Identities, Immigration and Integration

Maura Adshead
Department of Politics & Public Administration
Ronni Michelle Greenwood
Department of Psychology
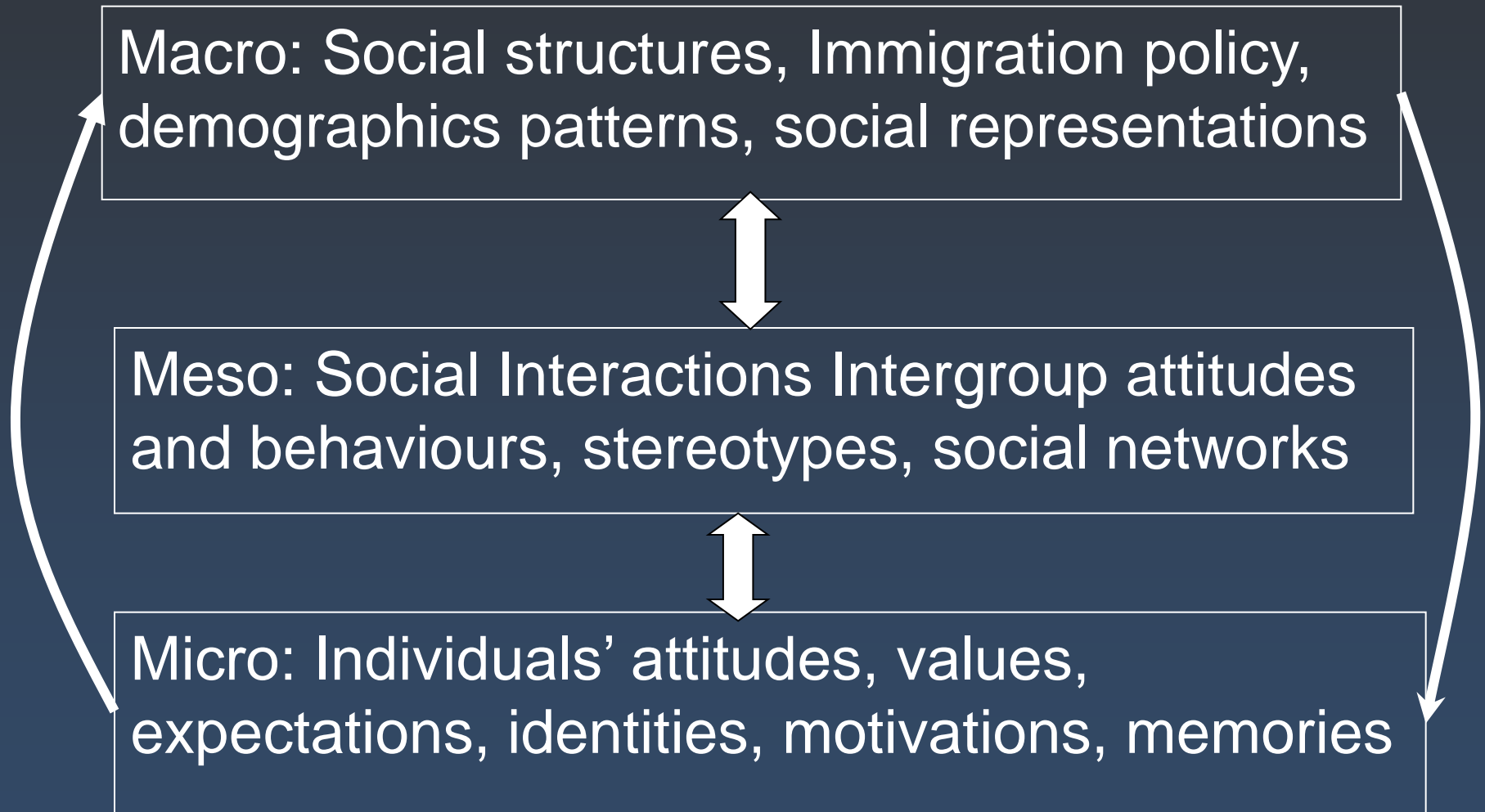
University of Limerick
Republic of Ireland

Acknowledgements

- New Communities Partnership research team

- Sarah Jay, Eidin Ni She, Branagh O'Shaughnessy, UL

- Civic Engagement grant

Overview

- This project is part of an on-going series of emancipatory research projects in collaboration with local communities
- Invited to work with New Communities Partnership, and

- Document the experiences and needs of immigrant women in Ireland (primarily African and Asian)
- Collaborate with the women to examine the conditions of their lived experiences (to kick start women's forum and advocacy work)
- Mixed methods (focus groups & quantitative survey)

Tri-level Model of the Immigrant Experience (Deaux, 2006)

Macro: Social structures, Immigration policy, demographics patterns, social representations

Meso: Social Interactions Intergroup attitudes and behaviours, stereotypes, social networks

Micro: Individuals' attitudes, values, expectations, identities, motivations, memories

Macro-Level: Context of Immigration in Ireland

- Immigration to Ireland is a recent phenomenon

- Only since the 1990s that Ireland experiences inwards migration

- In 2005 OECD estimated by 2030, 18% population would be foreign-born.

- In a very short space of time Ireland moves from being a net exporter of people to being a net importer

Irish interpretations of immigration

- Ireland's experience of migration is most usually understood in terms of emigration

- Historically and contemporarily a country of emigration

- Personal and political narratives are typically of enforced (*unwanted)* and (*ideally)* temporary emigration

- This is the prism through which Irish politicians & citizens perceive contemporary immigration

- For the Irish, emigration is historically and contemporarily a 'necessary evil' – it arises as a consequence of poverty (of income or opportunity)
- all things being equal, the Irish think they would prefer to be at home
- It is through this lens that many Irish perceive contemporary immigration – this has important and uneven political and policy consequences

Irish attitudes to emigration shape attitudes to immigration

- In Irish eyes, immigrants are poor, opportunistic and primarily economically driven migrants who, all things being equal, should and would prefer to stay in their own country

- This obviously raises difficulties for social integration

Meso-level: Interactions between individual and society

- ## Stereotypes and meta-stereotypes
  - Generalized beliefs about a group
  - Beliefs about an outgroup's perceptions of the ingroup
    - *Public regard*: beliefs about outgroup's opinions of ingroup

- ## Aspects of social inclusion and exclusion
  - *Perceived systematic exclusion*
  - *Ordinary privileges*: everyday advantages typically conferred to dominant group members
  - *Community integration*: Sense of belonging or fit within a community

Micro-level: Aspects of the Individual

- The ways in which the individual responds to the meso- and micro-levels
  - Psychological distress and well-being
    - *Psychiatric symptoms*: depression, anxiety, psychosis
    - *Life satisfaction:* global measure of well-being
  - Adaptive responses
    - *Group-based coping:* turning to ingroup members for material and psychological support
    - *Social support:* interpersonal, from family, friends, and "a special person"

Study 1: Focus Groups
Subjective Experiences of Meso & Micro Levels

- African and Asian women tend to experience Irish society as a closed community that is difficult to gain entry into
- On the margins of Irish society, they crave opportunities to develop themselves and their families
- Access to appropriate work
- Access to education
- Access to information about rights and opportunities

- Nonetheless, they evince huge capacities to continue to cope in the fact of adversity – in spite of the system, not because of it

Study 2: Quantitative Survey

- **Research Questions**
  - How do different groups of immigrant women experience immigration?

  - Are experiences of exclusion associated with well-being and distress?

  - Are ordinary privileges an important aspect of inclusion & exclusion for immigrant women?

  - Do coping options and social support protect immigrant women from the negative consequences of social exclusion?
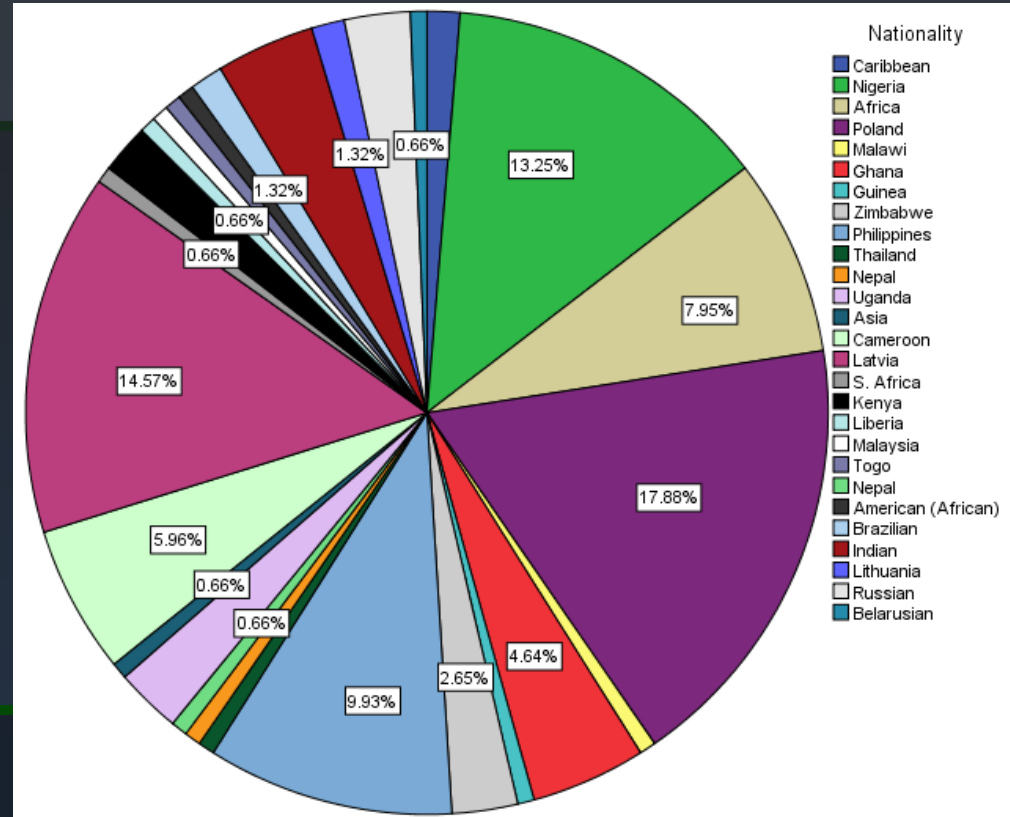
- **Procedures**
  - Develop a quantitative survey instrument
  - Trained members of NCP to collect data
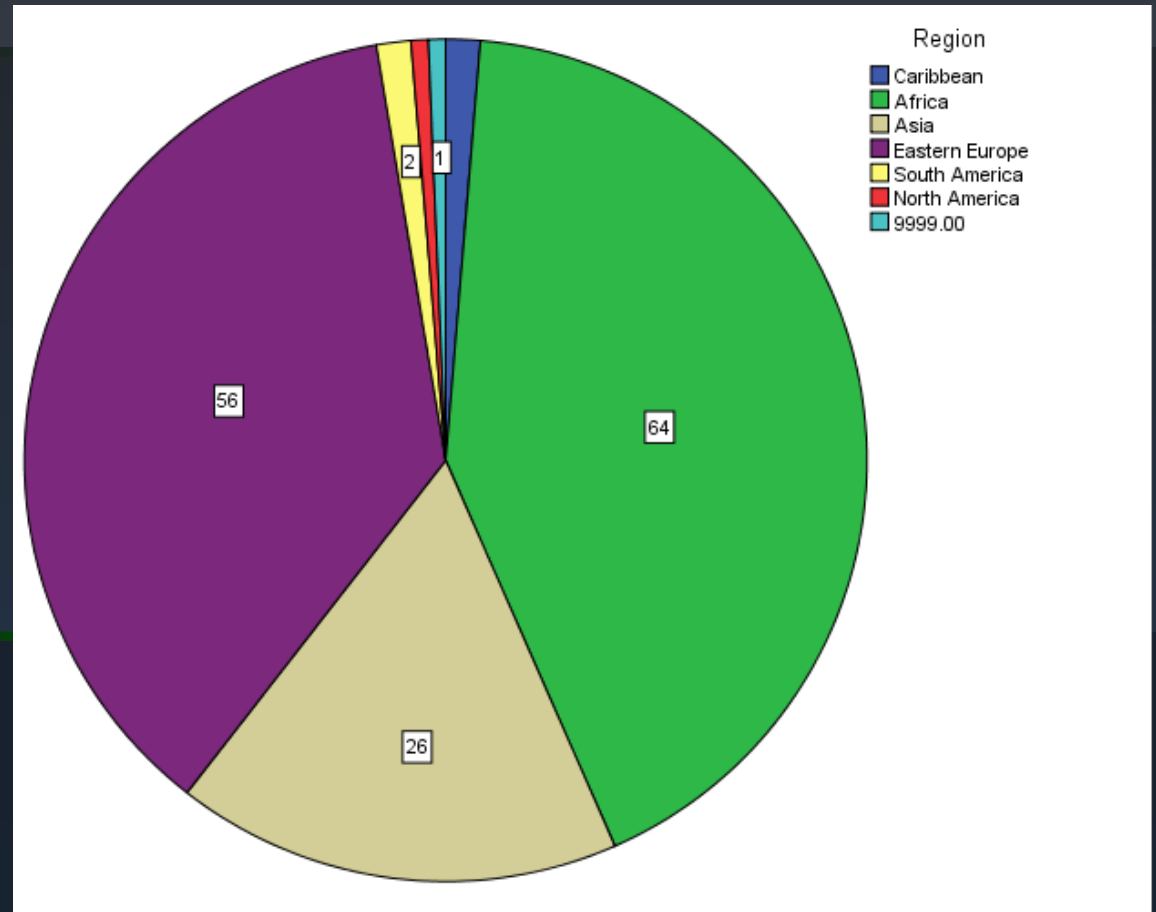 - Translation and back-translation of questionnaire

Participant Characteristics: Nationality

- 152 women

- Living mostly in Limerick area

- Representing 25 countries

Nationality

- Caribbean
- Nigeria
- Africa
- Poland
- Malawi
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Zimbabwe
- Philippines
- Thailand
- Nepal
- Uganda
- Asia
- Cameroon
- Latvia
- S. Africa
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Malaysia
- Togo
- Nepal
- American (African)
- Brazilian
- Indian
- Lithuania
- Russian
- Belarusian

13.25% 7.95% 17.88% 4.64% 2.65% 9.93% 0.66% 0.66% 5.96% 14.57% 0.66% 0.66% 1.32% 1.32% 0.66%

Participant Characteristics: Region

- 6 World Regions

Participant Characteristics: Residency Status
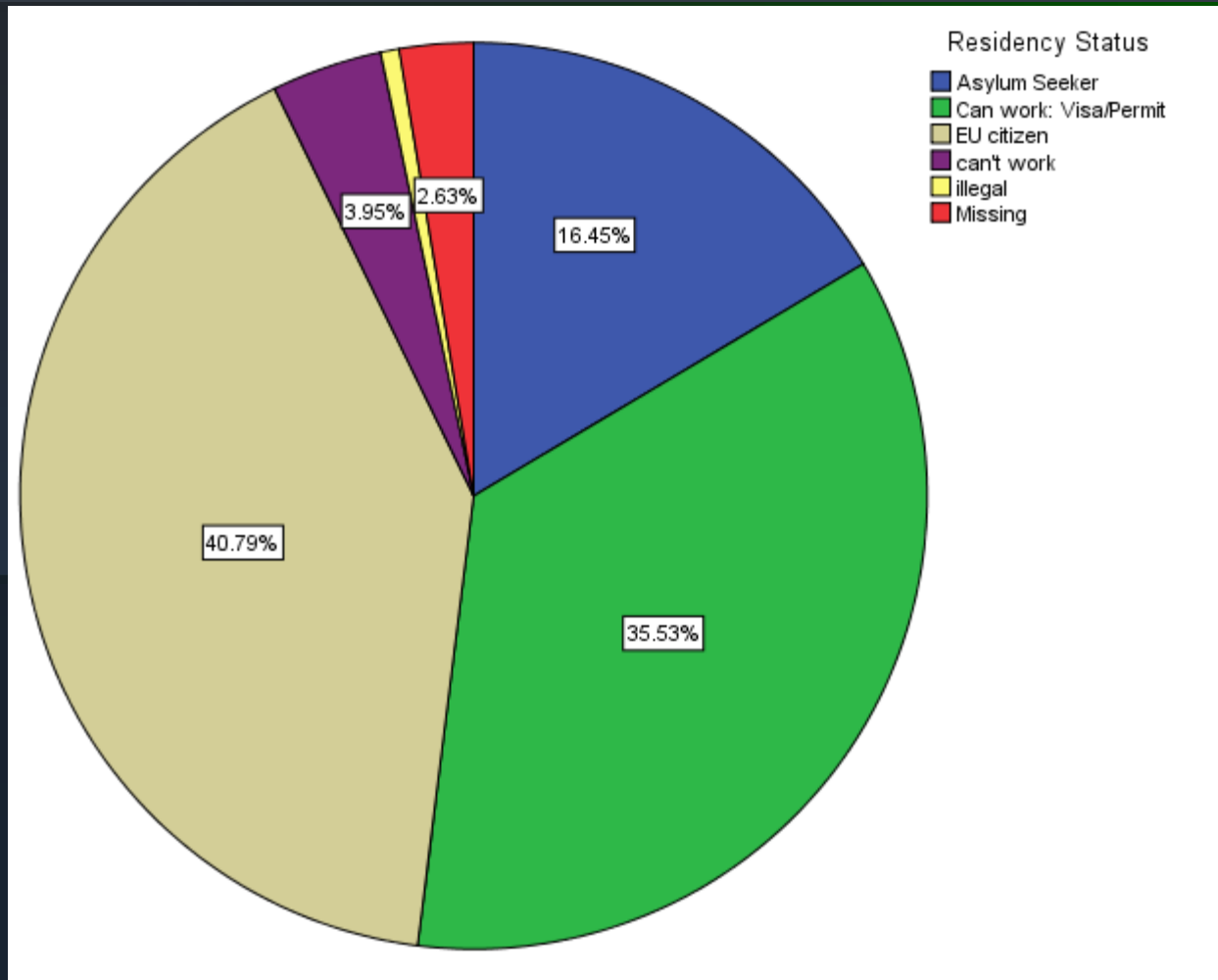
Participant Characteristics: Residency

- Irish/EU Citizen:
  - No 89 (62.6%)
  - Yes 53 (37.3%)
  - Missing 10
- Length of Residency in Years
  - Range .42 – 14
  - $M = 4.54$
  - $SD = 2.40$

Participant Characteristics

Education	N	%
None	2	1.6
Primary	0	0
Secondary	63	51.6
Third Level	52	32.9
Postgraduate	5	4.1
Total	122	100
Missing	30	

- Age:
  - $M = 33.5$
  - Range = 17 – 57
  - $SD = 8.5$
- Education
  - 84.5% secondary or third level education

Participant Characteristics: Family

Relationship	N	%
Single	36	25.5
Engaged	4	2.8
Married	85	60.3
Divorced	6	4.3
Widowed	2	1.4
Other	8	5.7
Total	141	100
Missing	17	

- Lives with Partner
  - Yes 91 (67.4%)
  - No 18 (13.3%)
  - N/A 26 (19.3%)
  - Missing 17

Participant Characteristics: Family

- <u>Number of Children</u>
  - 0 – 6
  - M = 1.88
  - SD = 1.31

Living with Children	n	%
No	11	8.7%
Some	4	2.6%
All	99	78%
N/A	13	10.2%
Missing	25	

Study 2: Quantitative Survey

- Social exclusion:
  - Domains:
    - Education and/or training
    - Employment
    - Social & community life
  - Attributions
    - Residency status
    - Economic recession
    - Lack of acceptance
    - Racial prejudice
  - 12 items
  - 0 = *Not at All*, 5 = *Very Much*

- Ordinary privileges
  - Everyday advantages often unavailable to minority group members
    - 16 items, 1 = *Very false* to 6 = *very true*
    - *When I turn on the television, my race is widely represented.*
    - *I can choose bandages in 'flesh colour' that will more or less match my skin tone.*

Study 2: Quantitative Survey

Public Regard

- Perception of Irish society's regard for immigrant women from her country
  - 6 items, 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree
  - *Overall, in Ireland, immigrant women from your country of origin are considered good by others.*
  - *Irish society views immigrant women from your country as an asset.*

Community Integration

- Psychological Integration
  - Extent to which you feel like a part of your community
  - 4 items, 1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree
  - *I feel at home where I live.*
- Physical integration
  - Extent to which you participate in everyday activities
  - 7 items, 0 = never, 3 = often
  - *Attended a movie; met people at a restaurant or coffee shop.*

Study 2: Quantitative Survey

Coping Options

- Emotion & Problem Focused
  - Individual:
    - *I handle my own emotional responses*
  - Intragroup:
    - *I can trust others who experienced immigration to give me good advice about coping with discrimination*
  - Intergroup
    - *By working together, immigrants can help reduce social inequality*
- 23 items; 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree

Social Support

- 3 sources
  - Significant other
    - *There is a special person who is around when I am in need.*
  - Family
    - *I can talk about my problems with my family.*
  - Friends
    - *I have friends with whom I can share my joys and sorrows.*
- 12 items
- 1 = Strongly Agree to 5 = Strongly Disagree

Study 2: Quantitative Survey

Psychiatric Symptoms

- Domains
  - Anxiety
    - How often have you felt nervous, worried, or frustrated?
  - Depression
    - How often have you felt depressed?
  - Psychosis
    - How often did you hear voices or hear or see things other people didn't think were there?
- 13 items, 1 = not at all to 5 = at least every day

Life Satisfaction

- 5 items
 - *In most ways my life is close to my ideal.*
  - *I am satisfied with my life.*
- 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree
- Reversed, so high scores indicate high satisfaction.

Group Differences

Variable	Black		White		Asian	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Exclusion $F_{2, 137} = 19.28$***	2.91[a]	1.32	1.46[b]	1.13	2.52[a]	1.28
Privileges $F_{2, 137} = 78.26$***	3.11[a]	0.59	4.69[b]	0.78	3.63[c]	0.66
Public Regard $F_{2, 142} = 2.59$†	2.82[a]	0.67	2.58[b]	0.52	2.74[a]	0.39
Physical Integration $F_{2, 143} = 7.92$***	1.44[a]	0.62	1.06[b]	0.63	1.56[a]	0.60
Psychological Integration $F_{2, 141} = 5.08$**	2.81[a]	0.93	3.17[ab]	0.99	3.53[b]	0.71

Group Differences: Coping Options

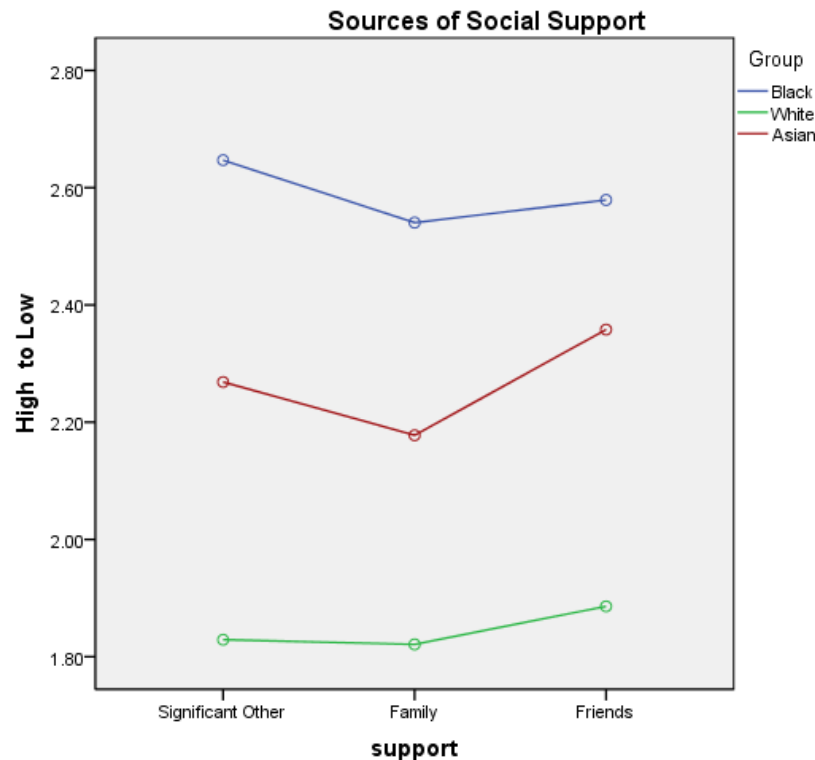**Coping Options**
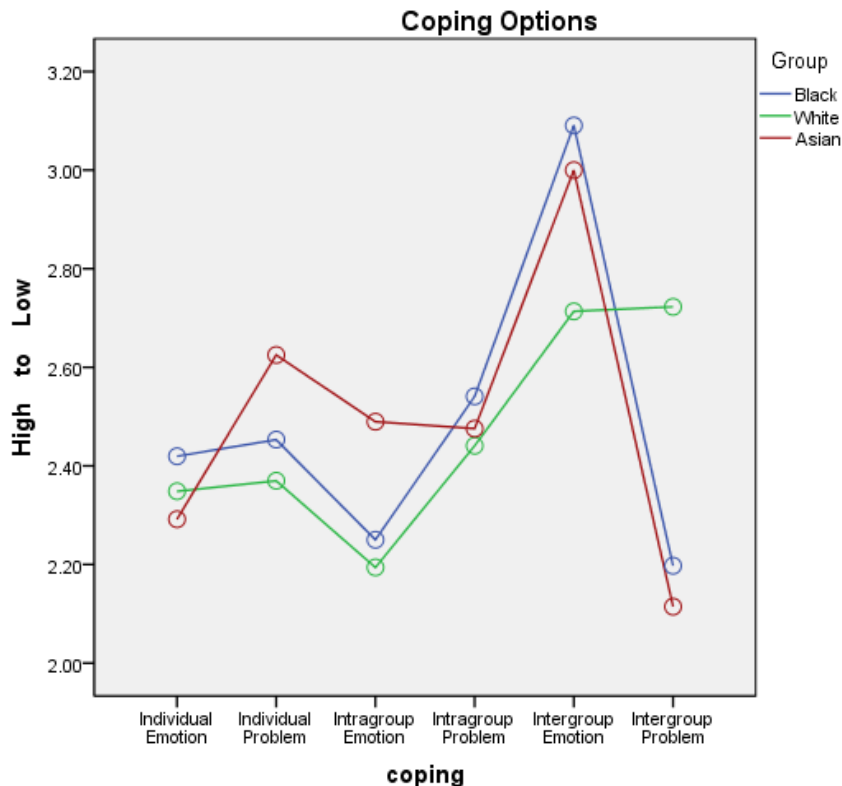
- Low scores mean greater options
- Intergroup Emotion
  - Black & Asian < White
- Intergroup Problem
  - Black & Asian > White

Multivariate F 5, 130 = 11.64, p < .001
Wilks' Lambda F 10, 260 = 2.77, p < .003

Group Differences: Social Support

- Most support available to White immigrants; least to Black immigrants

Group Differences: Distress & Life Satisfaction

	Group					
	Black		**White**		**Asian**	
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Psychological Distress $F_{2, 140} = 6.02**$	2.47[a]	0.86	2.02[b]	0.61	2.01[b]	0.81
Life Satisfaction $F_{2, 138} = 5.44**$	2.71[a]	0.91	2.97[a, b]	0.88	3.38[b]	0.69

Discrimination & Support

- **More** social exclusion was associated with:
  - less social support ($r = .29$, $p < .001$)
  - (weakly), to more intergroup problem-focused coping options ($r = .15$, $p = .08$)
    - *(By working together, immigrants can change discriminatory practices)*
- **Fewer** ordinary privileges was associated with:
  - Less social support ($r = -.39$, $p < .001$)
 - More intergroup problem-focused coping ($r = .29$, $p < .001$)

Discrimination & Well-Being

- Women who report more exclusion & fewer ordinary privileges also report more psychiatric symptoms & lower life satisfaction:
  - Exclusion & Symptoms ($r = .42$, $p < .001$)
  - Exclusion & Satisfaction ($r = -.26$, $p < .001$)
  - Privileges & Symptoms ($r = -.30$, $p < .001$)
  - Privileges & Satisfaction ($r = .30$, $p < .001$)

Social Support & Well-being

- Women with more social support reported fewer psychological symptoms:
    - Significant Other ($r = .42$, $p < .001$)
    - Family ($r = .42$, $p < .001$)
    - Friends ($r = .31$, $p < .001$)
- Women with more social support reported greater life satisfaction:
- Significant other ($r = -.32$, $p < .001$)
- Family ($r = -.42$, $p < .001$)
- Friends ($r = -.35$, $p < .001$)

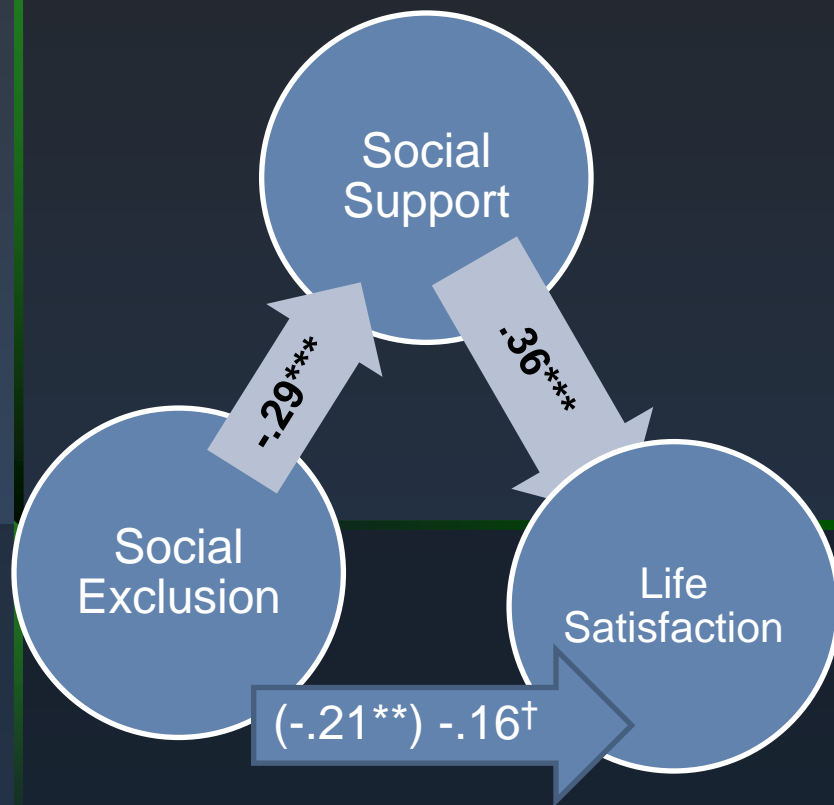# The Positive Effects of Social Support
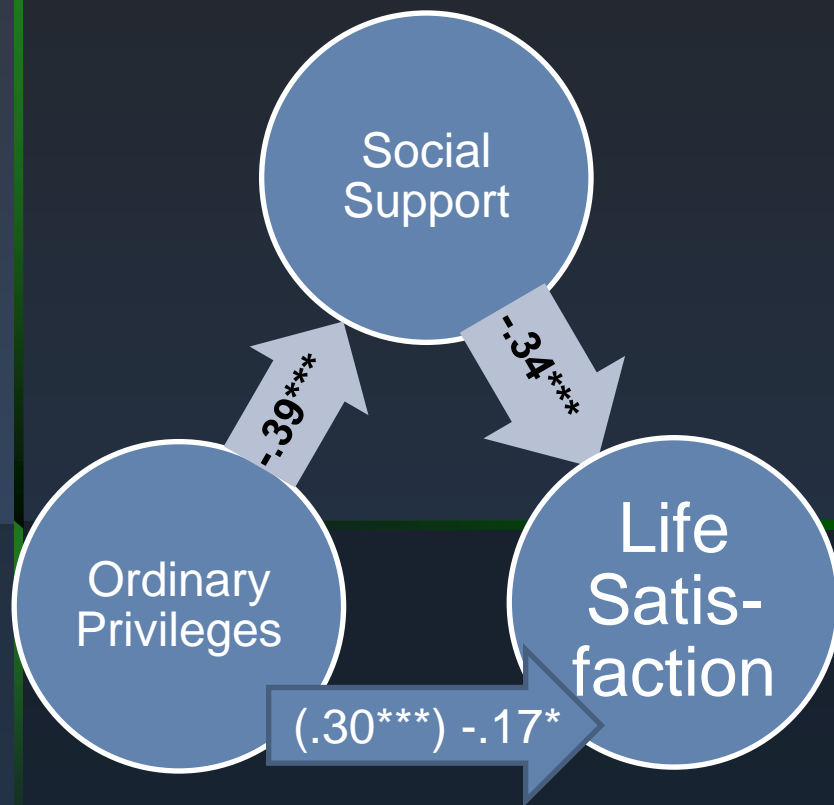
- Social support buffers women from the negative effects of exclusion from ordinary privileges on life satisfaction.

- Sobel's test
  - $z = 3.09$, $p < .002$
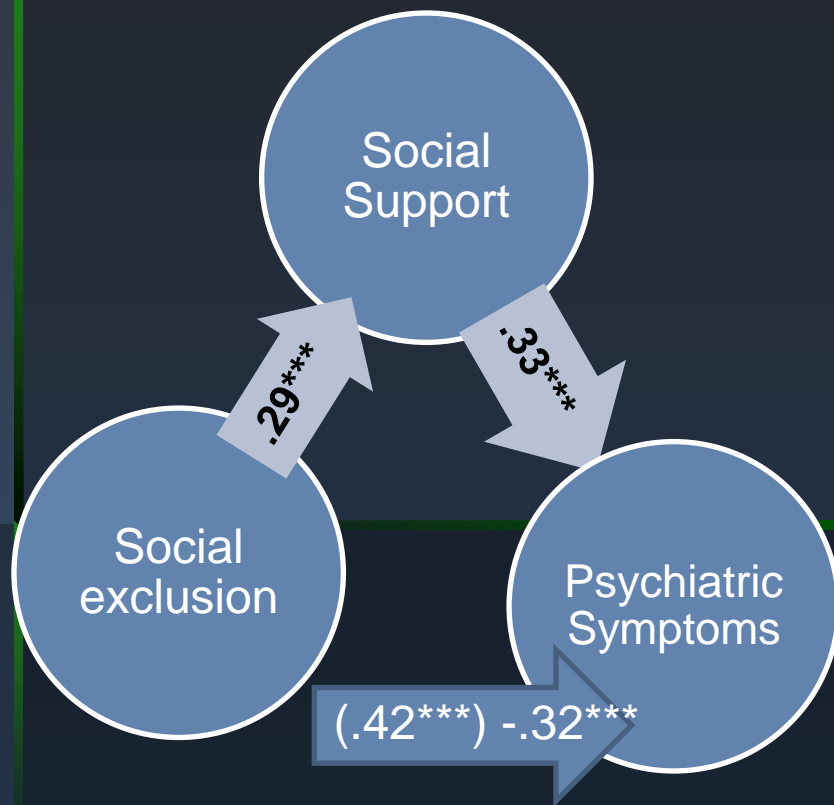
The Positive Effects of Social Support

Social Support

Ordinary privileges

Psychiatric Symptoms

-.39***

.37***

(.30***) -.16†
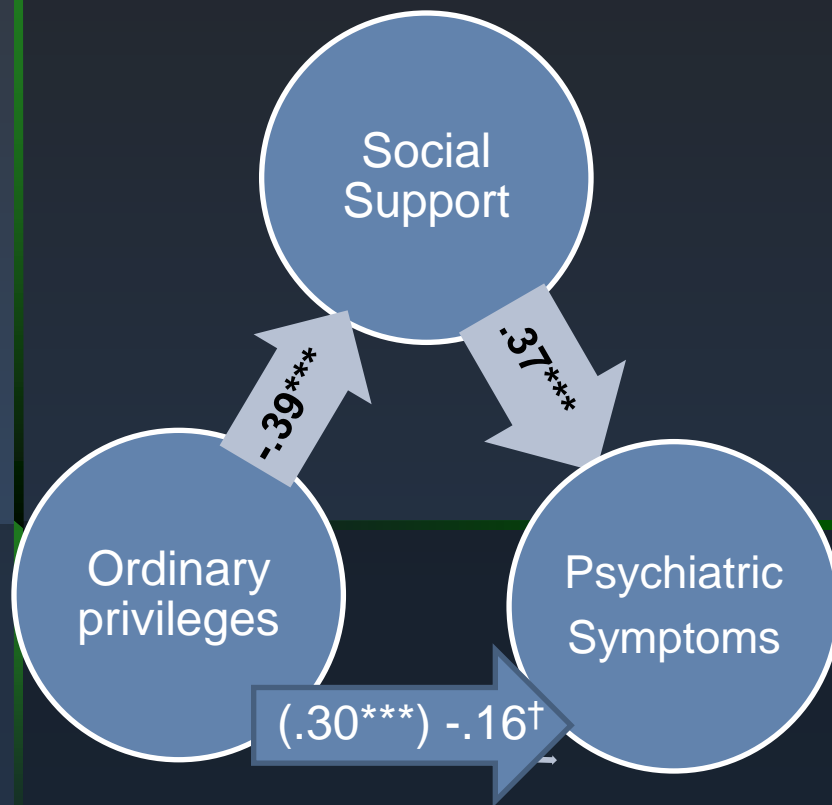
- Social support buffers women against the negative effects of discrimination on life satisfaction.

- Sobel's Test
  - z = 3.28, p < .001

The Positive Effects of Social Support

- Social support buffers women against the negative effects social exclusion on life satisfaction.

- Sobel's Test
  - $z = -2.77, p < .006$

The Positive Effects of Social Support

- Social support buffers women against the negative effects of exclusion on psychiatric symptoms.

- Sobel's Test
  - $z = -2.77$, $p < .006$

Conclusions

- Women immigrants to Ireland experience moderate amounts of social exclusion

- This social exclusion is correlated with psychiatric symptoms and low life satisfaction

- The presence of social support reduces the impact of social exclusion on immigrant women's well-being.

Recommendations

- Families and networks should be preserved to protect immigrant women's psychological well-being;

- Sources of discrimination should be identified and addressed to reduce their impact on immigrant women's psychological well-being.

Thank you for listening.