

Immigration into Europe: Economic Discrimination, Violence, and Public Policy

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Abstract

Immigration has irreversibly changed Western European demographics over the past generation. This article reviews recent research drawing implications of this migration for labor-market discrimination and for immigrant–state and immigrant–native violence. It further reports on research measuring the effects of political institutions and policy regimes on reducing the barriers to immigrants' economic integration. In the course of reviewing the literature, we discuss some of the methodological challenges that scholars have not fully confronted in trying to identify the causes and consequences of discrimination and violence. In doing so, we highlight that future work needs to pay greater attention to sequencing, selection, and demographic effects. Further, we suggest ways to resolve contradictory findings in regard to preferred policies aimed at advancing immigrants' economic performance.

INTRODUCTION

From a neoclassical economic framework, the returns to the free movement of labor should be strongly positive. But those theorized gains are generally considered to be insufficiently realized. Political economists have offered a plethora of reasons for this. The high transaction costs of migration to new political and cultural milieus, in the form of border controls and the issuance of limited work permits, are surely one constraint. The resistance of populations in high-wage countries to policies that would ease these transaction costs clearly dampens the actual rates of migration to levels below what would be economically optimal in the aggregate. These political economy concerns are reflected in mature literatures.¹

Additionally, the migrants who do manage to settle in host countries often face barriers when trying to advance economically. In many receiving states, first- and second-generation immigrant and refugee populations (henceforth called immigrants) have higher unemployment rates and earn lower wages than do natives. Immigrants' relative economic underperformance is especially problematic in Western European countries—the focus of our review—where the foreign-born are, on average, twice as likely to be jobless as are natives (see **Figure 1**). For many groups, this disadvantage persists or even grows over generations (Algan et al. 2010). Given that immigrants are a large and growing share of the population across European economies, and that immigration will likely continue owing to ailing pension systems, low native fertility rates, and labor shortages, the economic integration of immigrants presents a considerable policy challenge (see sidebar *What Is Integration?*).

WHAT IS INTEGRATION?

“Integration” occurs when all barriers to full participation in a society have been dismantled (Kymlicka 1995, pp. 15–17; 2012, pp. 14–15). It is distinct from “assimilation” as it does not require elimination of cultural distinctiveness, although it does demand fluency in at least one of the national languages. Here we address only labor-market barriers, but there are political and social barriers as well. Integration should be, according to Kymlicka’s normative theory, the goal in public policy for immigrant communities.

In this review, we explore some of the causes of this underperformance from a political science perspective. To do so, we focus on domestic barriers and pay particular attention to the ways in which discrimination, violence, and state policy affect the economic returns to immigration. In the first section that follows, we re-examine the broad question of discrimination, returning to debates on cultural versus economic threat. Recent evidence identifies a cultural threat that dominates economic threat, but we suggest that future research would benefit from telling a richer theoretical story that moves beyond this dichotomy. In a second section, we examine research on violence between immigrants and native populations as well as violence between immigrant populations and state actors. Both these forms of violence have a potentially large negative impact on realizing the returns to migration, and therefore the findings we report merit continued study. A third section raises general inferential issues hindering progress in both the discrimination and the violence literatures. We then discuss institutions and policy regimes that may affect economic outcomes by mitigating discrimination against immigrants. Finally, we summarize some broad findings in

¹Economics has examined immigrants’ wage effects and has developed models of discriminatory behavior seeking to understand the causal factors that sustain it, even when such behavior appears to defy any rational economic logic (see Hanson 2009 for a review).

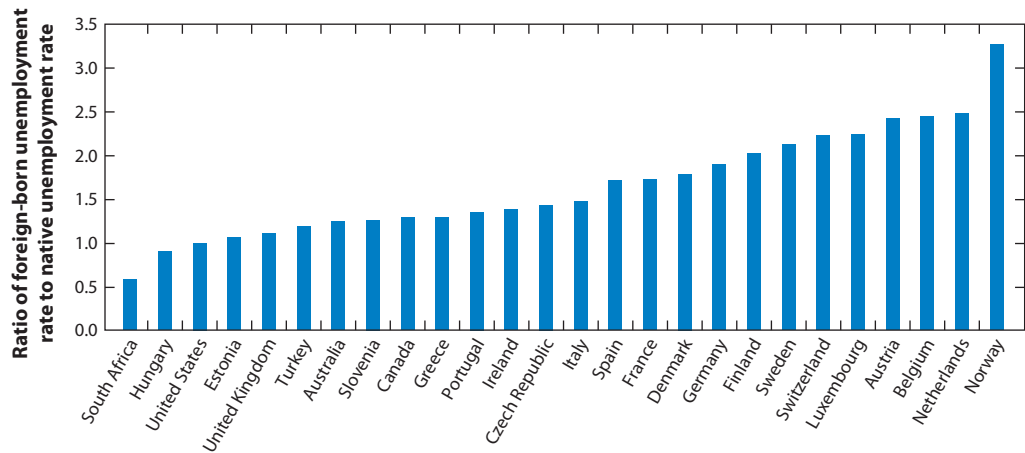


Figure 1

Foreign-born unemployment rate relative to native-born unemployment rate (2009 or latest available year). Source: OECD (2011).

the literature that we have reviewed, highlighting the implications of immigrant demographics for both rates of discrimination and types of violence.

DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOR MARKET

The returns to a free market in labor are reduced to the extent that labor-market discrimination prevents the optimal allocation of jobs. Ethnic differences in labor-market outcomes persist in many receiving countries; immigrant status may erect greater barriers to entry and lead to wage penalties and occupational mismatch. In Germany, for example, Constant & Massey (2005) show that individual investments in human capital have a stronger positive effect on the occupational prestige of the first job for Germans than for Germany's guestworkers.² The interpretation of these results is that guestworkers tend to be pushed into low-skilled positions, regardless of their level of human capital, more so than natives (see also Heath & Cheung 2007).

Why is there deep opposition to immigrants? Although some attribute it to elite manipulation for electoral gains, negative economic outcomes for immigrants are at least in part driven by native prejudice. Researchers have demonstrated this prejudice and attempted to explain its sources. Examining attitude surveys, scholars have consistently found that native populations are sensitive to the degree of the ethnic and cultural differences between themselves and the various immigrant populations (e.g., Sniderman et al. 2004, Hainmueller & Hiscox 2007, Sides & Citrin 2007). Other research—though not necessarily denying the importance of culture—places more emphasis on the economic drivers of hostility and has argued that immigration's adverse effects on local economies, native wages, jobs, or tax burdens constrain support for immigration (Scheve & Slaughter 2001, Hanson et al. 2007, Dancygier & Donnelly 2013, Malhotra et al. 2013). Although attitude studies have developed increasingly sophisticated identification strategies (see Hainmueller & Hopkins 2014 for a comprehensive review), we know less about how and whether these sentiments matter in the socioeconomic integration of immigrants. Under what conditions do native workers protest against the arrival of immigrants and the employment of immigrant

²Constant & Massey (2005) rely on the German Socioeconomic Panel (GSOEP) from 1984–1997.

coworkers? What shapes employers' attitudes about immigrant workers? Are employers reluctant to hire immigrants when they anticipate hostile reactions from their native workforce (Bouzar & Bouzar 2009)?

Correspondence tests, in which comparable c.v.'s (though differing on the employee characteristic that is thought to be the source of discrimination) are sent to employers, have begun to answer these questions. These tests have consistently shown job discrimination (see Riach & Rich 2002 for a review) when researchers control for skill levels but vary ascriptive traits, and are therefore consistent with a cultural account of discriminatory behavior. Bertrand & Mullainathan (2002) conducted this experimental protocol regarding race in the United States and found substantial discrimination. Subsequent correspondence tests have shown that such discrimination can be based on immigrant status, religion (Muslim), and/or region of origin. Several tests reveal that immigrant status, as well as religion and/or region of origin of the applicant, plays a role in the discrimination immigrants face. Some of these tests show that recruiters in Western Europe—in France, in Sweden, and in Germany—favor natives over immigrants from other European Christian-heritage countries (Jowell & Prescott-Clarke 1970, Firth 1981, Carlsson & Rooth 2007, Carlsson 2010, Duguet et al. 2010, Kass & Manger 2010, McGinnity & Lunn 2011, Larja et al. 2012, Booth et al. 2012). In other tests, recruiters in Western Europe are shown to favor immigrants who are coethnics or from the same religion over those who are more culturally distant (Firth 1981, Adida et al. 2010).

Other behavioral data provide clues as to the nature of the cultural threat that some immigrants pose to native populations. Adida et al. (2011), in an experimental setting, show that rooted French subjects are less generous to Muslim immigrants (compared to matched Christians) the greater the number of Muslims in their experimental group. Hainmueller & Hangartner (2013a) find that when Swiss citizens cast ballots to decide who among an applicant pool of legal long-term residents would be granted citizenship, levels of assimilation and job qualifications had only small effects. The applicant's country of origin was the best predictor of rejection (or acceptance): Swiss citizens were most likely to reject applicants from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey. These findings suggest that only some immigrant communities pose a threat. More recently, in a study of American views about immigration, Hainmueller & Hopkins (2013) find no evidence of labor-market threat when the immigrants in question have the same occupation as the native respondent.

Much of this evidence has been interpreted as being consistent with a cultural account of discriminatory behavior. Yet, several points should give us pause. First, although correspondence tests provide powerful behavioral evidence of discrimination, no study has yet unraveled the process by which human resource (HR) personnel systematically prefer natives to immigrants and, when choosing among immigrants, prefer coethnics over applicants from foreign cultures. Without such evidence, we cannot infer that these HR personnel are conditioning their rejections on culture. Second, explaining preferences for immigrant restrictions by pointing to survey responses about whether immigrants pose a threat to local culture appears nearly tautological. Meanwhile, the link between preferences for immigrant restrictions and the skill level of the respondent is more remote and will for that reason be less predictive than the cultural-threat variables. Third, cultural explanations can be inattentive to the interactions between cultural and economic threats.

Addressing some of these issues has led to findings that are less dismissive of the economic-threat perspective. Relying on more proximate measures of economic threat, Dancygier & Donnelly (2013) show that when European natives experience an increase in immigrant workers in their industries, their support for immigration diminishes, but only when economic times are bad, suggesting that threat is conditional on exit options. Similarly, Malhotra et al. (2013), employing a clever sampling strategy (targeting respondents who are more likely to compete in the labor market with immigrants) and Implicit Association Tests (measuring unconscious antipathetic

sentiments toward immigrants), find that the interaction of economic competition and cultural threat is associated with more negative anti-immigrant attitudes.

Conflicting results on cultural and economic threat may be reconciled by paying closer attention to demographics. Immigration can become politically consequential, recent research shows, when the size of any particular immigrant group becomes high enough.³ Here, the nature of the threat—cultural, economic, or otherwise—is not necessarily specified. Rather, threats are conjectured to be exacerbated as the size and salience of the immigrant group grows. This might explain findings (Adida et al. 2011, Hainmueller & Hangartner 2013a) that some immigrants, perhaps those who induce a modicum of distaste in the rooted population, become a threat as their numbers rise.

These results on the effect of demographic threat might be usefully connected to the theoretical (Lazear 1999) and observational studies (Alesina et al. 2013) that show a more positive effect of immigration both on host country attitudes and on employment success of immigrants to the extent that the immigrant population itself is highly diverse. Perhaps the greater the diversity of the immigrant population, the lower the chances of ethnic enclaves, and consequently the lower the cultural, political, or economic threat posed by a particular group of foreigners to members of the host society. This connection between diversity of immigrant cultures and lowered bias against migrants in the host country may well be worth exploring in future research, although as we note below, endogeneity would need to be addressed more critically.

Recent research on the cultural and economic foundations of discrimination therefore demands a recasting of the famous juxtaposition of the interpretations of two Nobelists (Becker 1957, Arrow 1973). Becker's notion was that discrimination can only be driven by taste; yet his critics have argued that any firm with an open policy for labor would outperform those that pay a cost to humor their distaste. In response, Arrow pointed out that there can be a rational foundation that sustains distaste despite concerns for profit or efficiency. If immigrants react to labor-market failure (perhaps due to initial distaste, but as we discuss below, there could be other factors that drive the discriminatory equilibrium) by underinvesting in their human capital [as it is not worth the investment if there is no pay-off, as Constant & Massey (2005) report for guestworkers in Germany], then it becomes rational at the next stage of the game for employers to assume that the immigrant population is likely to be less qualified. This "statistical discrimination" story remains a powerful account of labor-market failure among groups that faced initial discrimination based on taste. See Adida et al. (2014) for a consistent equilibrium model that sustains discrimination in France at the expense of Muslim immigrants. Note that statistical discrimination against immigrants is especially likely to get started once natives have initially exhibited distaste (consistent with the findings discussed above). We will return to this point.

ECONOMIC CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES OF IMMIGRANT VIOLENCE

Violence involving immigrants is another cost of immigration that diminishes the theorized gains from trade and may potentially undermine immigrants' economic performance. One can broadly distinguish two types of violent conflict involving immigrants: immigrant–native confrontations (defined here as natives attacking migrants) and immigrant–state confrontations (where

³These are not really threshold models, going back to the seminal work on "tipping" (Schelling 1978), as there is no evidence of a jump in negative attitudes at a certain demographic level. However, they do share characteristics of Schelling's descriptions of neighborhood instability with increasing numbers of outsiders moving in. See also classic texts by Key (1949) and Blalock (1967) on the relationship between relative group size and racial conflict in the United States.

immigrants clash with the police).⁴ Here we review research on the causal factors and estimated economic consequences for each type of violence.

Immigrant–Native Violence

In explaining native assaults on immigrants, some scholars focus on the underlying grievances that cause natives to attack their immigrant neighbors, while others emphasize the importance of opportunities.

On the grievance side, scholars have paid attention to the role of economic conditions. In their investigation of right-wing extremist crimes in Germany in the late 1990s, Falk et al. (2011) find that these crimes rise with the unemployment rate.⁵ One implication of their finding is that the large gap in unemployment between states in the former East and West Germany—rather than the regions’ different sociopolitical trajectories—accounts for the incidence of right-wing extremist crimes. Likewise, Dancygier (2010) demonstrates that increases in local economic deprivation are associated with higher rates of racist violence directed against immigrant-origin minorities in the United Kingdom. Focusing on tensions between African-Americans and whites in New York City, which witnessed several highly publicized racially motivated murders in the 1980s, Pinderhughes’ (1993) ethnographic work also suggests that industrial decline, unemployment, and the resulting competition for economic resources play a significant part in the production of white-on-black hate crime.⁶

Although these studies report correlations between economic conditions and antiminority crimes, they diverge in the mechanisms that generate these results. Falk et al. (2011) conclude, for instance, that widespread unemployment undermines social norms and value codes that would otherwise sanction extremist criminal behavior. The effect of unemployment is thus not directly linked to competition over resources. This clarification helps to explain why Krueger & Pischke (1997) find no relationship between antiforeigner violence and economic conditions in Germany. Dancygier (2010), by contrast, highlights the effect of economic competition on the distribution of goods as the source of anti-immigrant violence. In her account, immigrant groups that possess the electoral leverage to induce local politicians to allocate scarce resources to them are more likely to become the victims of racist violence than are groups that lack such electoral clout. Consistent with this, Pinderhughes (1993) links black political empowerment during economically bad times to antiblack hate crime in New York City.

While these studies vary in the mechanisms that link economic conditions to antiminority crimes, other studies focusing on grievances dispute the role of economic factors. One line of argument points to the unsettling effects of changing neighborhood demographics and dismisses economic forces. Green et al. (1998) find no evidence that economic variables explain the incidence of racially motivated violence in New York City’s 52 community districts. Instead, relying on an implicit threshold model, they note that residents use racist violence to “defend” their neighborhoods from ethnic outsiders: neighborhoods that were once predominantly white are more likely to react violently to the sudden in-migration of ethnic minorities than are areas that have already undergone demographic transitions. Neighborhood defense and the protection of turf also emerge

⁴See Dancygier (2010) on immigrant conflict specifically and Horowitz (2001) on the general distinction between intergroup and antiauthority violence in the case of riots.

⁵Not all of these crimes are violent or directed against foreigners. Among violent right-wing extremist crimes, 65% target immigrants (Falk et al. 2011, p. 265).

⁶See Dancygier & Green (2010) for a more detailed discussion.

as central motives in ethnographic studies of racist violence in Great Britain, which have found that “neighborhood nationalism” (Back & Nayak 1999, p. 277) and “white territorialism” (Hesse et al. 1992, pp. 171–73) can manifest themselves in violent ways.

Other research discounts the role of grievances and instead points to the importance of opportunities that have to be present for grievances to find an outlet. Karapin’s (2002) comparison of two East German towns controls for social, demographic, and economic variables, yet finds variation in anti-immigrant violence. With few differences in objective grievances, the author focuses on the political opportunities afforded to rioters by local police and politicians who signaled tacit approval of antiminority activities. (For a similar approach explaining sectarian violence in India, see Wilkinson 2004 and Brass 1997.)

This focus on political opportunities is also present in Koopmans’ (1996) work on cross-national variation in racist violence. His cross-national data show an inverse relationship between the success of far-right, anti-immigrant parties and the incidence of racist violence across a set of European countries. In his interpretation, party activity effectively substitutes for violence. A similar inverse relationship turns up at the level of the county (*Kreis*) within Germany (Braun & Koopmans 2010). Yet, evidence from the United Kingdom is not consistent with these results. Here, the presence of candidates of the far-right British National Party as well as the party’s vote shares are positively correlated with racist incidents across municipalities (Dancygier 2010).

To reconcile these findings, future research might study the organization of right-wing parties and their rhetoric more closely. Far-right parties vary in the degree to which they highlight latent racist attitudes and advocate extremist violence (Golder 2003, Art 2011). Parties that seek to maximize vote shares may do so by signaling that they do not want to be seen as fomenting racist violence. These parties may thereby become attractive to a wider set of voters who would not endorse a xenophobic party if it were associated with violent acts. On the measurement side, future work needs to be more attentive to reporting biases. One can imagine, for instance, that victims of racist violence are less likely to report such incidents to the police in areas where the far right is strong.

What are the implications of these distinct mechanisms driving violence on immigrants’ economic trajectories? If natives engage in anti-immigrant attacks to send a message that immigrants are not welcomed on their turf, racist violence may contribute to the proliferation of ethnic enclaves, as immigrants prefer to stay in the relative safety of their communities. In this way, violence may promote spatial segregation. However, whether immigrant concentration impedes or advances the labor-market integration of immigrants remains an open question. On the one hand, ethnic enclaves may hinder immigrants in their acquisition of language skills and reduce their contact with natives, which may in turn diminish their job prospects. On the other hand, coethnic networks can provide important labor-market opportunities. These networks may be particularly useful for recent or lower-skilled immigrants, especially if enclaves are also composed of immigrants with high skills. Edin et al. (2003), Friedrichs et al. (2003), and Cutler et al. (2008) review these hypotheses.⁷

Establishing which effects are at work is difficult, in part because a household’s residential choice is likely correlated with unobserved characteristics that also influence economic success. To circumvent this problem, Edin et al. (2003) make use of a natural experiment in the settlement of immigrant households in Sweden and find that once sorting is taken into account, ethnic enclaves raise the earnings of immigrants, especially when immigrants are members of high-income groups. Similar findings have been reported in the United States, where Cutler et al. (2008)

⁷In contrast to the mixed effects of immigrant enclaves, scholars tend to find that black ghettos in the United States have adverse economic consequences (e.g., Massey & Denton 1993, Cutler & Glaeser 1997).

show that segregation has beneficial effects for various socioeconomic outcomes among immigrant groups with high levels of human capital but negative effects among groups with very low levels of education. Reviewing the literature on segregation and integration outcomes in Europe and North America, Bolt et al. (2010) conclude that even though public discourse and policies tend to link spatial segregation to poor socioeconomic outcomes, the evidence is rather mixed.

More research is thus needed on whether anti-immigrant violence spurs segregation, and, if so, how this affects immigrants' economic performance. If low-income immigrant groups are more likely to be targets of native violence and to therefore seek refuge in low-income enclaves, persistent racist violence may impede economic success. Alternatively, if natives engage in violent xenophobia when immigrants are accessing scarce goods, the incidence of racist violence may actually signal the disintegration of economic barriers.⁸ Such violence against upwardly mobile immigrants could also lead to the formation of enclaves, albeit producing beneficial economic effects for its members. Indeed, as we elaborate below, residential and labor market integration do not necessarily coincide.

Immigrant-State Violence

The other face of immigrant conflict—antiauthority violence—may also have significant consequences for immigrants' economic standing. Systematic research comparing the varied incidence of antistate violence involving immigrants across locations and over time is still in its early stages. Even in France, which has witnessed large-scale immigrant–state conflict for decades, the literature on this topic has “seldom been rooted in empirical data or actual observation” (Jobard 2009, p. 236).⁹

Nevertheless, continued urban unrest involving immigrant-origin populations in France and in Great Britain has led to the formulation of a set of hypotheses, many of which echo the explanatory models inspired by the race riots that shook American cities decades earlier (see, e.g., Myers 1997, National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders 1968, Spilerman 1970). At the structural level, local economic disadvantage, especially if brought about by discriminatory practices, is one of the most commonly cited factors. Riot locations indeed tend to be hit particularly hard by material deprivation and decay, but it is not the case that all deprived areas of minority concentration witness violent unrest. Scholars have therefore identified additional variables, such as social and spatial segregation, the exclusion of minorities from local political office, discriminatory behavior by the police, and the failure by local officials to provide potential rioters with opportunities to voice their grievances in nonviolent ways (e.g., Benyon 1984, Benyon & Solomos 1987, Mucchielli & Le Goaziou 2006, Lagrange 2008, Waddington et al. 2009, Dancygier 2010). As with immigrant–native conflict, these explanations address both grievances and opportunities. Those who view riots as expressions of delinquency more generally have also pointed to the rioters' family backgrounds or their criminal pasts (Delon & Mucchielli 2006, Lagrange 2010).

Although economic deprivation serves as an important background factor in most accounts, additional facilitators are necessary to turn poor areas of immigrant concentration into riot locations. Research designs that are able to tease out which of these factors systematically explain the occurrence of immigrant–state conflict remain rare. This is in part owing to data limitations: cross-sectional and longitudinal data on the economic characteristics and electoral behavior of immigrants are very difficult to obtain, as are measures of immigrant–state conflict. For the

⁸Olzak (1992) shows that whites were prone to attack blacks in the American South once the latter made significant economic and political gains.

⁹See Garrett (2013) for a recent exception.

literature to move forward, it is therefore important that scholars build datasets that track instances of immigrant–state conflict over time and across locations. Compounding these difficulties, some of the proposed mechanisms—such as substantive (rather than merely descriptive) political representation or ongoing dialogues between local officials, the police, and minority youths—cannot easily be captured for a large number of locations over time.

Further, analyses have to be attuned to national and local immigration experiences. For example, it would be tempting to read racial and cultural elements into the 2005 French riots: participants were often black youths from sub-Saharan Africa (rather than of Maghrebian background) who had a very high number of siblings.¹⁰ To associate race and family structures with riot propensity would, however, miss the point that Sahelians with large families are also more recent migrants (Jobard 2009). For recent migrants, economic dislocation and sociopolitical marginalization might be especially acute, regardless of their race or family structure. Likewise, the fact that it is the second—not the first—generation that is generally involved in immigrant–state conflict is often seen as a sign of frustrated expectations among those who have been born in the “host” country and who therefore expect better treatment from the state and society than do their parents. Yet, it also tends to be true that primary (labor) migrants arrived when economic conditions were more propitious and, further, that age is inversely correlated with rioting. In other words, it may simply be the case that changes in economic conditions coincide with age to make rioting more prevalent among the second generation. Studies of the labor-market integration of migrants routinely seek to identify such age, cohort, and period effects (Borjas 1994), and we advise that studies of immigrant conflict should do the same.

As with the case of immigrant–native violence, we also need to better understand the economic consequences of immigrant–state conflict.¹¹ Some research suggests that urban unrest involving ethnic minorities leads to an expansion of state resources. In the aftermath of violent episodes, French politicians instituted various spending programs meant to revitalize poor neighborhoods—many of which had high ethnic minority concentrations, but, given French practice, were not targeted as such (Epstein 2009, Bleich et al. 2010). Similar dynamics are said to have occurred in Great Britain (John 2006).¹²

Can these spending measures counteract the riots’ adverse economic repercussions? To the best of our knowledge, research has not yet examined how large-scale antiauthority immigrant violence influences the economic development of the affected areas. For instance, do small-business owners and private investors flee riot-torn neighborhoods, and do property values take a hit? In the American context, urban riots have been associated with a decline in black home values, black earnings, and local tax revenues (Collins & Margo 2007, Matheson & Baade 2004). Matching riot and nonriot tracts in Cleveland, Collins & Smith (2007) find, for instance, that single-family homes in riot tracts lost 20–30% of their value compared to similar residences in nonriot tracts.

How might these findings translate to the European immigration context? The fact that home ownership is less prevalent in Europe than it is in the United States and that immigrants often live in state-owned housing may reduce some of the economic costs borne by immigrants living in riot-affected areas, which may, in turn, also remove some of the disincentives for rioting. Likewise, if immigrant-origin minorities live in deprived suburbs that are relatively cut off from

¹⁰Court records of youths tried in the aftermath of the 2005 riots in Seine St. Denis show that the average number of siblings of accused rioters was 4.6 and that 20% of the families involved contained seven or more children (Jobard 2009, p. 237).

¹¹For conflicting results about the economic consequences of war and terrorism, see Miguel & Roland (2011) and Abadie & Gardeazabal (2003).

¹²For research on violence and social spending in the United States, see also Fording (1997, 2001), Welch (1975), and Piven & Cloward (1971).

private businesses and economic opportunity, the direct economic costs of rioting may be reduced. Home ownership, tenure type (state-owned or private), and proximity to employment vary significantly across immigrant groups and cities within countries, as well as across countries—variation that scholars can fruitfully exploit. In doing so, scholars also need to take into account potential spillover effects. Even when riots do not significantly reduce employment options in the areas where unrest occurs, employers elsewhere may discriminate against jobseekers who live in riot-prone neighborhoods (L'Horty et al. 2011).

CHALLENGES TO CAUSAL INFERENCE

Existing research investigating the causes of discrimination aimed at immigrant workers and the causes of immigrant–native and immigrant–state conflict tends to take a snapshot view, which may create problems of inference. For instance, when a study correctly identifies that landlords or employers discriminate against an immigrant group on the basis of cultural, rather than economic, grounds at a given point in time, researchers should still ask what has led to such prejudice in the first place. Are there reasons to believe that the group suffers from culturally based discrimination because prior economic forces have helped turn this group into a spatially segregated, economically disadvantaged minority, and that it is this longer-term process that has fostered specific beliefs and stereotypes about this group?

Alternatively, one can imagine that initial rejection of immigrants on the basis of ascriptive traits paves the way for discrimination that is driven by economic concerns. As discussed above, recent research calls into question whether the clean theoretical distinction between cultural and economic sources of discrimination is tenable in practice. A more dynamic view would show that Becker was not wrong but rather incomplete. Arrow's model (as he understood) requires at minimum a small amount of taste-based labor-market discrimination at the point of initial contact in the labor market. But once the immigrants pick up even a weak signal of distaste, they will begin to revise their integration strategies, making lower investments in assimilation and incurring concomitant additional discrimination by members of the host society.

In short, we conjecture that the type of discrimination immigrants encounter initially puts them on different integration paths by affecting both their own labor-market behavior and native reactions to them. An examination of these sequences—and how they vary (and interact) in employment, education, and housing—would help move the field beyond the current culture-versus-economics dichotomy.

In addition to deepening the analysis in this way, scholars should broaden the scope of types of groups they study. When examining only one point in time, scholars tend to study immigrant groups that have already emerged as salient in the public debate (e.g., Hispanics in the United States, Muslims in Europe).¹³ This salience is in turn due to reasons that are likely related to conflict patterns and socioeconomic integration outcomes. When seeking to understand the causes of conflict and of various integration measures, researchers need to be mindful that they are often working with a truncated sample and, moreover, that this truncation occurs for theoretically important reasons. For example, if language barriers or religious difference cause discrimination at a given point in time, we need to ask at least two questions. First, do other immigrant groups whose language or religion also set them apart from the majority population (but who are less salient in public discourse) have similar experiences with discrimination? And, second, at what

¹³ For exceptions, see Brader et al. (2008) and Hainmueller & Hopkins (2013), who experimentally vary immigrant characteristics, including country of origin.

stage of the group's immigration history and for what reasons have language or religion emerged as significant and salient markers?

Cross-sectional studies should take account of these selection and sequencing issues and formulate scope conditions and causal interpretations accordingly. Longitudinal studies that trace immigrant groups and destinations over several decades (e.g., Dancygier 2010, Hopkins 2010, Hainmueller & Hangartner 2013a) can explicitly address these questions. For example, Hainmueller & Hangartner (2013a) are able to show how origin-based discrimination in Switzerland varies over time as a function of relative group size because their data cover naturalization requests over 30 years. Dancygier (2010) demonstrates that native mobilization against Indian migrants in Britain wanes over the decades as this group climbs up the socioeconomic ladder and therefore becomes less likely to compete for scarce goods with low-income natives.

A further challenge that the literature has not yet confronted is the fact that immigrant settlement within and across countries is (generally) not random. For instance, the finding that the diversity of the immigrant population positively correlates with immigrants' economic success may be driven by the fact that diverse areas have more vibrant economies that attract motivated migrants and facilitate their labor-market performance (see Alesina et al. 2013). They may also be more tolerant to begin with, thereby lowering the probability of discrimination, violence, and their adverse knock-on effects. Concluding that higher diversity within the immigrant population causes better integration outcomes is therefore premature. Likewise, the notion that the spatial segregation of a sizable immigrant group hampers economic integration, breeds intergroup suspicion, and fosters "parallel communities"—an often-voiced concern in the European integration debate—neglects the possibility that segregation may itself be an outcome of tense intergroup relations in poor localities. Here, sequencing again becomes important, especially if immigrants seek refuge in enclaves in response to native violence, as suggested above.

The identification problems associated with selection, sequencing, and sorting are prompting researchers to conduct field experiments, to look for natural experiments, and to trace processes in a confined set of carefully chosen cases. In this way, the study of immigrant integration mirrors developments in political science at large. We believe this is a sensible research strategy. However, we are also concerned that drilling down to the micro level carries some costs. For instance, if we correctly identify that a settlement-dispersal policy yields favorable economic outcomes in one country, a host of confounding variables (such as immigrant-group characteristics, labor-market dynamics, and welfare-state institutions) makes it difficult to generalize this effect across countries. Moreover, assiduous respect for identification could easily lead us to ignore the macro effects of national policy that are consequential but difficult to isolate. As we point out in the next section, evaluating the effects of institutions and public policy on immigrants' labor-market performance is an important but methodologically complex research area.

ESTIMATING THE IMPACT OF PUBLIC POLICY ON MITIGATING DISCRIMINATION

The literature addressing the benefits of public policies intended to reduce discrimination and violence, though hardly a systematic research program, focuses its attention at three different levels: political institutions, policy frameworks, and targeted policy interventions.

Political Institutions

Institutions have become a dominant explanatory variable in political economy, at least theoretically. However, as becomes clear in our review of the migration literature, research on institutional

effects has not been strongly evident. Consider the classic literature comparing proportional representation (PR) with first-past-the-post plurality electoral systems (Powell 2000). This literature consistently finds that minorities (with the vote) are served better under PR. Crepaz (2008) has compiled cross-national survey data to show that the comprehensive welfare state in European countries, which was facilitated by PR electoral rules, established norms of high interpersonal trust, a condition that has induced even the most anti-immigrant citizens to continue taking responsibility for the maintenance of the welfare state even if considerable benefits accrue to immigrants.

To our knowledge, however, this literature on electoral rules has not addressed the success of immigrant populations in their degree of neighborhood or labor-market integration.¹⁴ We cannot even assume that because PR favors minorities, it also favors immigrants; after all, PR has produced intensely anti-immigrant parties in Europe, and it has not led to representational equality. Data on the proportion of Muslim representatives in 21 western National Assemblies in 2010 reveal a rate of 0.7%, well below Muslims' share in these countries' populations, and this representational failure spans all party systems (Sinno 2011, pp. 144–45). Furthermore, the notion that political integration is a clear route to socioeconomic integration has been disputed by Dancygier (2010), who shows that when immigrants serve as swing voters, there are more likely to be local conflicts with rooted populations over scarce goods. As shown by Maxwell (2012) and Dancygier (2010), political, social, and economic integration rates often are orthogonal. Therefore, drawing connections between electoral systems and outcomes for immigrant populations will require new theory and tests.

Political parties—at least those that ran urban machines in American cities—were at one time the principal institution that reduced the costs for immigrants to get integrated into the host society (Shefter 1994, Trounstein 2008).¹⁵ But given a century of civil-service reform, even the promise of jobs for votes can no longer credibly be made. To be sure, the US Democratic Party candidates gained great electoral advantage by supporting immigrant interests in the 2012 presidential and congressional elections, at least in comparison with the anti-immigrant rhetoric of their opponents. But it is noticeable that no major party in Europe has made it a core part of its platform to offer special benefits to immigrants to reduce their costs of integration. Political scientists might work from the spatial diagrams in Kitschelt's (1996) study of the European right to examine whether there is a yet-to-be-formed political coalition that would attract immigrants as potential swing voters in national elections.

At the local level, there is more attention to this new electorate. Political parties, especially those on the left, have begun to court immigrant voters with hopes of creating cross-ethnic coalitions. Yet, existing research suggests that parties tread carefully, weighing the gains of appeals to immigrant voters against the potential electoral losses incurred by native defections (Garbaye 2005, Dancygier 2010). In England, for example, local Labor parties are less likely to nominate Muslim candidates in economically disadvantaged areas that contain sizable Muslim populations. Here, the native population is more likely to feel threatened by the representation of Muslims' economic and religious needs (Dancygier 2013). More encouraging, a clever identification strategy reveals that granting the vote to immigrants in local elections alters social policy in their favor (Vernby 2013).

Legislative assemblies are another institution with implications for rates of discrimination. Hainmueller & Hangartner (2013b) compare representative assemblies to those based on direct

¹⁴We thank Arend Lijphart and Gary Cox, from whom in private correspondence we learned that the relationship of electoral systems to immigrant interests remains unexplored territory. This is surely an opportunity for future research.

¹⁵However, as Erie (1988) reveals, the return to immigrants for their support of urban-machine parties was quite limited.

democracy and show that when elected representatives—rather than town meetings—adjudicate naturalization requests in Swiss municipalities, the number of discriminatory rejections falls considerably. The interpretation here is that the public nature of voting as a representative (built in, due to accountability norms and oversight) deters pure expressions of prejudice. If it is the case that the acquisition of citizenship leads to improved labor-market outcomes (see below), direct democracy may also have severe economic repercussions.

Policy Frameworks

Up to now we have discussed how discrimination, violent conflict, and political institutions can diminish the economic gains from migration. Much of the public debate and many policy responses addressing immigrants' economic integration have consequently focused on remedies, and in particular the effects of state-sponsored multiculturalism. The basic dichotomy, among pundits and scholars alike, is between multicultural policies that recognize and value group identities and rights, on the one hand, and assimilationist or republican policies that do not accord ethnic groups with special privileges, on the other. Shortly after the Conservative Party victory in the United Kingdom in 2010, newly installed Prime Minister David Cameron announced the failure of multiculturalism (Cameron 2011), albeit without any demonstration of what the relations between immigrants and rooted Britons would have been with a different policy regime. Similarly, Chancellor Angela Merkel is reported to have claimed (Kymlicka 2012, p. 15) that multiculturalism in Germany has “utterly failed,” a claim Kymlicka finds curious in that the multicultural “approach has not actually been tried in a significant way in Germany.” In a remarkable book uncovering some of the deeper prejudices against migrants in the Netherlands, Sniderman & Hagendoorn (2007) single out multicultural policies as a cause of the depth of these prejudices, but they do not explore the counterfactual, e.g., whether natives' feelings against immigrants would be any less negative had the Netherlands been assigned an assimilationist policy agenda. Thus the question remains: Do multicultural policies (more than assimilationism) promote immigrant acceptance by host nationals as well as social, economic, and political integration of migrants into their societies?¹⁶

Several cross-national scales have been developed, allowing us to get leverage on this question. We highlight here the Multiculturalism Policy Index (MCP) by Banting and Kymlicka, the Indicators of Citizenship Rights for Immigrants (ICRI) dataset by Koopmans, and the Civic Integration Index (CIVIX) by Goodman.¹⁷ The MCP dataset for immigrant groups focuses on policies that give recognition to the cultural practices of these groups and affirmative support that allows them to maintain those practices in their host societies. The ICRI dataset ranks countries on the degree to which fundamental human rights (family reunification, freedom of religion, nondiscrimination in employment) are granted to immigrant groups in order to determine both the inclusiveness of a country's understanding of citizenship and the degree to which countries give official recognition to specific groups.

Although the MCP and ICRI datasets are highly correlated, the two research units report conflicting results on the implications of policy for outcomes. The Kymlicka/Banting research program (Bloemraad 2006, Soroka et al. 2012, Wright & Bloemraad 2012), relying on

¹⁶ Kymlicka's (2012) principal concern is the promotion of dignity within immigrant communities through cultural recognition, and he makes only limited claims about the economic returns to multicultural policies.

¹⁷ See <http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/index.html> for MCP, <http://www.wzb.eu/en/research/migration-and-diversity/migration-and-integration/projects/citizenship-rights-for-immigrants> for ICRI, and <http://repository.library.georgetown.edu/bitstream/handle/10822/553083/goodmanSara.pdf?sequence=1>, p. 71, for CIVIX.

exemplary case studies, matched comparisons, and cross-national regressions, reports greater levels of acceptance of immigrants by the rooted populations, greater political participation and involvement by immigrants, and greater intergenerational social mobility the higher the score on MCP. Koopmans (2013) reports a more mixed picture, with ICRI scores having no significant effect on socioeconomic integration, some positive effects on political integration, and negative impacts on sociocultural integration.¹⁸

Goodman's CIVIX (though coded only for European countries) measures the extent to which countries provide (or demand) acculturation programs for immigrants, such as language training and civic education. It therefore reflects how countries help immigrants assimilate, and it offers one way to reconcile the different results of the MCP and ICRI research teams. Although CIVIX is orthogonal to MCP, Kymlicka (2012) suggests that when both scores are high—that is, when immigrant cultures are recognized but immigrants are induced to equip themselves with the cultural repertoires of the host society—there is a socially optimal outcome. Here Kymlicka is covering over a key confusion, namely how to code for linguistic assimilation. On the one hand, ancestral language is usually considered the quintessential element of any group's culture (see Taylor 1994, Hopkins 2014). On the other hand, individual immigrants go to great lengths—often in defiance of those seeking to represent them culturally—to have their children learn the host language for purposes of economic mobility (Laitin 1993). By endorsing CIVIX, Kymlicka is implicitly recognizing that multiculturalism cannot encourage both the full development of home languages and rapid social mobility for second-generation immigrants.

We thus remain far from conclusive findings on the returns to multicultural policies. We need sharper demonstrations of what constitutes a multicultural policy and whether these policy regimes are exogenous treatments (or can be considered as such for purposes of econometric estimation). This is all the more important given evidence that the policy regimes across Europe are not converging toward some multicultural norm. Rather, deep historical differences across western countries [coming from the differing traditions of *jus soli* versus *jus sanguinis* as traced by Brubaker (1992), Howard (2009), and Janoski (2010)] remain stable. These sticky policy regimes in regard to citizenship will consequently continue to influence outcomes for immigrant integration and social mobility (Koopmans et al. 2012), although the magnitude and significance of their effects remain contested.

Targeted Policy Interventions

Rather than trying to identify the effects of all-encompassing national regimes that contain a host of different policies and that likely have heterogeneous effects across different immigrant groups, some researchers have asked whether and how citizenship helps immigrants' prospects in the labor market.¹⁹ Several papers provide evidence that facilitating citizenship acquisition to immigrants desiring it has positive socioeconomic and cultural implications beyond the granting of long-term work certification. Bratsberg et al. (2002), using US panel data, report a positive correlation between naturalization and hourly wage. Bohon (2005) has similar results relying on the Public Use Microdata Sample (IPUMS) of Latino populations in the United States. Bevelande & Pendakur (2010), using data from Canada and Sweden and relying on an instrumental variable analysis, link naturalization to increased probability of employment. Avitabile et al. (2010) take advantage of the changed citizenship regulations in Germany to create a natural experiment

¹⁸For another mixed review of these policies, see Ersanilli & Koopmans (2011).

¹⁹For a comprehensive analysis of citizenship issues in Europe, see Soysal (1994) and Goodman (2012).

(comparing children from the same families under the two different regimes) and find that citizenship availability correlates with more rapid language learning and greater social contact with rooted Germans. In contrast, Constant & Massey (2005) report that guestworkers in Germany who naturalize (controlling for skill and occupational status) earn less than those who do not adopt German citizenship. However, of those who become self-employed (Constant & Shachmurove 2006), the advantage is to the citizens. Rallu (2011) uses marriage as an instrument for citizenship in France and finds citizenship a significant advantage for stable employment. In a carefully controlled analysis, Ersanilli & Koopmans (2011, p. 222) compare Turkish integration into Germany, France, and the Netherlands and find ease of citizenship leads to greater host-country identification.

The cumulative (but not universal) evidence weighs in the direction of accommodative citizenship regimes having beneficial economic and social effects. However, the mechanism remains obscure. In many European countries, nearly all rights (save for voting in national elections and, to varying degrees, public sector employment) come with legal status, so the gains from citizenship cannot be a direct result of the rights granted to citizens.²⁰

We distinguish four other mechanisms that are consistent with the data but not fully tested in the literature. First, we may be observing merely a selection effect: those who are better able and more motivated to take advantage of labor-market opportunities are also those who are able to go through the sometimes byzantine procedures to procure citizenship. Here citizenship would be a proxy for unobserved skills and motivation. Second, if applicants can only obtain citizenship by passing language tests and other exams, citizenship may be a direct measure of targeted skills, or the return on the investment by immigrants in those skills that are required of citizens and useful for better jobs.

Third, citizenship may serve as a costly signal of commitment. The citizen worker is seen as one who intends to stay on the job, and for jobs that require training/investment, such loyalty would matter to employers. This signal of commitment, resulting in easier employment, might give immigrants a stronger sense of belonging, with a willingness to invest in local human capital (language acquisition and inducing their children to think of their host society as “theirs”). However, there is some evidence that this might not be the case. Mazzolari (2009) shows that immigrants coming from countries that permit dual citizenship are more likely to apply for citizenship in the host country; for these immigrants citizenship is less of a commitment and does not reduce the probability of return.

Fourth, there is the issue of transaction costs for the employer. If an employee has citizenship, the employer faces a lower risk of complications related to legality, visas, and work permits. The employer can also be assured that the employee cannot be deported, and should there be any opportunity for employees to embezzle from the firm, the employer might believe that citizens are more easily tracked down by authorities. This “findability” makes employees more trustworthy and again reduces transaction costs.

At a more micro level than citizenship laws, Paluck & Green (2009) review the effects of targeted policy interventions, focusing mostly on national minorities and not immigrants. They reveal disappointment that there is little cumulative knowledge on interventions and that reported policies are typically not properly identified. They highlight as an exception to this grim review the exemplary papers of Cook (1971, 1978), in which southern railroad workers were assigned to work in groups with an African-American and a matched white confederate. After a long period of

²⁰But see Bloemraad (2006, p. 17), who shows that in the United States, following the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, many social benefits were denied to noncitizens. Oddly, this was followed by a decrease in the rate of citizenship among the foreign born.

working together, the treatment subjects were less prejudiced toward the African-American than were those in the control group. This finding is consistent with research on diversity within firm management (Milliken & Martins 1996), which tends to show high short-term costs to diversity (in job satisfaction and in turnover), but in the long term, if diversity is sustained, there are high pay-offs in creativity and access to useful new information. Although of course in the long term only those with a taste for diversity remained, and the identification is not well established, this perspective merits systematic microtesting.

An important revisionist economic history of civil rights in the American South (Wright 2013) demonstrates the significant positive effect of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts in integrating African-Americans into previously excluded job opportunities. Wright traces the changing market incentives in the South as it became more industrialized and reports that powerful market incentives only minimally changed the behavior of employers. These employers, counter to rather clear evidence, believed that their regional economy would prosper if and only if hiring discrimination was maintained. However, when the exogenous treatment of two mid-1960s civil rights laws forced employers to hire African-Americans, the flow of black migration reversed toward the South. Despite this expansion of the labor force, all evidence points toward economic advantages to white workers in the South as well. Wright's study shows that it took powerful legislation and committed administration of law to compel employers in the South to act in their rational self-interest. Resolute state policy under conditions that will enrich those who are being coerced to be unprejudiced is a prescription of some merit.

Although immigrants have not been the targets of these legal initiatives, greater learning on how best to reduce job-market discrimination would be of immense importance for lessening the costs of integrating immigrants into western societies and enhancing the benefits that their complementary skills could furnish. This is an important avenue for research in political science.

CONCLUSIONS

Here we summarize how future research might be organized to better assess the scope of discrimination and violence involving immigrants to Western Europe and to evaluate the institutions and policies that can influence those outcomes. We address four challenges to research that follow from our review. First, we draw a theoretical sketch to summarize the empirical findings that we have highlighted to motivate new models. Second, we point to the importance of demographics for rates of both discrimination and violence, a general substantive observation that has not yet received the attention it deserves. Third, we focus on the limited headway comparative politics has achieved in exploring how institutions or policies can influence levels of discrimination and violence. Finally, we review the methodological hurdles that need to be cleared to enable future progress in this field.

Theory

The theoretical literature is converging toward the description of a discriminatory equilibrium. It points to the implications of only a small degree of cultural distaste for immigrants with certain cultural traits. The Becker model of taste-based discrimination against immigrants is not wrong but is incomplete. Arrow's model, by examining the rational responses to taste-based discrimination, reveals the full implications of Becker's original insight and is consistent with findings reported in this review.

A Common Empirical Thread

A common thread running through this review concerns the demographics of immigrant populations in their host countries. There is evidence that the greater the diversity within the immigrant population in any locale, the less the sense of threat felt by the native populations. In a related finding, when the size of an immigrant population from a particular country rises, there seems to be a backlash against immigrants from that country. Similarly, there appear to be different implications for success in the labor market of demographic segregation for high- and low-skilled immigrant populations. In regard to violence, research suggests that when an immigrant population that can mobilize collectively is sufficiently large in any locale to serve as swing voters, it subjects itself to violence by threatened natives if it uses its electoral power to access scarce resources. However, when immigrants' demographics (or voting laws) limit their influence on voting outcomes, there is a greater chance of violence by immigrant populations against police. All these are discrete studies; there is no general framework on the implications of demographic differences for successful integration of immigrants into their host societies.

Policy Advice

The most impressive findings in comparative politics in regard to the institutional or policy interventions that enhance gains from immigration are those that point to institutional irrelevance. The large literature on electoral systems has not identified voting rules that work best to represent the interests of populations such as immigrants. Moreover, we are only beginning to acquire evidence on whether voting rules permitting immigrants to vote or to run for local office have implications for economic integration.²¹ Nor has research shown that different policy regimes (from assimilationist to multicultural) differentially address labor-market discrimination. We have suggestive evidence that the easy granting of citizenship and the institution of indirect democracy are more conducive to immigrant success, but these findings remain to be conclusively demonstrated. A single case study from the United States (Wright 2013), in which a coercive policy regime eventually advanced employment opportunities for racial minorities, suggests that shifting from a discriminatory equilibrium requires an arsenal of policy and judicial practices. But whether this applies to immigrant populations remains to be seen.

Methodology

Our review of the literature points to recurrent methodological problems that seriously undermine future theoretical and empirical progress. First, we have shown how the selection of immigrant groups for study is biased, mostly focusing on those for which the discriminatory equilibrium is most telling and where remedial action is most urgent. But largely ignoring immigrant-group success spoils any chance of proper inference. Second, although we have proposed a theoretical sketch of a dynamic model of integration failure, nearly all the empirical work performed as of yet looks at only one period, ignoring second-order effects of strategies of immigrants and host populations in the countries where they settle. Third, throughout our review, we have shown how inattention to endogeneity concerns has reduced our confidence in reported findings. To repeat just one example, we cannot be sure that open citizenship regimes benefit immigrants in the labor market without testing whether immigrants choose countries of settlement where they have the

²¹On the link between minority representation and substantive policy gains for minorities, see, e.g., Dunning & Nilekani (2013).

greatest chance of success, and whether the more ambitious/skilled immigrants move to countries with open citizenship regimes. Finally, our analyses of policy regimes—from assimilationist to multicultural—has been too macro to allow any careful identification. Too many other factors in any country affect labor-market outcomes to allow us to infer much from comparisons of country-level policy packages. We applaud a new generation of studies at the local level, where the relationship between policies toward immigrants and labor-market outcomes for immigrants can be properly identified. But there is a big methodological challenge here. It may be that the biggest impacts on immigrant life chances are due to macro policies at the state level and that we as researchers are ignoring them in our commitment to proper identification. Although micro studies ought to be promoted, as we think much of the action takes place at this level, we should not give up hope of solving the identification problems delimiting our ability to assess the effects of national-level policies on immigrant integration.

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