Diverse sides of adolescents’ and young adults’ tolerance towards immigrants

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Main points

tolerance towards immigrants is composed of different dimensions

each dimension of tolerance has different basis

there is no universal predictor of tolerance
Introduction

EU foreign population: **20.4** million (**4.1%**)  
(1. 1. 2013; Eurostat)

compared to other social groups, the solidarity with immigrants among EU citizens is relatively low  
(van Oorschot, 2006)

pre-adult and early adult stages of life important for establishing attitudes towards immigrants  
(e.g., Sears & Levy, 2003)
Who is more tolerant?

1) higher education (school track)
Who is more tolerant?

1) higher education (school track)

explanations (Coenders & Scheepers, 2003)

- cognitive (enhanced knowledge and cognitive capacities)
- social identity (enhanced self-esteem)
- realistic conflict (lower perceived threat)
Who is more tolerant?

2) higher **social capital**

social trust and involvement in civil society
Who is more tolerant?

2) higher **social capital**

social trust and involvement in civil society
(Côté & Erickson, 2009; Herreros & Criado, 2009)

higher social trust means lower **perceived threat** from strangers
**contact** with people from diverse backgrounds
(redrawing group boundaries)
Who is more tolerant?

3) people with some specific ideology
Who is more tolerant?

3) people with some specific ideology

e.g., left-right dimension

individual v social attributions of other people’s well-being (Jost, Federico, & Napier, 2009)
nationalism v cosmopolitanism

the extent of state interventions
Dimensions of tolerance

in this paper, we understand tolerance as a support for immigrants’ various rights

at least two dimensions:

basic equality (social welfare, equal wages)
recognition of immigrants’ disadvantaged position
Our questions

1. what are the dimensions of young people’s tolerance towards immigrants?
2. what are the predictors of different dimensions of tolerance?

higher education (i.e., cognitive, social identity and realistic conflict motives) will predict the support for basic equality

on the other hand, the recognition of immigrants’ disadvantaged position (and the support for immigrants’ special rights) will require having a high level of social capital and a favourable political ideology
Data

**source:** Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation (PIDOP)

**data collection:** questionnaire-based self-reports

N = 556 (62% females)

only people who explicitly identified themselves as the members of the national majority

![Age distribution chart showing age 15-28 (M = 21.3)]
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The same opportunities to study</td>
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<tr>
<td>The same wage for the same job</td>
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<td>The same social benefits</td>
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<td>The same rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowed to preserve their language</td>
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The same wage for the same job | 4.31
---|---
The same opportunities to study | 4.36
The same social benefits | 3.97
The same rights | 4.29
Allowed to preserve their language | 3.41
The right to learn their language in school | 2.28
The right to maintain traditions and culture | 3.49
The right to build places of worship | 3.09
Granted special rights | 2.40
To have a representative in the parliament | 1.96
To have easier access to college/university | 1.37

*mean (1 = lowest; 5 = highest)*
Measure

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mean (1 = lowest; 5 = highest)
Measure

- The same opportunities to study
- The same wage for the same job
- The same social benefits
- The same rights
- Allowed to preserve their language
- The right to maintain traditions and culture
- The right to build places of worship
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- To have a representative in the parliament
- To have easier access to college/university
Confirmatory factor analysis

The same opportunities to study
The same wage for the same job
The same social benefits
The same rights
Allowed to preserve their language
The right to maintain traditions and culture
The right to build places of worship
Granted special rights
To have a representative in the parliament
To have easier access to college/university

\[
\chi^2_{35} = 726.28, \ p < .01; \ CFI = .72; \ RMSEA = .19; \ SRMR = .12
\]

N = 556
Confirmatory factor analysis

The same opportunities to study
The same wage for the same job
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Equality

Cultural rights

Affirmative action

\[ \beta_s > .50 \]

\[ \chi^2_{31} = 82.81, \ p < .01; \ CFI = .98; \ RMSEA = .06; \ SRMR = .04 \]

N = 556
Predictions

- Gender (female)
- Age
- Family income
  - Does your income cover everything that your family needs?
  - (1 = not at all; 4 = fully)
- Education
  - (1 = basic; 6 = doctoral)
- Social trust
  - „I feel that most people can be trusted.“ (5-item response scale)
- Organizational involvement
  - being involved in some organization/group/club
  - (dichotomous variable)
- Ideology (leftist)
  - „In political terms, how would you describe yourself?“
  - (1 = extreme right; 7 = extreme left)
Predictions

- Gender (female)
- Age
- Family income
- Education
- Social trust
- Organizational involvement
- Ideology (leftist)

Equalities

- Equality
- Cultural rights
- Affirmative action
Predictions

Gender (female)  
Age  
Family income  
Education  
Social trust  
Organizational involvement  
Ideology (leftist)

Equality  
Cultural rights  
Affirmative action

$\chi^2_{80} = 156.73, p < .01; \text{CFI} = .96; \text{RMSEA} = .05; \text{SRMR} = .04$

N = 471
Predictions

- Gender (female): -0.08
- Age: 0.05
- Family income: 0.09
- Education: 0.22**
- Social trust: 0.17**
- Organizational involvement: 0.00
- Ideology (leftist): 0.05

Equality

Cultural rights

Affirmative action
Predictions

- Gender (female): 0.04
- Age: 0.09
- Family income: -0.05
- Education: 0.08
- Social trust: 0.18**
- Organizational involvement: -0.01
- Ideology (leftist): 0.04

Equality

Cultural rights

Affirmative action
Predictions

- Gender (female): .13*  
- Age: .04  
- Family income: .03  
- Education: -.13  
- Social trust: .11*  
- Organizational involvement: -.04  
- Ideology (leftist): .21**

Equality
Cultural rights
Affirmative action
Discussion

support for equality predicted by higher educational attainment and greater social trust

support for cultural rights predicted by greater social trust

support for affirmative action predicted by leftist political ideology
Discussion

education is not a universal predictor of tolerance – together with social trust, it seems to reduce the essential fear of immigrants (based on cognitive, social identity, or realistic conflict motives); in result, educated young people support the idea of immigrants’ equal rights

however, more demanding dimensions of tolerance (which require the recognition of immigrants’ disadvantaged position) must be embedded in one’s broader social and political beliefs

one’s generalized trust in other people contributes to the support for immigrants’ cultural rights, while one’s leftist political ideology (often associated with social attributions of well-being, lower nationalism, and support for state interventions) is associated with the approval of affirmative action
Discussion

if schools aim to cultivate different dimensions of students’ tolerance towards immigrants, they should go beyond formal curricula (see also Gniewosz & Noack, 2008)

individual social capital, which might be developed in schools through various extracurricular activities, seems to be an important resource of one’s cultural tolerance
References


