the Muslim migrant claimant than the other claimants. Finally, we see evidence here that sympathy with welfare claimants may be ethnically bounded: negative perceptions about the national economy prompt more sympathetic views of the white native claimant, but not of any of the other claimants. A similar, but somewhat weaker, pattern of effects is found in the unemployment benefit experiment, which is not shown in detail here for reasons of space.

73 The effects of attitudes to immigrants and attitudes to Muslims operate so similarly that both cannot be included in the model. Models using attitudes to Muslims are presented in the Appendix.

74 Regression results from the unemployment experiment can be found in the Appendix.
Table 4: Support for provision of disability benefit

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support for disability benefit provision</th>
<th>Model 1: Prejudice</th>
<th>Model 2: Deservingness</th>
<th>Model 3: Sympathy</th>
<th>Model 4: Combined</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cut 1</td>
<td>-3.91 (0.30)**</td>
<td>-5.53 (0.31)**</td>
<td>-1.97 (0.42)**</td>
<td>-3.79 (0.53)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 2</td>
<td>-2.61 (0.29)**</td>
<td>-4.18 (0.29)**</td>
<td>-0.73 (0.42)</td>
<td>-2.44 (0.52)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 3</td>
<td>-0.69 (0.28)*</td>
<td>-2.09 (0.28)**</td>
<td>1.17 (0.41)**</td>
<td>-0.32 (0.52)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cut 4</td>
<td>0.71 (0.28)</td>
<td>-0.55 (0.28)</td>
<td>2.60 (0.42)**</td>
<td>1.29 (0.52)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treatment condition (ref: white native)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim native</td>
<td>-0.01 (0.36)</td>
<td>-0.17 (0.38)</td>
<td>0.68 (0.55)</td>
<td>1.39 (0.72)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White immigrant</td>
<td>-0.45 (0.36)</td>
<td>-0.37 (0.42)</td>
<td>0.25 (0.50)</td>
<td>0.75 (0.71)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim immigrant</td>
<td>-0.03 (0.38)</td>
<td>0.12 (0.40)</td>
<td>-0.001 (0.50)</td>
<td>2.00 (0.70)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prejudice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostility to immigrants</td>
<td>-0.36 (0.47)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>0.89 (0.61)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim native*hostility to immigrants</td>
<td>-0.85 (0.61)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.87 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White immigrant*hostility to immigrants</td>
<td>-0.46 (0.63)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.55 (0.78)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim immigrant*hostility to immigrants</td>
<td>-1.83 (0.63)**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-1.52 (0.75)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deservingness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welfare recipients undeserving</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-2.63 (0.47)**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-3.19 (0.57)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim native*undeserving</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.60 (0.64)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.12 (0.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White immigrant*undeserving</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.68 (0.70)</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-0.11 (0.83)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim immigrant*underserving</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-2.20 (0.69)**</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-1.61 (0.78)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sympathy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Worried about nat econ sit</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>2.25 (0.52)**</td>
<td>2.17 (0.57)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim native*Neg nat econ</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-1.56 (0.70)*</td>
<td>-1.84 (0.76)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White imm*Neg nat econ</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-1.22 (0.66)</td>
<td>-1.47 (0.72)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Muslim imm*Neg nat econ</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>-1.42 (0.68)*</td>
<td>-1.91 (0.71)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R squared</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.08</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>1716</td>
<td>1730</td>
<td>1722</td>
<td>1693</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Robust standard errors in parentheses
** p<0.01, * p<0.05

The substantive impact of the interactions found in our model is illustrated in Figures 6-8, which show predicted reactions to different benefit claimants across the full range of the dependent variables. We can see the interaction mechanisms operating in three different ways. In Figure 6, which shows the impact of prejudice against blacks on support for early pensions awards, we see a divergence in support as prejudice rises. Those reporting no prejudice against blacks treat the...
black and the white claimant equally, then as levels of prejudice rise support for the white claimant rises but support for the black claimant falls. At the highest levels of reported prejudice, support for the black claimant is only half that found for the white claimant.

**Figure 6: Prejudice against blacks and predicted support for early pension provision, by ethnicity treatment**

Simulation run using Clarify\(^75\) on ordinary least squares version of pensions Model 1. Dotted lines show confidence intervals.

Figure 7 shows the effects of views about the deservingness of welfare claimants in general on reactions to the white and Muslim claimants in the housing experiment. In both conditions, those who regard welfare claimants in general as less deserving are less generous, but the shift in attitudes as we move up the scale is larger when the welfare claimant is Muslims: support scores

\(^75\) King, Tomz and Wittenberg, 2000
decline 0.35 points across the full range of the deservingness scale in the white condition, but fall 0.57 points in the Muslim condition. The net consequence is that those sympathetic to welfare claimants treat both claimants equally, while those who regard welfare claimants as undeserving discriminate against Muslims.

**Figure 7: Perceptions about the deservingness of welfare recipients and predicted support for housing benefit claimant, by ethnicity treatment**

Simulation run using Clarify on ordinary least squares version of housing Model 2. Dotted lines show confidence intervals.

Figure 8 illustrates the third mechanism - sympathy - plotting predicted support for claimants in the disability experiment against views about the economy. The minority of white British respondents who are optimistic about the economy treat the white native and Muslim immigrant claimant equally, but as we move right across the graph and economic assessments become more
negative support for the two claimants diverges. Support for the white native claimant rises sharply, suggesting greater sympathy for the claimant's circumstances among those worried about the broader economic situation, but this does not occur in the Muslim immigrant condition, suggesting such sympathies are reduced by foreign birth and ethnic difference.

**Figure 8: Perceptions of national economic conditions and support for disability claimant, by ethnicity condition**

Simulation run using Clarify on ordinary least squares version of disability Model 3. Dotted lines show confidence intervals.
Discussion

This paper has focussed on a question at the heart of debates about how rising diversity will affect support for welfare policies in Europe: do white majority group members discriminate against welfare claimants who are different to them? Our experiments provide strong evidence that, in Britain, they do. The randomised experimental design allow us to attribute this discrimination with confidence to the claimants identities, while embedding the experiments in a nationally representative survey give us confidence that the results generalise to the wider population. Native born claimants are regarded as more deserving of help than the foreign born, holding ethnicity constant, while white claimants are regarded as more deserving of help than non-white, holding birthplace constant. Muslim claimants suffered worse treatment than black minority claimants in one of our experiments, though not in a second. We found substantial discrimination of some kind in all four of our welfare experiments, on benefits where minorities are over-represented, like housing benefit, and on benefits where minorities are under-represented, like pensions. Moreover, these effects cumulate, so a Muslim immigrant faces a more powerful negative reaction than someone who is either a Muslim or an immigrant.

We tested three possible mechanisms for discrimination and found evidence that all three operate at least some of the time. The most consistent effects were from prejudice: white majority members who are hostile to a minority are less willing to assist them, but not less willing to assist a white native claimant. Conversely, those who score low on prejudice generally treat claimants equally, suggesting long run declines in prejudice in Britain may reduce the impact of this form of discrimination. There was also evidence that anxiety about the economy boosts sympathy to co-ethnic welfare claimants but does not have the same effect when the claimant is from a minority group. Respondents may look more kindly on welfare claimants when they can
picture themselves needing the same help, but this only happens when the claimant is a fellow native born majority member. Finally, we also found evidence that those who regard welfare claimants in general as undeserving were harsher on minority claimants than white claimants, suggesting that those with negative about welfare recipients perceive minority claimants to be particularly undeserving.

These experiments represent an important first step in understanding the new politics of welfare in diverse European societies, but many questions remain unanswered. Firstly, how does ethnicity interact with other contextual information to drive reactions to individual welfare claimants? The brief vignettes examined here, presenting verbal information only and with very little context, bear little resemblance to the more complex, visually and normatively loaded media and political narratives in which citizens receive most of their information about the welfare system. Our experiments provide a convincing minimal test for discrimination effects - it seems likely that if respondents discriminate on the basis of name and birthplace alone, in response to brief stories told in neutral language, they will be even more willing to discriminate in response to more heavily loaded political and media stories. But it is clearly desirable to test the impact of more realistic stimuli on citizen reactions, using mock print or film news reports. This is particularly pertinent in the British context, where a highly politicised print media plays a central role in debates over immigration, multiculturalism and welfare, and often frames the political narrative on these issues.\footnote{Craig, 2007}

Future work should also investigate how views of specific welfare claimants translate into general judgements about the welfare system. The public tend to perceive welfare in terms of exchanges
between individuals, and hence to base their judgements about welfare in general on their moral judgements about the deservingness of individual claimants, a tendency which is so persistent that it may have evolutionary roots\textsuperscript{77}. Given this tendency, the moral narratives political and media elites use to frame public debates may play a crucial role in framing perceptions about welfare. If minorities are perceived as inherently less deserving of help due to their difference from the majority group, then stories which focus on "undeserving" minority claimants may have a particularly strong impact on public support for welfare in general.\textsuperscript{78} Campaigns against welfare recipients may have a particular resonance when they also emphasise the present difficult economic and budgetary situation, encouraging voters to think of welfare assistance as unaffordable as well as unjust. Conversely, a campaign in the opposite direction, emphasising solidarity between those who pay in to welfare state and those who receive from it, or focusing on "deserving" welfare recipients, may have the opposite effect. Such campaigns may also bring in economic arguments, focusing on the greater need of claimants in a depressed economy. The broader political and institutional context may also play a role in driving such perceptions: voter responses to such campaigns may be different in countries where elite consensus over desirability of strong welfare institutions is stronger, or welfare provision is more comprehensive, so more voters directly experience benefits from the system. Further experiments on elite framing effects, including comparative research across countries with different party structures and welfare regimes, are needed to address these questions.

Support from the electorate is crucial for the persistence of a generous welfare state, particularly in the harsh economic circumstances prevalent today. Predictions of the demise of welfare state systems following the economic difficulties of the 1970s/80s have proved premature,

\textsuperscript{77} Petersen, 2012
\textsuperscript{78} Gilens, 1999
underestimating the strength of elite and public commitment to these systems of assistance. Our results suggest that rising ethnic diversity presents a new challenge to redistributive welfare policy regimes. In almost all European societies, immigrants and ethnic minorities are over-represented among the economically and socially deprived groups in need of welfare assistance, and are growing rapidly. If voters from the majority group are less willing to assist claimants who are foreign born or ethnically different from them, this has the potential to transform the terms of debate over welfare. Politicians on the right, seeking cutbacks in welfare assistance, will be tempted to use ethnic difference to stigmatise welfare recipients. Politicians on the left, seeking to defend welfare policy in a harsh climate, will face a tough dilemma: defending inclusive welfare policies risks undermining majority group support for benefits which assist minorities, but restricting access to welfare on grounds of nativity or ethnicity risks condemning minority groups to even worse deprivation.

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79 Brooks and Manza (2007); Pierson (ed) (2001)
References


Senik, Claudia; Holger Stichnoth and Karine Van Der Straeten (2009)"Immigration and Natives Attitudes Towards the Welfare State: Evidence from the European Social Survey", Social Indicators Research 91(3): 345-70


