Prejudice in Context Over Time

How demographic, economic and social conditions influence anti-immigrant attitudes in adolescents and adults

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To Gilbert Cortez

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List of original papers in the thesis

I. Mitchell, Jeffrey. 2018. Prejudice in the classroom: a longitudinal analysis of anti-immigrant attitudes. *Ethnic and Racial Studies,* DOI: 10.1080/01419870.2018.1493209

II. Mitchell, Jeffrey. 2019. Context and change: A longitudinal analysis of attitudes about immigrants in adolescence. *Socius,* (5): 1-11.

III. Eger, Maureen A., Mikael Hjerm and Jeffrey Mitchell. *(Authors listed alphabetically).* "When I grew up": The lasting impact of immigrant presence on native-born attitudes towards immigrants and immigration.

IV. Mitchell, Jeffrey. Social trust and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe: A longitudinal multi-level analysis

Abstract

Background Thesis explores the contexts that influence anti-immigrant attitudes in both adolescents and adults, and how contexts influence changes anti-immigrant attitudes in societies over time. Whereas previous research into anti-immigrant attitudes has either focused on micro socialization factors in adolescence, or threat inducing factors in adulthood; this thesis forwards an approach that synthesizes these two ideas. This approach includes four aspects: 1) Macro level contexts influence of prejudice during adolescence 2) Macro contextual factors, not strictly limited to direct competition over resources are important for prejudicial attitudes 3) These contexts are potentially changing over time, and changes in conditions should be related to changes in attitudes, and 4) The effects of these macro contexts on prejudicial attitudes during adolescence cast a long shadow over the rest of people's lives.

Methods The methods used in this thesis employ a diverse range of datasets from Sweden (YeS), Germany (CILS4EU), the United States (GSS) and Europe (ESS) to measure attitudes towards immigrants. Each of these datasets allow for both comparative and longitudinal analysis with multi-level models, and contextual indicators that expand with each study from classrooms to regions, and finally countries.

Results The findings support the proposed approach. Demographic, economic and attitudinal contexts in adolescence influence attitudes about immigrants. Similarly, changes in contexts over time are also important. In contrast, only historic demographic and economic conditions experienced in adolescence, and contemporary levels of social trust influence attitudes in adults.

Conclusion This thesis makes both a theoretical and emperical contributions to the literature on anti-immigrant attitudes. By combining previous approacehs it draws attention to both different types of contexts and when they should be imporatant in relation to anti-immigrant attitudes. It also shows emperical evidence for each aspect of this approach with longitudinal analyses.

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Jeffrey Mitchell

Introduction

It is difficult to overstate the importance of understanding what drives prejudice, both for individuals and societies since attitudes so heavily influence people's lives. In-group preferences influence selection into social networks, peer groups, and romantic partners, where people choose to live and many other choices they make as they traverse the life course (Goodreau et al. 2009; Lewis 2013; Mutz 2018; Muller 2018). In regard to anti-immigrant attitudes, perhaps the most visible consequence has manifested in the political arena, where a cadre of neo-nationalist parties have carved out a portion of the political landscape in Europe and the US by stoking fears of the generalized other. As the issue of immigration gains political salience, these parties are increasingly aligning themselves with the attitudes of the people, by rejecting old paradigmatic classifications of left-right politics in favor of nationalistic rhetoric (Eger and Valdez 2015; Eger and Valdez 2019). How successful these parties are in the future, and how stringent the policies they advocate for become, will be determined at least in part by the prejudicial attitudes of the young people of today, whose worldviews are currently developing in environments that both encourage and deter the formation of prejudice. With these implications as a backdrop, this thesis explores the contexts that influence anti-immigrant attitudes in both adolescents and adults, and how contexts influence changes anti-immigrant attitudes in societies over time.

In an attempt to understand prejudice, the classical scholarly approaches that began gaining momentum in the post-war period focused on a series of different contexts as potential influencers of people's attitudes (Allport 1954; Bandura 1971; Blalock 1973; Blumer 1958; Sherif, Sherif 1953). Over time these approaches have branched out into substantial albeit disjointed traditions of research. Nevertheless, an essential distinction can be made between them: they either explain prejudice through a process of socialization, or through the lens of inter-group dynamics. The socialization approach argues that prejudice is a product of learned behavior. People receive information by observing the examples set out by the other people in their lives, then they emulate others until their behaviors are internalized into prejudice. In contrast, the approach that focuses on inter-group dynamics sees prejudice as the product of competition for scarce resources. This competition results in feelings of threat that translate into prejudice. Due to this distinction, each approach attributes different contextual elements as the drivers of prejudice. The socialization approach posits that people learn prejudicial behavior from those that are closest to them, so the contextual unit

of analysis is micro, focusing for example, on the attitudinal transmission from parents to children. The inter-group dynamics literature on the other hand, places the focus on macro level contexts, looking for conditions that might increase the threat dynamic between groups.

While the difference between individual and societal influence is important to note, the socialization and group dynamics approaches also focus on different times in the life course. The socialization research recognizes that attitudes, including prejudice, begin when people are young during the so-called formative years. This research explores the influence that micro level contexts have during childhood and adolescence. Again, this is contrasted by the group dynamics approach, which is dominated by research that focuses on adults, the assumption being that it is at this time, when people are in direct competition for scarce resources that macro contextual conditions should influence attitudes.

This distinction, which advocates for different mechanisms that brings the research to focus on different contexts at different times in the life course, results in the construction of a confusing narrative about how people come to harbor and maintain prejudicial attitudes. Taking these literatures together, one gets the impression that people are socialized into having anti-immigrant attitudes by the people they are close to, regardless of the broader circumstances that characterize the contexts surrounding them while they are growing up. Then once they are adults, they matriculate into a higher plane where they are suddenly sensitive to economic and demographic contexts that make them feel threatened, and the things they were exposed to during the formative years are no longer paid attention to. Alternatively, we could view these two traditions as complimentary, each making contributions to our understanding of prejudice. The aim of this thesis is to examine this narrative by negotiating these two positions, highlighting the strengths, and problematizing the assumptions made by both to inform the empirical work that is included.

The first way to do this is to ask if macro contextual factors influence prejudicial attitudes during adolescence. Those that have applied the inter-group relations approach have predominantly relied on comparative methods to analyze differences in prejudice in societies. Oftentimes, this involves looking for relationships between attitudes and conditions in countries that result in increased competition for resources between groups. The argument being that higher levels of competition for scarce resources in places with larger proportions of out-group members should translate to higher levels of prejudice. While adolescents are not typically in direct competition for the same resources as adults (e.g. jobs or housing), they are growing up around,

and being socialized by people that are experiencing these circumstances. This would mean that the influences from factors applied in the group dynamics approach could be trickling down from adults to adolescents. Alternatively, it could be that adolescents are more sensitive to macro level influences than previously thought and they might be gathering information on their own through the media and their peers. In either case, it is likely that contextual conditions shared by many adolescents are influencing their out-group attitudes.

However, after decades of comparative empirical studies finding mixed or null results, challenges to the inter-group relations approach are becoming more common . In response to these conflicting findings, scholars have shifted the focus to other contexts, or environments that are not primarily related to competition for scarce resources (for a review see: Bohman 2014). These contexts are varied but examples include religious, political and media environments. In both comparative and longitudinal studies, contexts like these have shown more promise in explaining how attitudes about out-groups take shape (Bohman 2011; Bohman and Hjerm 2014; Czymara and Dochow 2018). Exploring this idea further, conceptualizing attitudinal environments themselves as a context, both during times of socialization and adult life might inform how attitudes of individuals are developed. This is because attitudinal environments help to set the rules for what types of attitudes are acceptable, and help define how inter-group relations form. Since it would appear that conceptualizations of contexts should extend beyond simple metrics of proportions of immigrants or economic indicators, the research question should be augmented to include, which macro contexts influence prejudicial attitudes during adolescence?

As a point of departure, this thesis recognizes that anti-immigrant attitudes are formed during adolescence. It also recognizes that while individual-level psychological differences and socializing agents are important, macro contexts should shape these attitudes as well. Assuming for a moment that this premise is correct, there is no telling how long the effect of these influences last into one's life. It is possible that the extent to which these relationships exist, it is only observable while people are being exposed to them, and once they move in to a different context or grow older they are no longer important. However, this goes against the conventional wisdom that argues that the way people think about the world is due to how things were "when they grew up". It also contradicts the political socialization literature that would caution against this line of thinking (Jennings 1996; Sears and Valentino 1997). The idea that there is a long shadow cast into the future by the social conditions that people are exposed to while they were young is far from new (Mannheim 1920). Political scientists have long recognized not only

the potential influence that macro contexts can have on adolescence, but also the possibility that this effect is lasting. Still, just as the inter-group dynamics approach has not yet been systematically applied to the attitudes of adolescents and the socialization literature has not typically taken in to account the importance of macro contexts, the political socialization literature has not applied these ideas to prejudicial attitudes. This raises the question: do the effects that macro level contexts have during adolescence continue to influence them when they are adults?

While answering these questions will significantly contribute to our understanding of what influences prejudice by expanding the age window in which people are sensitive to macro level contexts, it arguably does not explain how prejudice changes over time. Changes in attitudes in societies have been attributed to two different but possibly related things. First, through generational change where older cohorts with similar attitudes are replaced by younger cohorts with different attitudes. Second, that enough people actually change their mind about an issue, like immigration, so that in the aggregate change is visible at the societal level. A change like this would most likely be due to a collective response to a shared contextual condition.

The challenge in accounting for change is both conceptual and empirical since neither the socialization or inter-group relations approaches give a specific motivation for why attitude change should happen. The conceptual challenge largely concerns the fact that contexts are time specific. They have historical properties relevant to individuals, and as individuals age their contexts change, exposing them to different contextual conditions and the generations that follow them experience those conditions anew. Further complicating things, it could be that it is the experience of changing conditions itself that translates into changes in prejudice. This could occur, for example, by living through an economic recession that sparks changes in the attitudes because of a sudden increase in the feelings of threat from out-groups. This leads to the empirical challenge, concerning access to adequate longitudinal data that is able to measure the same people over a long period. Because of this, previous research has been stymied by what are referred to as "age-period-cohort" effects. Meaning that it is difficult to parse out if the observed changes in prejudices in societies are due to trends in how people's attitudes change as they grow older, how things are at the time that they are being surveyed, or to cohort replacement (Gorodzeisky and Semyonov 2018). While the questions that result from this consideration of how prejudice changes over time are as complicated as the concept itself, this thesis distills them down to two separate, but related research questions. First, how are macro level contexts related to changes in attitudes over time? Second, how do changes in contexts relate to changes in attitudes over time? These questions regarding the

importance of change are applied to both adolescents and adults since both groups are likely to be sensitive to them.

To summarize, in order have a better understanding about prejudice, what influences it and how prejudice changes over time, a third approach is needed. One that takes into consideration not only that adolescents might be sensitive to macro level contexts, but also one that incorporates an expansion of the types of contexts to include those that are not strictly related to competition over scarce resources, and also have historical properties that are subject to change. Defining context this way is not a simple task either from a theoretical or analytical perspective. In terms of theory, scholars in psychology, sociology and political science have paid attention to some of the different potential explanations proposed in this thesis without linking them, so combining approaches from these literatures is needed in order to supplement, not supplant each other.

To address the analytical complications that are presented when designing research of this type, the thesis incorporates a variety of data sources from Sweden, Germany, the United States and Europe in conjunction with official government statistical data all with a longitudinal perspective. By combining these theoretical perspectives with the diverse data used here, each of the studies explores the relationships between how different types of contexts are related to prejudicial attitudes towards immigrants over time. This longitudinal approach contributes to the field of research by bridging theoretical and methodological positions typically relegated to either psychology or sociology, in either youth or adulthood, exploring factors that are open to change as a more valid representation of the real world contexts that exert influence over individuals throughout their lives. Doing so will provide valuable insight about how macro contexts influence attitudes in adolescence, the potentially lasting effect those contexts may have, and how contexts are related to attitudinal change in societies.

In the sections following this introduction, an overview of the theoretical approaches that are used in this thesis are provided. Since the thesis spans across both age categories and varying types of contextual analysis it begins with an overview of the socialization approach during the formative years of attitude development in adolescence, then moves to a discussion of macro-contextual influences that might influence prejudice in societies. This includes both a case for the importance of changing conditions and a discussion about differing concepts of contexts such as attitudinal environments, detailing why it should be expected that changes in contexts should be related to anti-immigrant attitudes. The methods section outlines the motivation behind why the datasets were chosen, and how each study incorporates some type of

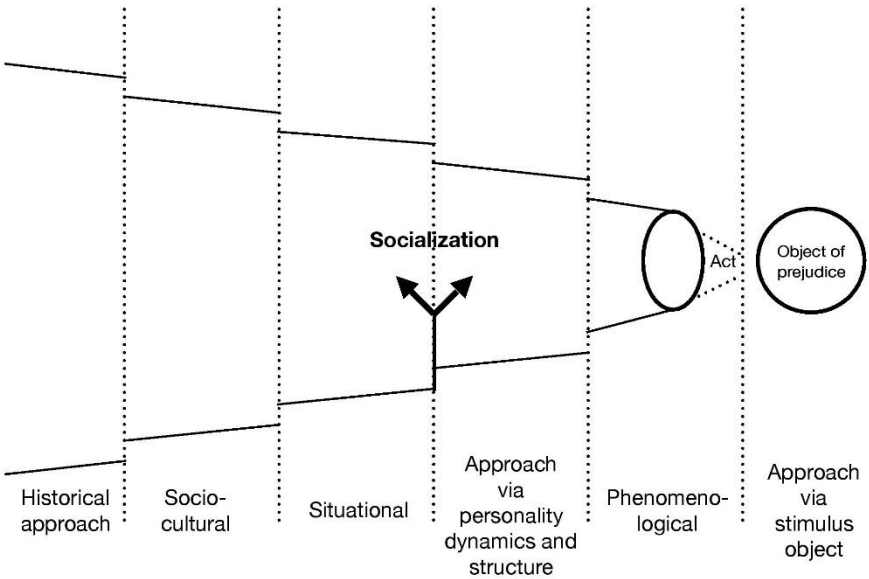
longitudinal, comparative analytic method to get a better understanding of how different contexts influence attitudes over time. It follows with a short summary of each of the studies and their main findings. Then there are some concluding remarks about how the findings in the thesis contribute to the research field and some of the implications it may have for future theoretical approaches.

Theoretical approach

The distinction between the socialization and inter-group dynamics approaches of research into prejudice have long been known. Writing on behalf of the Department of Scientific Research created by the American Jewish Committee in the forward to The Authoritarian Personality (1950); Horkheimer noted that there are two potential strands of research into prejudice, one that focuses on individual level characteristics and one that focuses on broader social forces that exert themselves on many people in society. However, instead of conceptualizing these research fields as competing, he thought of them more as a two-step process where one body of research informs the other. "For we recognize that the individual in vacuo is but an artifact … [prejudice] although essentially psychological in nature, it has been necessary to explain individual behavior in terms of social antecedents and concomitants. The second stage of our research is thus focused upon problems of group pressures and the sociological determinants of roles in given social situations." Since, there has been a considerable amount of development on the individual "stage" of research in terms of other personality traits that commonly correspond to prejudicial attitudes (Allport 1954, Adorno 1950, Pratto et al. 1994) and the socializing agents around individuals that influence their development (Bandura 1969, Tajfel and Turner 1979, Abrams and Hogg 1990, Van Zalk et al. 2013, Thijs and Verkuyten 2013; Bohman et al. 2019).

However, in the process of trying to hone in on the intricacies of each approach, scholars have still not made it to the 'second stage', of developing a coherent narrative of what influences prejudice as it develops across the life course. Even Gordon Allport in his seminal text The Nature of Prejudice (1954) repeatedly emphasized the need for a multi-layered approach to understanding the influence that contexts have on prejudice, in his outline he included six types of contextual analysis that scholars should take into account, ranging from the most individually focused factors out to macro contexts. They are depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Allport's causal model of approaches to the study of prejudice



This figure illustrates a causal assemblage where working from right to left, the factors that are close to the individual are dependent upon the context that proceeded it. As a psychologist, Allport places his own work in the situational and personality dynamic approach. He argues that this is the conceptual arena where socialization occurs, echoing the socialization scholars discussed previously. Still, he understands that those approaches are influenced by the socio-cultural environments where they transpire, and that those socio-cultural environments are shaped by the historical contexts that lead up to contemporary circumstances. By focusing on some contexts while omitting others, scholars simultaneously gain insight into special facets of the relationship they have with prejudice and run the risk of missing how those relationships are dependent on the higher order contextual influences. This, according to Allport, limits what we are able to understand about how the different contexts work together to influence prejudice. His feelings about them deserve to be quoted directly:

> "The fact that we shall devote so much time to these [micro] approaches perhaps indicates the author's psychological bias. If so, he pleads with the reader to recognize his attempt to give considerable emphasis likewise to historical, sociocultural and situational determinants. The author hopes the present volume may be regarded as reflection of the present tendency for specialists to cross boundaries and to borrow methods and insights from neighboring disciplines in the interest of a more adequate understanding of a concrete social problem." (pp.202)

The theoretical position most often referred to in the analysis of macro contexts, described here as the inter-group relations approach, could be positioned into the socio-cultural zone of Allport's figure. Blumer's (1958) original text about group relations (and Blalock's follow up book (1969)) set out to analyze and describe the setting through which white-black prejudice was so prevalent in the United States and the approach focused on the contexts in which the group dynamics take place.

To apply Allport's figure to the inter-group relations approach, Blumer was writing his piece during a time of institutionally sanctioned segregation during the Jim Crow era in the United States. This context was dependent on a history of slavery, the reconstruction efforts that followed its abolition and a slew of other historical factors that are bound up into the threat mechanisms that informed the construction of his inter-group relations approach. So, just as Allport's situational approach is dependent on socio-cultural conditions, Blumer's socio-cultural approach is dependent on the historical conditions that led up to the time of his writings. While providing important insight about why broader social forces should influence attitudes, they point to certain mechanisms that should be at play, that could function differently when applied to prejudices that people have against immigrant groups. For instance, the theory does not address how changes in context might influence attitudes, this is likely due to the fact that there was no reason to believe that the proportions of black people in the United States should suddenly increase relative to white populations. In contrast, in-group prejudice towards immigrants is characterized by change, and promise to continue to change in the future. This requires modifying the socio-cultural approach to accommodate for the historical conditions that precede in the causal assemblage.

Contemporarily, more scholars are echoing Allport's warning about the danger of focusing on certain factors while omitting others, potentially important drivers of prejudice in what can be considered the "single factor

fallacy", pointing out that the individual and societal level approaches are not mutually exclusive (Bobo 1999, Pettigrew and Hewestone 2017). Taking these recommendations seriously, in the sections that follow I outline in more detail just what these theories are and how they have informed the previous empirical research on prejudice, touching first on the socialization literature and the importance of the formative years. That is followed by a discussion of the inter-group relations approach, which highlights some of the new developments in understanding how different macro contexts might influence prejudice. This is followed by a section about bridging these theoretical positions to construct a more streamlined, intuitive narrative of prejudicial attitude development both within individuals and across societies.

Pre-adult socialization and the formative years

To explain the mechanisms behind socialization, social learning theory is a framework whose central principle is that people learn behaviors and attitudes through the examples set by the people that are around them. While in the developmental stages of youth, people emulate the behaviors of others, and over time those behaviors are internalized into attitudes, beliefs and values. There are a variety of ways young people learn behaviors and attitudes including through modeling, where they take on the behaviors of their role models, as well as through vicarious conditioning, where people are able to see the consequences of the behaviors of the people around them and generalize the consequences of their actions back on to themselves. In any case, what people learn is limited to what they are exposed to by the role models that they have in their lives, so who these role models are, and how they think and behave is crucial. Role models are commonly thought of in social learning theory as parents, peers, teachers and classmates, but they can also include popular cultural figures such as celebrities and famous athletes that demonstrate behavior and attitudes that can be adopted by the individual (Bandura 1969; Bandura 1977). However, it may also be the case that children learn behavior from anyone they see, for example in an early psychological experiment testing this idea Bandura, Ross and Ross (1961) showed that children are prone to imitate the behavior, even the potentially deviant behavior of adult role models that were strangers to them.

Among the things that people are learning from role models is the identification of who is inside and who is outside of their own group. Informing this identification process, social identity theory argues that once children learn which classification schemes define people as in and out-group members, they start to attribute qualities to these group members differently. Individuals do this because they strive to maintain a positive social identity and this identity is based on favorable comparisons between the individuals'

own in-group and some out-group. In the interest of maintaining high self-esteem, individuals seek to identify with their chosen in-group and assign a value to that identity, so prejudices develop through creating positive associations to in-group traits exhibited by the people around them and negative associations to out-group traits as a means of justifying the perceived group membership (Tajfel and Turner 1979). In both social learning and identity theory, prejudice is a product of learned behavior. The key distinction between these two perspectives is that social learning theorists argue that individuals internalize the behavior exhibited by those around them, and the social identity theory argues that prejudice is a social construction based on the desire of the individual to maintain positive views of the people in their in-group since they are a reflection of themselves. Nevertheless, both are linked to psychological ideas of childhood cognitive development, so to understand what the influences of prejudice are, it is also important to understand when people should be sensitive to what influences.

To inform the aspect of time sensitivity, we have to reach further into the psychological literature. Nesdale (2000) suggests that, children go through four phases of cognitive development that gradually incorporate aspects of social identity theory. First they are unable to differentiate between groups at a very young age, then they establish an awareness of ethnic differences, followed by ethnic preference of their own in-group and finally ethnic prejudice toward out-groups. He cites that children can develop in-group identification as young as 4 years old, and there is empirical support for the idea that prejudicial attitudes are at least somewhat dependent on age. A meta-study of 121 worldwide reports show a consistent trend in levels of prejudice in childhood and adolescence. They appear to grow into a peak between 5-7 years old and then drop off and level out around 14 years old (Raabe and Beelmann 2011). Clearly, prejudice begins when people are quite young.

While this provides insights into when the socialization process begins, but when does it end? Allport's figure places the socialization process in the situational and personality dynamic tier of the contexts that influence prejudice, but it offers no guidance as to the timing of when the socialization process takes place. It could be that it never stops, and as people transition out of youth they continue to model the behaviors of others and learn new classification schemes about which people are in or out group members in order to maintain a changing sense of superiority in correspondence to their group identification. While Raabe and Beelmann analyzed the age related differences in average level of prejudice, they did not make claims about how attitudes are susceptible to change within individuals, meaning we still need to know when, or if the socialization process stops and attitudes become

stable. Addressing this issue, Krosnick and Alwin's (1989) argue that attitudes are still susceptible to change during late adolescence/young adult life in the years between 18-25. Testing what they call the impressionable years hypothesis, they assert that prejudicial attitudes are most susceptible to socializing influences when individuals are young and that the attitudes they form during this time have a profound and remaining effect on the rest of their lives. Once people age beyond this crucial socializing period individuals' attitudes stabilize and are less susceptible to change. While their data supports this hypothesis, its youngest respondents were already 18 years old, missing many years of crucial attitudinal development preceding it, however other subsequent studies have bolstered these findings showing that by the time people reach adulthood their attitudes are "crystalized" and less subject to change than at earlier stages in their lives (Henry and Sears 2009; Sears and Funk 1999; Rekker et al. 2015).

To explain what is influencing attitudes during the socialization period, modern interpretations of social learning and social identity theories have continued to focus on micro level socializing agents in childhood and adolescence such as parents, peers and friendship networks, as well as classrooms and schools (Miklikowska 2016; Brown 1990; Brown et. al 2008; Poteat 2007; Titzmann et al. 2015, Van Zalk et. al. 2013; Janmaat 2014; Lenzi et. al 2014; Munniksma et al. 2017). Generally speaking, the findings suggest that these micro contexts are important in the development of prejudicial attitudes. Still, even modern interpretations of the theory are careful to point out that people do not blindly express in-group favoritism regardless of context, and recognize that broader social contexts may also be important factors, influencing how the individual interacts with their peer groups (Hornsey 2008). Adding to this point, Brown notes that "researchers should be mindful of how major contexts in adolescent lives such as classrooms, work, family and other larger social institutions shape peer group relations." (1990:182). Despite this recognition, it is unfortunately the case that potential influencers that are common among groups of young people, those who share experiences in a broader contextual environment are conspicuously absent from the empirical literature on prejudice. This is surprising since it has been noted that the existence of prejudicial attitudes in individuals are "more likely traceable to pre-adult socialization than to current racial threat" (Kinder & Sears 1981:416). However, looking toward the sociological literature, the inter-group relations approach has enjoyed considerable attention. If larger social contexts shape prejudices, then threat mechanisms may also be at work during this time.

Prejudice in response to macro influences

Turning attention to the potential importance of macro contextual influence, the sociological literature about prejudice has been molded by Herbert Blumer's paper Race Prejudice as a Sense of Group Position (1958). This admittedly short theoretical piece outlined what is commonly known as 'group threat theory', which asserts that prejudice is a function of inter-group dynamics. While Blumer developed this theory in response to race relations in the United States, its application to the study of anti-immigrant attitudes has been extensive. In terms of understanding how contextual level factors influence prejudicial attitudes, this has been the prevailing theoretical approach in sociological research. In it, inter-group dynamics are defined by a competition over scarce resources. Blumer argues that dominant groups in a society have a proprietary feeling of privilege, believing that they should have exclusive claims to important areas of life including access to schools, jobs and churches among other things. The dominant group experiences perceptions of threat when members of a subordinate group cast those proprietary claims into flux, and that while "threat is perceived by individuals … its relationship to prejudice depends on a comparison of the relations between dominant and sub-ordinate social groups." (1958:5) Therefore, the dominant group's prejudicial attitudes should be higher in places where the threat to resources is higher such as where there are higher levels in the proportion of minority members, or in places where access to economic resources are more limited.

Quillian (1995) took Blumer's theory of prejudice as a product of inter-group relations, coined the term 'group threat' and applied empirical methods to search for a relationship between both economic condition and levels of foreign born people and the anti-immigrant attitudes of people in different countries. He found this relationship in a comparative analysis of European countries that has ignited over 20 years of empirical research into the subject (for example see: Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Hjerm 2007; Kunovich 2004; McLaren 2003; Schlueter and Scheepers 2010; Schneider 2008; Strabac 2011; Weber 2015). However, the findings in this research are mixed. In a recent meta-analysis of studies specifically looking for evidence of the relationship between the size of out-groups and anti-immigrant sentiment showed that "some studies show a positive relationship between immigrant group size, others show a negative relationship or no relationship at all" (Pottie-Sherman and Wilkes 2017: 243).

In terms of economic threat, the evidence is similarly mixed. Some literature suggests a negative relationship consistent with group threat theory where more strained economic conditions, such as higher unemployment rates or lower GDP, corresponds to higher levels of prejudicial attitudes of the

respondents in that area in response to economic threat (Billiet et. al. 2014; Meuleman et. al. 2009; Quillian 1995). However, other studies find no relationship between the contextual effects of economic condition on anti-immigrant attitudes (Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Kuntz et. al 2017; Meeusen and Kern 2016; Schneider 2008). What is common in the literature is that economic condition is only important when it is interacted with other factors. For example, Hjerm (2009) found that in municipalities, economic conditions are only important to anti-immigrant attitudes in areas that are poor and have comparatively high levels of immigrants. Other studies have found that economic condition is also related to anti-immigrant attitudes when it is interacted with inequality (O'Connell 2005), or the individual's ideological political preferences (Pardos-Prado 2011).

Taken together it would appear that the group threat literature is in a state of disarray, but rather than abandon the approach altogether some researchers have begun incorporating a new interpretation to Blumer's theory. The literature discussed here has traditionally interpreted group threat in a static fashion where the presence, or perceived presence of threat induces prejudicial attitudes. However, another interpretation of the theory suggests that inter-group threat occurs as a dynamic process where prejudice is a reaction within the individual in response to an increased threat to their dominant group vis-à-vis a sub-ordinate group. Meuleman, Davidov and Billiet (2009) forwarded this dynamic interpretation of the theory, arguing that it is changes, instead of absolute levels of threat factors that induce prejudicial attitudes. This means that "actual competition could remain constant at a high level without affecting outgroup attitudes. It is only when sudden changes in minority group size or economic conditions occur that outgroup attitudes evolve." (2009:354). In this case, the findings of previous studies may be clouded by the fact that even high proportions of immigrants in an environment, if stable, do not necessarily correspond to higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes because the inter-group power dynamics are also stable. This could be because, as Blumer notes, prejudice is a response to the threat that individuals perceive towards their in-group. Since, Mueleman and colleagues' dynamic interpretation of group threat has received some empirical support, mostly in cross sectional comparative research designs (Quillian 1995; Coenders and Scheepers 1998; Coenders and Scheepers 2008; Hopkins 2010; Kunts et. al 2017) and recently with repeated measures panel data (Lancee and Pardos-Prado 2013).

This idea speaks to the larger family of theories in sociology and social psychology that employ relative comparisons to explain how contextual conditions influence attitudes and behaviors and serve as justification for this approach. For example, theories of relative deprivation (Stouffer 1962) argue

that while evaluating their circumstances individuals first make cognitive comparisons, then appraisals about whether they or their in-group are disadvantaged, and if this appraisal is perceived as unfair the result is anger and resentment (Pettigrew 2015). When conditions change this process repeats and the two appraisals are compared leaving the individual with either a perceived gain or a perceived deprivation. It could be that the perceptions of threat to proprietary claims of in-group members that Blumer detailed follow a similar cognitive process. First, in-group members make cognitive comparisons about their access to proprietary claims, compare that access to the access of others, and if that comparison results in a feeling of threat to those claims then the result is prejudicial attitudes toward the out-group. A change in their environmental conditions restarts this evaluation process and if the appraisal of their access has diminished, this triggers feelings of threat that translate to inter-group prejudice.

Revisiting Blumer to understand context

Blumer's theory about prejudice resulting from a sense of threatened group position brought theoretical attention to the importance of how macro contextual indicators might influence prejudice. Both Quillian's (1995) study and many of the studies after it, conceive of prejudice as a response to direct competition for resources, and while recent augmentations to the theory incorporate the importance of changes in contexts as the link to attitudes, they nevertheless focus on how environments that are related to competition for resources induce threat. However, it could be argued that this is a narrow interpretation of the text, especially given the growing body of literature that has begun to link other macro contexts to attitudes about immigrants.

Again, there are many contexts that groups experience which are not directly related to competition for resources. Blumer's text explicitly draws attention to contexts such as "big events" and how public leaders can help define them in ways that either generate or reduce prejudice depending on how they are framed (1954: 6). For example, media environments in a country help to shape the topics that are being discussed, and make salient certain issues at points in time influencing the population's attitudes towards immigration (Czymara and Dochow 2018; van Klingeren et al. 2015). Also, political environments help to set the agenda and direct national discussions that bring issues like immigration to the forefront. In contexts that are particularly hostile towards immigrant groups, exemplified by anti-Muslim rhetoric after September 11th (itself a 'big event') in the U.S., or European political parties that take anti-immigrant positions have also been shown to increase anti-immigrant attitudes (Hopkins 2010; Bohman 2011). These contexts are intuitively

important, as they are explanations of how prejudice can shift in a society, but not why they are able to shift in the first place.

To explain this, Blumer specifically outlines four qualifications for the triggering of threat on behalf of the dominant group. They are "(1) a feeling of superiority, (2) a feeling that the subordinate race is intrinsically different and alien, (3) a feeling of proprietary claim to certain areas of privilege and advantage, and (4) a fear and suspicion that the subordinate race harbors designs on the prerogatives of the dominate race" (1958:4). By focusing on demographic and economic indicators that might create threat environments, scholars studying contexts have mostly focused on the proprietary claims of the in-group. So far, research that addresses the other traits have done so predominantly by linking individual level characteristics to out-group attitudes. The social dominance orientation literature, for example, provides individual evidence that feelings of superiority are linked to inter-group prejudice (Pratto et al. 1994). Also, studies examining cultural distance show religious beliefs matter especially for Evangelical Christians in the US (Nadeau et al. 2011), and that individuals who lack familiarity and have a fear of conflict over values and culture might be driving prejudice in Europe (Schneider 2008). Similarly, where there is support for proprietary claims driving prejudice it also lies in perceptions of the economy or feelings about immigration levels, that may have nothing to do with the actual material conditions in the respondent's environments at the contextual level (Kuntz et al. 2017; Nadeau et al. 1993).

Meanwhile, research that explores how macro contexts relate to one of the four aspects of group threat are sparse, though there are encouraging findings in the empirical research. For instance, religiously homogeneous environments foster prejudice between in-groups and out-groups providing evidence for feelings that the sub-ordinate group is intrinsically different and alien (Bohman and Hjerm 2014). Still, a sociological approach that engages seriously with the other aspects of the theory in comparison to macro-level contexts is still needed. Attitudinal environments, such as social trust and the very prejudicial environments in which individuals are situated, signal both who is threatening and whether situations feel threatening in the first place. In other words, it is possible that attitudinal environments where prejudice is the norm can serve as a threat inducing factor, while other contexts that are highly trusting might be inoculating factors by giving people confidence that their society can integrate immigrants seamlessly. They also might serve as socializing environments, because they help set the rules expected of young people in how they are supposed to think and define themselves in relation to others. Applying this idea to Blumer's four prejudice aspects, attitudinal environments like these may amplify or subdue the "fear and suspicion that

the sub-ordinate race harbors designs against the prerogatives of the dominant race", providing manufactured justification for understanding out-groups as intrinsically different, inferior beings that threaten proprietary claims.

As has been discussed, recent interpretations of group threat have begun to focus on how changes in conditions related to competition for resources may trigger perceptions of threat, but other contexts are also changing. While year-to-year changes in social trust might be small, over time drops in this represent profound changes in the state of affairs in how people interact with the economic, institutional and private spheres of their lives that should translate to changes in attitudes about out-groups. Similarly, an individual's attitudes about immigrants might change if they are faced with a change in context, such as being suddenly removed from an environment of normalized prejudice. Therefore holding these ideas simultaneously, that other contexts are important, and that changes in those contexts are also important should be considered in the study of anti-immigrant attitudes.

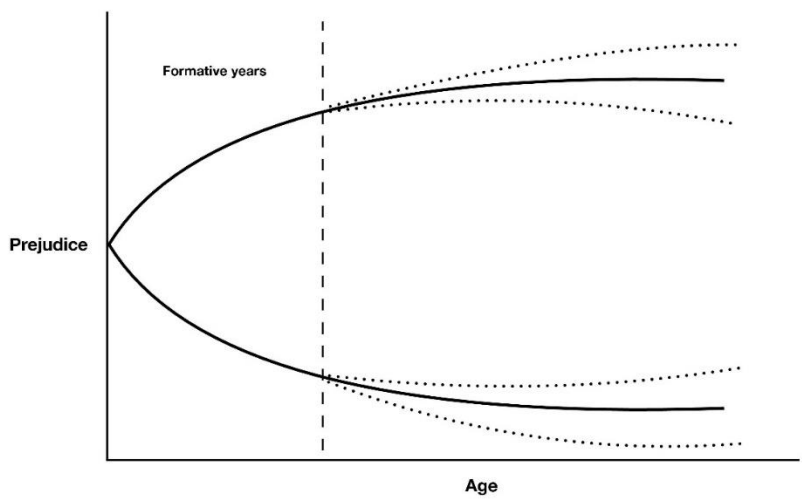
Finding the bridge to the formative years

The theoretical approaches summarized here place the focus on different kinds of contexts that function mechanistically different, principally because the units of analysis are so different. Thankfully, theories of political socialization represent a third theoretical approach that understands that attitudes are formed during adolescence. The idea that the things people are exposed to when they are young having a lasting impact on them is not new, as Mannheim notes, "Early impressions tend to coalesce into a natural view of the world. All later experiences then tend to receive their meaning from this original set…that even if the rest of one's life consisted in one long process of negation and destruction of the natural world view acquired in youth, the determining influence of these early impressions would still be predominant" ([1928]1952:298). In other words, the conditions that people experience when they are young have profound implications to the future. In this approach, it is recognized that micro level influences are important (Almond and Verba, 1963; Hyman 1959) but also that macro level conditions have an important relationship to political attitudes. Political scientists have, for example, shown that the political environments shaped by different presidents and prime ministers influence the political attitudes of young people (Sears and Valentino 1997; Campbell et al. 1960; Grasso et al. 2019). In this example, the context is a political environment, linking how other contexts influence attitudes while people are young, the effect of which can be measured in their attitudes many years later. While the political socialization literature has not yet applied this idea to prejudicial attitude formation, it is possible that the

socializing conditions that people experience while they are young have a lasting impact on their attitudes about immigrants as well.

Figure 2 is a theoretical model of how attitudes might change over the life course. Each solid line is a representation of the possible trajectory that a high and low prejudice person might take over time. Beginning with similar attitudes it is possible that two individuals take different paths depending on the influences that surround them as they enter adolescence, both micro and macro. The formative years approach argues that most of the change in their attitudes should occur while they are young, represented by the area on the left side of the dashed line. The right side of the dashed line represents the trajectory during their time as adults, flattening out as they grow older. Of course, change is still possible in adults, and that is represented by the dotted lines that extend away from the formative years. Still, the amount of change should be smaller in the years of adulthood compared to the amount of change undergone as adolescents. By looking for relationships between macro contexts and measurements of people only on the right hand side of the dashed line, we not only capture a comparatively small amount of variation that may be occurring during this time, we also omit the lasting influences that occurred while people were young.

Figure 2: Conceptual diagram of the 'formative years' approach to attitudinal change



Taking the psychological literature of the socialization approach and the importance that learning theories place on the formative years, in conjunction

with the sociological literature informing the importance of macro level contexts on attitudes- a synthesis of these theoretical perspectives is needed. This synthesis advocates for an analysis that takes four things into account, which are the key aspects from each of these traditions in considering the influence of context on prejudice:

> 1) Macro level contexts influence of prejudice during adolescence
>
> 2) Macro contextual factors, not strictly limited to direct competition over resources are important for prejudicial attitudes
>
> 3) These contexts are potentially changing over time, and changes in conditions should be related to changes in attitudes, and
>
> 4) The effects of these macro contexts on prejudicial attitudes during adolescence cast a long shadow over the rest of people's lives

Advancing this approach is the main theoretical contribution of this thesis to the research field. While each of the other theories presented have addressed one or more of the four qualifications listed here, none have forwarded the approach that keeps these in mind simultaneously. However, this novel approach is not without its problems. Theoretically speaking, the mechanisms in which these macro contexts exert influence on anti-immigrant attitudes in adolescence is unclear. It could be that the influence of the macro contextual factors typically considered in the group threat theory framework are trickling down through the micro contexts such as peers, parents, schools, and other adults in adolescents' lives usually considered in the social learning theory perspective. It could be that adolescents are more sensitive to macro factors than previously thought at a time when they are developing their worldview and shaping their feelings about others, or it could be a combination of both. It should be mentioned that the same mechanistic questions present themselves when asserting that macro contextual indicators influence within person attitude changes at any age. Still, parsing out these mechanisms is not the aim of this thesis, instead it simply seeks to examine if they are important and worthy of further investigation.

To implement this approach and to augment the historically dominant theoretical perspectives described here involves, for instance, giving considerable attention to time. Applied to this thesis, this means not only paying attention to when contexts should matter to individuals in their life course, but also to how contexts interact with individuals over time. As characteristics of contextual environments, levels of immigration, economic conditions, prejudicial environments, and even country level social trust are inherently dynamic processes, meaning that relevant changes in these contexts should be taken into account at the time they should be taken into account (during adolescence, for example). This may partly explain why the research into contextual links to prejudicial attitudes are so mixed. In addition to the interesting empirical findings in each of the studies, accounting for these difficulties by taking a longitudinal analytical approach, and providing evidence for the importance of each of these aspects is the primary empirical contribution of this thesis to the research field. Unfortunately, due to data limitations, testing each of the four aspects of this approach simultaneously is not possible, but each of the four studies presented is able to touch on at least two of the qualifications listed. Study 1 investigates how attitudinal environments in the classroom context influence within individual attitude change over time in adolescence, and how attitudes respond to a re-shuffling of the environment. Study 2 examines how changes in macro contextual factors typically applied to adults are reflected in changes in the attitudes of adolescents. Study 3 expands on the results of Study 2 by testing if the macro factors experienced in an individual's youth remain influential on their attitudes into adulthood. Finally, Study 4 examines how social trust, and changes in trust influence the anti-immigrant attitudes of adults and informs how prejudice changes in societies over time.

Table 1: Summary of approaches of contextual influence on attitudes about immigrants.

Study: (context unit)	**Context:**	**Time consideration:**
Study 1: Classrooms (Sweden)	Attitudinal environments- prejudice	Formative years, contemporaneous, change over time
Study 2: States (Germany)	Demographic and economic	Formative years, contemporaneous, change over time
Study 3: States (United States)	Demographic and economic	Formative years, historical contexts future influence
Study 4: Countries	Attitudinal environments- social trust	Adult years, contemporaneous, change over time

Methods

Data

This thesis incorporates a series of different datasets to answer the research questions of interest. Since one of the focuses of the thesis is how different contexts influence people during the formative years of adolescence, data that targeted that specific age group was necessary to map how anti-immigrant attitudes develop over time when exposed to different environments. Adding to this complexity, understanding how historical contexts continue to influence attitudes in the future, and how changes in contexts over time influence attitudes required the incorporation of different datasets that lend themselves to that analysis. In all, four different datasets, one in each study, were used to measure the key dependent variable of the thesis, attitudes about immigrants. While similar, each of the datasets measure attitudes about immigrants slightly differently, employing different questions and scales that are context specific.

Similarly, while the primary interest of the thesis is how contexts are related to attitudes about immigrants, 'context' can mean many things. Broadly speaking, this thesis makes a distinction between contexts that are directly related to competition over scarce resources, namely demographic and economic contexts, and those that are not directly related to competition over

scarce resources. In line with the theoretical approach forwarded, these are attitudinal environments. It also understands that the timing of contextual influences should matter, placing importance both on when in the life course contexts should play a role as well as how over time changes should be related to attitudes. To incorporate this type of consideration into the analysis, other datasets were also incorporated. The following sections describe how attitudes towards immigrants were measured in this thesis, followed by how context was operationalized in each study.

Attitudes about immigrants

The first study focused on Swedish adolescents between ~13-17 years old over a five year period from 2010-2015. A part of the Youth and Society (YeS) dataset compiled at Örebro University, this dataset was comprised of repeated measures asking the same participants the same questions every year, enabling the observation of change over time. To measure attitudes about immigrants the 849 participants were asked a stem question "What is your opinion of people that come here from other countries?" followed by three statements where they were asked to select how well they believe it applies either "very well", "quite well", "does not apply so well", and "does not apply at all". The statements were: "It happens only too often that immigrants have customs and traditions that not fit into Swedish society", "Immigrants often come here just to take advantage of welfare in Sweden" and "Immigrants often take jobs from people who are born in Sweden". I averaged those scores in each response wave to create an anti-immigrant scale measurement that can be compared overtime within students and between students.

Study 2 utilizes the Children of Immigrants Longitudinal Study of 4 European Countries (CILS4EU). As implied in the name of the dataset, four countries were included in the original sample, however only the German sample included repeated measures of the same respondents allowing for observed changes in attitudes over time. The German sample included 2,328 German adolescents (ages ~14-18) over four response waves (2010-2014). Where Study 1 asked questions specifically about 'immigrants', this dataset asked respondents how they feel about the largest immigrant groups in Germany. Respondents were asked: "Please rate how you feel about the following [survey country] groups on a scale that runs from 0 to 100. The higher the number, the more positive you feel, and the lower the number, the more negative you feel towards this group." While not specifically mentioning the word 'immigrants', by averaging the responses to the thermometer scale, I created a value for how the respondents feel about immigrants. Like Study 1, this allows for the comparison of how changes in respondents' attitudes towards immigrants compare to others.

The third study switches to the United States, and where studies 1 and 2 sampled adolescents multiple times to measure change, the respondents in this study were comprised of adults that were only surveyed once. The data comes from the General Social Survey, a nationally representative sample that included 10 rounds from 1994 to 2016. Similar to Study 1, attitudes towards immigrants was measured by asking respondents to answer questions about the degree to which they agree with statements like "Immigrants are good for America's economy", "Immigrants take jobs away from people who were born in America", and "Immigrants increase crime rates", averaging these responses created a scale of the respondents' feelings about immigrants in general. In addition, respondents were asked whether they think immigration should be increased or decreased. While related, measuring opposition to immigration may also change over time. These two variables allow for the comparison of how attitudes are related to various conditions in states.

Finally, as the unit of contextual analysis expands to the country level, cross-national data from the European Social Survey (ESS) from eight survey waves from 2002-2016 was used. While the ESS includes periodic modules with more detailed questions about attitudes towards immigrants, a key part of this study is the incorporation of how changes in contexts influence changes in attitudes towards immigrants, so in order to have as many observations as possible three questions about immigrants that were included in every wave are used in this study. These questions touch on national, cultural and economic feelings people may have about the effects that immigrants have in their country. The questions are "Would you say it is generally bad or good for [country]'s economy that people come to live here from other countries?", "Would you say that [country]'s cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people coming to live here from other countries?", and "Is [country] made a worse or a better place to live by people coming to live here from other countries?". Similar to studies 1 and 2, the answers for these questions were averaged, generating a score for each respondent that can be compared to the other respondents in the sample.

Expanding contexts to explore the theory

The studies in the thesis begin and end with the analysis of how attitudinal environments are related to attitudes towards immigrants. As is described in the theoretical framework of this thesis, while not directly related to competition over scarce resources, it should still influence the perceptions about immigrants of individuals. To study these environments, the hierarchical nature of the data allows for individuals to be placed inside of groups of people and by aggregating the attitudes of the people in those groups a measurement of the attitudinal environment is gleaned that can be

compared to the environments of other groups. While both studies 1 and 4 make use of the idea of 'attitudinal environments' generally speaking, both the size of the groups, and the types of environments differ. In Study 1 the attitudinal environment of interest is prejudice in classrooms. To construct this variable, the attitudes towards immigrants of the students in each of the classrooms were averaged. In Study 4 the attitudinal environment of interest shifts to social trust. Similarly, the unit of analysis expands from classrooms to nations, however the same principle applies. In this case, respondents were asked "Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted, or that you can't be too careful in dealing with people?" and their responses were averaged with the other respondents in their country and survey year.

Studies 2 and 3 of the thesis analyze how demographic and economic contexts are related to attitudes towards immigrants. In Study 2, respondents are nested within German states allowing for a regional contextual analysis. This was combined with data about proportions of foreign-born people and unemployment rates from the German Statistical Offices of the Länder. Similarly, respondents in Study 3 were also nested within US states, so contextual data about percentages of foreign-born people were matched to respondents. However, since the theoretical focus of the study was how historical contexts might influence future attitudes, state-level data going back to 1900 was required. Since no such database aggregating this information had yet been made publically available, we created one for the purposes of this study. To get both current and historical data, we drew upon three U.S. government sources. We relied on a U.S. Bureau of the Census report on the nativity of the U.S. population based on decennial censes (Gibson and Lennon 1999). Data for 2000 and 2010 come from decennial censes and data for 2015 come from the American Community Survey. The data were averaged from decennial censes to create midpoints between decades. Then were matched respondents' to the states they were living in at response time and the states they were living in during adolescence, allowing for the comparison of contemporaneous and historical contexts relationship to prejudice.

Analytical approaches

The studies in this thesis explore how different contexts influence attitudes about immigrants. It does this by comparing how differing aspects of contexts are related to the individuals that are inside of each of these contexts. This hierarchical structure means that, individuals in the same context or responses within individuals should be more similar than those of other contexts because they are exposed to a host of different aspects of that context. The selection of the data listed above has both strengths and weaknesses in assessing how context influence anti-immigrant attitudes. In order to isolate

the influence contextual environments might have on individual's attitudes, a host of multi-level modeling techniques were employed.

Demographic, economic and attitudinal environment contexts are far from static and since change, both within individuals and within contextual conditions is a central part of the theoretical motivation behind why contexts should matter and detecting their importance, this must also be taken into account. Comparing over time differences face a similar issue to comparing differences in contexts, where the observed object or response is expected to be more similar to the objects or responses that come before and after it. The similarities within contexts, and within times are referred to as "nesting structures", where for example, responses can be nested within individuals, that are then nested within groups creating a three level structure. Special attention has been paid to these nesting structures and the following is a brief overview of the modeling used in each of the studies, detailing the strategy that helped to produce the robust findings included in this thesis.

In turn, the contextual unit of analysis changes from study to study so the hierarchical structure also changes to take this into account. This provides both strengths and weaknesses in the types of claims that can be made in each of the studies. One could view the expanding contextual units as a type of case selection where in each study some characteristics that are undoubtedly important in influencing the attitudes of the respondents are held constant, while in others much of the variation in responses is captured in the error terms. For example, Study 1 focuses on the influence of classrooms drawn from a sample of a city in Sweden. This holds the regional effects of the area constant since all the respondents are located in the same area at the same time, and it is possible that the strength of the effect could be moderated by the characteristics in a different part of Sweden, in a different country in Europe, or in a different country in the world. Conversely, Study 4 captures the country level influence of social trust, but does not include in the model the potentially confounding effects of smaller regional contexts.

While a strength of the thesis is that it takes time into consideration, data limitations make it so that influences that happen before, and sometimes between measurement periods cannot be accounted for. While this is true of most longitudinal studies of people and societies that do not include regular measurements of the same individuals over the entire period of the life course, it is something to consider while designing, interpreting and assessing the long-term implications of the findings reported. The first two studies involve repeated measures of the same individuals over a series of time points. This creates a structure where each response (level 1) is nested within the individual that gave that response (level 2). The first study is interested in how

classroom attitudinal environments influence attitudes over time, so the respondents are then nested into the classrooms they attend (level 3). At an aggregated level, the attitudinal environments of classrooms were stable over time, which is to say that there was not significant overtime change so this level three predictor was treated as time invariant. Structuring the models in this way allows for the comparison between the changes in the attitudes of individuals over time, as they relate to the different attitudinal environments from classroom to classroom. The timespan of the study includes a transition from primary school to high school, creating the possibility for a natural experiment where a comparison of the environmental stimulus is removed as the respondents are sorted out into different groups.

Study 2 uses a similar multi-level modeling approach as the first study, where repeated measure responses (level 1) are nested within individuals (level 2). However, this study shifts the focus from attitudinal environments to economic and demographic contexts commonly used in the literature about prejudice. In doing so, the unit of analysis expands to German states, and the relationship of interest is between attitudes about immigrants and the levels of immigrants and the economic condition in the states. In this case, during the time of the study there was considerable change in contextual conditions over time, especially in the levels of immigrants in the respondents' states. This is of particular interest given the theoretical approach, so to isolate the relationship between respondents' attitudes and states that have traditionally high levels of immigration, versus those states that experienced large changes in immigration, a technique called group mean centering was used (Fairbrother 2014). This allows for the separate testing of if respondents' attitudes are changing in relation to the conditions between states, versus if they are changing in relation to changes within states. Studies 1 and 2 analyze a snapshot of a relatively short period of time in the life course, but both theory and the results of the psychological literature suggest that the participants were getting to the age where attitude crystallization occurs, meaning it is possible that the influences may have a lasting effect.

Studies 1 and 2 utilized repeated measures of the same individuals over time. In studies 3 and 4 instead of repeated measures of individuals nested in groups, individuals are nested in groups that are sampled multiple times. In the case of Study 3, this longitudinal cross-sectional design nests individual respondents in state-year observations, nested inside of states. This allows for the comparison of between state differences in contexts, while controlling for the overall general effect of time. The focus of Study 3 is how historical contexts, in this case proportion of foreign-born people, in the states where people grew up, might continue to influence their attitudes in to adulthood. While the main strength of this study is its ability to link historical conditions

to future attitudes, the participants in the study were only measured once, so we are unable to know what their attitudes were in the formative years, or how they changed over time before they were measured at the time of survey. We also do not know how many times the participants may have moved between the state they were living in during adolescence and at the time of survey, meaning that some people in the survey could have been exposed to many different contexts during that window of time. Still, we believe that these unobserved influences would conservatively bias the results of the study.

Finally, just as each study has expanded the contextual unit of analysis from classrooms to German States to American States, Study 4 is a cross-country comparative analysis of European countries using longitudinal survey data. The nesting structure is similar to Study 3, with individuals nested within group/time observation, nested into groups- in this instance country years, and countries. This type of nesting structure not only allows to control for the overall effect of time, but it also allows for a similar type of within and between analysis conducted in Study 2. This study brings back the idea that attitudinal environments should be important to attitudes about immigrants, by creating a country level trust variable. Structuring the data this way allows for analysis of how attitudes about immigrants are related to differences between high and low trust countries as well as over time changes in trust within countries separately. Since the data spans the time before, and after the so-called immigration crisis, another country level analysis was conducted to test if historically high trusting countries were insulated from prejudicial attitudes, even during time of high immigration. This serves both as a natural experiment, and a robustness check for the between country differences in the relationship between social trust and attitudes about immigrants. The ESS data used for the primary analysis only allowed to set the "historical" trust to the first wave of the study (2002), limiting the time gap that I was able to produce to correlate to attitudes in 2016. To increase the gap, and as a further robustness check, I merged the available countries from the 1999 wave of the European Values Survey and replicated the analysis. In an effort to generalize these findings to countries outside Europe, I also reproduced the analysis using the World Values Survey measuring country level social trust with the 1995-1996 wave with attitudes about immigrants in the 2010-2012 wave. While having more historical data with a larger sample of countries would be ideal, reproducing the same findings across multiple different times, and country contexts adds to the validity of the claims made in the study.

Results: summaries of the studies

Study 1: Prejudice in the classroom: a longitudinal analysis of anti-immigrant attitudes

The first study analyses how attitudinal environments influence prejudice towards immigrants. Following the formative years approach which suggests that adolescence is a crucial time for attitudinal development, and since adolescents spend so much time in classrooms, it conceptualizes this context as an environment where the attitudes of the group should influence the attitudes of the individuals. In other words the study asks, does the attitudinal environment adolescents are exposed to in their classrooms influence their attitudes over time? When other studies have looked at how classrooms might influence prejudice, researchers have typically tested the contact hypothesis, which states that individuals that are in regular contact with immigrants should have more friendly attitudes about immigrants more generally. While important, this focus runs the danger of falling victim to the single factor fallacy. Findings show that over time individual's anti-immigrant attitudes adjust in classrooms with a higher or lower average level of anti-immigrant sentiment, net of the effect of classroom heterogeneity and other individual level factors. However, this finding was true only while students were still enrolled in the same class over the first three waves of the study. After students entered high school, the classroom/time interaction effect disappears, suggesting that other contextual influences take over. Moreover, while these results also support other research that shows that anti-immigrant sentiment is lower in classrooms with higher levels of ethnic heterogeneity, the effect of the attitudinal environment remains. This finding is both discouraging since immigrant friendly individuals can enter classrooms that have an attitudinal environment with high levels of anti-immigrant attitudes and become more anti-immigrant over time, even in ethnically heterogeneous contexts; but also encouraging because individuals can become less prejudiced over time when exposed to environments that are friendly towards immigrants, even in ethnically homogeneous contexts. Nevertheless, it draws attention to how important contexts like attitudinal environments in classrooms are during a crucial time in attitudinal development.

Study 2: Context and change: a longitudinal analysis of anti-immigrant attitudes in adolescence

The second study stays in the formative years of adolescence but shifts the focus in two ways, first by switching to economic and demographic contextual influences, and second by expanding the contextual unit of analysis to states.

Previous research has explored many different relationships between contextual influences, such as levels of immigration or economic condition, and anti-immigrant attitudes with mixed results. While some show a significant relationship, others find only weak evidence, or evidence suggesting that a relationship only exists in specific areas where these contexts interact. These have largely been international comparative studies using cross-sectional data with varying spatial units of analysis, therefore they have been unable to make claims about how changes in environmental context translate to changes in attitudes of respondents. This study addresses these shortcomings by employing a longitudinal research design with repeated measures. Results show that year-to-year changes in contextual conditions including the proportion of foreign born people and unemployment rates within the state where respondents live, correspond to changes in attitudes towards immigrants consistent with a dynamic interpretation of group threat theory. Conversely, the stable between-state levels of foreign born populations and unemployment rates do not appear to be important. Results also support other bodies of established research that adolescents that have more contact with out-groups have more positive attitudes about immigrants, but even after controlling for these individual level factors, the changes in state level conditions remains important. These results show that macro contextual indicators typically applied to adults, albeit with mixed results, are important in the attitudinal development during the formative years of adolescence. It also shows that, insofar as threat inducing contexts matter, it is changes that seem to be important rather than absolute levels.

Study 3: "When I was growing up": The lasting impact of immigrant presence on native-born American attitudes towards immigrants and immigration

Co-written with Maureen Eger and Mikael Hjerm

The third study builds on the findings in the second study by applying the concept that demographic and economic contexts should matter during the formative years to a historical research design. This represents a combination of theoretical insights from sociology, psychology and political science, exploring the possibility that the threat conditions present in the places where people were when they were adolescents might have a lasting impact, casting a long shadow over their lives. The formative years hypothesis argues that our attitudes, including prejudicial attitudes, are shaped during adolescence and afterward, they become crystalized and are less subject to change. However, the previous research attempting to link contextual conditions to attitudes have almost exclusively looked at contemporaneous factors, ignoring the possibility that historical conditions could be playing a role later on. Testing

both previous and contemporary conditions, our results show that only proportions of immigrants in states at the time when respondents were young have an effect on their attitudes as adults. Furthermore, while this study did not seek to adjudicate between theories of prejudice, we find no support for the group threat approach. Instead, respondents who grew up in areas with high proportions of foreign-born people reported more friendly attitudes towards immigrants at the time of survey, potentially decades later. These results are consistent across all waves and different formulations of the dependent variable. This provides evidence for the conventional wisdom that the way things were, in the places where people grew up, play a role in their attitudes. Even though this study does not lend support for the group threat theory, our analysis does not incorporate changes in conditions, which may increase anti-immigrant sentiment. It could be that changes in conditions induce perceptions of threat, but that overtime as contact increases this effect is offset and the net result is a reduction in prejudice.

Study 4: Social trust and anti-immigrant attitudes in Europe: a longitudinal multilevel analysis of 32 countries

The final study of the thesis returns to attitudinal environments as contextual factors, but this time at the country level. In light of the mixed results from the empirical tests of group threat theory, this study advocates a return to Blumer's original text, and makes the case for a theoretically motivated analysis that suggests that high trusting counties should be better insulated from prejudicial attitudes than low trusting countries. As a measurement of social cohesion, the link between social trust and prejudicial attitudes has largely been unexamined. This study explores this link, and whether changes in social trust are related to changes in attitudes about immigrants. Results show that countries with higher levels of social trust have more favorable attitudes towards immigrants, and while changes in social trust over time are small, they result in comparably large changes in anti-immigrant attitudes. Similarly, countries with historically high levels of social trust are related to lower levels of prejudice in the future, even after the so-called immigration crisis. Findings also support previous, albeit limited research linking individual level trust to more friendly attitudes towards immigrants. The within- and between analysis included traditionally used economic and demographic threat indicators at the country level such as GDP and proportions of immigrants, along with the individual level variables, only country level trust remained statistically significant. The implications of these results suggest that despite the attention recent surges in immigration flows have received both by researchers, politicians and media outlets, it appears that other contexts like social trust might be more important.

Conclusions

This thesis forwards an approach that broadens both the types of contexts that should influence prejudice, and when they should be important. The approach highlights four core aspects of how contexts should influence prejudice across the life course. First, that macro level contexts are important in the influence of prejudice during adolescence. Second, that macro contextual factors, not strictly limited to those linked to direct competition over resources are also important. Third, that these contexts are potentially changing over time, and that changes in conditions should be related to changes in attitudes. And fourth, that the effect of this influence on prejudicial attitudes during adolescence casts a long shadow over the rest of people's lives. This approach, while not comprehensive, takes into account the strengths of both the socialization and inter-group relations approach and adds to them by incorporating a consideration of change over time, in the interest of what Allport called "a more adequate understanding of a concrete social problem."

The application of this approach to empirical analysis resulted in four corresponding research questions. Unfortunately, due to data availability, none of the studies are able to answer all four of these questions in the same study, but each speaks to at least two of the aspects of the approach forwarded here. Testing these questions are the empirical contribution of this thesis. The studies that focus on 'the formative years' of adolescence show that the micro-level contexts of parents and peers are not the only influencers of prejudice. Each of the studies measuring the influence of macro level contexts show that adolescents are sensitive to the broader social forces that they are exposed to, even when controlling for individual level factors that might confound the results. Both the study using longitudinal comparative data in Germany, and the historical comparative data in the United States show that proportions of immigrants are important in the development of attitudes during the formative years. These findings suggest that the approach forwarded by this thesis advocating that the socialization of young people include a sociologically informed inter-group relations approach deserves more attention.

Turning attention social forces not directly related to the competition over scarce resources. While there are many potentially important macro contexts that could be related to anti-immigrant attitudes, in choosing attitudinal environments, the studies draw attention to how the attitudes of others influence the prejudicial attitudes for both adolescents and adults. During the

formative years, adolescents spend an inordinate amount of time in classrooms around friend and foe allowing for minimal selection effects, so how the people around them think about prejudice should help set the standard for how they think themselves. Over time, the studies observed a process referred to as 'social tuning', where the attitudes of individuals in classrooms moved towards the average attitudinal environment of the classroom. For adults, the attitudinal environment of social trust helps define the general state of affairs that are a part of a socially cohesive society. Higher levels of social trust, both for individuals and at the societal level were associated with lower levels of anti-immigrant attitudes. As a measurement of social cohesion, trust is an important metric of the general state of affairs in societies that may either induce or inoculate its citizens from prejudice.

In addition to the idea that macro contexts are important during adolescence, the thesis also advocates that changes that occur in contextual conditions should be related to changes in attitudes, this claim is also supported by the empirical findings in the studies. For example, Study 1 serves as a natural experiment, where the change is induced by the respondents leaving their attitudinal environment as they are reshuffled into different classrooms. The attitudes about immigrants in this study began to converge toward each other as they spent more time with one another during the sample period, but this 'social tuning' stopped as they matriculated into high school and the attitudinal environment was removed. Bolstering this claim, it was the changes in conditions that influenced the attitudes of the respondents in Germany, rather than just the absolute levels of immigrants in each state. These results extended beyond the sampling of the formative years into the study of adult population with cross-national longitudinal data in relation to changing trust environments. However, in this case, neither the absolute levels nor the changes in demographic and economic contexts are important when including the measurement of social trust. Instead, changes in social trust while small over time, translated into comparatively large changes in prejudice in countries. These findings support the reading of the inter-group relations approach that places the importance of experiencing changes as the driver of prejudice.

Finally, it would appear that in line with Mannheim's (1928) assertion that impact of the contexts that people are exposed to when they are young continues to influence their political attitudes as adults also applies to prejudice. Fitting in to Allport's 'historical approach', Study 3 showed that in testing the influence of both contemporaneous and historical material conditions, only the historical contexts had a relationship with attitudes about immigrants and immigration as adults. As it is in the theoretical model in Figure 1, this study suggests that in so far as people's prejudicial attitudes are

sensitive to the influence of material contexts, they appear to only matter when attitudes are thought to be most subject to change, during the formative years. Taking these results in conjunction with the results from the study about adolescents in Germany, it would appear that both the empirical research and the theoretical motivations for understanding how macro contexts influence the prejudicial attitudes of young people are underdeveloped. This is surprising considering not only the psychological literature about the formative years, but also the conventional wisdom and the common reference to how things were "when I grew up" in attempting to justify people's attitudes towards others. To construct a coherent theoretical argument about why, for example, the macro-level historical conditions that people were exposed to during adolescence should matter for their attitudes many years in the future is difficult, one has to follow Allport (1954) and pull pieces from psychology, sociology and political socialization.

The approach forwarded here, while important for broadening the scope of how the inter-group relations approach should be applied to prejudice research, was never meant to adjudicate the veracity of the threat aspects Blumer's theory. However, it should be mentioned that only limited support for it can be found here. One of the central tenants of the inter-group relations approach, that prejudice is the result of feelings of threat over scarce resources is not well supported by this thesis, this is in agreeance with the growing body of research into the field. In each of the studies that measured material conditions where threat should increase there were either null (Study 4) or opposite (Study 3) findings. Support only came in the form of measuring how changes in context influence the attitudes of young people, suggesting that the empirical support for anti-immigrant attitudes in relation to group threat only lies in the dynamic interpretation of the theory applied to the formative years. This is admittedly a claim with multiple qualifications. As researchers, we should take these findings seriously, since this approach has dominated the sociological research into prejudice over the last 25 years. An important caveat is needed here, this criticism is only targeted at the mechanism employed by a specific part of an already short text. Blumer's assertion that prejudice is shaped, at least in part by the social environments in which groups interact is still important, and taking different types of contexts into consideration should lead to a more nuanced theoretical position that better outlines the mechanisms that influence prejudice. Whatever that more nuanced theory becomes, it appears to be clear that it must include a more long-term view about the potential macro level influences that extend into the formative years and that changes over time exert influence.

One finding that should be highlighted from the thesis is that the effects for studies 2 and 3 point in opposite directions. In one instance, increases in

immigration during adolescence are related to an increase in anti-immigrant attitudes, in the other, growing up in states with higher proportions of immigrants are related to more positive attitudes later on in life. One possible explanation for these findings is that these are two different country contexts, whose historical position to both immigration and ethnicity are markedly different. However, assuming for a moment that the results are not due to country specific differences, it is possible that the threat inducing effect of changes in immigration on attitudes is only temporary, and over time as young people grow up they have more chances for positive interactions with immigrant populations, resulting in a net increase in positive attitudes towards immigrants. This is the benefit of understanding the influence of context as both static (Study 3), and subject to change (Study 2). If it were possible to design a study with measures of the same people through their socialization period and well in to their adult lives, there would likely be a swing in attitudes over time for people that experienced changes in immigrant populations, from relatively high to relatively low prejudicial attitudes, this is well within the possibility of the formative years approach. However, it does highlight the fact that neither the threat literature, nor the inter-group contact literature theorize how long lasting the effects that contextual changes have on attitudes. It is possible that the attitude swing described here does occur in both countries, but that amount of change possible over the life course is also dependent on country specific factors. All of these are intriguing possibilities for future research that will help researchers develop a more adequate theory.

This implies exploring these findings with data that can measure within individual changes over a longer period, underscoring the importance of the collection, and usage of longitudinal data in the ability of researchers to expand our understanding of what influences anti-immigrant attitudes and prejudice generally. Repeated measures analysis like what is employed in studies 1 and 2 are good examples of how researchers in the future can make use of these new data in linking contexts to anti-immigrant and other important attitudes in society. However, longitudinal data includes more than repeated measures of the same people over time, and multiple wave studies of comparative data like those used in studies 3 and 4 can still offer novel findings that fit into the approach proposed by this thesis and that further the field. The creation of the historical region-level database that was used to apply historical contexts to contemporary attitudes is a good example of this. While collecting these data from primary documents is labor intensive, research will benefit from the creation of more historical datasets like it in other countries, preferably in harmonized ways that can be compared across country contexts. In combination, these analytic approaches will be able to answer more questions that are inherent in this approach but were unable to be addressed here, for example parsing out the age-period-cohort effects of

changes in prejudice in societies over time. Within this idea, there are many research questions, perhaps the most intriguing being: What contexts are most important at what times in the life course?

The aim of this thesis was to examine the narrative of how contexts influence prejudice over the life course. One reading of this examination is a critical one, that highlights the shortcomings of the two theoretical traditions of socialization and inter-group relations that have defined prejudice research in the post world-war era. A more preferable interpretation, as was recommended by Horkheimer, is that parts of both theories complement one another. By bringing attention to the formative years and including the ideas here about how macro contexts and social change results in a more informative approach. Allport, Blumer, and Manheim, all contributed significantly to how we think about what influences attitudes. However, as the empirical research on anti-immigrant attitudes begins to stack up, a revisiting of the theory is required to guide future research in fruitful ways. This is an exciting time for prejudice research and research into values, public opinion and attitudes more generally. When given access to more improved data and methods we can finally take the second step, to avoid the single factor fallacy, and pull from different disciplines to take an approach to prejudice that better tests its relationships with socio-cultural and historical factors.

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