Bridging Perceptions: Unravelling Ethnic Inequalities in the Labour Market

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Abstract

The Dutch and German labour markets have a longstanding history of ethnic inequalities. These can be harmful to society, especially during current labour shortages. However, there is a lack of research on whether these inequalities vary between the public and private sectors (macroeconomic sectors). Moreover, most studies focus on capital disparities and discrimination, neglecting the general perception of fair job opportunities. Therefore, this study examines the perceived fair chances of getting a job (PFJ) and whether this is moderated by macroeconomic sector.

Data from the European Social Survey was used including respondents with different migration backgrounds from the Netherlands and Germany (N=1975). Bivariate and multivariate analyses using linear hierarchical regression analyses were used to test the hypotheses.

Results show that immigrants in general have lower PFJ than natives. However, when comparing smaller immigrant groups to natives, this only seems to be the case for non-western and first-generation immigrants. Results also show that non-western immigrants have lower PFJ than western immigrants. First-generation immigrants have lower PFJ than second-generation immigrants. Immigrants generally show higher PFJ in the public sector than natives. However, this is not the case for second-generation immigrants.

Therefore, this research shows the continuing existence of ethnic inequalities in the labour market, especially for non-western and first-generation immigrants. This research also highlights the importance of the institutional context, particularly for western, non-western, and first-generation immigrants. These findings were used to form policy recommendations aimed at creating awareness and promoting multi-helix collaboration to address these inequalities in the labour market.

Keywords: labour market; immigrants; ethnic inequalities; discrimination;

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1. Introduction

1.1 Ethnic inequalities in the labour market

Extensive research has demonstrated the existence of ethnic inequalities in the labour market (e.g., Thijssen et al., 2021; Ahmad, 2020). Immigrants are more likely to be unemployed (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016; Dustmann et al., 2010; Blume et al., 2008; Husted et al., 2001; Statistics Netherlands, n.d.-e), work more frequently in lower-paying jobs, and have lower income than natives (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). According to Fibbi et al. (2021), discrimination – and therefore ethnic inequality – is harmful to society. It is damaging to society because it threatens social cohesion, impedes economic development, and exacerbates ethnic disparities. Additionally, those who experience unfair treatment, such as ethnic minorities, pay a high price because their chances in life are reduced across a variety of social spheres, sustaining personal disadvantages (Fibbi et al., 2021).

These societal consequences could also occur in the Dutch and German contexts. Both countries' labour markets contain longstanding inequalities between ethnic groups (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016; Gebel & Giesecke, 2009). For example, in 2018, 27% of Dutch people reported having directly experienced discrimination, most of them based on gender, age, or race (Andreissen et al., 2020) Consequently, 5% of job seekers gave up their employment search (Andriessen et al., 2020).

A recent societal development is shortages in the Dutch and German labour markets (Statistics Netherlands, 2022a; SER, 2022; UWV, 2022a). Consequently, there are more delays at airports and in the hospitality sector, some enterprises are compelled to close, trains are cancelled (UWV, 2022c) and there is not enough staff in the healthcare sector (European Parliament, 2021). Employing more immigrants could be beneficial in addressing these shortages, as statistics show that they are less likely to have paid work than natives (Statistics Netherlands, 2023a). Moreover, research has shown that having an ethnically diverse staff improves company quality and outcomes (Gomez & Bernet, 2019; Lorenzo et al., 2017; LaVeist & Pierre, 2014; McKay et al., 2008; Crisp & Turner, 2011; Miller & Triana, 2009; Erhardt et al., 2003).

This study uses the definition of an immigrant from Statistics Netherlands (n.d.-a). Meaning that someone with a migration background (or immigrant) is a person who was not born in the host country – a first-generation immigrant – or has at least one parent who was born abroad – a second-generation immigrant (both including western and non-western

immigrants). A distinction is drawn between people with a western and non-western migration background (both including first- and second-generation immigrants) (Statistics Netherlands, n.d.-a). Western immigrants are people who originated in one of the following regions: North America, Oceania, Indonesia, Japan, or Europe (except Turkey) (Statistics Netherlands, n.d.-c). Non-western immigrants are people who originated from Africa, Latin America, Asia (except Indonesia and Japan), or Turkey (Statistic Netherlands, n.d.-b).

It is worth noting that the labour market seems to be hierarchically classified by ethnicity with natives at the top, followed by western and non-western immigrants (Huijnk & Andriessen, 2016). Moreover, research has shown different job chances for first- and second-generation immigrants (Li & Heath, 2016). Therefore, this research will focus on comparing all immigrant groups (combined) to natives, western to non-western immigrants, and first- to second-generation immigrants. Only immigrants who currently live in the Netherlands and Germany will be included in this study. Those who are planning on moving to these countries or refugees are excluded from this study.

1.2 Labour market conditions

Due to local labour market conditions, the potential for (positive) interethnic contact, or the visibility of cultural differences, demographic and socioeconomic characteristics of an environment could be relevant for immigrants (Blommaert et al., 2013). Some industries may practise positive discrimination since immigrants are more likely to accept lower pay (Behaghel et al., 2012). Furthermore, discrimination is more prevalent in positions with lower educational requirements and bigger candidate pools (Andriessen et al., 2012; Mergener & Maier, 2019; Midtben, 2016), and the effect of anonymous applications on discrimination may vary depending on context (Hulsegge et al., 2021).

Despite research demonstrating these contextual ethnical differences in the Dutch and German labour markets, studies lack knowledge of whether variations exist throughout the public and private sectors. Therefore, studying this could contribute to the theory regarding the contextual factors and improve policy regarding ethnic inequalities in the labour market. Within this study, the term, "macroeconomic sector" will be used to refer to both the public and private sectors. Previous studies have been using both field experiments and perceived inequality methods to study ethnic inequalities in the labour market. It was found that there was a significant relation between these methods (Biddle, 2013). Moreover, according to Biddle (2013), it might be that people tend to avoid certain sectors in which they expect to be

discriminated against. For instance, Biddle found that this is the case for women working in industries with a male predominance. Thus, it could be interesting to find out if this also applies to immigrants if they expect to experience discrimination more frequently in the public or private sector. Furthermore, measuring perceived discrimination has been used in previous studies and has shown how immigrants might behave in the labour market (Veenman, 2010). However, it is unknown if this goes hand in hand with the perceived fair chances of getting a job (PFJ) in general, which makes it interesting to research, instead of perceived discrimination.

Therefore, this research aims to examine the relation between migration background and whether this relation is influenced by macroeconomic sector. Hence, the following research questions are formulated: *what are the perceived fair chances of getting a job in the labour market in the Netherlands and Germany? To what extent does migration background affect the perceived fair chance of getting a job in the Netherlands and Germany? And is this moderated by macroeconomic sector?* Furthermore, a policy question is formulated: *how can policy for immigrants be improved regarding chances of getting a job in the labour market in the Netherlands and Germany?*

1.3 The Dutch and German context

The Netherlands and Germany both have a similar share of people who have a migration background, respectively 25.2% in the Netherlands (Statista, 2022a) and 27.2% in Germany (Statista, 2022b). Both countries have also known a long history of immigration and different types of it such as labour immigration and refugees (Statistics Netherlands, 2007; Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2022). The countries have relatively similar shortages in the labour market as well (Statistics Netherlands, 2022a; SER, 2022; UWV, 2022a). Additionally, immigrants are known to be a hard-to-reach population for research (Muhib et al., 2001; UyBico et al., 2007). Therefore, this implication and the mentioned similarities make it interesting to study both countries, which has been done before (e.g. Thijsen et al., 2019).

1.3.1 Dutch policy

The Dutch government has implemented new policies to provide better employment opportunities for immigrants, such as The Work Agenda for More Integration on the Labour Market. This policy aims to decrease inequality and discrimination against this group in the workplace. The policy seeks to achieve this by promoting cultural diversity in the workplace,

offering more employment opportunities for young people from immigrant backgrounds, and providing better guidance for both immigrant workers and employers. The government encourages employers to actively participate in promoting equal opportunities through evidence-based interventions and by understanding the benefits of having a culturally diverse organisation. The state is also committed to tackling discrimination (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, 2022).

1.3.2 German policy

The German government aims at creating more chances to participate in society regardless of ethnicity. The government has several projects aimed at reducing inequality, such as reducing educational disparities and improving immigrants' (occupational) language skills. According to the German government, creating more (vocational) training, improving (occupational) language skills, and extracurricular educational opportunities could increase the chances for immigrants to integrate into the labour market. To improve immigrants' chances in the labour market, the government has introduced integration programmes for newcomers since 2005. As part of a job creation programme, the Coordinating Agency for Training and Migration (KAUSA) was also established. The KAUSA aims at increasing the number of internship positions in migrant-owned businesses and is directed at both young and elderly immigrants. Additionally, it focuses on expanding current networks and creating solid mechanisms to ensure equal participation in training for all young people (The Federal Government, 2016).

2. Theory

Research shows the intertwined nature of measuring ethnic inequalities in the labour market in a subjective and objective way (Biddle, 2013). Thus, when looking into ethnic disparities in the labour market, it is useful to describe the body of literature regarding both ways. Therefore, these will be described.

2.1 Human and cultural capital

The human capital and cultural capital theory have been used to study hiring chances for immigrants (Van Tubergen et al., 2004; Mergener & Maier, 2018). Human capital refers to an individual's skills and knowledge that are relevant to the labour market (Becker, 1993), such as education and work experience (Card, 1999; Mincer, 1974, 1958). The likelihood of getting employment and developing skills all rise with more education, knowledge, and skills (Mincer, 1958, 1974; Becker 1993; Goldberg & Smith, 2007, pp. 3-4). Consequently, people invest in their human capital (Becker, 1993).

Cultural capital can be seen as a type of intellectual capital that influences people's chances in life while also perpetuating a particular social order (Bourdieu et al., 1999 p. 186). It gives knowledge, norms, and behaviours that elevate social status (Bourdieu et al., 1999 p. 186). Cultural capital can be defined at the macro-system level (Ford & Lerner, 1992), establishing the population's chances for engaging and being involved in social and cultural activities (DiMaggio & Mohr, 1985). Particularly, language plays an essential role in cultural capital, providing involvement in society and therefore the labour market (Mergener & Maier, 2018). Additionally, cultural capital has been shown to influence human capital (Mergener & Maier, 2018). Therefore, the mentioned elements of cultural and human capital – education, work experience, and language – will be described as they are important for immigrants in the labour market.

2.1.1 Education

According to the human capital theory, individuals who invest in their education are highly sought after by employers as their academic achievements reflect their potential productivity and route of accomplishment (Becker, 1993). Educational investments contribute to improving educational opportunities and, consequently, make it easier for people to acquire the skills they need to obtain better jobs (Fasih, 2008; Van Tubergen, 2020).

Immigrant students typically perform worse scholastically than native students in most

European countries (OECD, 2007). For instance, first-generation immigrants lag behind their native peers by an average of 1.5 school years (OECD, 2007). Often, various concerns, such as residential segregation, selective processes, resource inequalities, leaving school early, and higher dropout rates, limit their access to good quality education (OECD, 2007).

However, recent statistics show that western immigrants are occupying the highest level of education in the Netherlands, followed by natives and non-western immigrants (Statistics Netherlands, 2023b). Similarly, recent findings in Germany show that immigrants whose ethnic backgrounds are more closely related to the German language and culture have the best educational outcomes. Those with southern European or non-western backgrounds have the lowest level of education (Gries et al., 2021).

Additionally, Rudolphi and Salikutluk (2021) found that nearly all ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, Germany, England, and Sweden desire a university degree as much as or more than their ethnic majority peers. Nonetheless, immigrants in the Netherlands and Germany have fewer educational opportunities compared to those in Sweden and England due to later tracking and more flexible educational systems in the latter countries. Research shows that an earlier tracking age amplifies the impact of social background on educational paths (Van de Werfhorst & Mijs, 2010). This is crucial for children of immigrant origin who often come from low-income, minority-language homes, thus lacking cultural and social capital to support their education (Alba et al., 2011). Consequently, they may be placed on lower tracks, further disadvantaging them (Suárez-Orozco et al., 2010). Thus, even though immigrant students show more aspirations for getting higher educated degrees, typically, non-western immigrants perform worse than their native peers. However, those with a western migration background appear to perform better than natives.

2.1.2 Work-experience

Work experience is vital throughout the hiring process and in determining employability, particularly for senior or leadership roles (Annen, 2020). Immigrants may find it challenging to acquire higher-level work experience due to the majority of their job prospects being low-skilled, resulting from the inequalities they face (Adserà & Pytliková, 2016). The likelihood of finding work mostly depends on whether someone's talents match the demands of the labour market (OECD, 2022). Occupational qualifications may particularly indicate that a person is legitimately qualified for a given employment (Edgerton et al., 2012). Although certain skills can be used internationally, others are country- or even company-specific (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2017). Hence, disparities in their degree of

fundamental and country-specific human capital are linked to structural differences between native employees and different immigrant groups (Borjas, 1989). The majority of immigrants arrive in the country of destination with skills that are only marginally useful to the local economy, which causes beginning labour disadvantages (Chiswick, 1980). Pandey and Townsend (2017) found that previous work experience in the country of destination is a determinant of immigrants' achievement in the labour market. Additionally, they found that immigrants' foreign experience benefited their employment in the host country.

2.1.3 Language

Fluency and literacy in the dominant language of the host country are contributing factors to immigrants' success in the labour market (Rivera-Batiz, 1990; Borjas & Chiswick, 2019; Dustmann 1994; Chiswick & Miller, 1996; Chiswick et al., 1997; Berman et al., 2003). Moreover, Shields and Price (2002) found that successful vocational outcomes for certain immigrant groups in the UK are positively correlated with the language of the host country. De Graaf et al. (2000) state this also applies to the language proficiency of immigrants' parents. They state that parental reading behaviour, mainly for parents who have low educational levels, was a predictor of their children's success in school.

Immigrants who are proficient in the host country's language – reading, writing, and speaking – generally have greater job opportunities than those who have less fluent language competency (Pieroni et al., 2022; Beenstock et al. 2001; Chiswick and Miller 1996; Dustmann and Fabbri, 2003). However, Yao & Van Ours (2015) found that in the Netherlands language skills affect employment for females, but not for males. They state that this gender difference might occur due to women having more non-manual jobs that require language skills, while men often work in industries where the Dutch language is less important.

Nevertheless, it is generally considered that larger linguistic divergence between immigrants' native language and their adopted language will hinder their economic integration (Rooth & Saarela, 2007; Miller & Chiswick, 2007; Beenstock et al., 2001).

2.2 Social capital

Social capital could be described as resources gained through an individual's network (Van Tubergen, 2020). Numerous studies and theories suggest this could lead to better job prospects (e.g., Lin & Erickson, 2008; Granovetter, 1974).

Having native friends positively influences immigrants' job outcomes (Evra & Kazemipur, 2015). However, the homophily theory states that people seek others who are

similar to themselves (McPherson et al., 2001). This theory is confirmed by Cohen and Wills (1985) and Tegegne and Glanville (2019) as minorities rely on social ties with similar ethnicity for regarding social support. Moreover, second-generation immigrants frequently grow up in homes that have emotional, material, or ideological ties to their nation of origin (Levitt, 2009). Consequently, they possess the social abilities to interact with the country of origin. Adverse settings, such as discrimination in the destination country, could encourage the second generation to employ these social skills to create additional transnational social relationships (Arat & Bigili, 2021; Portes & Rumbaut, 2001; Fokkema et al., 2012).

However, immigrants with higher education have been shown to have more contact opportunities and genuine positive contact with the majority population (Kalmijn & Van Tubergen, 2006; Martinovic, 2013). Nonetheless, minorities may feel isolated from the majority group when they experience discrimination in the host country and may therefore turn more to their ethnic community for comfort (Tajfel & Turner, 2004; Branscombe et al., 1999; Ashmore et al., 2004). Especially highly educated immigrants might feel off worse when comparing themselves to equally educated majority members (Verkuyten, 2016; Steinmann, 2019). They are more conscious of societal injustices like discrimination and limited opportunities because of their greater levels of education, which also suggest stronger cognitive abilities (Kane & Kyyrö, 2001; Wodtke, 2012).

2.3 Discrimination

Various research shows the occurrence of ethnic discrimination in the labour market (e.g. Kaas & Manger, 2012; Di Stasio et al., 2019). In the literature, discrimination is mostly based on three theories: taste-based, statistical, and institutional discrimination. These will be discussed along with perceived discrimination, except for institutional discrimination which will be applied to examine inequalities for the macroeconomic sectors.

2.3.1 Taste-based and statistical discrimination

The "taste-based" discrimination theory holds that employers dislike hiring racial or ethnic minorities (Becker, 1973). Employers pick employees who are representative of the general population. Hence, the employer chooses his employees based on their (cultural) preferences and is open to paying extra for that (Becker, 1973). However, according to the statistical discrimination theory, companies make choices based on economic logic rather than (dis)liking someone based on their ethnicity. Meaning that employers favour candidates who belong to the majority due to a lack of information and unfavourable group

beliefs about the skill sets of ethnic minorities. Employers consequently base individual hiring decisions on presumptions regarding the productivity of ethnic groups (Arrow, 1973; Phelps, 1972).

Both Germany and the Netherlands have the presence of discrimination in the labour market (Thijssen et al., 2019). Thijssen et al. (2019, 2020, 2021) and Di Stasio (2019) suggest that the inclusion of more personal information and (different) information categories (social skills, grade, and performance) on CVs did not lessen ethnic discrimination. Furthermore, Hulsegge et al. (2021) found that anonymising CVs did not affect whether applicants would be invited to interviews or hired. It was also found that Turkish-sounding applicants in Germany, who called companies to ask about open positions, were more frequently told that were not available anymore (Schmaus & Kristen, 2021). However, Kaas & Manger (2012) did find evidence for the occurrence of statistical discrimination in Germany. In their study, participants with a German name received more callbacks but the gap between them and participants without German names disappeared after adding reference letters.

Additionally, Thijssen et al. (2021) state that firms discriminate based on the socioeconomic development of the nation of origin. Their study revealed that within the Dutch labour market, not all minority groups are equally impacted by discrimination. They concluded that there is an ethnic hierarchy, with native-majority origin at the top, following western minorities and non-western minorities at the bottom. Similar results regarding ethnic hierarchies occur in other European countries as well, such as Germany (Koopmans et al., 2019) and Finland (Ahmad, 2020).

2.3.2 Perceived discrimination

In the perception of ethnic minorities, perceived discrimination rises mainly in reaction to failing entry into the educational market, which is attributable in part to professional ambitions and individual experiences of discrimination (Lindemann, 2020). Krings et al. (2014) discovered that immigrants are substantially more inclined than natives to report workplace discrimination. They provide an explanation based on the claim of immigrants that they encounter disrespectful behaviour more frequently. Their study also states that researchers and organisations are drawn to an often-overlooked group as a result of competing immigrant groups from close neighbour countries, mostly western, who experience personal discrimination. They suggest that when creating policies to address discrimination against immigrants, these groups are frequently overlooked because it is considered that they will easily integrate into the host nation and labour market.

Consequently, Lindemann (2020) found that even if immigrant adolescents have successfully integrated into the school system, they take on a training role that is not in line with their planned careers. However, perceived discrimination does not increase for them.

2.4 Disadvantages for immigrants in the labour market

Altogether, it could be stated that immigrants in general have less human, social, and cultural capital in the Netherlands and Germany. Moreover, immigrants experience more discrimination within the labour market in both countries. However, it seems that non-western immigrants and first-generation immigrants are even more disadvantaged compared to western immigrants and second-generation. Therefore, the first (H1a), second (H2a), and third (H3a) hypotheses could be formulated:

H1a. Immigrants have lower perceived fair chances of getting a job compared to natives in the Netherlands and Germany.

H2a. Within this group of immigrants, non-western immigrants are more likely to have lower perceived fair chances of getting a job than western immigrants.

H3a. Within this group of immigrants, first-generation immigrants are more likely to have lower perceived fair chances of getting a job than second-generation immigrants.

2.5 Perceived fair job chances for immigrants in the public and private sector

As mentioned, the literature lacks research regarding (perceived) fair job chances in the public or private sector for immigrants. Nevertheless, L'Horty et al. (2022) did find discrimination in the labour market but they could not conclude whether it occurs more in the public than in the private sector. Based on their research, it could be expected that hiring discrimination between ethnicities does not differ within the public or private sector. However, their research only supports this for ethnic minorities with a disability as this was the focus of their study.

Nevertheless, according to Blommaert et al. (2013), environmental characteristics in the labour market could be essential for immigrants. Moreover, Di Stasio (2014) claims that recruiting decisions are influenced by the institutional context employers are in. The Neo-institutional theory offers a useful framework for analysing how external forces influence organisational practices (Mezias, 1990; Beckert, 1999). This framework holds that actions at the institutional environment level, rather than just firm-level characteristics, have an impact on organisational outcomes (Mezias, 1990; Beckert, 1999). Coercive isomorphism might also

be taking place within the institutional setting (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). This refers to the result of pressures that are applied to organisations on a formal and informal basis by other organisations that rely on and are influenced by cultural norms in the society in which they function (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). Additionally, the public sector is more dedicated to the idea of equality and is better protected from the competitive constraints that mitigate discrimination in recruitment operations (L'Horty et al., 2022).

Moreover, Brinton (2002) states that social actors' behaviour is influenced by the environmental setting. To be more specific, institutional discrimination is the systematic denial of opportunities and resources to people who belong to less privileged groups as a result of discriminatory practices and laws that exist inside institutions (Cunningham & Light, 2016). This kind of prejudice is supported by laws, organisational rules, or institutional traditions of a certain institution. Direct institutional discrimination refers to overt institutional or governmental measures that might, over the course of several years, create generational inequalities. When laws and procedures are applied differently to subordinate groups without a clear motive for damage, this is known as indirect institutional discrimination (Cunningham & Light, 2016). Differences in chance equality in various areas of the labour market might explain why Hulsegge et al. (2021) found only minor differences between normal and anonymous CV rounds. However, little consideration was given in their study to the role of context in this study to draw conclusions about this potential influence and support the mentioned claim by Di Stasio's (2014).

Additionally, research by Netherlands Organisation for Applied Scientific Research (TNO) and Statistics Netherlands (2023) shows that the experience of discrimination due to ethnicity varies in different sectors. However, this is divided into more specific labour market sectors, such as education and healthcare. Worth noting, is that ethnic minorities experience less discrimination in public sectors such as governance when compared to the overall average of experiencing discrimination due to ethnicity. Biddle (2013) states people might avoid certain sectors where they expect to be discriminated against when looking for a job. However, according to TNO and Statistics Netherlands, perceived discrimination in the educational sector is more comparable to the average of all sectors. Furthermore, perceived discrimination due to ethnicity almost always occurs more than other types of discrimination such as gender or age discrimination. The requirements for the job tasks within the governance and education sector are slightly more but comparable to the overall average.

Moreover, Osoian and Zaharie (2014) found that the public sector less often relies on

recommendations from their networks when recruiting candidates. This could indicate that social capital might influence the chance of getting a job in the public sector to a lesser extent than in the private sector. However, their study did not focus on immigrants specifically and might not apply to the Netherlands and Germany as it was conducted in Romania.

Thus, it could be that employers within the public sector are more aimed at equality and might be less interested in their candidates' human, social, or cultural capital. This could create such an environment within the public institutions that might influence employers' recruitment decisions and therefore increases chances of getting a job within the public sector. As the public sector is aimed more at equality it might be that society, and therefore immigrants, expect that it has more equal chances regarding recruitment processes. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H1b) could be formulated:

H1b. Getting a job in the public sector will positively influence the relation between migration background and the perceived fair chances of getting a job.

Altogether, institutional factors could influence the chances of getting a job in the public and private sectors. As mentioned, Becker (1993) states that employers seek employees with the best productivity. Even though immigrants may have better chances of getting a job in the public sector than in the private sector, differences in the expected productivity of immigrant groups could lead to differences in the chances of getting a job for immigrants. This could be because of various backgrounds and whether they are a first- or second-generation immigrant. Therefore, the fifth (H2b) and sixth hypotheses (H3b) could be formulated:

H2b. The relation between western immigrants and the perceived fair chances of getting a job is higher in the public than the private sector compared to non-western immigrants.

H3b. The relation between second-generation immigrants and the perceived fair chances of getting a job is higher in the public than the private sector compared to first-generation immigrants.

3. Data and method

3.1 Data

3.1.1 Dataset

Open data from the ninth round of the European Social Survey (ESS) were used to study the research questions (ESS, 2021). The dataset includes 30 European countries and portrays the European population. Representing this population no matter their nationality, citizenship, language, or legal status, all residents of private households who are 15 years of age or older in the nations where they are currently living. Letters were sent to about 100,000 addresses using population registers from the participating countries. To ensure validity and reliability the survey establishes precise translation procedures, a strict random probability sample standard, and a minimum response rate of 70% to ensure validity. However, this survey had a response rate of 50,84% and therefore comprises 49,519 respondents. Within the selection process, individuals were chosen in strata that are divided by region, age, and gender in each country. Questions were asked during a one-hour in-person computer-assisted interview on a range of subjects, including politics, demographic data, social behaviour, and equality. During the interview, the survey data was collected through the computer. The timeframe of the survey was from August 30, 2018, until January 1, 2020. Each respondent was marked with an identical number to ensure anonymity so that the identity of the respondent cannot be traced (ESS, n.d.).

A list of the questions used in this study with all response categories, the participation sheet and informed consent form, and definitions of privacy, data management and ethics terminology can be found in the appendix.

3.1.2 Selection and exclusion criteria

First, the dataset was filtered for only respondents from the Netherlands (*N*=1673) and Germany (*N*=2358) as these are the countries being studied (*N*=4031). As this study examines PFJ, only those who are currently part of the labour force, according to Statistics Netherlands (2023c) were included in the sample. Statistics Netherlands states the labour force comprises all inhabitants within the age range of 15-74 who currently have a paid job or those who are unemployed but actively looking for a job. Therefore, a filter was applied to only include respondents within this age range (*N*=3636). Next, the dataset was filtered so that only respondents were included who currently have a paid job or are unemployed and actively looking for a job (*N*=2106).

3.2 Measurements

3.2.1 Dependent variable: perceived fair chance of getting a job (PFJ)

To create the dependent variable the scale question "Imagine you were looking for a job today. To what extent do you think this statement would apply to you? Compared to other people in [country], I would have a fair chance of getting the job I was seeking." was used, ranging from (0) "does not apply at all" to (10) "applies completely". This resulted into the variable: "*perceived fair chance of getting a job*" (PFJ). Meaning that the higher the score on the question the higher their PFJ which is demonstrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

Dependent variable: PFJ
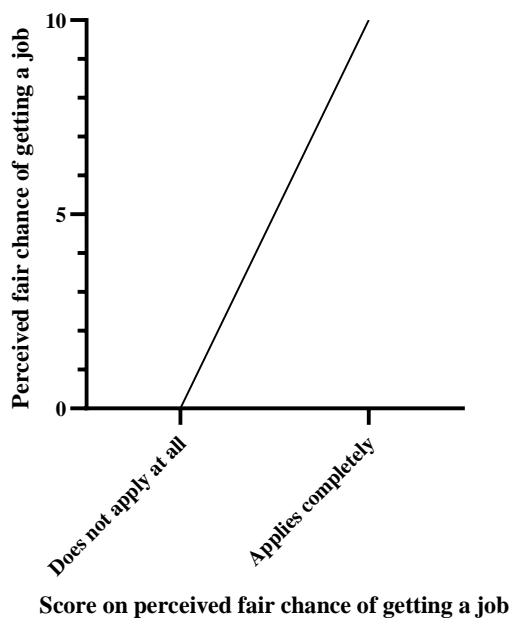
3.2.2 Independent variable: migration background

To create the independent variable "*migration background*" several steps had to be taken as there were three versions of the variable used in the analyses: *general migration background*, *geographical migration background*, and *generational migration background*. To ensure validity for this variable, definitions from Statistics Netherlands (n.d.-a) regarding migration background were used.

First, the variable *general migration background* was created to indicate whether someone is an immigrant in general or not (0) "native" and (1) "immigrant". To do this, the questions "Were you born in [country]?", "Was your father born in [country]?", and "Was your mother born in [country]?" were computed into (1) "yes" and (0) "no". The question was different for respondents living in the Netherlands and Germany as in the Netherlands the value for "[country]" was filled in as "the Netherlands" and in Germany, this value was filled in as "Germany". Respondents who and if their parents were born in the country they are currently living in were pooled into (0) "native". Respondents who were not born in the country or if one of their parents was not born in the country they are currently living in were pooled into (1) "immigrant".

Next, the variable *geographical migration background* was created to indicate participants' geographical migration background, consisting of (0) native, (1) western immigrant, or (2) non-western immigrant. Within this categorical variable, non-western immigrant was used as the reference group in the analyses. Native was used as a reference group to compare these immigrant groups to natives in addition to the *general migration background* analyses. Native was computed in the same way as previously described for the *general migration background* variable. To make a distinction between western and non-western immigrants the following questions were used: "In which country were you born?", "In which country was your father born?", In which country was your mother born?". After that, the questions were categorised into western immigrant and non-western immigrant. If someone was not born in the country they are currently living in and were born in a western country or if they were born there and their parents were not born there but were born in a western country, they were marked as "western immigrant". If someone was not born in the country they are currently living in and were born in a non-western country or if they were born there and their parents were not born there but were born in a non-western country, they were marked as "non-western immigrant". Every country in Europe (except for Turkey), North America, Oceania, Indonesia, and Japan was marked as "western". Countries from Asia (except for Japan and Indonesia), Africa and Latin America were marked as "non-western".

Finally, a last version of the independent variable, *generational migration background*, was created to make a distinction between (0) native, (1) first-generation immigrant, and (2) second-generation immigrant. Within this categorical variable, first-generation immigrant was used as the reference group in the analyses. Native was used as a reference group to compare these immigrant groups to natives in addition to the *general*

migration background analyses. Native was computed in the same way as previously described. A first-generation immigrant was computed when someone was not born in the country they are currently living in. A second-generation immigrant was computed when one of the parents of a participant was not born in the country they are currently living in.

3.2.3 Moderator: macroeconomic sector

To create the moderator, *macroeconomic sector*, the question "Which of the types of organisation on this card do/did you work for?" was used. This variable was computed from "central or local government", "other public sector (such as education and health)", "a state-owned enterprise" into (1) public sector and "a private firm" and "self-employed" into (0) private sector, making private sector the reference group.

3.2.4 Control variables

As literature has shown other elements might influence (perceived) fair chances of getting a job, control variables were created to ensure validity.

First, a control variable was created for the *country* the participant is currently living in, with (1) "the Netherlands" and (0) "Germany", making Germany the reference group. This control variable was added to indicate whether there were significant differences between the Netherlands and Germany in the chances of people getting a job. Additionally, it could be that immigrants from these countries have different PFJ. For instance, Thijssen et al. (2019) found discrimination against Turkish minorities more often in the Netherlands than in Germany. However, this distinguishing PFJ for immigrants between the two countries was not within the scope of this study.

Furthermore, a control variable for the *gender* of the participant was computed from the variable "sex" into (1) "male" and (0) "female", using female as the reference group. This variable was created due to research found women have been discriminated against within the labour market for a long time (Neumark et al., 1996; Petit, 2007; Zhou et al., 2013; Durguet et al., 2017; González et al., 2019).

Next, *age* was used as a control variable as it has been shown to influence the chance of getting hired in previous studies (Baert et al., 2016; Riach, 2015).

Finally, *employment status* was created using the question "Using this card, which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days?". Only the respondents who answered "paid work" and "unemployed, actively looking for a job" were used in creating the variable into (1) employed and (0) unemployed, using unemployed as the

reference group. This variable was created as literature has stated that times of labour market absence can harm someone's job prospects (Ackum, 1991; Gregg & Tominey, 2005).

3.2.5 Final sample

After adding the control variables, a filter was applied to make sure all participants within the sample answered all the questions and relevant categories that were used in the analyses. Otherwise, they were marked as system-missing and were excluded from this study. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 1975 participants. Within this sample, 1604 respondents were marked as native. 371 respondents were marked as "immigrant", which consisted of 164 western migrants and 207 non-western migrants. These 371 immigrants consisted of 217 first-generation and 154 second-generation immigrants.

3.3 Analyses

Before performing the analyses, assumptions were checked to make sure the quality and reliability of the multiple regression analyses. Using linear hierarchical regression models, bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted with IBM SPSS Version 27. To test the hypotheses, the regression analyses were established into 12 different models, divided over 3 tables.

First, within Table 1, model 1 tested the relation between *general migration background* and the PFJ. Model 2 tested the same relationship including the control variables and model 3 included the moderator. Additionally, model 4 added the interaction variable between *general migration background* and the *macroeconomic sector* variable.

Second, within Table 2, model 5 tested the relation between the variable *geographical migration background* and the *PFJ*. Model 6 tested the same relation including the control variables. In model 7 the moderator was added. Model 8 included the interactions between *macroeconomic sector* and the categorial variables of *geographical migration background*.

Third, within Table 3, model 9 tested the relation between the variable *generational migration background* and the *PFJ*. Model 10 tested the same relation including the control variables. In model 11 the moderator was included. Additionally, model 12 added three interaction variables consisting of interactions between macroeconomic sector and the categorial variables of *generational migration background*.

4. Results

Bivariate and multivariate analyses were conducted using hierarchical regression analyses. The results of these analyses will be described.

4.1 Descriptive results

The descriptive results of the variables that were used in the regression analyses are shown in Table 1. The final sample consisted of 1975 respondents from the Netherlands and Germany. Respondents overall indicate PFJ in these countries with a mean of 7.40. However, the standard deviation shows a sizable portion of the respondents deviates from this mean (min = 0, max = 10, SD = 2.38). This can be seen as natives having the highest PFJ (M = 7.51). However, all immigrant groups combined (M = 6.91) have a lower score than natives, but the sizeable difference can mostly be seen for first-generation (M = 6.56) and non-western immigrants (M = 6.54). These differences are only slight for second-generation immigrants (M = 7.41) and western immigrants (M = 7.39). It is worth noting that the differences in mean scores for PFJ among the studied immigrant groups might be considered relatively small. This is the case as PFJ was measured on a ten-point scale and with the largest difference being just one point. These differences are shown in Figures 2, 3, and 4.

Further, Table 1 shows that 19% of the sample consists of immigrants. 8% of them are western immigrants and 10% are non-western immigrants. 11% of them are first-generation immigrants and 8% are second-generation immigrants.

Figure 2

Descriptives of PFJ by general migration background

General migration background
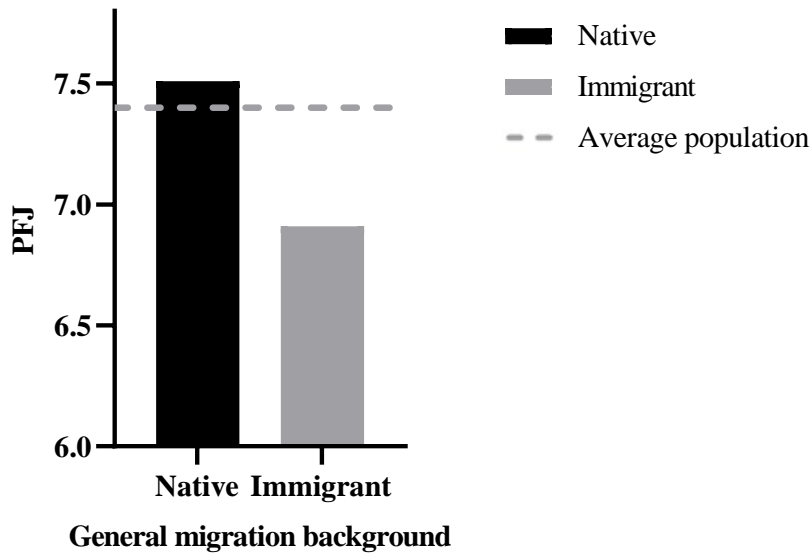
Figure 3

Descriptives of PFJ by geographical migration background

Geographical migration background
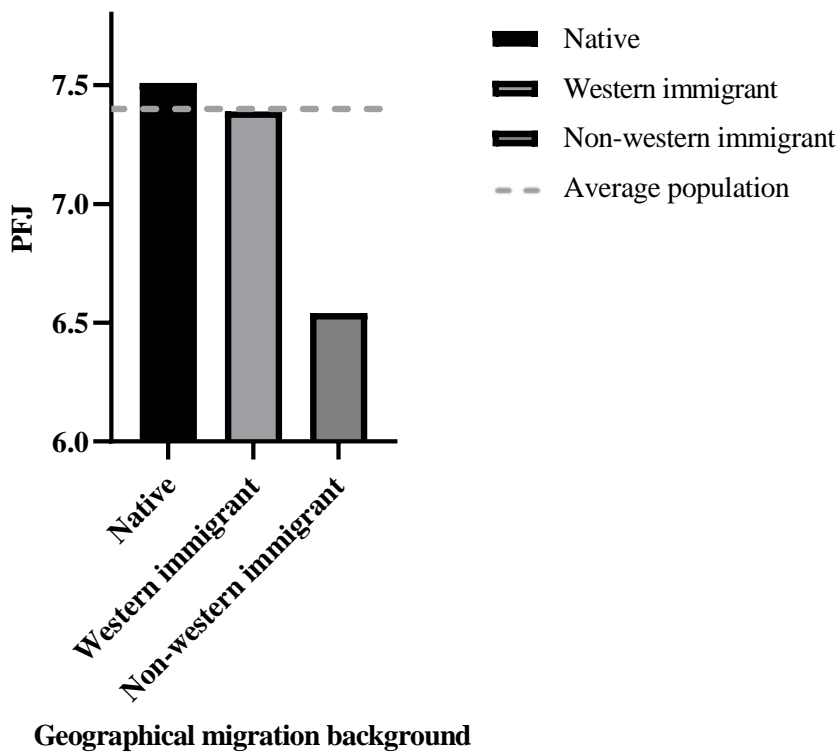
Figure 4

Descriptives of PFJ by generational migration background
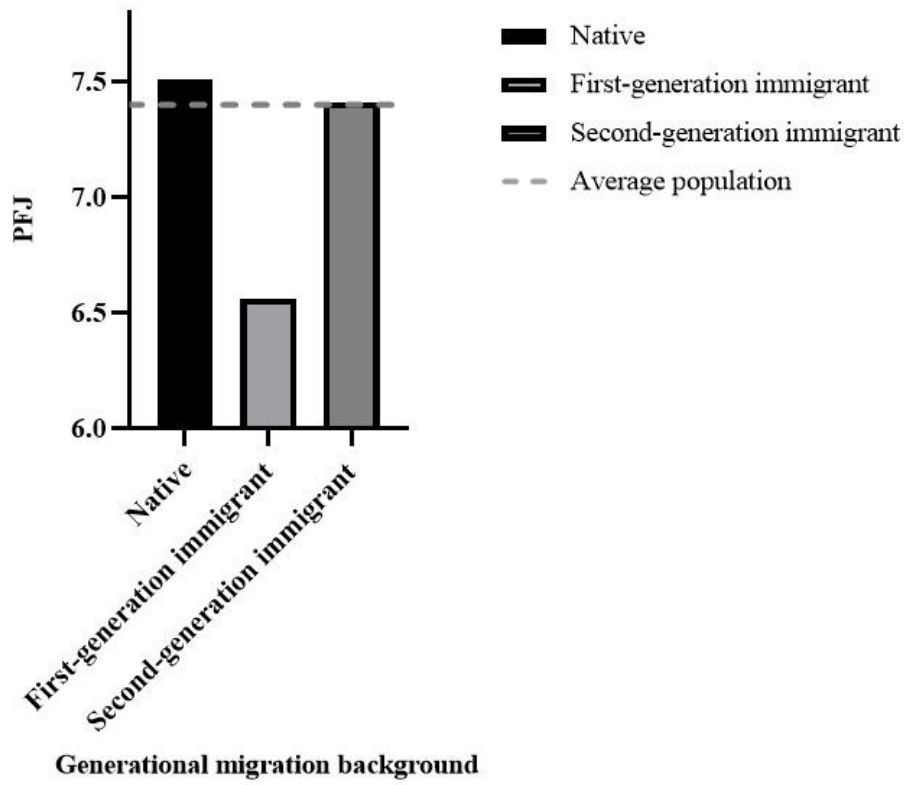
Table 1

Descriptive statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Perceived fair chance of getting a job (10=applies completely)	1975	0	10	7.40	2.38
Native		0	10	7.51	2.28
Immigrant		0	10	6.91	2.72
Western immigrant		0	10	7.39	2.45
Non-western immigrant		0	10	6.54	2.89
First-generation immigrant		0	10	6.56	2.90
Second-generation immigrant		0	10	7.41	2.38
Immigrant (ref=native)	1975	0	1	.19	
Western immigrant (ref=native)	1975	0	1	.08	
Non-western immigrant (ref=native)	1975	0	1	.10	
First-generation immigrant (ref=native)	1975	0	1	.11	
Second-generation immigrant (ref=native)	1975	0	1	.08	
Male (ref=female)	1975	0	1	.55	
Age	1975	16	74	44.64	12.77
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)	1975	0	1	.42	
Employed (ref=unemployed)	1975	0	1	.98	

Public sector (ref=private sector)	1975	0	1	.30

4.2 Hypothesis testing

The results of the regression analyses are shown in Tables 2, 3, and 4. Table 2 consists of the analyses with the *general migration background* variable, Table 3 the *geographical migration background* variable, and Table 4 the *generational migration background* variable[1].

4.2.1 General migration background

Table 2 consists of models 1, 2, 3 and 4. Immigrant had a significant negative relation on the PFJ in both models 1 and 2 and is even stronger where the controls are included (B = -.645, p <.001). Meaning that immigrants indicate that their chances of getting a job are lower than the job chances natives indicate about themselves. However, when comparing smaller immigrant groups with natives, support for the hypothesis was only found for non-western and first-generation immigrants. Western and second-generation immigrant were non-significant. See the appendix[2]. Therefore, hypothesis 1a (H1a) stating that immigrants have lower PFJ than natives is only partially supported.

In model 4, the interaction between immigrant and public sector had a significant positive relation with the PFJ (B = 1.090, p <.001). Suggesting that looking at the perceptions of these immigrant groups of getting a job, their chances of getting a job in the public sector are higher than in the private sector. A visualisation of the interaction can be seen in Figure 5. However, within this group of immigrants, this was only significant for western, non-western, and first-generation immigrants. The interaction for second-generation immigrant was non-significant. See the appendix. Thus, support was partially found for hypothesis 1b (H1b) stating that the public sector will positively influence the relation between being an immigrant and the PFJ.

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[1] The analyses were checked for robustness by including education as a control variable. The sample decreased to 1877 people. However, similar results were shown. See the appendix.
[2] Tables 3 and 4 also show results for non-western and first-generation immigrant compared to native but are in line with the tables in the appendix. Moreover, these tables are about the differences between immigrant groups and not compared to native. Therefore, these will not be interpreted in these sections.

Figure 5

Interaction between immigrant and

public sector for the PFJ
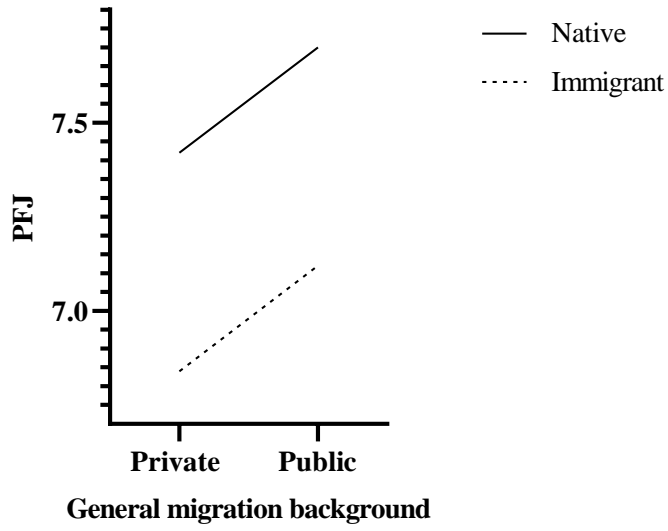
Table 2

Hierarchical regression models 1, 2, 3, 4 predicting PFJ

N=1975	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.509***	.059	6.672***	.418	6.613***	.417	6.770***	.418
Immigrant (ref=native)	-.596***	.136	-.645***	.134	-.628***	.134	-.927***	.156
	(-.098)		*(-.106)*		*(-.103)*		*(-.152)*	
Male (ref=female)			.203	.104	.303**	.107	.297**	.107
			(.043)		*(.063)*		*(.062)*	
Age			-.037***	.004	-.038***	.004	-.039***	.004
			(-.200)		*(-.206)*		*(-.210)*	
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.106	.105	-.134	.105	-.141	.105
			(-.022)		*(-.028)*		*(-.029)*	
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.493***	.373	2.423***	.372	2.365***	.371
			(.146)		*(.142)*		*(.138)*	
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.418***	.117	.232	.127
					(.081)		*(.045)*	
Immigrant*Public sector							1.090***	.297
							(.099)	
R2	.010		.072		.078		.084	
F	19.054***		30.488***		27.686***		25.805***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

4.2.2 Geographical migration background

Table 3 consists of models 5, 6, 7, and 8. Western immigrant had a significant positive relation on the PFJ in model 1 and was even stronger when the controls were added in model 2 (B = .917, p <.001). Meaning that western immigrants indicate that their PFJ are higher than those of non-western immigrants. Therefore, support was found for hypothesis 2a (H2a) stating that non-western immigrants are more likely to have lower PFJ than western immigrants.

In model 8, the interaction for western immigrant was non-significant. Therefore, no support was found for hypothesis 2b (H2b) stating that the relation between western immigrants and the PFJ is higher in the public than the private sector compared to non-western immigrants.

Table 3

Hierarchical regression models 5, 6, 7,8 predicting PFJ

N=1975	Model 5		Model 6		Model 7		Model 8	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	6.536***	.164	5.694***	.422	5.645***	.421	5.546***	.426
Native (ref=non-western immigrant)	.973*** (.174)	.174	1.053*** (.173)	.171	1.043*** (.171)	.170	1.300* (.213)	.200
Western immigrant (ref=non-western immigrant)	.854** (.099)	.247	.917*** (.106)	.240	.935*** (.108)	.239	.822** (.095)	.277
Male (ref=female)			.213* (.044)	.104	.315** (.066)	.107	.310** (.065)	.107
Age			-.038*** (-.204)	.004	-.039*** (-.210)	.004	-.040*** (-.214)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.100 (-.021)	.105	-.128 (-.027)	.105	-.135 (-.028)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.443*** (.143)	.371	2.371*** (.139)	.371	2.312*** (.135)	.370
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.428*** (.083)	.117	1.131** (.218)	.358
Native*Public sector							-.895* (-.163)	377
Western immigrant*Public sector							.522 (.031)	.543
R2	.016		.079		.082		.088	
F	15.561***		28.023***		26.092***		22.122***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

4.2.3 Generational migration background

Table 4 represents models 9, 10, 11, and 12. Second-generation immigrant had a significant positive relation on the PFJ and remained significant when the controls were added (B = .963, p <.001). Meaning that second-generation immigrants indicate that their chances of getting a job are higher than the job chances first-generation immigrants indicate about themselves. Therefore, support was found for hypothesis 3a (H3a) stating that first-generation immigrants have less PFJ than second-generation immigrants.

In model 12, the interaction for second-generation immigrant was non-significant. Therefore, no support was found for hypothesis 3b (H3b) stating that the relation between second-generation immigrants and the PFJ is higher in the public than the private sector compared to first-generation immigrants.

Table 4

Hierarchical regression models 9, 10, 11, 12 predicting PFJ

N=1975	Model 9		Model 10		Model 11		Model 12	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	6.562***	.160	5.701***	.426	5.670***	.425	5.486***	.430
Native (ref=first-generation immigrant)	.947*** (.156)	.171	.963*** (.158)	.167	936*** (.154)	.166	1.259*** (207)	.191
Second-generation immigrant (ref=first-generation immigrant)	.847** (.095)	.249	.769** (.087)	.241	.745** (.084)	.241	.849** (.096)	.282
Male (ref=female)			.210* (.044)	.104	.307** (.064)	.107	.303** (.063)	.107
Age			-.037*** (-.198)	.004	-.038*** (-.204)	.004	-.039*** (-.207)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.103 (-.021)	.105	-.130 (-.027)	.105	-.142 (-.029)	.105
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.479*** (.145)	.372	2.412*** (.141)	.371	2.363*** (.138)	.370
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.408*** (.079)	.117	1.533*** (.296)	.385
Native*Public sector							-1.300** (-.238)	.385
Second-generation immigrant*Public sector							-.591 (-.037)	.543
R2	.015		.077		.082		.088	
F	15.367***		27.214***		25.200***		21.188***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

4.2.4 Control variables and the moderator

It is important to note that results should be taken with caution as the models explain a small amount of the variance. When the control variables are added the amount of variance explained rises but still explains a small amount. Within the different regression analyses, the control variables overall showed results in line with the literature. For instance, age had a significant negative relation with the PFJ in model 6 (B = -.038, p <.001). Indicating that the older someone gets the less PFJ they have. For gender, the results were mostly in line with the literature as well showing that men have higher PFJ than women. Country was added as a control variable as well to test whether PFJ would differ between the two countries. The control variable was, however, found non-significant.

It was also found that the moderator, macroeconomic sector, was significant, indicating that those who work or had ever worked in the public sector indicate that their chances of getting a job are higher than those in the private sector.

5. Conclusion and discussion

To date, research regarding ethnic inequalities has not considered the perceived fair chances of getting a job (PFJ). Moreover, it is unknown whether these inequalities vary between the public and private sectors (macroeconomic sectors). Therefore, this study aimed to assess the relation of migration background on PFJ and whether this is moderated by macroeconomic sector. To understand the current situation, human, social, cultural capital, discrimination theories and the neo-institutional theory were used. Using ESS-data, the analyses focused on all immigrant groups combined, first- and second-generation immigrants (both including western and non-western), and western and non-western (both including first- and second-generation) immigrants using the definition of migration background by Statistics Netherlands (n.d.-a).

We conclude that migration background affects the PFJ in the Netherlands and Germany as natives have higher PFJ than immigrants in general. This is in line with previous literature regarding ethnic inequalities in the labour market (e.g., Thijssen et al. 2021; Ahmad, 2019). A possible explanation for immigrants having lower PFJ might be due to their experience with discrimination in the labour market (Lindemann, 2020). Another possible explanation could be that immigrants compare their job chances to those of their native peers and feel worse off, perceiving that they have fewer equal opportunities (Verkuyten, 2016; Steinmann, 2019).

We also conclude that the relation between migration background and the PFJ is positively influenced by the public sector. Meaning that immigrants' PFJ are higher in the public than in the private sector. When comparing smaller immigrant groups to natives, we can only conclude this for non-western and first-generation immigrants. These results are in line with the Neo-institutional theory (Mezias, 1990; Beckert, 1999), which could possibly explain this mechanism. This theory claims that organisational outcomes are influenced by acts at the institutional environment level rather than just firm-level attributes (Mezias, 1990; Beckert, 1999). This might result in the outcome of formal and informal pressures placed on organisations by other organisations that depend on and are determined by cultural norms in the society in which they operate (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983). An example of this type of pressure, and a possible explanation for these findings, might be that L'Horty et al. (2022) state that the public sector is more aimed at equality. Another possible explanation could be as these immigrant groups might expect to be discriminated against more in the private sector and therefore might try to avoid it (Biddle, 2013).

We conclude higher PFJ for western than non-western immigrants. A possible explanation might be that they have higher education levels than non-western immigrants (Gries et al., 2021; Statistics Netherlands, 2023b). However, the literature states that immigrants with higher education levels may be more aware of and better understand societal inequities, such as discrimination and opportunity restrictions (Kane & Kyyrö, 2001; Wodtke, 2012). Therefore, this raises the question of whether educational disparities could be a possible explanation. Another possible explanation might be due to the ethnic hierarchy in the labour market stating that western immigrants are less frequently discriminated against than non-western immigrants (Thijssen et al., 2021; Koopmans et al., 2019).

We also conclude higher PFJ for second-generation than first-generation immigrants. A possible explanation for this might be due to the advantages second-generation immigrants have by growing up in the host country. This provides them with country-specific capital that has been shown to positively influence people's job chances such as work experience (Pandey & Townsend, 2017) and language (e.g., Pieroni et al., 2022; Dustmann and Fabbri 2003). Another possible explanation could be that second-generation immigrants have one parent who already has a native background. Literature has shown that parents' proficiency in the majority language could help their children regarding education (De Graaf et al., 2000). Moreover, tightness in the labour market has been an issue for years (Statistics Netherlands, n.d.-d). As Blommaert et al. (2013) stated, discrimination is more likely to occur when the demand for labour is low. So, a possible explanation for second-generation immigrants having higher PFJ than first-generation immigrants could be as there might occur a reverse effect for second-generation immigrants regarding their country-specific advantages compared to first-generation immigrants and the labour market demand.

It is important to note that the differences in mean scores for the PFJ among various immigrant groups do not exceed approximately one point on a ten-point scale, which can be considered relatively minor. Nonetheless, this study highlights the persistent existence of ethnic inequalities in the labour market, as it demonstrates significant differences in PFJ between immigrants and natives, as well as among different immigrant groups. Furthermore, these disparities vary between the public and private sectors for particular immigrant groups.

This research contributes to the body of literature as we did not just measure perceived discrimination. Veenman (2010) states, "victim" research – which is frequently used for measuring discrimination – cannot give information about the determinants of why people feel discriminated and cannot measure actual discrimination. We measured PFJ in general.

The strength of this is that it gives information about the way people view their chances of getting a job. This is a new way of measuring job chances and therefore inequalities in the labour market.

Moreover, this research contributes to the theory by suggesting that context regarding macroeconomic sector does matter for some immigrant groups. This is in line with Blommaert et al. (2013) suggesting that contextual factors could be important for immigrants' job chances.

We combined the measures of PFJ and macroeconomic sector. Therefore, we gathered information about immigrants' perception of the labour market including the public and private sectors. Biddle (2013) already stated people tend to avoid sectors where they expect to be discriminated against. This research indicates immigrants' behaviour within the institutional context of the public and private sectors in the labour market.

However, this research does not go without limitations. It is hard to measure the underlying mechanism for inequalities (Veenman, 2010). Thus, even if the data was perfect, still no theories about job chances for immigrants could explicitly be tested.

Additionally, the question that was used for the dependent variable included asking about a perceived fair chance to get a job they seek. For example, a job that matches their education level. Not specifically getting a job in general. Therefore, it is uncertain whether respondents' scores indicate their general perceived job prospects or their chances of obtaining the one they desire. Thus, future research should consider not including "getting a job they seek" in their measurements. However, this study still contributes to the theory as it could predict the choices immigrants make when they are looking for a job.

Furthermore, the different immigrant groups in the sample were not big enough to make a further distinction between immigrants or countries. This would make the number of immigrants within different groups too small to draw valid conclusions. However, not enough immigrants being included could be explained as they are known to be a hard-to-reach population for research (Muhib et al., 2001; UyBico et al., 2007). This research has shown the results of the PFJ differ between both generational and geographical immigrant groups. This could suggest that there are differences within smaller groups as well, such as first- or second-generation western or non-western immigrants. Finally, Thijssen et al. (2021) found that ethnic discrimination in the labour market was less likely to occur in Germany than in the Netherlands. Thus, it might be that results differ between these groups of immigrants between these countries. However, this study still contributes to the theory regarding PFJ in the context

of these Northern European nations.

Therefore, future research could contribute to the theory by examining whether the results differ between the distinctions mentioned. As mentioned, this study showed institutional context is important for some immigrant groups regarding the macroeconomic sector. Thus, further research should focus on whether the influence of the institutional environment also applies to smaller sectors within the public and private sectors, such as the healthcare or the tech sector. But first, researchers should find a method to reach a larger amount of immigrants for research.

<center>**6. Policy advice**</center>

The Dutch and German governments have already made efforts to improve employment opportunities for immigrants, especially in times of labour shortages, focusing on addressing discrimination and enhancing elements like human capital (Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment [SZW], 2022; The Federal Government, 2016). The literature has shown that this increases immigrants' job chances (Mergener & Maier, 2018).

However, this study demonstrates the continuing existence of ethnic disparities and highlights the importance of the institutional context. Therefore, two recommendations are provided to address ethnic inequalities in the labour market.

6.1 Creating awareness

First, it is important to emphasise the need for awareness among employers about ethnic inequalities. The Dutch government is, for instance, already addressing this by creating modules for HR study programmes to mitigate biased recruitment processes (SZW, 2022). However, it is crucial to recognise the difficulties creating awareness will present. Training programmes for unconscious bias are commonly proven to be ineffective and occasionally even damaging (Duguid & Thomas-Hunt, 2015; Kalev et al., 2006). Nonetheless, promoting a diverse workforce is important, particularly in light of the current labour market shortages (SER, 2022). Ethnically diverse workforces have been shown to improve company quality and outcomes (Gomez & Bernet, 2019; Lorenzo et al., 2017; LaVeist & Pierre, 2014; McKay et al., 2008; Crisp & Turner, 2011; Miller & Triana, 2009; Erhardt et al., 2003). Thus, employers must acknowledge the valuable contributions and skills immigrants bring and contribute to filling staff shortages. Meaning employers must actively seek to create an inclusive and equitable work environment.

To encourage workplace diversity, the countries' governments have both implemented programmes like the "Diversity Charter" (Charter der Vielfalt, n.d.; SER, n.d.). Companies can participate by signing up and actively supporting inclusion and diversity within their workplaces. EY (2016) evaluated the effectiveness of the German Diversity Charter, supported by the ministry. They found that the majority of the participating firms incorporated cultural appreciation and respect into organisational values, practised by both management and staff. Therefore, awareness campaigns are needed to raise consciousness to foster diverse workplaces and include more companies in the Diversity Charter. Awareness campaigns, such as for people with a disability, have been shown to be effective in positively influencing

attitudes regarding inclusion (Bonan et al., 2014). By collaborating with important stakeholders like the Netherlands Institute for Social Research and immigrant citizens, SZW could raise awareness through various channels. For instance, using social networking and frequent broadcast advertising to show the benefits of a diverse workforce and promote the Diversity Charter.

6.2 Stimulating multi-helix collaboration

Second, this research has shown that the majority of immigrant groups indicate that their prospects of finding employment are higher in the public than in the private sector compared to natives. Therefore, governments should encourage multi-helix collaboration to address ethnic inequalities in the labour market. Meaning cooperation between the public and private sectors, advocacy groups, educational institutions, and citizens with a migration background must be stimulated.

It has been established that encouraging interaction among various groups helps lessen bias (Kalev et al., 2006). This is because all parties must actively collaborate as equals towards a common goal for it to be effective (Kalev et al., 2006). Here, the collaborating parties share the objective of addressing labour shortages, boost organisational productivity, and give immigrants more equal opportunities to get work experience. Engaging within this collaboration might pose obstacles since it is impracticable to include all existing enterprises and only rely on nationwide efforts. Consequently, it is necessary to secure the involvement of representatives from different groups, including SMEs, and establish regional alliances. The value of multi-helix collaborations in addressing societal issues, such as housing shortages, is already evident in the Brainport region (Midpoint Brabant, 2023). These existing collaborations offer opportunities to include addressing societal issues, such as ethnic inequalities in the labour market across several industries and create similar partnerships in other regions.

SZWs' and regional governments' HR departments should host gatherings for the mentioned stakeholders. To develop a labour market that provides more equal possibilities for immigrants, this collaboration must attempt to use the talents and knowledge of these various stakeholders. The focus of these gatherings, which will take place twice a year, will be on sharing best practices and exchange programmes.

Through knowledge-sharing, stakeholders can collaborate on promoting effective equality policies and initiatives for immigrants in the labour market. General best practices for organisations are already being shared in a variety of ways. For instance, the HRtop100 in the

Netherlands brings together HR professionals from different companies to collaborate. This collaboration strives to share knowledge and inspire one another in order to jointly innovate HR practices (HRtop100, 2022). Developing relationships and working together with other organisations enables the acquisition of new insights and ideas, which improves the outcomes of innovation (Wang & Zhang, 2009). Consequently, knowledge-sharing has been shown to improve organisational success, reducing costs and fostering growth (Ali et al., 2019; Mariotti, 2012).

Creating organised exchange programmes between the public and private sectors can improve immigrants' work experience opportunities. Country-specific work experience has been shown to improve immigrants' job prospects (Edgerton et al., 2012). Previous exchange programmes, such as those in healthcare where nurses were switched between hospitals have proven to be effective (Bryne et al., 2020). The programmes showed to improve nurses' clinical and professional growth by raising their understanding of various practice contexts and skill requirements (Bryne et al., 2020). Active participation from stakeholders can smoother transitions across public and private sectors and create a better understanding of diverse labour market contexts, thereby increasing immigrants' work experience opportunities.

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Appendix A: Questions used for analyses

Table 5

Questions from ESS-data used for analyses.

Question (or variable if question was not available)	Number linked to category	Category
To what extent do you think this statement applies to you? Imagine you were looking for a job today. To what extent do you think this statement would apply to you? Compared to other people in [country], I would have a fair chance of getting the job I was seeking.	00	Does not apply at al
	01	
	02	
	03	
	04	
	05	
	06	
	07	
	08	
	09	
	10	Applies completely
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know

Country		Type in
Were you born in [country]?	1	Yes
	2	No
	7	Refusal
	8	Don't know
Was your father born in [country]?	1	Yes
	2	No
	7	Refusal
	8	Don't know
Was your mother born in [country]?	1	Yes
	2	No
	7	Refusal
	8	Don't know
In which country were you born?		Type in
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know
In which country was your father born?		Type in
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know

In which country was your father born?		Type in
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know

Which of the types of organisation on this card do/did you work for?	01	Central or local government
	02	Other public sector (such as education and health)
	03	A state-owned enterprise
	04	A private firm
	05	Self-employed
	06	Other
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know

Sex respondent	01	Male
	02	Female
	09	No answer

Age calculated from Year born		Type in
	999	Not available

Using this card, which of these descriptions applies to what you have been doing for the last 7 days?	01	In paid work (or away temporarily) (employee, self-employed, working for your family business)

	02	In education, (not paid for by employer) even if on vacation
	03	Unemployed and actively looking for a job
	04	Unemployed, wanting a job but not actively looking for a job
	05	Permanently sick or disabled
	06	Retired
	07	In community or military service
	08	Doing housework, looking after children or other persons
	09	Other
	77	Refusal
	88	Don't know
What is the highest level of education you have successfully completed?	000	not completed ISCED level 1
	113	ISCED 1, completed primary education
	129	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C programmes of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED 3

221	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2C programmes of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED 3
222	Qualification from vocational ISCED 2A/2B programmes, access to ISCED 3 vocational
223	Qualification from a vocational ISCED 2 programme giving access to ISCED 3 (general or all)
212	Qualification from general/pre-vocational ISCED 2A/2B programmes, access to ISCED 3 vocational
213	Qualification from general ISCED 2A programmes, access to ISCED 3A general or all 3
229	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programmes of duration shorter than 2 years, no access to ISCED level 5
321	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3C programmes of 2 years or

	longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5
322	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programmes, access to 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
323	Qualification from vocational ISCED 3A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
311	Qualification from general ISCED 3 programmes of 2 years or longer duration, no access to ISCED level 5 institutions
312	Qualification from general ISCED 3A/3B programmes, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
313	Qualification from general ISCED 3A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
421	Qualification from ISCED 4 programmes without access to ISCED level 5
422	Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A/4B programmes, access to

	ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
423	Qualification from vocational ISCED 4A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A or all ISCED level 5 institutions
412	Qualification from general ISCED 4A/4B programmes, access to ISCED 5B/lower tier 5A institutions
413	Qualification from general ISCED 4A programmes, access to upper tier ISCED 5A/all ISCED level 5 institutions
520	ISCED 5B programmes of short duration, advanced vocational qualifications ISCED 5B programmes of short duration, advanced vocational qualifications
510	ISCED 5A programmes of short duration, intermediate certificate or academic/general tertiary qualification below the bachelor's level
610	ISCED 5A programmes of medium duration, qualifications at the

	bachelor's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution
620	ISCED 5A programmes of medium duration, qualifications at the bachelor's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution
710	ISCED 5A programmes of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from a lower tier tertiary institution
720	ISCED 5A programmes of long cumulative duration, qualifications at the master's level or equivalent from an upper/single tier tertiary institution
800	ISCED 6, doctoral degree
5555	Other
7777	Refusal
8888	Don't know

Note. The question was different for respondents living in the Netherlands and Germany as in the Netherlands the value for "[country]" was filled in as "the Netherlands" and in Germany, this value was filled in as "Germany".

Appendix C: Regression analyses comparing different immigrant groups to natives

Table 6

Hierarchical regression models 13, 14, 15, 16, predicting PFJ

N=1975	Model 13		Model 14		Model 15		Model 16	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.509***	.059	6.747***	.417	6.688***	.416	6.845***	.417
Western immigrant (ref=native)	-.119 (-.014)	.194	-.136 (-.016)	.188	-.108 (-.013)	.188	-.478* (-.055)	.217
Non-western immigrant (ref=native)	-.973*** (-.125)	.174	-1.053*** (-.136)	.171	-1.043*** (-.134)	.170	-1.300** (-.167)	.200
Male (ref=female)			.213* (.044)	.104	.315** (.066)	.107	.310** (.065)	.107
Age			-.038*** (-.204)	.004	-.039*** (-.210)	.004	-.040*** (-.214)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.100 (-.021)	.105	-.128 (-.027)	.105	-.135 (-.028)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.443*** (.143)	.371	2.371*** (.139)	.371	2.312*** (.135)	.370
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.428*** (.083)	.117	.236 (.046)	.127
Western immigrant*Public sector							1.417** (.085)	.428
Non-western immigrant*Public sector							.895* (.062)	.377
R2	.016		.079		.085		.092	
F	15.561***		28.023***		26.092***		22.122***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Table 7

Hierarchical regression models 17, 18, 19, 20 predicting PFJ

N=1975	Model 17		Model 18		Model 19		Model 20	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.509***	.059	6.663***	.417	6.606***	.416	6.746***	.417
First-generation immigrant (ref=native)	-.947*** (-.125)	.171	-.963*** (-.127)	.167	-.936*** (-.123)	.166	-1.259*** (-.166)	.191
Second-generation immigrant (ref=native)	-.100 (-.011)	.199	-.194 (-.022)	.195	-.191 (-.022)	.194	-.411 (-.046)	.232
Male (ref=female)			.210* (.044)	.104	.307** (.064)	.107	.303** (.063)	.107
Age			-.037*** (-.198)	.004	-.038*** (-.204)	.004	-.039*** (-.207)	.004
Netherlands[a]			-.103 (-.021)	.105	-.130 (-.027)	.105	-.142 (-.029)	.105
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.479*** (.145)	.372	2.412*** (.141)	.371	2.363*** (.138)	.370
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.408*** (.079)	.117	.233 (.045)	.127
First-generation immigrant*Macroeconomic sector							1.300** (.087)	.385
Second-generation immigrant*Macroeconomic sector							.709 (.045)	.420
R^2	.015		.077		.082		.088	
F	15.367***		27.214***		25.200***		21.188***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

To see what would have happened to the relation between migration background and PFJ if education was added as a control variable, robustness analyses were performed[3].

Measurements

Control variable

A control variable was made for education to see what would happened to the results if this variable was included. The variable for education was computed with (0) low-educated, (1) medium-educated, and (3) high-educated. Low-educated was used as the reference group in the analyses. The control variable was generated from the variable "Highest level of education". To ensure validity, the categorisation of respondents' answers into the categories "low-educated" "medium-educated" and "high-educated" were based on the definitions of Statistics Netherlands (2011).

As a new control variable was added to the analyses a filter was applied to make sure all participants within the sample answered all the questions that were used in the analyses. Therefore, the analyses including the control variable for education had a sample of 1877 respondents. 1534 of them were marked as native and 343 of them were marked as immigrants. 185 of them had a western background and 158 had a non-western migration background. These 343 immigrants consisted of 199 first-generation immigrants and 144 second-generation immigrants.

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[3] The assumptions were checked before performing the robustness analyses.

Appendix E: Tables robustness analyses

Descriptive Results

Table 8

Descriptive Results robustness analyses

	N	Min	Max	Mean	S.D.
Perceived fair chance of getting a job (10=applies completely)	1877	0	10	7.50	2.31
Native				7.60	2.22
Immigrant				7.05	2.67
Western immigrant				7.53	2.34
Non-western immigrant				6.65	2.86
First-generation immigrant				6.74	2.81
Second-generation immigrant				7.47	2.41
Immigrant (ref=native)	1877	0	1	.18	
Western immigrant (ref=native)	1877	0	1	.08	
Non-western immigrant (ref=native)	1877	0	1	.10	
First-generation immigrant (ref=native)	1877	0	1	.11	
Second-generation immigrant (ref=native)	1877	0	1	.08	
Gender (1=male)	1877	0	1	.55	
Age	1877	16	74	44.63	12.67

Country (1=Netherlands)	1877	0	1	.41
Employment status (1=employed)	1877	0	1	.98
Medium-educated (ref=low-educated)	1877	0	1	.47
High-educated (ref=low-educated)	1877	0	1	.49
Macroeconomic sector (1=public sector)	1877	0	1	.31

Note. [a]Reference category Country (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Hypotheses testing

Generational migration background

Table 9

Hierarchical regression robustness analyses model 21, 22, 23, 24 predicting PFJ

N=1877	Model 21		Model 22		Model 23		Model 24	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.598***	.059	5.707***	.468	5.695***	.468	5.902***	.469
Immigrant (ref=natives)	-.552***	.138	-.526***	.133	-.520***	.132	-.835***	.156
	(-.092)		*(-.088)*		*(-.087)*		*(-.139)*	
Male (ref=female)			.195	.195	.243*	.106	.239*	.105
			(.042)		*(.052)*		*(.051)*	
Age			-.038***	.004	-.039***	.004	-.040***	.004
			(-.210)		*(-.213)*		*(-.217)*	
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.057	.104	-.070	.105	-.079	.104
			(-.012)		*(-.015)*		*(-.017)*	
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.344***	.389	2.311***	.389	2.243***	.388
			(.133)		*(.131)*		*(.127)*	
Medium-education (ref=low-educated)			.903***	.253	.900***	.253	.856**	.253
			(.195)		*(.194)*		*(.184)*	
High-education (ref=low-educated)			1.619***	.252	1.590***	.253	1.550***	.252
			(.350)		*(.253)*		*(.127)*	
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.195	.115	.011	.125
					(.039)		*(.002)*	
Immigrant*Public sector							1.098***	.291
							(.099)	
R2	.008		.106		.107		.114	
F	16.064***		31.688***		28.112***		26.744***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Table 10

Hierarchical robustness analyses regression model 25, 26, 27, 28 predicting PFJ

N=1877	Model 25		Model 26		Model 27		Model 28	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.598***	.059	5.763***	.466	5.750***	.466	5.957***	.468
Western immigrant (ref=native)	-.066 (-.008)	.194	-.011 (-.001)	.186	-.001 (-.000)	.186	-.377 (-.045)	.216
Non-western immigrant (ref=native)	-.948*** (-.123)	.177	-.949*** (-.123)	.170	-.946*** (-.123)	.170	-1.227*** (-.160)	.201
Male (ref=female)			.202* (.043)	.102	.252* (.054)	.105	.248* (.053)	.105
Age			-.039*** (-.213)	.004	-.039*** (-.216)	.004	-.040*** (-.220)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.055 (-.012)	.104	-.069 (-.015)	.104	-.076 (-.016)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.340*** (.133)	.387	2.306*** (.131)	.388	2.236*** (.127)	.387
Medium-education			.866** (.187)	.253	.862** (.186)	.252	.821** (.177)	.252
High-education			1.588*** (.343)	.251	1.557*** (.336)	.252	1.521*** (.329)	.251
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.204 (.041)	.115	.014 (.003)	.124
Western immigrant*Public sector							1.390** (.087)	.417
Non-western immigrant*Public sector							.936* (.068)	.371
R2	.015		.113		.115		.123	
F	14.327***		29.892***		26.950***		23.670***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Table 11

Hierarchical regression robustness analyses model 29, 30, 31, 32 predicting PFJ

N=1877	Model 29		Model 30		Model 31		Model 32	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	7.598***	.059	5.729***	.467	5.717***	.467	5.920***	.496
First-generation immigrant (ref=native)	-.855*** (-.114)	.173	-.769*** (-.102)	.166	-.759*** (-.101)	.166	-1.098*** (-.146)	.192
Second-generation immigrant (ref=native)	-.133 (-.015)	.201	-.189 (-.022)	.192	-.191 (-.022)	.192	-.431 (-.052)	.232
Male (ref=female)			.200 (.043)	.102	.245* (.053)	.106	.243* (.052)	.105
Age			-.038*** (-.209)	.004	-.039*** (-.211)	.004	-.039*** (-.215)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.054 (-.011)	.104	-.067 (-.014)	.105	-.080 (-.017)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.329*** (.132)	.388	2.298*** (.131)	.389	2.232*** (.127)	.388
Medium-education			.881** (.190)	.253	.878** (.189)	.253	.830** (.179)	.253
High-education			1.594*** (.344)	.252	1.566*** (.338)	.253	1.524*** (.329)	.252
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.187 (.037)	.115	.013 (.003)	.125
Native*Public sector							1.323** (.090)	.382
Second-generation immigrant*Public sector							.734 (.049)	.409
R2	.013		.109		.110		.117	
F	12.172***		28.529***		25.672***		22.430***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Table 12

Hierarchical robustness analyses regression model 33, 34, 35, 36 predicting PFJ

N=1877	Model 33		Model 34		Model 35		Model 36	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	6.651***	.167	4.814***	.472	4.804***	.471	4.730***	.474
Native (ref=non-western immigrant)	.948 (.158)	.177	949*** (.158)	.170	.946*** (.158)	.170	1.227*** (.205)	.201
Western immigrant (ref=non-western immigrant)	.882*** (.105)	.249	.937*** (.111)	.237	.945*** (.112)	.237	850** (.101)	.277
Male (ref=female)			.202* (.043)	.102	.252* (.054)	.105	.248* (.053)	.105
Age			-.039*** (-.213)	.004	-.039*** (-.216)	.004	-.040*** (-.220)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.055 (-.012)	.104	-.069 (-.015)	.104	-.076 (-.016)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.340*** (.133)	.387	2.306*** (.131)	.388	2.236*** (.127)	.387
Medium-education			.866** (.187)	.253	.862** (.186)	.252	.821** (.177)	.252
High-education			1.588*** (.343)	.251	1.557*** (.336)	.252	1.521*** (.329)	.251
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.204 (.041)	.115	.950* (.190)	.354
Native*Public sector							-.936* (-.178)	.371
Western immigrant*Public sector							.454 (.028)	.532
R2	.015		.113		.115		.123	
F	14.327***		29.892***		26.950***		23.670***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)

Table 13

Hierarchical regression robustness analyses model 37, 38, 39, 40 predicting PFJ

N=1877	Model 37		Model 38		Model 39		Model 40	
	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE	B	SE
Constant	6.744***	.163	4.960***	.473	4.958***	.472	4.822***	.474
Native (ref=first-generation immigrant)	.855*** (.143)	.173	.769*** (.129)	.166	.759*** (.127)	.166	1.098*** (.183)	.192
Second-generation immigrant (ref= first-generation immigrant)	.722** (.083)	.252	.580* (.067)	.240	.568* (.065)	.240	.667* (.077)	.283
Male (ref=female)			.200 (.043)	.102	.245* (.053)	.106	.243* (.052)	.105
Age			-.038*** (-.209)	.004	-.039*** (-.211)	.004	-.039*** (-.215)	.004
Country[a] (1=Netherlands)			-.054 (-.011)	.104	-.067 (-.014)	.105	-.080 (-.017)	.104
Employed (ref=unemployed)			2.329*** (.132)	.388	2.298*** (.131)	.389	2.232*** (.127)	.388
Medium-education			.881** (.190)	.253	.878** (.189)	.253	.830** (.179)	.253
High-education			1.594*** (.344)	.252	1.566*** (.338)	.253	1.524*** (.329)	.252
Public sector (ref=private sector)					.187 (.037)	.115	1.336*** (.267)	.366
Native*Public sector							-1.323** (-.251)	.382
Second-generation immigrant*Public sector							-.589 (-.039)	.532
R2	.013		.109		.110		.117	
F	12.172***		28.529***		25.672***		22.430***	

Note. Dependent Variable: PFJ

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

[a]Reference category Netherlands (1=Netherlands and 0=Germany)