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# Anomie, marketization, and prejudice toward purportedly unprofitable groups: Elaborating a theoretical approach on anomie-driven prejudices

**Andreas Hövermann**
Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, Germany;
LCSR, Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russian

**Steven F Messner**
University at Albany, SUNY, USA

**Andreas Zick**
Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, Germany

## Abstract

This paper discusses systematically different concepts of anomie as an explanation of Group-focused Enmity (GFE) against selected groups in society. The GFE research programme has demonstrated the utility of applying the concept of 'anomia' – an individual reaction to disruptions in the normative order – to explain prejudices against vulnerable groups. This paper extends the GFE research programme by incorporating insights from Institutional Anomie Theory, a theoretical perspective originally introduced in the criminological literature. Drawing upon this, it develops a theoretical model that links perceptions of weakened non-economic institutions with prejudices against groups that are readily seen as being 'unprofitable'. These perceptions are theorized to affect prejudices against such groups via a pathway of 'marketized' attitudes and orientations, net of any influence of anomia. This paper's theoretical model was assessed with data from a representative survey of the German population ($n = 840$). The results of Structural Equation Modelling support most of the main hypotheses, revealing the additional value for prejudice research of measuring the individual experience of anomie not only as anomia but also with respect to processes of marketization.

**Corresponding Author:**
Andreas Hövermann, Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence, Universitätsstrasse 25, 33615, Bielefeld, Germany.
Email: andreas.hoevermann@uni-bielefeld.de

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## Introduction

Prejudices are severe societal problems since they stem from key societal processes and legitimize the discrimination of groups. Currently across Europe macro-social processes of marketization influence the situation of individuals and groups; on the one hand by causing states of disorientation and the perception of enfeebled societal institutions and on the other hand by eventually affecting the assessment of societal groups.

With respect to out-group derogation Allport's (1954) assumption of several prejudices against different societal groups being interconnected has been empirically substantiated. The theoretical and empirical approach of Group-focused Enmity (GFE) recognizes this and understands prejudices as generalizing from one to another. An important body of research has documented the utility of the construct of GFE for the understanding of prejudice (e.g. Heitmeyer, 2002; Zick et al., 2008). In the GFE research programme prejudices toward different vulnerable groups in society are understood as an interconnected syndrome. The programme has connections with the anomie tradition in social thought. 'Anomie' is commonly understood to refer to weaknesses in the normative order of a society, and as such it is conceptualized as a macro-level property. For purposes of explaining prejudice and the devaluations of others, GFE researchers have focused on 'anomia' as the individual-level counterpart to anomie (e.g. Hüpping, 2006). The study at hand elaborates the GFE programme by transporting insights from another variant of the anomie tradition – criminological Institutional Anomie Theory (IAT). IAT suggests that conditions of anomie in the society at large will be linked with prejudices in part through a 'marketized mentality'. Moreover the theory implies that this pathway should be particularly applicable to a subset of vulnerable out-groups – those who are vulnerable for a theoretically strategic reason; they are readily characterized as unprofitable[1] when evaluated by market-driven, cost–benefit considerations. Thus this paper is also an effort for understanding the process of generalized devaluations of specific groups. Furthermore, it contributes to a better understanding of the macro-micro-link between societal marketization processes and individual perceptions and reactions by connecting a sociological insight of marketization with an anomic micro-level reaction to comprehend hostilities against out-groups.

In a previous study, Hövermann and colleagues (2015) have reported evidence suggesting that insights from IAT can be usefully applied to explain devaluations toward selected 'unprofitable' groups. The present analyses go beyond this prior work by incorporating anomia as well as other important predictors of prejudices in the model to determine if marketization processes exhibit any effect on prejudices net of a wider range of well-established covariates. The expanded analytic model is less susceptible to omitted-variable bias and extends the scope of potentially victimized groups.

The specific objectives of the current research are thus as follows: (1) to explicate further the 'marketized' pathway to prejudice at the micro-level of society in terms of perceptions of societal outcomes and individual reactions drawing upon IAT; (2) to assess with representative survey data of the German population[2] whether such a pathway can be detected for purportedly unprofitable out-groups net of any effect of the more commonly studied pathway through anomia; and (3) to determine whether the theorized marketized pathway is distinctive to this particular subset of vulnerable out-groups.

## The Group-focused Enmity research programme on prejudice

The concept of the Group-focused Enmity-syndrome was introduced by Wilhelm Heitmeyer over a decade ago (2002). It has since been elaborated and empirically verified by other researchers (Zick et al., 2008; 2011). The GFE-concept is based on Allport's (1954) conceptualization of prejudices defined as negative attitudes toward groups and individuals solely based on their group membership.

In other words: 'Individuals are looked down upon not on the basis of their personal characteristics but through nothing other than their categorization as a member of an out-group' (Zick et al., 2011: 27). A spectrum of several prejudices, including anti-immigrant prejudices, racism, devaluation of Muslims, anti-Semitism, sexual prejudices, sexism, the devaluation of unemployed, homeless and disabled as well as prejudices against newcomers are understood as elements of a syndrome of GFE. The GFE-concept builds on the research tradition that regards prejudices against different target groups as closely linked phenomena (e.g. Allport, 1954; LeVine and Campbell, 1972; Sumner, 1906) rather than independent of each other. Prejudices are seen as unitary phenomena, which derive from a generalized attitude toward certain out-groups – the so-called 'ideology of unequal worth' (Zick et al., 2008) that leads to devaluations due to an attributed unequal worth.[3] The ideology can be attributed on the basis of different justifications such as lower levels of civilization, abnormal sexual practices or role models, or economic uselessness.

In the following two sections the connections between the two different understandings of anomie and the occurrence of prejudices are described with reference to the syndrome of GFE.

## Anomia and prejudice

Rapid societal change and the individual's reaction have provided a fruitful field of research for many social scientists over the last 100 years. Most of this research is connected to the concept 'anomie'[4], which describes a societal condition of lack of norms or normative disorder. Anomie has been applied extensively in the criminological literature, most often in macro-level studies (Baumer, 2010; Messner, 2010).

Durkheim (1992 [1893]) referred to the reaction to societal anomie on the individual level as individual disorientation, later labelled with the term anomia which occurs as a result of rapid societal change. It captures a disorientation that might develop from unclear boundaries and ambiguities about social norms. Anomia describes a loss of cognitive orientation and confidence to act. Establishing stable social identities might also become a problem because individuals are increasingly unable to cope with the absence of normative orientation or control provided in new situations.[5]

Leo Srole (1956) was one of the first researchers who connected the individual experience of anomia to categorizations of vulnerable groups in society. He found strong effects of anomia on the devaluation of other groups, especially minorities, and explained them with reference to the aim to regain orientation. This is achieved by strengthening and assuring an individual's own social identity by categorizing people into in-groups and out-groups. This social psychological link between anomia and the devaluation processes was also drawn in the long-term GFE-project with data from the German population as well as from the population of eight European countries. Hüpping (2006), Kühnel and Schmidt (2002), and Zick and colleagues (2011) have repeatedly shown connections between individual disorientation and prejudices against several vulnerable groups in society. Hüpping (2006) used longitudinal data to show a causal relationship of anomia on prejudices, although Oepke (2005) detected effects in the opposite direction. Hüpping (2006) found the strongest effects of anomia particularly on prejudices toward foreigners, who thus appear as being responsible for the disorientation. Hövermann (2013) showed the distinctive sensitivity for anomia among individuals in lower social positions, since they experience negative perceptions of crises more often and intensely; and in addition share prejudices toward vulnerable groups more often. Other studies reported that variables such as a hierarchical self-interest (Baier, 2005) or authoritarian attitudes (Scheepers et al., 1992) mediate the effect of anomia on prejudices.[6]

## Anomie, marketization and Group-focused Enmity

This paper proposes that anomie is also manifested at the individual level in another form, which can be understood with reference to Institutional Anomie Theory (IAT) (Messner and Rosenfeld, 1997). IAT is a criminological perspective that draws heavily on Durkheimian sociology, along with insights from the writings of the institutional economist, Karl Polanyi (1957 [1944]).[7] IAT is predicated on the Durkheimian notion that a precondition for a well-functioning society is the social regulation provided by a strong

normative order. Moreover, the major social institutions of society are the sources of such regulation. These institutions cultivate the external constraints that channel behaviour in socially acceptable directions. According to IAT an imbalance in the institutional configuration of society can emerge, which can lead to dysfunctional and eventually weakened or enfeebled institutions that are unable to provide effective normative regulation, thus leading to anomie. The type of institutional configuration that is considered to be most conducive to anomie is that of 'economic dominance'. This occurs basically through three processes: first, the devaluation of non-economic institutional functions and roles; second, the accommodation to the requirements of economic roles when they conflict with those of noneconomic roles; and finally, a penetration of economic norms into other institutional domains (see Messner and Rosenfeld, 1997).[8] Those weakened non-economic institutions eventually lose the capacity to fulfil their functions effectively by no longer promoting and sustaining their distinctive, characteristically particularistic orientations. Instead, the egoistic or utilitarian motives associated with the market economy prevail.[9]

These societal processes have an impact on the individual's attitudes. This paper hypothesizes that the overarching presence and distribution of marketized attitudes and motives in the individual's everyday life encourages the judging of whole groups using the criterion of profitability. Vulnerable groups in society can appear then as unprofitable in cost–benefit calculations, and they will accordingly be devalued – especially those groups that can be perceived as being incompatible with the animating spirit of a marketized society. More specifically groups such as unemployed, homeless or disabled persons are easily stigmatized as being economically useless, or even economically burdensome.

The process of marketization also affects the culture of society by influencing individuals' everyday lives, as well as their attitudes and values. Messner and Rosenfeld (1997) describe this culture with the term 'American Dream ethos', which is based upon values such as achievement, individualism, universalism and money-fetishism. Messner et al. (2008) explain how the individual's everyday life, in the sense of role-performance-repertoires and behavioural motives, is influenced by the imbalance in the institutional configuration.

This paper argues that this anomie-theoretical point of view is potentially useful for understanding prejudice toward a subset of vulnerable out-groups. Devaluations of groups that are potentially seen as not increasing the efficiency of the market society are of particular interest here, because they might not be protected by the normal moral restraints and bonds of social solidarity. Such groups may be judged as being incompatible with the animating spirit of a marketized society, which is oriented toward cost–benefit calculations. As a result, they are likely to be at risk of being victims of prejudices. More specifically, groups such as unemployed, homeless or disabled persons are easily stigmatized as being unprofitable or even economically useless or burdensome.

## Hypotheses

The processes enumerated above can be joined together with those associated with anomia in an integrated analytic model. In this model, perceptions that non-economic institutions have become weakened or enfeebled[10] are expected to influence both disorientated, anomic feelings as well as marketized mentality (see Figure 1). On the one hand, when institutions are perceived as enfeebled, it becomes difficult for individuals to enact or adhere to the prevailing norms pertaining to the institutions, which results in anomic disorientations ($H_1$). On the other hand, non-economic institutions which have become enfeebled through marketization processes are expected to facilitate a marketized mentality as socialization agents ($H_2$).[11]

In a second step those measures are connected to its outcome prejudices. It is hypothesized that perceptions of enfeebled non-economic institutions have an impact on prejudices by means of two separate paths – for simplification these are called here the anomic and the marketized path (see Figure 1):

On one path perceived enfeebled non-economic institutions cause disorientated, anomic feelings resulting in devaluations of vulnerable groups. Here the absence of normative control is introduced as a modelled cause for the anomic and disoriented reaction eventually leading to devaluations.

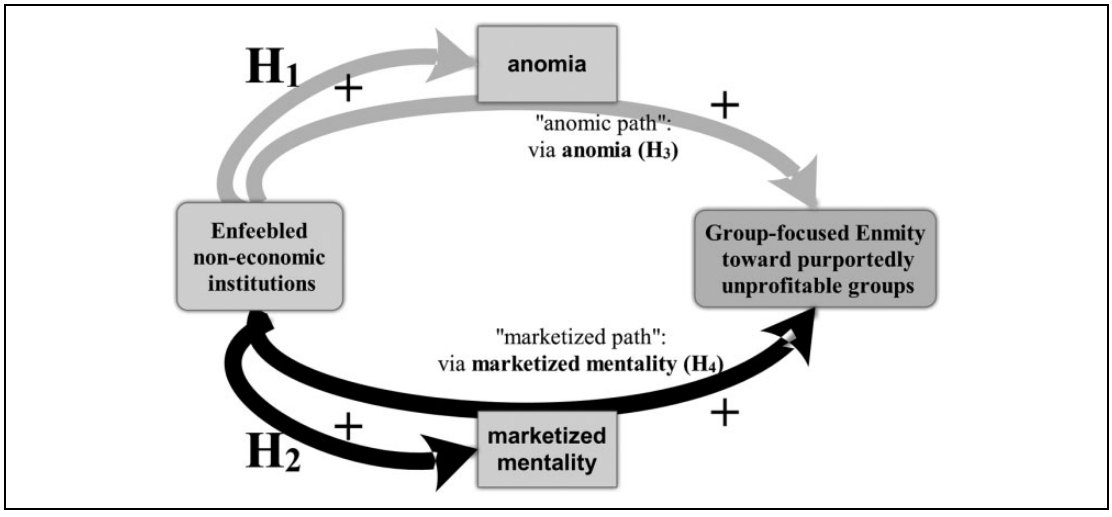


**Figure 1.** Posited model including the two paths from perceptions of enfeebled non-economic institutions to Group-focused Enmity toward purportedly unprofitable groups.

Devaluations serve as attempts to regain orientation that come by strengthening and assuring an individual's own social identity by categorization processes. Following Hüpping (2006), effects of anomia especially on prejudices toward those groups who are either perceived as coming from outside, like foreigners or symbolically represent the very societal change that is held accountable for their disorientations, would be expected. However, since prejudices are understood here as closely linked phenomena, other groups such as those purportedly unprofitable are also expected to be targets of devaluations due to anomic and disoriented feelings. Therefore, it is expected that the more anomic the respondents, the stronger they state prejudices. The effect of perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions on prejudices is expected to be partially mediated by anomia ($H_3$).

The other, 'marketized' path is derived from the macro-level perspective of Institutional Anomie Theory. The dominance of utilitarian interaction motives and attitudes embodied in the marketized mentality is hypothesized to be conducive to generalized devaluations of groups that do not measure up well with respect to cost–benefit calculations. It is expected that the more respondents share a marketized mentality, the stronger they state prejudices. The effect of a perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions on prejudices is expected to be partially mediated by marketized mentality ($H_4$).

In a final step, this paper will test whether this newly established marketized path is especially important for the devaluations of certain groups in society. To do so, further vulnerable groups that are covered by the GFE-syndrome are included in the model, such as those susceptible to anti-immigrant prejudices, sexual prejudices and anti-Semitism. Given the logic of this paper's theoretical argument, it is expected that the marketized pathway should be differentially salient across vulnerable groups, with particularly prominent effects for those groups that are more readily viewed as unprofitable ($H_5$).

## Procedure

The aforementioned hypotheses are tested by a secondary analysis of data, which were part of the ten-year Group-focused Enmity-project (Heitmeyer, 2002).[12] They were collected in 2007 by means of standardized computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) as a representative sample of the German adult population ($n = 1.757$). Only one split ($n = 840$) of the whole sample is considered in the study at hand, because some of the requisite items were only asked of every second respondent. It is a cross-sectional, simple random sample encompassing only participants who are German nationals.

**Table 1.** Frequencies of variables measuring enfeebled non-economic institutions.

| *Enfeebled non-economic institutions* ($Chi^2 = 243$, df = 48, $p = .00$, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .07, PClose = .00, SRMR = .045) | | | | Latent construct loadings | Item loadings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Enfeebled political system* | | | | .60*** | |
| *General political alienation* | Disagreement | Mean | SD | | |
| If you engage in politics, you will be heard. | 61.0% | 2.61 | .70 | | .66*** |
| There are enough possibilities to influence politics. | 64.7% | 2.64 | .80 | | .83*** |
| | Agreement | Mean | SD | | |
| *Personal political alienation* | | | | | |
| I have no influence on what the government is doing. | 57.9% | 2.75 | .98 | | .78*** |
| It does not make any sense to engage in politics. | 37.4% | 2.30 | .99 | | .66*** |
| *Alienation from parties and politicians* | | | | | |
| The parties just want the people's votes, they are not interested in their views. | 67.0% | 2.93 | .87 | | .87*** |
| The delegates in the parliament lose contact with the people very fast. | 83.7% | 3.22 | .73 | | .74*** |
| *Enfeebled friendship networks* | | | | .75*** | |
| Because of the many changes it is increasingly difficult to maintain lasting friendships. | 49.0% | 2.48 | .95 | | .61*** |
| The constant pressure to conform to working hours prevents the opportunities to begin new friendships. | 47.8% | 2.43 | .86 | | .69*** |
| Finding real friends is becoming harder these days. | 66.8% | 2.93 | .99 | | .65*** |
| Amicable relations are getting more unstable these days. | 70.9% | 2.93 | .85 | | .60*** |
| *Enfeebled family* | | | | .76*** | |
| Due to the different working hours, it is hardly possible to realize a family life any more. | 58.9% | 2.39 | .86 | | .76*** |
| Because of the pressure in the workplace, it is no wonder that parents lose control over their children. | 51.1% | 2.46 | .96 | | .69*** |

Women (58%) are slightly overrepresented in the sample (51% of German population, source: Datenreport, 2008). The age range is from 16 to 85 years, with a mean age of 47 years (SD = 15.6).

## Operationalizations and descriptives

While IAT is formulated at the macro-level of society to describe the interplay of different institutions and their impact on the cultural level of society, the study at hand shifts the focus to the micro-level. Individuals were asked for their opinions about several statements in an effort to measure the theoretically relevant constructs. The response categories to each item range from 1 ('do not agree at all') to 4 ('totally agree').

The perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions is considered as the starting point of the model. It focuses on three non-economic institutions (political system, friendship networks and the family) which can be combined to one latent construct *enfeebled non-economic institutions* (see model-fit indicators in Table 1). The variables aim at measuring the extent to which individuals perceive important non-economic institutions as having been marketized and 'hollowed out'.

The measure of the *enfeebled political system* is the most sophisticated one, since it is built as a second-order latent construct consisting of measures for *general political alienation*, *personal political alienation* and *alienation from parties and politicians*. All sub-constructs are captured as latent

**Table 2.** Frequencies of variables measuring 'marketized mentality'.

| Marketized mentality ($Chi^2 = 34$, df = 7, $p = .00$, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .06, PClose = .09, SRMR = .031) | Agreement | Mean | SD | Latent construct loadings | Item loadings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Marketized orientation toward interactions* | | | | .66*** | |
| I weigh the pros of how much I benefit from a contact. | 58.3% | 2.87 | .90 | | .61*** |
| In most cases it is more favourable to keep your real intentions for yourself. | 57.9% | 2.67 | .88 | | .77*** |
| There are things that are more important than relationships with others. | 30.9% | 2.21 | .91 | | .72*** |
| *Marketized valuation of groups* | | | | .88*** | |
| No society can afford people who are not very useful. | 22.2% | 1.88 | .91 | | .33*** |
| We take in our society too much regard for losers. | 27.8% | 2.15 | .87 | | .56*** |
| In this society we cannot afford too much indulgence. | 36.5% | 2.19 | .83 | | .46*** |

variables consisting of two items that measure individual alienation from politics, parties and politicians resulting from exclusion from democratic processes and disengagement from political institutions. The measurement model of the latent variable *enfeebled political system* in a second order confirmatory factor analysis including the three first order constructs was separately tested, and it received a good model-fit (see Table 1).

*Enfeebled family* as well as *enfeebled friendship networks* are both captured with latent variables consisting of two (family) and four (friendship networks) items that measure the individual's perceptions of families and friendship networks. The reliability of both constructs is satisfactory (see Table 1).

Frequencies in Table 1 show a large percentage of respondents agreeing to the items and feeling alienated from the political system, which are interpreted as indicative of a widely perceived enfeebled political system. Especially, the agreement to the items measuring alienation from parties (67%) and politicians (84%) is very high. Also, a widespread (albeit far from universal) belief that work and its time-consuming and exhausting requirements weaken family life and friendship networks is shown in Table 1. More than half of the respondents agreed that a realization of family life is nowadays hardly possible, and that it is no wonder that parents lose control over their children. Almost the same percentages of people agreed that due to the requirements at work, friendship networks both are more difficult to maintain as well as more difficult to build up. Even more respondents agree to the statement that amicable relations are also more unstable nowadays.

*Marketized mentality* is conceptualized as a second-order latent construct consisting of marketized orientations in the respondents' everyday lives as well as marketized valuation of groups. The first sub-dimension is operationalized as a 3-item measure designed to capture the pervasiveness of cost–benefit calculations and egoistic motives in personal interactions in everyday life (*marketized orientation toward interactions*). The second sub-dimension (*marketized valuation of groups*) is taken into account as a 3-item latent construct capturing the general readiness to categorically value whole groups of society in terms of generalized cost–benefit calculations. It is a measure intended to capture the undermining of solidarity with vulnerable groups due to marketization-processes. The measurement model of the latent variable '*marketized mentality*[13] was separately tested in a second order confirmatory factor analysis including the two first order constructs, and received a satisfactory model-fit (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that more than half of the survey's respondents agree to the items measuring egoistic and marketized motives in everyday interactions. Almost one-third of the population believes that there are things other than relationships with others that are more important. Also the items depicting a categorical valuation of whole groups in society and an eventual withdrawal of solidarity with these groups receive consent in Germany (see Table 3). With an acceptance of 22 to 37%,

**Table 3.** Frequencies of variables measuring 'anomia'.

| | Agreement | Mean | SD | Item loadings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Anomia ($\alpha = .86$)* | | | | |
| Nowadays things are so confusing that you sometimes do not know where you stand. | 43.0% | 2.39 | .86 | .92*** |
| Nowadays things are so complex that you sometimes do not know what is going on. | 38.5% | 2.33 | .86 | .85*** |

**Table 4.** Frequencies of elements of Group-focused Enmity toward purportedly unprofitable groups.

| | Agreement | Mean | SD | Item loadings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Devaluation of unemployed ($\alpha = .73$)* | | | | |
| Most long-term unemployed are not really interested in finding a job. | 44.2% | 2.43 | .85 | .85*** |
| I find it appalling when long-term unemployed make themselves a comfortable life at the expense of society. | 58.9% | 2.69 | .97 | .65*** |
| *Devaluation of disabled ($\alpha = .80$)* | | | | |
| The expenditures allocated for the disabled are too large. | 4.2% | 1.42 | .61 | .68*** |
| Many claims of disabled are excessive. | 7.0% | 1.57 | .68 | .85*** |
| Disabled receive too many discounts. | 5.1% | 1.54 | .63 | .76*** |
| *Devaluation of homeless ($\alpha = .71$)* | | | | |
| Homeless should be removed from pedestrian zones. | 33.2% | 2.16 | .93 | .75*** |
| Homeless people in the cities are unpleasant. | 41.7% | 2.28 | .88 | .68*** |
| Most homeless people are lazy. | 26.0% | 2.05 | .78 | .57*** |

there are considerable numbers of respondents in the German population for whom solidarity with those groups in society that do not pass their requirements of utility has eroded. 37% of the respondents feel that the society cannot afford too much indulgence, and 28% think that too much regard is taken for losers.

As depicted in Figure 1, the concept of anomia (scale originally developed by McClosky and Schaar, 1965; German version by Fischer and Kohr, 1980) in the sense of disoriented feelings is considered and modelled in the study. Anomia is understood as an expression of uncertainty of orientation in respect to social conditions resulting from rapid changes. Anomia is also measured as a latent variable consisting of two well-tested items as indicated in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that feelings of anomia are widespread in the representative survey of the German population. Around 40% agree to both items measuring a general disorientation as a result of anomie in society.

Finally, the observed outcomes which the abovementioned macro and micro dynamics are expected to affect are prejudices toward different groups of society. The present study examines prejudices toward three specific groups that are devalued because they might be seen as economically useless or burdensome. The three elements of GFE are presented in Table 4. Each prejudice is measured as a scale with satisfactory reliabilities, consisting of at least two variables.

Table 4 shows that many of the respondents tend to devalue the different groups. Especially, the items measuring the devaluation of unemployed and homeless receive a lot of agreement in the German population, whereas only few respondents agree to the very sharply formulated items for devaluation of disabled. However it is not advisable to compare the spread of the different prejudices with each other because all prejudices are measured with different item difficulties, which cannot be compared directly since some items measure very blatant prejudices while others aim at rather subtle forms.

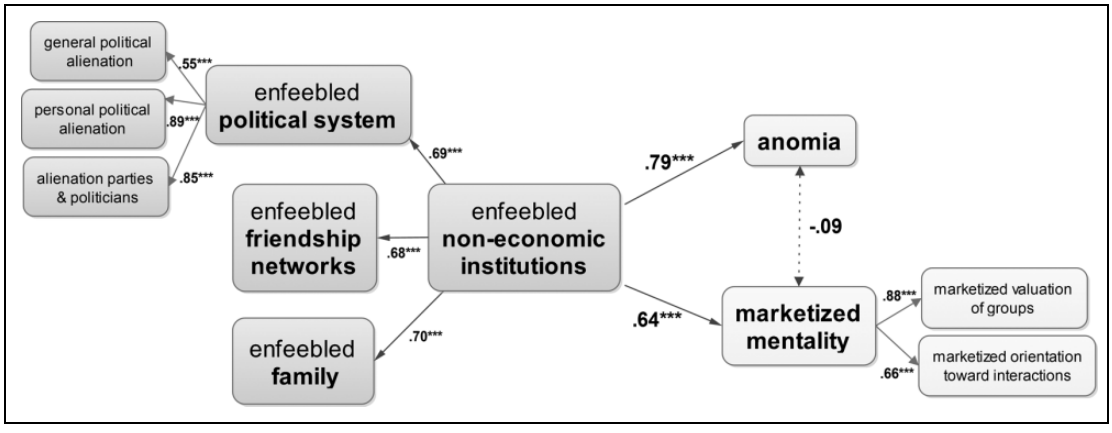


**Figure 2.** Model 1 results measures of anomie and marketization (standardized beta-coefficients are shown in the figure, ***=$p < .001$, **=$p < .01$, *=$p < .05$).

## Results

This section begins with testing the first two hypotheses concerning perceptions of enfeebled institutions, anomia and marketized mentality. In all calculations missing values were treated with the FIML (full information maximum likelihood) procedure. An empirical differentiation is made between the different measures of anomie and marketization by calculating Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) as indicated in Figure 2 (see also Table 7 in Appendix). The model-fit is good ($Chi^2 = 457$, df = 159, $p = .00$, CFI = .94, RMSEA = .047, PClose = .80, SRMR = .045).

At a first glance, it becomes obvious that the different instruments – though intercorrelated – are distinctive and do not measure the same phenomenon. No significant correlation ($r = -.09$) between anomia and marketized mentality can be observed, which clearly indicates two distinct concepts. The perceptual measures of enfeebled non-economic institutions have an impact on the occurrence of anomia as well as marketized attitudes as follows.

When the family, friendship networks or the political system are perceived as enfeebled, respondents react with stronger disorientated anomic feelings ($\beta = .79$). This suggests that it has become difficult for individuals to enact or adhere to the prevailing norms pertaining to those institutions. These results are in line with this study's expectations enumerated in hypothesis $H_1$.

For the measure of a marketized mentality again the perceptions of enfeebled family, friendship networks and political system play an important role ($\beta = .64$). As expected in hypothesis $H_2$, the perceived marketization of those institutions facilitates egoistic or utilitarian motives captured here by marketized mentality.

In a second step, the theoretical model is expanded by including prejudices toward the three purportedly unprofitable groups (unemployed, homeless and disabled persons) and by controlling for the effects of socio-demographic variables age, education, income, gender, religiousness and heritage (East/West Germany)[14]. Furthermore, measures for the important prejudice predictors Authoritarianism as well as Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) are included to prevent a potential omitted-variable bias.[15]

The model-fit is satisfactory ($Chi^2 = 1377$, df = 519, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.89, RMSEA = .046, PClose = .99, SRMR = .07). In the estimated model this study allowed for both direct effects of anomia and marketized mentality on prejudices and for direct as well as indirect effects of the measures of enfeebled non-economic institutions on prejudices, as indicated in Figure 3 and Table 5.

The results reveal strong effects for the indicator of marketized mentality on the three different devalued groups (see Figure 3). The greater the extent to which the respondents' motives, attitudes,

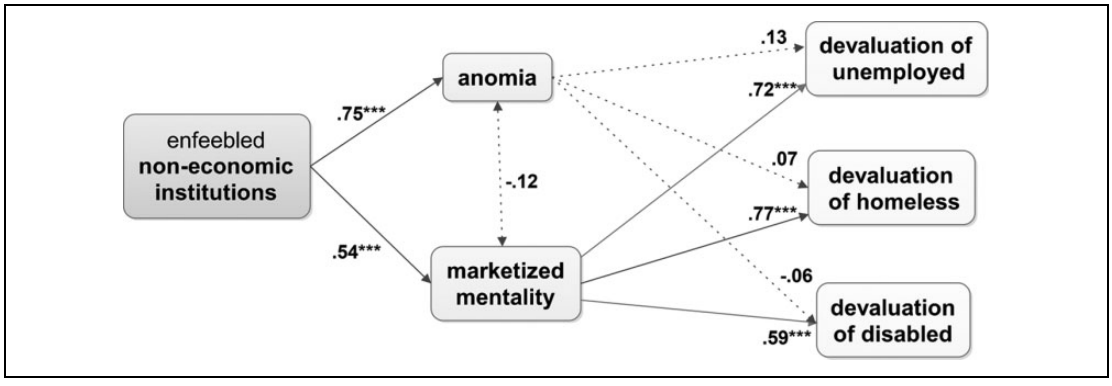


**Figure 3.** Model 2 results (standardized beta-coefficients are shown in the figure, ***=$p < .001$, **=$p < .01$, * = $p < .05$).

and orientations are characterized by marketization, the more the unemployed, homeless or disabled are devalued. The results also reveal that perceptions of enfeebled institutions show indirect effects on the devaluations of all three considered groups that are fully mediated through marketized mentality (see Table 5). The perception of enfeebled institutions that do not fulfil their function anymore evidently fosters devaluations, as mediated by an increase in market orientations.

The results for the 'anomic pathway' are quite different. No significant effect of anomia on the devaluations toward purportedly unprofitable groups is observed (see Table 5). The anomic feeling of disorientation does not appear to encourage the respondents to devalue purportedly unprofitable groups in order to regain orientation. Thus, hypothesis $H_3$ clearly needs to be revised concerning devaluations toward purportedly unprofitable groups.

In a final step this study expands the number of devalued groups in the estimated models by including all ten elements of the GFE-syndrome to enhance the credibility of its arguments. The added prejudice elements comprise anti-immigrant prejudices, racism, devaluation of Muslims, anti-Semitism, sexual prejudices, sexism and prejudices against newcomers. Each element is measured by at least two items (see descriptives in Table 8 in Appendix) and included as latent outcome variable in the model interconnected to each element. Again, the model-fit for the SEM is satisfactory ($Chi^2 = 2355$, df = 1032, $p < .001$, CFI = 0.90, RMSEA = .04, PClose = 1.00, SRMR = .06).

As indicated in Table 6, marketized mentality has by far the strongest effects on the devaluations of unemployed, homeless and disabled, which clearly supports hypothesis $H_5$. These results are in accord with this study's main arguments: when interaction motives as well as general attitudes become marketized, certain groups such as the aforementioned appear as unprofitable, whereas the attitudes toward other groups remain mostly untouched. There are also – yet much weaker – effects of the marketized mentality on other GFE-elements such as anti-immigrant prejudices ($\beta = .22$), anti-Semitism ($\beta = .21$), racism ($\beta = .18$), devaluation of Muslims ($\beta = .15$) or prejudices against newcomers ($\beta = .13$), but only the effect on anti-immigrant prejudices attains a statistically significant level. This effect on anti-immigrant prejudices suggests that immigrants might also fail to measure up to, or that they might even contravene, the demands of modern 'high-performance societies' in the eyes of respondents. Interestingly as contrasted with the effects on the devaluations of unemployed, homeless and disabled, here the marketized mentality serves only partly as a mediator for the effect of enfeebled non-economic institutions on anti-immigrant prejudices, emphasizing that the processes derived from IAT play a weaker role for prejudices toward foreigners. Thus, foreigners do not primarily appear as burdening or unprofitable. Moreover, there are no significant effects of marketized mentality on the other considered GFE-elements. For those elements high effects can be observed, especially of this study's control-predictors (SDO and Authoritarianism).

**Table 5.** Model 2: Direct and indirect effects.

| | Effect on devaluation of unemployed | | | Effect on devaluation of homeless | | | Effect on devaluation of disabled | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | ind via mm β/b/S.E. | ind via anomia β/b/S.E. | direct β/b/S.E. | ind via mm β/b/S.E. | ind via anomia β/b/S.E. | direct β/b/S.E. | ind via mm β/b/S.E. | ind via anomia β/b/S.E. | direct β/b/S.E. |
| Enfeebled non-economic institutions | .39**/.47**/.15 | .10/.12/.11 | −.22/−.27/.19 | .42***/.51**/.16 | .05/.07/.11 | −.21/−.26/.20 | .32**/.26**/.08 | −.04/−.03/.06 | .00/.00/.11 |
| Anomia | – | – | .13/.12/.10 | – | – | .07/.07/.10 | – | – | −.06/−.03/.06 |
| Marketized mentality | – | – | .72***/.92***/.24 | – | – | .77***/.99***/.25 | – | – | .59***/.50***/.13 |

***=$p < .001$, **=$p < .01$, *=$p < .05$, indirect effects via marketized mentality (mm) and anomia.

**Table 6.** Effects of anomia, marketized mentality and enfeebled non-economic institutions on all Group-focused Enmity elements, Model 3.

| | Devaluation of unemployed | Devaluation of homeless | Devaluation of disabled | Anti-immigrant prejudices | Anti-Semitism | Devaluation of Muslims | Racism | Prejudices against newcomers | Sexual prejudices | Sexism |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. | β/b/S.E. |
| Anomia | .12/.10/.08 | .05/.05/.09 | −.05/−.03/.05 | −.09/−.09/.08 | .06/.05/.08 | .05/.05/.09 | −.13/−.08/.06 | −.19*/−.16*/.08 | .13/.13/.08 | −.02/−.02/.08 |
| Marketized mentality | .71***/.90***/.23 | .75***/.98***/.25 | .58***/.50***/.13 | .22*/.32*/.15 | .21/.26/.14 | .15/.23/.16 | .14/.13/.10 | .13/.16/.14 | .01/.01/.14 | −.18/−.24/.14 |
| Enfeebled non-economic institutions (direct) | −.20/−.23/.15 | −.17/−.20/.16 | −.01/−.01/.09 | .34**/.44**/.14 | .12/.13/.13 | .25*/.34*/.15 | .16/.13/.10 | .33**/.38**/.14 | −.02/−.02/.14 | .23*/.27*/.11 |
| Enfeebled non-economic institutions (indirect via anomia) | .09/.10/.08 | .04/.04/.08 | −.04/−.03/.05 | −.07/−.09/.08 | .04/.05/.07 | .03/.05/.08 | −.10/−.08/.06 | −.14*/−.16/.08 | .09/.12/.08 | −.02/−.02/.07 |
| Enfeebled non-economic institutions (indirect via marketized mentality) | .38***/.43***/.13 | .40***/.46***/.11 | .31***/.24***/.07 | .12*/.15*/.07 | .11/.12/.07 | .08/.11/.08 | .08/.06/.05 | .07/.08/.07 | .00/.01/.07 | −.09/−.11/.07 |

***=$p < .001$, **=$p < .01$, *=$p < .05$.

Finally, Table 6 also shows the effects of anomia on all considered GFE-elements. Once again, anomia has no significant effects on the theorized vulnerable groups – the unemployed, homeless, and disabled. The coefficients for anomia are also non-significant for the other GFE-elements, with the exception of prejudices against newcomers, for which the sign is unexpectedly negative ($\beta = -.19$). However, direct effects on the very groups this study expected to be influenced by anomia from non-economic institutions can be observed. A perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions has significant direct effects on anti-immigrant prejudices ($\beta = .34$), prejudices against newcomers ($\beta = .33$), devaluation of Muslims ($\beta = .25$) and sexism ($\beta = .23$).

## Conclusion

This study extends the research on prejudices by examining a previously neglected link between anomie in society and prejudices against vulnerable groups. Drawing upon the Institutional Anomie Theory of crime, it has proposed that an important manifestation of anomie at the individual level is the perception that non-economic institutions have been weakened and have become enfeebled. These perceptions are expected to promote a marketized mentality characterized by egoistic and utilitarian motives, attitudes, and orientations. The degree of acceptance of such a marketized mentality, in turn, is hypothesized to increase the likelihood that groups will be evaluated by market-driven, cost–benefit criteria. Those groups that are readily regarded as being 'unprofitable' are accordingly at high risk of being the targets of prejudice in the form of devaluations.

The results of this study's SEM analyses of survey data from a representative sample of German respondents offer a good deal of support for its theoretical arguments. Indicators of perceptions of an enfeebled political system, enfeebled friendship networks and enfeebled family are positively and significantly related to the measure of a marketized mentality. In addition, the indicator of a marketized mentality exhibits strong positive effects on the devaluation of three purportedly unprofitable groups – the unemployed, the homeless, and the disabled. These effects of a marketized mentality on devaluations emerge despite controls for the level of anomia and other relevant covariates. The results also reveal that, as expected, perceptions of enfeebled non-economic institutions are related to the devaluations of the unemployed, the homeless, and the disabled indirectly via a marketized mentality. Moreover, the effects of a marketized mentality on devaluations appear only for the theoretically expected groups and not for other groups that have been considered in the GFE research programme, i.e. the effects appear only for groups that would seem to be most susceptible to being viewed as unprofitable. However, this result does not challenge the general idea of the syndrome of Group-focused Enmity, given that the devaluations are all strongly interconnected. Rather, it underlines the fact that, despite commonalities, the motivations and predictors for being prejudiced toward different groups may diverge in certain respects.

The results of this study's analyses challenge in certain respects prior research on anomia's influence on prejudicial attitudes. No significant direct effect in the expected direction of anomia on prejudices in the models when marketized mentality, SDO, authoritarianism and enfeebled non-economic institutions are included can be detected. However, there are observable effects on the devaluations of immigrants, Muslims and newcomers from the perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions and not from anomic disorientation. In this study's models the theoretically explained orientation-regaining mechanism resulting in devaluations toward groups coming from outside can be much better depicted by measuring a perception of enfeebled non-economic institutions. This study's results indicate that the effects of anomia on prejudices – if any – could only be modelled indirectly via enfeebled non-economic institutions. These findings call for further theorizing and empirical analyses of the interconnections among indicators of institutional ties, anomia, and various forms of prejudice.

The limitations associated with this study are acknowledged. As noted above, caution must be exercised in making causal inferences, especially in cross-sectional, observational designs. Future research with longitudinal data could assess the impacts of changes in the variables, which would enhance

confidence in the postulated relationships. Another limitation of the study is the exclusive focus on individual perceptions and attitudes. The logic of this study's theoretical framework implies linkages between the institutional level of society and individual experiences. It would be highly beneficial to observe not only subjective individual perceptions but also objective indicators of the enfeeblement of institutions. To pursue this line of inquiry, a multi-level framework is required which allows for comparison of different experiences of individuals nested within their respective institutional contexts.

To conclude, this study's analyses imply that researchers interested in the link between anomie in society and prejudice would be well advised to broaden the focus beyond that of an individual disoriented reaction in the form of anomia by also considering general processes of marketization. Perceptions of enfeebled institutions as well as orientations reflecting a market mentality evidently play an important role in fostering prejudices against selected groups, i.e. those groups that are potentially seen as failing to measure up to market criteria. At a more general level, this study's analyses attest to the utility of 'transporting' a theoretical approach originally developed in the criminological literature to help understand the social sources of prejudicial attitudes.

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## Notes

1. It is important to explicitly point out that the pejorative terms 'unprofitable,' 'useless' or 'burdensome', refer only to the respondents' devaluations of the specified groups in terms of cost–benefit-calculations. In no way do the implied judgments reflect the subjective opinions of the authors, nor are the terms intended to represent an objective description of the respective groups.
2. The case of Germany is of particular interest because in Germany the processes of marketization and the discourse on costs and benefits of groups are on the public agenda of immigration debates.
3. In the ten year-project employing large probability samples of the German population (Zick et al., 2008) the pattern of generalized prejudices has been repeatedly shown empirically. Besides finding support for a second order-factor for several prejudice elements (the latent variable 'GFE'), the analyses demonstrated the common core of the syndrome by showing its stability over time and by analysing its causes and consequences (e.g. Davidov et al., 2011). In a cultural comparison study for eight European countries, the researchers found empirical support for the generalized syndrome of GFE as a second-order factor in all examined countries (Zick et al., 2011).
4. The term was introduced by Jean Marie Guyau (1962 [1887]) and more prominently by Emile Durkheim (1966 [1897]; 1992 [1893]) in his analyses of suicide rates. Robert K. Merton (1938) extended this approach and advanced it as an essential contribution for sociological and especially criminological research. More recently Steven F. Messner's and Richard Rosenfeld's Institutional Anomie Theory (1997) as well as Robert Agnew's General Strain Theory (1985) developed related theoretical concepts with different focuses. Accordingly, many different research approaches concerning 'anomie' have appeared with different levels of explanation (micro vs. macro level), outcomes (suicides, crime, discriminatory intentions, prejudices) and theoretical presumptions (e.g. lack of norms, predominance of economic goals and blocked access to legitimate means).
5. This individual feeling of disorientation is not so closely linked to socio-demographic factors like gender, age or socio-economic status as implied by Robert K. Merton's approach to anomie (1938; 1968), which assumes that structurally- deprived groups are most strongly affected. In fact negative individual perceptions of economic crises seem to be the more relevant causes (see Hövermann,

2013; Hüpping, 2006). Legge et al., (2008) found on the basis of longitudinal data from the project 'Group-focused Enmity in Germany' that right-wing minded individuals in particular tend to be unable to cope with rapid societal change and react to it with anomic disorientation. Data from the empirical survey on GFE additionally show that the more negative the economic trend in a certain region, the stronger do individuals react to economic crises with an anomic disorientation (Hüpping and Reinecke, 2007).

6. In addition to the connection of anomia to prejudices there are many studies considering other consequences of anomia, such as discriminatory intentions (Legge and Heitmeyer, 2012) or the propensity to violence (Baier, 2005; Fuchs, 2003; Kühnel and Schmidt, 2002). Legge and Heitmeyer (2012) discovered effects of anomia on both discriminatory behavioural intentions to several groups and on propensity to violence, which are fully mediated by anti-immigrant prejudices. This finding emphasizes the role of prejudices, since without them it is very unlikely that disoriented individuals would discriminate against or use violence.
7. See Bernburg (2002) for an analysis of the ways in which IAT follows more closely in the Durkheimian tradition than does the anomie perspective in American criminology popularized by Robert Merton. In addition to drawing heavily on the works of Durkheim and Polanyi, IAT is heavily indebted to the scholarship of Talcott Parsons, and in particular, to Parsons' (1990 [1934]) approach to institutions.
8. The conceptualization of 'economic dominance' in IAT incorporates core elements of Polanyi's notion of the 'disembedded' market. For an extended discussion of the affinities between Polanyi's social thought and IAT, see Messner and Rosenfeld (2001).
9. Economic dominance accordingly impedes the development of the fundamental value orientation that Durkheim considered to be crucial for the advanced societies, i.e. the value orientation of 'moral individualism'. See Messner et al. (2008) for a discussion of the interconnections among economic dominance, anomie, and 'disintegrative individualism' in contrast with 'moral individualism'.
10. This paper does not hypothesize about any differential impact of the respective institutional domains. Current theory is insufficiently developed to sustain such hypotheses.
11. This paper's analytical model implies a causal structure that seems most plausible given the above theoretical arguments, but it is recognized that aspects of the causal ordering of variable are open to question. Thus this paper is only able to assess whether the data are consistent with a theoretically generated model. More definitive causal inferences must await future research.
12. All of the items considered here – unless otherwise stated – were developed by the GFE-project. The data are available through the GESIS-database: https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/sdesc2.asp?no=5572&db=e&doi =10.4232/1.11814
13. In order to specify this latent construct, this paper refers to the term 'mentality' rather than 'ideology' or 'belief' since in addition to the attitude (e.g. readiness to valuate groups) the construct goes beyond pure belief or ideology, due to the behavioural component contained within the interaction measure.
14. To control for the heritage is very common in German studies, because the eastern and the western part of Germany still differ in many important economic and social aspects. The item measures whether the respondent was born in East or West Germany.
15. Authoritarianism is measured by four items: 'Crimes should be punished more severely'; 'To maintain law and order, stronger action should be taken against troublemakers'; 'One of the most important characteristics one should have, are respect and obedience toward superiors'; and 'We should be grateful for having leaders, who tell us what to do'. Social Dominance Orientation is measured by three items: 'Inferior groups should stay in their place'; 'There are groups in society, which are of less worth than others'; and 'Some groups in society are more useful than others'.

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## Author biographies

**Andreas Hövermann** is scientific assistant at the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) and associate researcher of the Laboratory for Comparative Social Research (LCSR), Higher School of Economics, Russian Federation. He has studied sociology and social psychology and worked in several projects on prejudices in Germany and Europe. His research focuses on anomie, cross-cultural research and the concept of Group-focused Enmity.

**Steven F Messner** received his Bachelor's degree from Columbia University and his Master's degree and Doctorate in sociology from Princeton University. He is now distinguished teaching Professor at the State University New York in Albany. His research has focused primarily on the relationship between social organization and crime, with a particular emphasis on criminal homicide. He has also studied the spatial patterning of violent crime, crime in China, and the situational dynamics of violence.

**Andreas Zick** is full Professor in Educational Research and Chair of Socialization and Conflict Research. He is the Director of the Institute for Interdisciplinary Research on Conflict and Violence (IKG) at University Bielefeld. He has been coordinating several research projects on prejudice and discrimination, especially the 10-year long-term study of Group-focused Enmity. He has coordinated cross-cultural studies across Europe on prejudices and political ideologies.

# Appendix

**Table 7.** Model 1 results.

| | Anomia | Marketized mentality |
|---|---|---|
| | β/*b*/SE | β/*b*/SE |
| Anomia | – | −.09/−.01/.01 |
| Marketized mentality | −.09/−.01/.01 | – |
| Enfeebled non-economic institutions | .79***/1.09***/.09 | .64***/.45***/.07 |

***=$p < .001$, **=$p < .01$, *=$p < .05$.

**Table 8.** Descriptives of variables measuring further elements of Group-focused Enmity.

| | Agreement | Mean | SD |
|---|---|---|---|
| *Anti-immigrant prejudices (α = .76)* | | | |
| There are too many immigrants in Germany. | 44.1% | 2.43 | .96 |
| When jobs are scarce, foreigners should be sent to their home countries. | 20.5% | 1.95 | .87 |
| *Racism (α = .59)* | | | |
| German re-settlers should be better off than foreigners, because they are of German origin. | 13.2% | 1.73 | .76 |
| The Whites are leading the world with good reason. | 6.5% | 1.38 | .67 |
| *Devaluation of Muslims (α = .75)* | | | |
| Muslims should be prohibited from immigrating. | 19.7% | 1.88 | .87 |
| Because of the many Muslims, I feel like a stranger in my own country. | 28.4% | 2.04 | .99 |
| *Anti-Semitism (α = .72)* | | | |
| Jews have too much influence in Germany. | 12.5% | 1.67 | .78 |
| Jews are complicit in their persecutions. | 7.9% | 1.47 | .71 |
| *Sexual prejudices (α = .80)* | | | |
| Homosexuality is immoral. | 10.5% | 1.58 | .85 |
| It is disgusting when homosexuals kiss in public. | 22.9% | 1.90 | 1.02 |
| It is a good thing to allow marriages between two men or two women. | 26.0% (against marriages) | 1.88 | 1.06 |
| *Sexism (α = .78)* | | | |
| It should be more important for women to help their husband with their career. | 8.0% | 1.57 | .73 |
| Women should take their role as wives and mothers more seriously. | 15.9% | 1.75 | .85 |
| *Prejudices against newcomers (α = .65)* | | | |
| Those who have always lived here should have more rights than others. | 26.3% | 1.99 | .92 |
| Newcomers should be satisfied with less. | 43.5% | 2.35 | .98 |