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How emotional are extremists?

The connection of discrimination, anger and political violence

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Background and research focus

- Rising prevalence of discrimination experiences, esp. in connection with higher migration rates
- Feelings of being treated unfairly in society → „Wutbürger“ (angry citizens)

Research focus

- Role of negative experiences for negative emotions
- Need for coping strategies to deal with emotions → Political violence?

Project background & database

- MOTRA (Monitoring System and Transfer Platform Radicalization)
 - German research consortium funded by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research and the Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community.
 - <https://www.motra.info/>
- The surveys “People in Germany” (*Menschen in Deutschland*)
 - Representative population surveys conducted by the University of Hamburg
 - Focus: subjective evaluations of the social and political situation in Germany, political attitudes and perceptions of intolerance, discrimination and political extremism in the social environment people live in.
 - <https://www.mid.uni-hamburg.de/en/startseite.html>

MiD

Menschen in Deutschland

JuMiD

Junge Menschen in Deutschland

MiDInt

Menschen in Deutschland: International

motra

Monitoringsystem und Transferplattform Radikalisierung

Gefördert vom



Bundesministerium
für Bildung
und Forschung

Bundesministerium
des Innern
und für Heimat

Project background & database

- Database
 - 2nd wave of MiD (spring 2022)
 - Data collection between 29th March and 4th July 2022
 - Representative sample of the adult population living in Germany of 18 years and older
 - N = 4 319; analysis sample of n = 3 936

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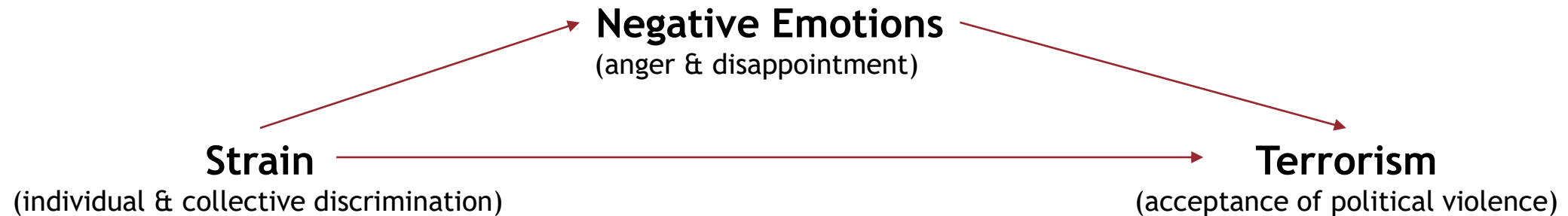
Theoretical Background: General Strain Theory (of Terrorism)

- “[T]he GSTT [“general strain theory of terrorism”] states that **terrorism** is more likely when individuals experience “**collective strains**” [...]. These collective strains increase the likelihood of terrorism because they increase **negative emotions**.” (Agnew 2017, pp. 121-122)



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Operationalization: Individual Discrimination

“These strains include absolute and relative material deprivation;
[...] the problems encountered by certain immigrant groups, including Muslims in Western countries;
[...] a range of human rights violations, including the denial of civil and political rights;
[...]religious and ethnic discrimination; [...].”(Agnew 2017, p. 124)

How often in the last 12 months have you personally felt discriminated against for one or more of the reasons stated below?

	never	rarely	some- times	often	mean	sd	n
Skin colour	92.7	4.2	2.1	1.0	0.11	0.45	4 299
Nationality / Ethnicity	81.7	10.1	5.8	2.4	0.29	0.68	4 298
Religion	87.5	7.5	3.5	1.5	0.19	0.56	4 288

Operationalization: Marginalization

“These strains include absolute and relative material deprivation;
[...] the problems encountered by certain immigrant groups, including Muslims in Western countries;
[...] a range of human rights violations, including the denial of civil and political rights;
[...]religious and ethnic discrimination; [...].”(Agnew 2017, p. 124)

Being disadvantaged can also show itself in different ways. How much do you agree with the following statements? Where we live, people like me are ...

	strongly disagree	somewhat disagree	somewhat agree	completely agree	mean	sd	n
not acknowledged for achievements	24.1	36.4	31.3	8.2	2.23	0.91	4 283
not valued much by others	28.4	36.4	29.6	5.6	2.13	0.89	4 268
not taken seriously by politicians	21.0	30.4	32.2	16.3	2.44	1.00	4 254
treated unfairly by the police	50.5	34.7	9.9	4.9	1.69	0.84	4 282

Operationalization: Negative Emotions

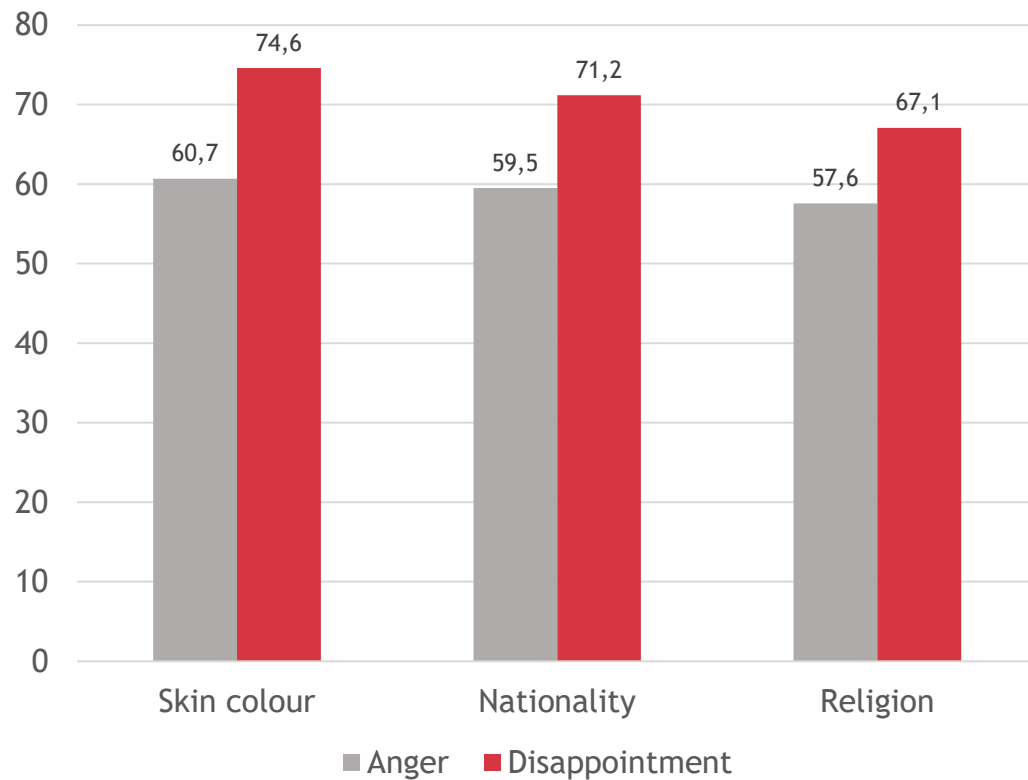
“These collective strains, [...] lead to strong negative emotions that are conducive to terrorism, including anger, frustration, envy, humiliation, and hopelessness.”(Agnew 2017, p. 127)

Please think about how you feel when you are disadvantaged or treated unfairly. In connection with that, how often in the last 12 months have you experienced the following feelings?

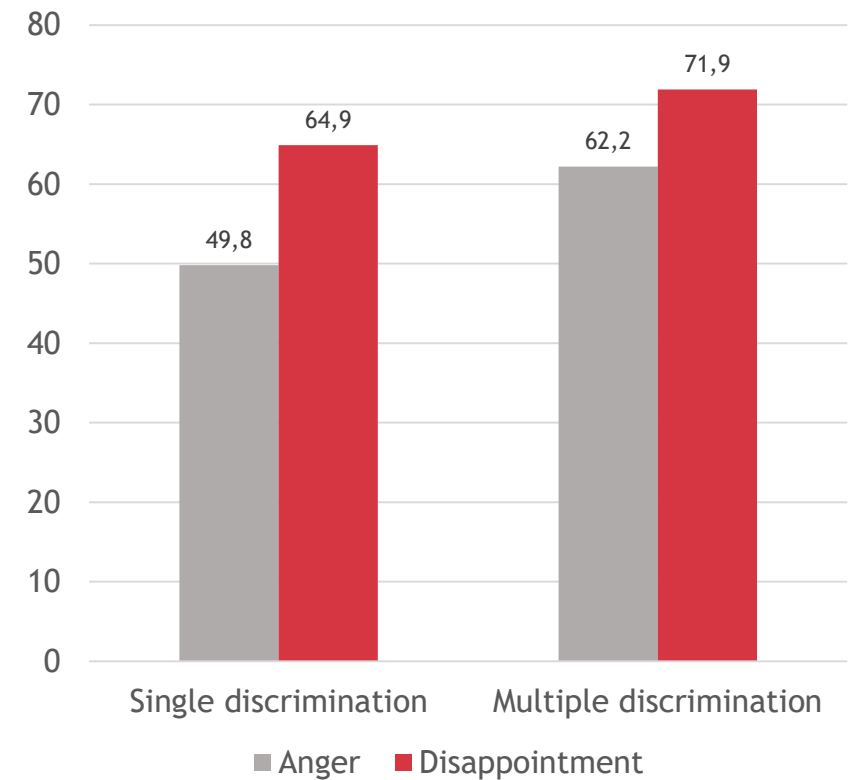
	never	rarely	some- times	often	mean	sd	n
Disappointment	23.5	29.6	32.8	14.1	1.4	0.99	4 279
Anger	34.4	27.1	26.8	11.7	1.16	1.03	4 268

Descriptive Results: Individual discrimination and negative emotions

Prevalence of negative emotions due to discrimination in %

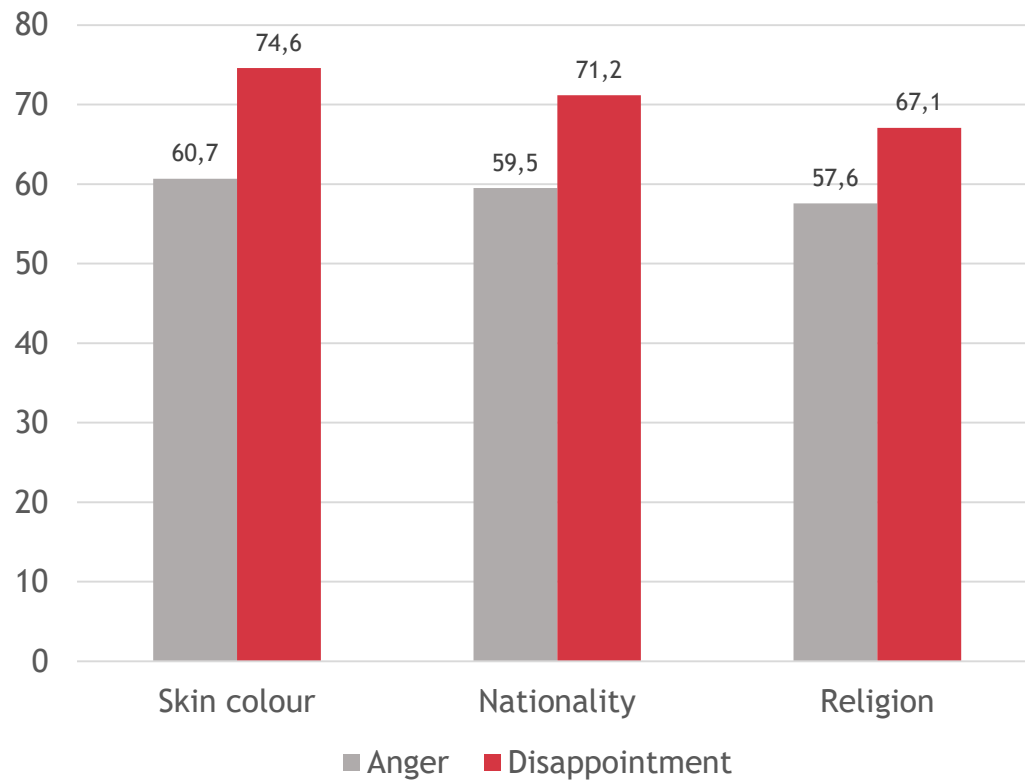


Prevalence of negative emotions due to discrimination in %

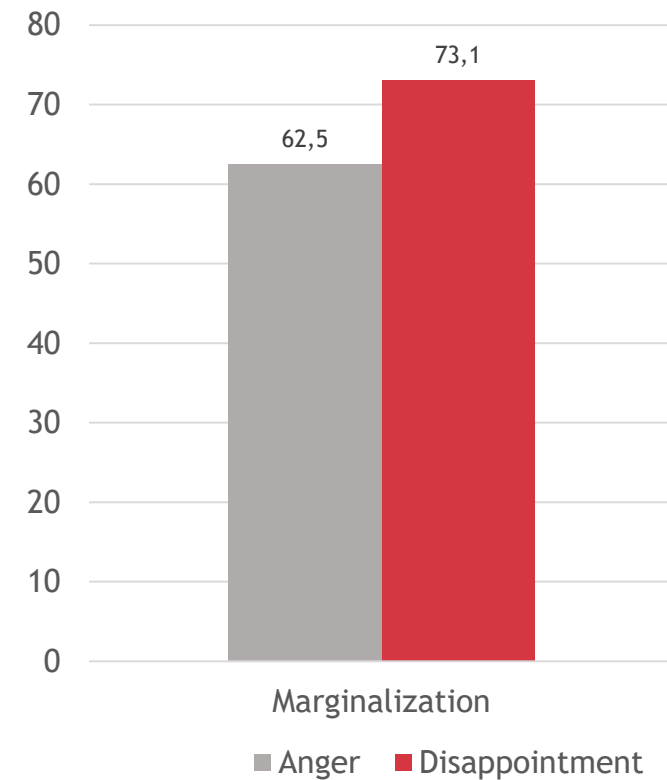


Descriptive Results: Individual discrimination and negative emotions

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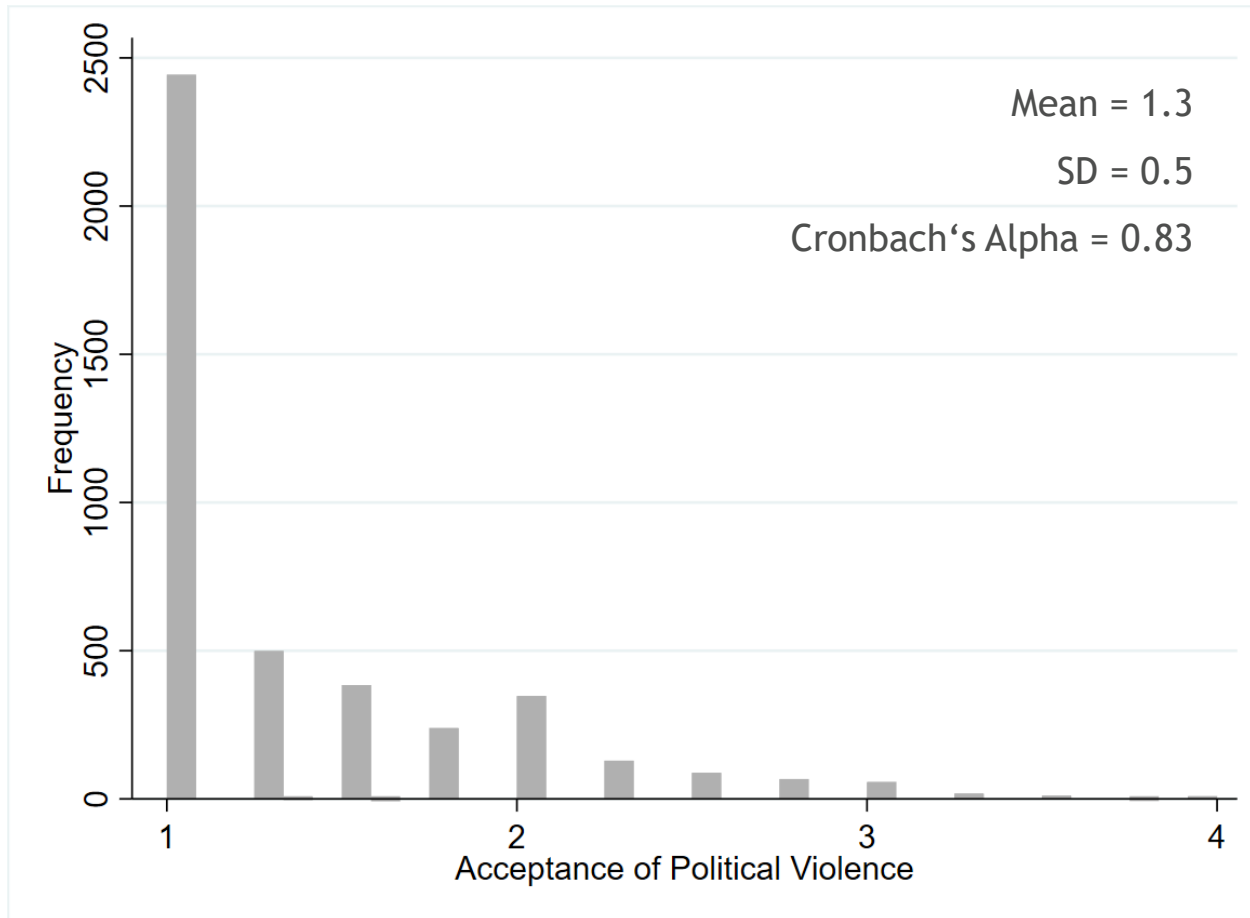
Prevalence of negative emotions due to marginalization in %



Operationalization: Acceptance of political violence

Statement	strongly disagree	sonewhat disagree	somewhat agree	completely agree	mean	sd	n
Every democratic society has certain conflicts that have to be dealt with through violence.	76.5	18.7	3.6	1.2	1.30	0.60	4 296
The changes needed in this society can only be achieved through violent revolution.	82.1	14.3	2.7	0.9	1.22	0.53	4 291
Sometimes you have to fight the representatives of the system using violence.	73.6	18.8	5.8	1.8	1.36	0.67	4 289
Even in a democracy, it is sometimes necessary to use violence to achieve one's political goals.	79.0	15.8	4.1	1.1	1.27	0.59	4 289

Prevalence of acceptance of political violence



Rejection of violence: 88.0 %

Openness for violence: 9.3%

Adherence to violence: 2.7%

Methods

- Generalized Structural Equation Modeling
 - DV: Acceptance of political violence (0/1)
 - IVs: Standardized scales on discrimination and marginalization
 - Mediators: Anger & disappointment
- Reporting of b-coefficients for comparability
- Controls: Age, gender, education, migration background, religion
 - Data are weighted

Results of mediation analyses

Notes

- *Control variables (not shown): age, gender, educational level, migration background, religious affiliation*
- *Weighted data are used*

Discrimination $\xrightarrow{c = 0.34^{***}}$ Pol. violence

Statistics

- $N = 3\,936$
- $Pseudo R^2 = 0.08$

Marginalization $\xrightarrow{c = 0.62^{***}}$ Pol. violence

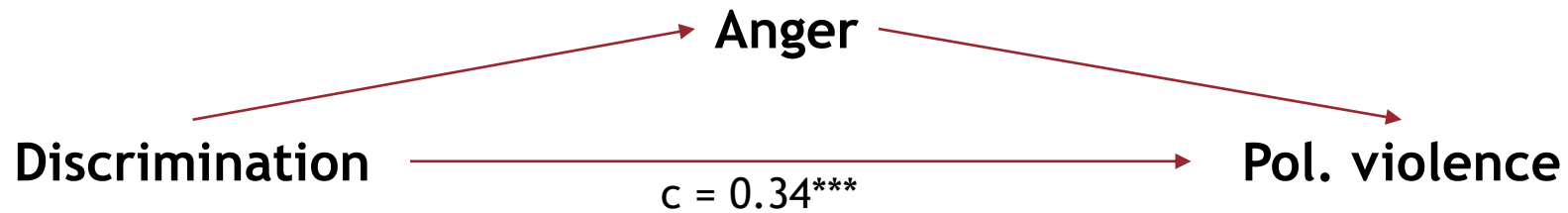
Statistics

- $N = 3\,936$
- $Pseudo R^2 = 0.12$

Results of mediation analyses

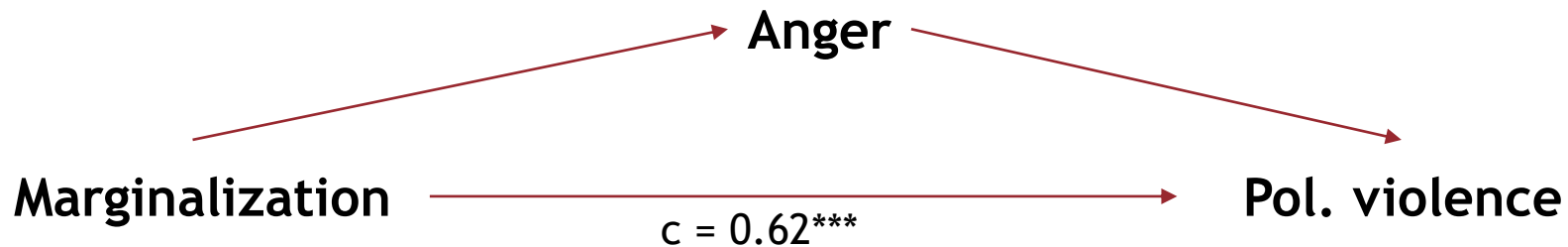
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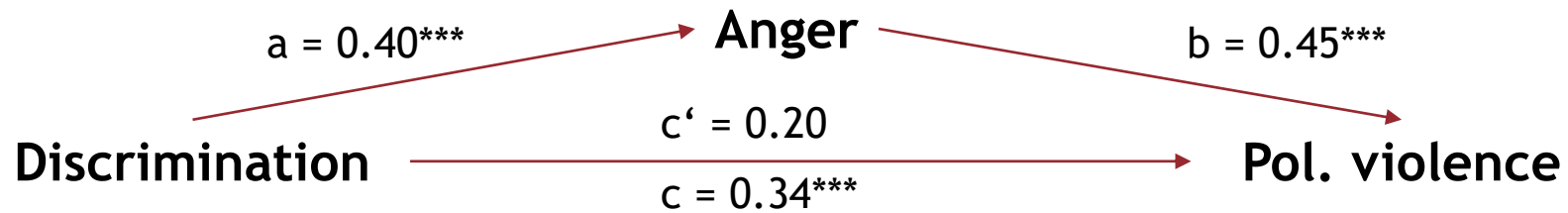
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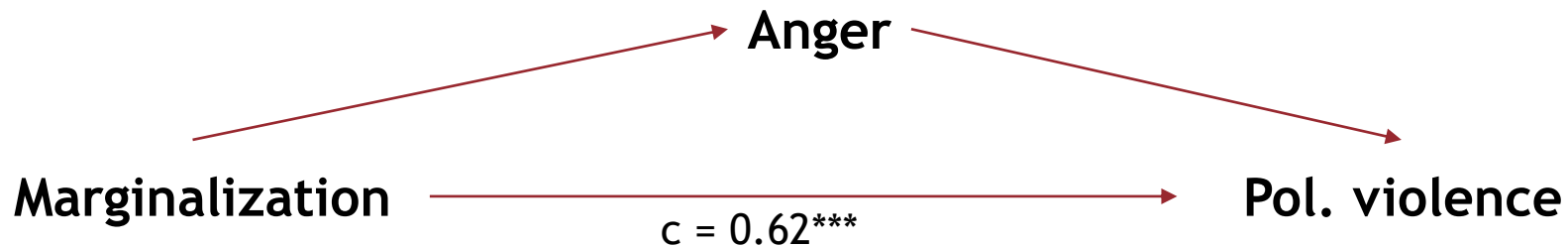
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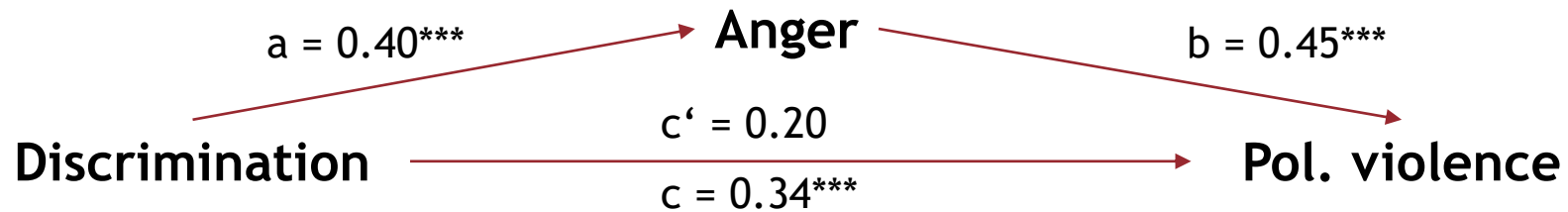
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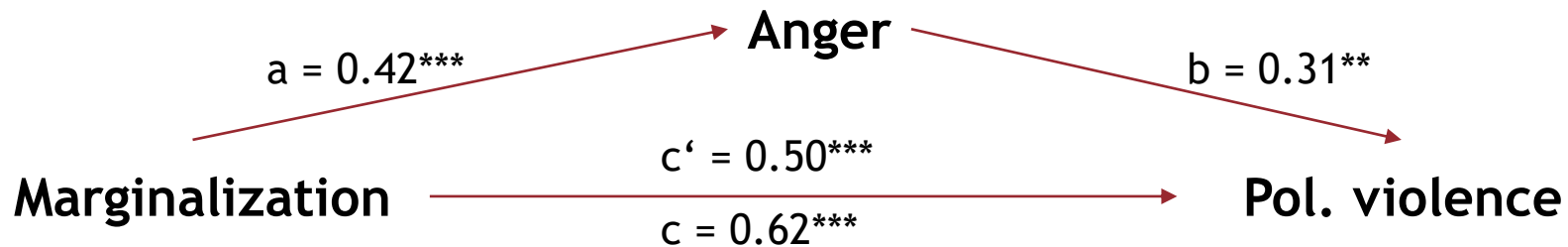
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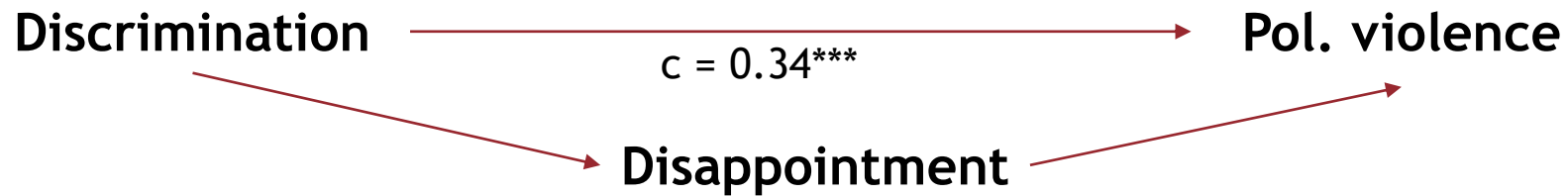
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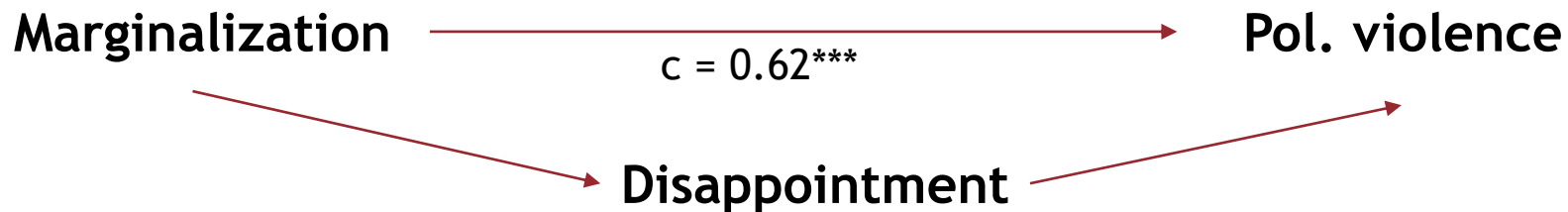
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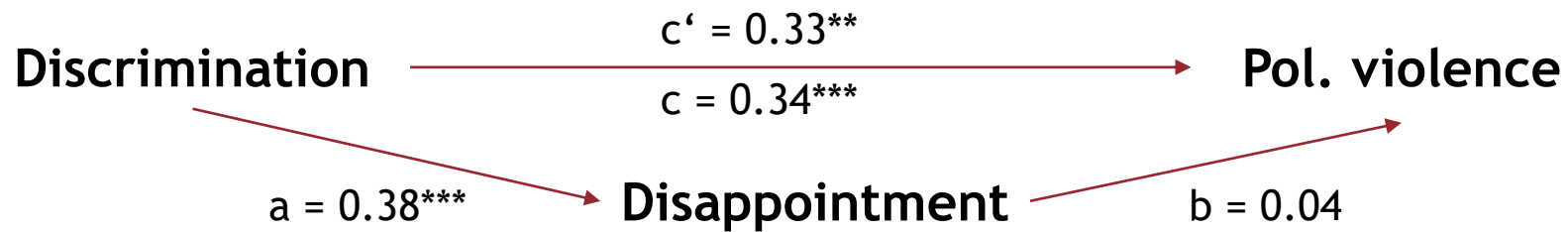
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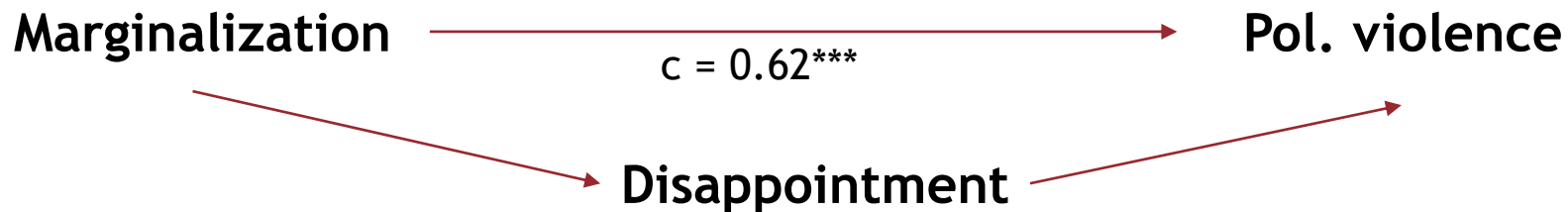
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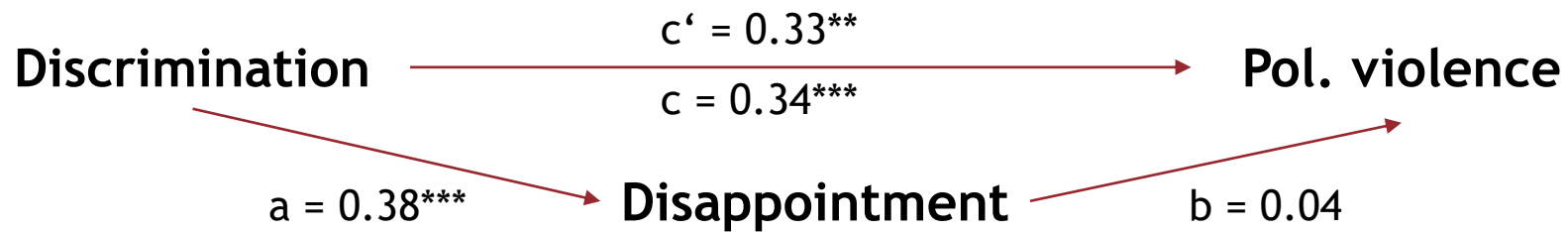
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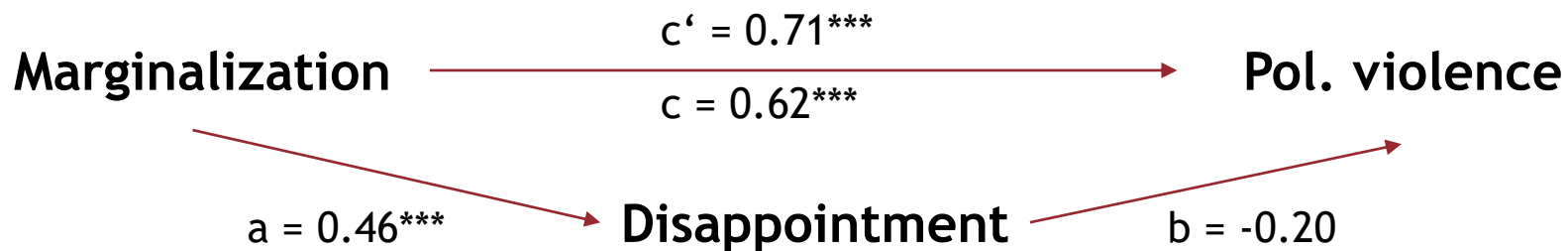
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Summary & Discussion

- Perceptions of collective discrimination have a higher influence on deviant attitudes than individual discrimination experiences
 - Both lead to similar levels of anger and disappointment, but only anger has an effect on the acceptance of political violence
 - Full mediation only for individual discrimination
- Anger projects discrimination experiences outwardly, disappointment does not
- For the perception of collective discrimination (i.e., marginalization), additional other factors apart from emotions become relevant

Summary & Discussion

Additional (ongoing) research...

- Continuous monitoring of prevalences necessary in order to detect changes in society
- subgroup analyses (e.g., immigrants, Muslims)
- inclusion of moderating factors (e.g., social background and personality factors)
- why do people become victims of discrimination in the first place?

Thank you!

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