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Extreme Negative Attitudes towards Immigrants: An Analysis of Factors in Five Countries

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### Abstract

A major focus of the IEA Civic Education Study concerned attitudes of adolescents towards different aspects of social life. One of these aspects deals with the attitudes towards immigrants. By means of data from samples from Denmark, Germany, Switzerland, England, and the USA the effect of variables relating to marginality, contact, attitudes towards the political system, and school have been examined. Using multilevel logistic regression approaches the differential impact of these predictors on students' attitudes towards immigrants is demonstrated on the basis of data pertaining to nearly 16,000 students. The reported results underline the importance of school influence in this issue and should therefore be of particular interest for teachers both inside and outside of the five countries examined.

Key words: civic education, social cohesion, diversity, attitudes towards immigrants, logistic regression analysis

### Extreme Negative Attitudes towards Immigrants: An Analysis of Factors in Five Countries

The process of educational expansion and the demographic process of generational replacement would have ongoing liberalization effects and therefore lead to a growth of ethnic tolerance. This was the prediction of Hyman and Sheatsley stated in 1956. Nearly half a century later there is little empirical evidence for a rising support of the implementation of racial or ethnic equality principles (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo & Krysan, 1997). Ethnic group identifications and ethnic exclusionism still seems to be one of the major reasons for political conflicts around the world and have reached even more actuality through the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks and their political consequences. The concept of ethnic attitudes is one of the main components of ethnic identity (Rotheram & Phinney, 1987). According to the conception of Fishbein and Ajzen belief and attitude are the starting points in developing behavioral intention and behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975). Hence, unfavorable behavior against members of other ethnic groups is based on negative attitudes.

There are numerous national studies about reasons for ethnic exclusionism and the circumstances under which they are developed. In some of these studies the students' views on social and economic politics, such as nationalism, support for right-winged parties and dissatisfaction with the political regime, were found to be strongly connected to attitudes towards the rights of immigrants. For example, in a study analyzing the ideological and social structures of voters of a right-winged party in Flemish Belgium Billiet and De Witte (1995) and Billiet, Swyngedouw, Depickere & Meersseman (2001) confirmed the relationship between voting that party and nationalism. A study of Pia Knigge (1998) traced the evolution of right-wing extremism, conceptualized as latent electoral support for extreme right-wing parties. According

to this study rising levels of immigration and public dissatisfaction with the political regime significantly facilitated right-wing extremism.

There are some studies which focus not on ethnic exclusionism but on ethnocentrism (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson & Sanford, 1969; Billiet, Eisinga & Scheepers, 1996) ascertaining that the feelings of pride and superiority towards the own nation is strongly related to negative attitudes towards members of other ethnic groups. In a comparative study about nationalistic attitudes and ethnic exclusionism in 22 countries Marcel Coenders focused on the relationship between nationalistic attitudes and ethnic exclusionism, with interesting results (2001). According to his study, a higher level of patriotism was related to stronger exclusionism of immigrants only in Germany and Japan, whereas in other countries this relationship was either reversed or nonsignificant. Patriotism generally seems to be related to actual national achievements with regard to the national economy and the countries political influence in the world. Coenders (2001) found the highest average level of patriotism in the United States and a much lower level in the eastern European countries. Due to their special roles during World War II, Germany and Japan seem to be exceptional cases.

According to the theory of economic threat (e.g. Fetzer, 2000) the subjective individual perception of economic threat is an important factor in influencing the attitudes towards immigrants. This was reported by Meredith Watts (1996) in his study about political xenophobia in Germany. Another German study (Kracke, Oepke, Wild, & Noack, 1998) came to similar conclusions. Many studies analyzed the perception that immigrants take jobs away from people born in the country (e.g. Klein-Allermann, Kracke, Noack & Hofer, 1995, Pettigrew & Meertens, 1995, Legge, 1996). Joel Fetzer (2000) in his research on public attitudes towards immigration in the United States, France and Germany examined the strength of three major explanations of

opposition to immigrants: marginality, economic self-interest and contact. Cultural and economic threat were important significant variables in his analyses. Conversely, Winkler (2003) stated in his paper on reasons for negative attitudes towards immigrants that the influence of relative economic deprivation becomes very small when controlling for social circumstances, contacts to people from other countries and patriotism.

Interaction or contact with immigrants was found to be important in both Fetzer's and Winkler's research. According to the contact hypothesis (see Jonas, 1998), the interaction with people from other ethnic or cultural groups but from the same social status groups may lead to more positive attitudes towards immigrants. If the contact is between people from different status groups, this may lead to more negative attitudes.

Marginality is another explanation for ethnic exclusionism (Fetzer, 2000). According to the theory marginalized persons generally hold stronger positive attitudes towards immigrants. This explanation was confirmed in some empirical studies: Females and African-Americans rely much less on stereotypes than boys or European-Americans and more often use fairness as a reason for including somebody in their groups (Killen & Stangor, 2001). Various German studies also show that females generally hold more positive attitudes than males towards the rights for groups such as immigrants (Adler, 1996, Frindte, Funke & Waldzus, 1996, Watts, 1996). Conversely, Marcel Coenders found that males displayed more patriotism and chauvinism but were less exclusionistic towards immigrants than females (Coenders, 2001). Winkler (2003) found a similar result for French males, although he found German males to have less positive attitudes towards immigrants. Miller, Timpson, & Lessnoff (1996) also found a positive correlation between the respect for women's rights and for immigrants' culture.

Apart from individual factors such as gender or the individual's own immigrant status, the context has been found to be of importance for the development of ethnic exclusionism. In a study with American elementary and high school students Killen and Stangor (2001) analyzed students' judgement about exclusion. According to this study the majority of children judged it generally wrong to exclude somebody. Younger children judged it more wrong to exclude somebody based on race than based on gender. This result was similar to that of a later study of Killen, Lee-Kim, McGlothlin & Stangor (2002), who found that exclusion from school was more likely to be judged as wrong, than exclusion from friendship or from the peer-group.

Furthermore, several studies found a relationship between educational attainment and ethnic exclusionism (e.g. Billiet & De Witte, 1995; Billiet et al., 2001; Winkler, 2003). In Coenders's study (Coenders, 2001) educational attainment was the single most important predictor for chauvinism and dimensions of ethnic exclusionism. Lower educated persons had stronger chauvinistic and exclusionistic attitudes. The educational effect was smaller in recently established democracies. Coenders attributed this effect to the longer term of dissemination of democratic value orientation in the educational system. Interestingly patriotism was hardly affected by educational attainment.

Students are exposed to values, norms and modes of behavior transmitted by the educational system (Selznick and Steinberg, 1969); however, with the exception of knowledge and educational attainment, few school context variables have been analyzed in relation to ethnic exclusionism.

In this paper I will use the data from the IEA Civic Education Study that makes it possible to compare a large number of representatively-sampled countries on a variety of individual and school context variables to identify or to explain differences regarding the attitudes towards

immigrants between countries. In addition to variables that express individuals' marginality, contact and attitudes towards the political system I will also look at variables that measure school climate. An influence of the number of books at home, which serves as a proxy for the educational family background of students, could not be confirmed in any country. There are only few variables which could be used to assess economic threat in the data from the IEA Civic Education Study, so I will rely on the other explanations named above.

#### The IEA Civic Education Study

The IEA Civic Education Study (Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald & Schulz, 2001), conducted in 1999, analyzed two aspects of political achievement and attitudes among students in 28 countries. First, civic knowledge at age fourteen has been tested by using multiple choice items. Second, a number of items regarding attitudes toward various aspects of democracy were included. The information to create the test instruments was gathered primarily through a first qualitative research phase of case studies (Torney-Purta, Schwille, & Amadeo, 1999), which aimed to understand the problems and research questions in the different countries and different curricula. Three main domains of research questions were then chosen for the test and survey (Torney-Purta et al., 2001): *Democracy*; *National Identity, Regional and International Relationships*; and *Social Cohesion and Diversity*. One of the research questions analyzed during Phase I in the framework of the third domain was the question of the attitudes that students from the different countries have developed towards the rights of immigrants. Problems of discrimination and disenfranchisement against racial minorities, immigrants or foreigners were reported in nearly all of the countries' case studies (Torney-Purta et al., 1999).

Using this data, I will examine the context factors which are responsible for negative attitudes towards immigrants, and how the influences on these factors vary in different countries. I will

use multilevel logistic regression analyses in order to show effects of context variables on the negative attitudes towards immigrants while controlling for other variables. I will start by describing the measurement methods used in the IEA Civic Education Study to assess attitudes towards the rights of immigrants. This will be the explained variable in the regression analyses described later in this paper.

## Method

### *Variables*

*Measuring attitudes towards the rights of immigrants in the IEA Civic Education Study.* In order to measure the attitudes towards immigrants a scale of five items was constructed for the survey. Students were asked to read different statements about immigrants' rights and select a judgment which most closely corresponded to the way they felt about the statement. Possible categories were *strongly disagree*, *disagree*, *agree*, *strongly agree* and *don't know*, which was set to missing. The statements to which students had to give their opinion were:

1. Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own language.
2. Immigrants' children should have the same opportunities for education that other children in the country have.
3. Immigrants who live in a country for several years should have the opportunity to vote in elections.
4. Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own customs and lifestyle.
5. Immigrants should have all the same rights that everyone else in a country has.

Methods based on Item Response Theory (IRT) made it possible to scale the data and to compare it over countries (international mean=10, standard deviation=2). The mean values for each country resulting from this measurement turned out to be quite different (see Figure 1).

However, it remains difficult to interpret these differences and to understand what kind of attitude is behind each of the national means. For example, does a mean value of 9.2 in Germany mean that, on average, German students have negative attitudes towards immigrants? Or, are their attitudes only less positive than the attitudes of students from other countries? The IRT scores can only be interpreted as relative to the international mean, and they do not reveal any substantial meaning regarding the item response categories. Therefore, it is not possible to determine from the scale scores the extent to which students agreed or disagreed with the individual items used. The scale is arbitrarily gauged by linear scale transformations, and scale values have no meaning on their own.

*Item-by-score-maps.* In order to interpret scale values with regard to the actual responses, the underlying dimensions of the scale (i.e. the items and their categories) have to be considered. This is possible through calculating the expected item scores (Linden & Hambleton, 1997) which are at the basis of the so called item-by-score-maps for the single scales in the IEA Civic Education Study (Husfeldt, 2003). For the scale of attitudes towards immigrants this item-by-score-map is shown in Figure 2.

Considering these expected item scores, the interpretation of the mean values becomes much more evident. In Germany, the country with the lowest scale score, average students are likely to agree to all of the five statements described below, and therefore hold on average attitudes towards immigrants that are moderately positive. Regarding the expected item scores, there does not appear to be large differences between the single countries. Only in few countries (Sweden, Poland, Greece, Cyprus, and Colombia) are average students likely to strongly agree to the second statement that immigrants' children should have the same opportunities to education as others, while they would only agree to the remaining statements. However, there are some other

important questions to consider besides the comparison of mean scale scores. Are there students with extreme negative attitudes towards immigrants in some countries? Are there countries in which this group is numerous? And, if there are, what are the potential explanatory factors related to negative attitudes? What are the educational implications?

*Dichotomizing attitudes towards the rights of immigrants.* The distribution of attitudes towards immigrants is described by a normal ogive curve as long as values around the international mean are considered (see Figure 3). However, at both ends of the curve groups of extreme raters can be observed. Every country has its own distribution with more or less accentuated extreme groups.

To get an idea of the group of extreme negative students, defined as those who disagreed or strongly disagreed to all of the five statements, we can set a cut-off point at the scale value which corresponds to the expected answers “disagree” or “strongly disagree” to all items. This cut-off point lies at the second threshold of the second item (see item-by-score-map in figure 2). A student that is likely to disagree to this item probably would disagree also to any other item from the scale. This leads to a cut-off point of 7.53. A student with a scale score below that value is likely to disagree to all statements included in the five items of the scale and therefore can be considered as a rater with negative attitudes towards immigrants. As it could be expected this group is very small and reaches a considerable value (over 10% of the whole sample) in only in a few countries: Germany (16.4%), Switzerland (15.6%), Denmark (12.4%) and England (12.3%).

In comparison, only 5 percent of the 14-year-olds in the United States are part of this group. Anyway, to get a comparison to a country with a lower percentage of students in the extreme group, the United States are included in the following analyses. Table 1 shows as an example the answers (percentages) to the first item on the scale given by students in these selected countries.

Table 2 summarizes the percentages of males and females and immigrants in the above described extreme group in the single countries.

*Factors that are related to negative attitudes towards immigrants.* To understand more about origins and educational implications, it is worth having a closer look at these five countries.

Numerous research studies have found some evidence for the relation between various background variables and attitudes towards immigrants or right-wing extremism. With the data from the IEA Civic Education Study a comparison of the five selected representatively-sampled countries becomes possible using the large variety of background variables that could be related to attitudes towards immigrants. As we know from earlier research, attitudes towards immigrants' rights can be related to several characteristics which are mainly developed through satisfaction or dissatisfaction regarding economic, social and cultural circumstances and through the level of education. The level of civic knowledge and civic skills, patriotism, nationalism, trust in government-related institutions, attitudes towards women's rights are variables which have been included in the IEA Civic Education Study. This allows us to assess students' views on society and society-related institutions. In addition to this and to most of the preceding research studies, the IEA Civic Education Study provides us with information about the communication in the classroom. Classroom climate<sup>1</sup>, understanding for people with different ideas, the opportunity to cooperate with other students and the proportion of immigrants in the

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<sup>1</sup> Students' perception of an open classroom climate reflects the individual's perception of the atmosphere in class. As such, perceptions may vary within a class. However, in this area, an individual's view of whether it is a good idea to express an opinion is one factor that is important in determining whether he or she will become involved in class discussion.

class (as a proxy for individual contact with people from other countries) are variables whose predicting power for attitudes towards immigrants is worth investigating.

Data pertaining to more than 13,000 students from samples of the five selected countries were analyzed using multilevel logistic regression approaches, to demonstrate the differential impact of predictors in various countries. As a matter of previous reflection, the predictors shown in table 3 were included in the model.

To make interpretation easier all predictors except *civic knowledge* and proportion of immigrants in the class have been dichotomized. The response alternative “disagree” was coupled with “strongly disagree,” as was “agree” with “strongly agree”. For dichotomizing the scales, the same procedure as described for the scale for attitudes towards immigrants was used. For every scale (international mean = 10; international standard deviation = 2) this was done in a way that one group of students, which according to the theory and previous research have more negative attitudes towards immigrants, is clearly distinguished. For the scale of attitudes towards the nation this means, that the cut-off point (8.47) is chosen in a way, that a student, who has a higher score value than that, is likely to chose the most or the second most positive response alternative for every item on that scale. For the other scales this means that the cut-off points (11.37 for trust, 7.12 for women’s rights and 9.7 for classroom climate) distinguishes between groups of students which are expected to chose the lowest two response alternatives for each item and students who chose a higher category at least with one item.

### *Analysis*

All independent variables in this model were checked for multicollinearity. However, the highest correlation found between two independent variables was  $r = .27$  between two single

items. The percentages of the students who are in the lower categories of the dichotomized variables and the percentages of males and of immigrants are shown in Table 4.

The stratified clustered design used in the sampling procedure of the IEA Civic Education Study makes it necessary to use either jackknife procedures in order to calculate reasonable standard errors or to use a multilevel approach. The analysis described here uses a two level (individual and school level) approach to logistic regression analysis. This also allows the addition of higher level variables such as percentage of immigrants in the classroom used in this analysis. For each of the five countries one logistic regression model with the same predictors to explain negative attitudes towards immigrants was calculated.

## Results

### *Logistic Regression Analysis*

In the following analysis I have examined the association of various factors to having extremely negative views towards immigrants. I find that the factor „positive attitudes towards the nation“ increases the probability of having negative views, while the following factors decrease the probability of holding negative views: gender (female), own immigration background, contact to immigrants, trust in institutions, positive attitudes towards women’s rights, civic knowledge, stimulating classroom climate and having learned to cooperate and to understand people with different ideas.

*Probabilities.* To see the extent to which the discussed predictors are influencing students’ attitudes in the single countries we first look at the probabilities students in one country have to be in the negative attitudes group. For a *male student born in the country of test* — with *positive attitudes towards the nation* with *low trust in institutions* and *negative attitudes towards women’s rights*, with an average *civic knowledge*, who has learned neither to *cooperate* nor to

*understand people with different ideas* in a poorly stimulating *classroom climate*, with no contact to immigrants in the class — the probability to have negative attitudes towards immigrants is .77 in Germany, .76 in Switzerland, and .67 in Denmark. This would be compared with a probability of .5 if there were no significant influences. For England and the U.S. the regression constant is not significantly different from the logit 0, corresponding to a probability of .5. Still, a probability of .47 and .55 respectively for the US and England is remarkable knowing the fact that only 5% of the students in the U.S. and 12.3% of the students in England have negative attitudes towards immigrants. This base model of extreme circumstances is the basis for the interpretation of the relative probabilities which are shown in Table 5.

*Relative Probabilities.* The relative probabilities in Tables 5 and 6 show how the chance to be in the group of people with negative attitudes towards immigrants would change with respect to the basic group described above if the value of a person for one single variable would increase by one unit. The relative probability is the factor by which the chance (odds ratio) to be in the negative group has to be multiplied. If the relative probabilities are below one, the chances decrease. Since the basic category of students is defined here as the group with the most negative attitudes towards immigrants, all relative probabilities (main effects) will be below one. The lower the relative probability is, the greater is the effect of this variable on attitudes towards immigrants. A relative probability of 1 would indicate for no change.

*Explained variance.* In *Germany*, nearly all of the variables mentioned above are significantly related to the negative attitudes towards immigrants and can explain more than 26 percent of the variance (see Pseudo  $R^2$  in Table 6).

In *Denmark*, even more of the variance than in Germany is explained (29%) although there are fewer significant factors. Here the attitudes towards the nation, classroom climate, and

having learned in school to cooperate with others are not significantly related to the negative attitudes towards immigrants. Trust, civic knowledge and learning in school to understand those with diverse views are all significant.

In *Switzerland* trust in institutions, and classroom climate are not significant predictors, 23 percent of the variance is explained by the model. Civic knowledge, learning in school to understand those with diverse views and learning to cooperate are all significant.

In *England* only half of the predictors are significant. Attitudes towards the nation, classroom climate, civic knowledge, and gender have no explanatory power and only eleven percent of the variance is due to the variables in the described model. In England there seem to be a different structure to explain negative attitudes towards immigrants than in the other four countries. Trust and learning in school to understand those with diverse views are important.

The *United States* is the only country where immigrant status is not significant. Attitudes towards the nation and the classroom climate are also not significant but 25 percent of the total variance can be explained by the model. Civic knowledge and learning in school to understand those with diverse views are important.

#### *Context factors*

*Marginality.* As it can be seen from Table 5 the immigration variable has the lowest relative probabilities and therefore the highest effect on the attitudes towards immigrants in all countries. Keeping constant all other variables, the probability to have negative attitudes towards immigrants is only around one fifth in Switzerland, and around one third in the other countries, if a student is not born in the country of the test. The effect is highest in Switzerland and lowest in Germany. In the countries in which immigrant status is significant, marginality could explain the more positive attitudes of people who are not born in the country. Probably the one's

circumstances as immigrants lead to a more positive attitude towards people in the same situation.

Females have more positive attitudes than males in Switzerland, Denmark, and the United States when taking into account the other predictors. Being female reduces the probability to have negative attitudes towards immigrants to nearly one third in the United States, and to less than a half in Switzerland and in Denmark. In Germany an interaction effect of 3.83 is present when looking at the influence of gender and immigration. Although immigrants in Germany hold more positive attitudes towards immigrants, this is primarily the result of male attitudes.

The explanation of marginality fits the results from Switzerland, Denmark, and the United States that have been found similar in several other studies (e.g. Adler, 1996, Frindte et al., 1996, Watts, 1996, Winkler, 2003). The case of England and Germany, where the main effects of gender are not significant, is interesting and should be explored more in detail. In a previous study on negative attitudes towards immigrants based on the IEA Civic Education data I found some influence of gender even in Germany (Husfeldt, 2004). Including the interaction effects for gender the main effect has become less important. A relative probability of 0.66 for the interaction between gender (female) and 20% of immigrants in the class (see below) shows that there are other explanations than simply gender to describe the attitudes towards immigrants in Germany.

*Contact.* The contact hypothesis states that people who interact with people from other ethnic or cultural groups develop more positive attitudes towards members of this group. With the data from the IEA Civic Education Study it was possible to analyze the impact of the proportion of immigrants in a class assuming that there is interaction between the native born and the immigrant students on a similar social level. However, the influence of this contact was not

found in the five countries. Only in Germany is there a significant interaction between gender and the proportion of immigrants in the class even though the main effect for gender is not significant (see Table 5 and 6). In other words, being female in Germany has no influence with respect to the basic group of students described above, but together with the contact with immigrants in a class it has an effect. According to this model the chance of having a negative attitude toward immigrants for a German girl in a class with 20% of immigrants, would only be 66% of the one she would have in a class with no immigrants. Anyway, other considerations such as socioeconomic status or about the prevalence of multicultural friendships between students are probably necessary to describe contact as an influencing factor.

*Attitudes towards the political system.* Two predictors that are closely related to the student's view of social and economic politics in his or her country are attitudes towards the nation and trust in government-related institutions. Having positive attitudes towards the nation influences students from Germany and Switzerland, but not the students from Denmark, England, and the United States, to be against immigrants. Positive attitudes towards one's own nation must be contextualized within the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century, which may have different meanings, and therefore different consequences, in certain countries.

Trust in government-related institutions seems to have some value in preventing students from having negative attitudes towards immigrants. This result is in accordance to findings from other studies in which dissatisfaction with the political regime (Knigge, 1998) or perceptions of economic threat (Watts, 1996) were reported to facilitate right-wing extremism or xenophobia. Only in Switzerland is this relationship between negative immigrant attitudes and trust not significant. This may be because of limited variance in levels of trust among students in Switzerland, which is one of the highest countries on this scale.

Another very important factor is the support of women's political rights. For women's rights the effect is highest in the USA and lowest in Switzerland. The probability of having negative attitudes towards immigrants is only around one third if a student has positive attitudes towards women's rights.

The significant relation between the support of women's political rights and the support of immigrant's rights in each of the five countries confirms what was found in Britain by Miller et al. (1996). Students with low attitudes towards women's rights had lower attitudes towards immigrants as well. This effect can be interpreted in several ways. Students may have generally lower attitudes towards immigrants if they have more traditional and restricted concepts of family and social life. The findings relating to this question may also reflect a tendency for some students to discriminate against minorities or groups of persons they think to be less powerful. This tendency may lead to negative attitudes against immigrants as well as against women.

*School-related factors.* As reported by Billiet & De Witte (1995) and Billiet et al. (2001) there appears to be a relationship between voting for a right-wing party and a low educational level. It was expected that civic knowledge would have some impact on students' attitudes towards immigrants, and in four of the countries this influence is substantial. It is somewhat surprising, however, that there is no significant influence of civic knowledge in England.

The three factors regarding school-related circumstances also show differences between countries. Having learned in school to understand people with different ideas and to cooperate with others supports a more positive attitude towards immigrants in nearly every country. In Denmark, however, no influence of having learned to cooperate with others could be confirmed.

An open classroom climate is a significant predictor only in Germany. Whether or not this can be explained by the different school system with an early merit-based selection would be an

interesting point to be confirmed in further focused studies. In any case in the country with the highest rate of students with negative attitudes towards immigrants, it seems to be a possibility to strengthen tolerance and understanding for people from other countries through educational efforts to make the classroom a place where students learn to respect each others' ideas.

### Discussion

“When we see trends there are [still] significant numbers of people who do not go along with the majority.” (Sanford, 1986, p. 213) The majority of students in the five countries Denmark, England, Germany Switzerland and the United States have positive attitudes towards immigrants but there is a small but considerable group of students with negative attitudes towards immigrants. This paper attempts to contribute to a better understand the reasons for students having negative attitudes towards immigrants and to find ways to change the situation by educational efforts.

The meaning of the word immigrant may differ from country to country based on the special political situation of the group of immigrants in the single country. In the German instruments, for example, the word immigrant was translated by the word “Ausländer” (foreigner) which may have an influence on students' answers to the related questions because this expression does not imply the integration of this group into the German social system. As we are not mainly looking at the absolute numbers of students with negative attitudes towards immigrants but at the factors that may explain these attitudes, the interpretation of the word is less important for this analysis. Anyway we should focus more on the impact of the influencing factors in the single countries and carefully interpret the cross-national comparisons.

Marginality is one of the main explanations for ethnic exclusionism and its influence has been confirmed in many studies. Variables that could express marginality in this study were

immigration and gender (female). Both variables were found to be important factors in nearly all countries.

Another important explanation is the contact with people from other ethnic groups or from another culture. The contact hypothesis as well as the marginality hypothesis has been analyzed and found to be valid in several research projects. Using the proportion of immigrants in the class the influence of contact could not be confirmed in this study. Only in Germany there seem to be an influence of the contact that affects only females. Further research should be undertaken to explain this extremely interesting phenomena. Furthermore, taking the proportion of immigrants in a class as the only explanation for contact is probably a too strong simplification of the theory.

The students' view on social and economic politics — expressed by attitudes towards the nation and by trust in government-related institutions — influences students' attitudes towards immigrants and should be a focus for further research.

While positive attitudes towards the nation influence the attitudes towards immigrants in Germany and in Switzerland, no effect could be confirmed for the other countries. This result is in accordance with the results found by Coenders in his study on nationalistic attitudes and ethnic exclusionism (2001) and is probably related to the specific historical German situation in which nationalistic and patriotic positions are positions of extreme groups rather than expected for many young people.

Trust in government related institutions is an important factor for every country but Switzerland, and is especially important in the United States. This could partly be explained by the theory of economic and social threat if we assume that these institutions stand for stability

and security in a democratic system. Nevertheless, there are too few variables regarding economic or social threat in the data to confirm this explanation.

The relationship of attitudes towards women's rights and attitudes towards immigrants is clearly shown in all of the countries. But there is no real causal explanation to state in which direction the attitudes towards immigrants' and towards women's rights affect each other, or whether they are both part of a constellation of attitudes toward those with less power in the society.

The most interesting factors to look at are the school-related factors, because they imply the possibility of a directed influence from the school. Having learned in school to understand people with different ideas and to cooperate with others, civic knowledge and the classroom climate are very closely related to processes in school and education. Therefore, they could offer the possibility to intervene in order to minimize the group of students with extreme negative attitudes towards immigrants' rights. The results of the described analysis should therefore be of particular interest for teachers, and not only those in the five countries.

General knowledge is a factor that has been analyzed in several previous studies. In this study the focus is on civic knowledge and this factor was found to be significant for attitudes towards immigrants in all countries except England. Knowing more about the democratic system and being more skilled regarding the interpretation of civic related text material could reduce negative attitudes towards immigrants. This important result should be taken into account in future discussions about school curricula and educational standards.

Having learned in school to understand people with different ideas and to cooperate with others are two other important factors. They may be less connected to the curricula and the educational goals in school but more to the educational process. The results showing that these

variables are important influencing factors underline the importance of school education for the development of responsible democratic citizens.

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Table 1

*Students' Answers to Item: Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own language.*

Country	Immigrants should have the opportunity to keep their own language			
	% Strongly disagree	% Disagree	% Agree	% Strongly agree
Denmark	20.5%	25.4%	41.2%	12.9%
England	11.8%	13.7%	51.6%	22.9%
Germany	17.0%	22.1%	47.2%	13.7%
Switzerland	13.4%	20.9%	43.7%	22.0%
USA	7.9%	13.1%	52.9%	26.1%
All 28 countries	8.3%	14.6%	53.9%	23.2%

Table 2

*Students With Negative Attitudes Towards Immigrants by Country by Gender and Immigrant Status*

Country	Students With Negative Attitudes Towards Immigrants			
	% Males	% Females	% Native Born	% Immigrants
Denmark	70.5	29.5	97.9	2.1
England	51.7	48.3	95.8	4.2
Germany	61.2	38.8	84.7	15.3
Switzerland	65.6	34.4	93.5	6.5
USA	76.5	23.5	76.5	23.5
All 28 countries	70.4	29.6	94.4	5.6

Table 3

*Predictors in the model*

<p>Marginality</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gender (female)</li> <li>2. Immigration (not born in country of test)</li> </ol>
<p>Contact</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Proportion of immigrants in the class</li> </ol>
<p>Attitudes towards the political system</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Positive attitudes towards the nation (scale, based on four-category likert-items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items: The flag of this country is important to me; I have great love for this country; This country should be proud of what it has achieved; I would prefer to live permanently in another country (negative)</li> </ul> </li> <li>2. Trust in government-related institutions (scale, based on four-category likert-items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items: How much of the time can you trust each of the following institutions?</li> <li>The national government; The local council or government of town or city; Courts; The police; Political parties; National parliament.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. Positive attitudes towards women’s political and econ. rights (scale, based on four-category likert-items) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Items: Women should run for public office and take part in the government just as men do; Women should have the same rights as men in every way; Women should stay out of politics (negative); When jobs are scarce, men have more right to a job than women (negative); Men and women should get equal pay when they are in the same jobs; Men are better qualified to be political leaders than women (negative).</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

Table 3 (continued)

*Predictors in the model*

School related factors

1. Civic knowledge (Scale based on test items)
2. Having learned in school to understand people with different ideas (single item)
3. Having learned in school to cooperate with other students (single item)
4. Students' perception of an open classroom climate (scale, based on four-category likert-items)

Items: Students feel free to disagree openly with their teachers about political and social issues during class; Students are encouraged to make up their own minds about issues; Teachers respect our opinions and encourage us to express them during class; Students feel free to express opinions in class even when their opinions are different from most of the other students; Teachers encourage us to discuss political or social issues about which people have different opinions; Teachers present several sides of an issue when explaining it in class.

Table 4

*Percentages of Students in the Lower Categories of the Dichotomized Variables by Country*

Country	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
	males	immi- grants	positive attitude towards the nation	low trust	negative attitudes towards women's rights	knowl. below intern. mean	low response altern. for "underst. diff. ideas"	low response. altern. for "coop. with others"	no open classr.- climate
Denmark	50.6	7.1	83	40.3	3	52.3	27.6	7.9	47.2
England	49.8	5.7	73	76.5	2.9	57.6	10.4	6.4	45
Germany	49	19.4	62.6	75.9	4.2	52	22.6	13.9	36.6
Switzerland	49.3	16.5	68.1	62.5	3.5	56.8	16.6	8.5	37.1
USA	49	10.5	79.6	67.7	3.4	43.6	11.4	8.5	34.6

Table 5

*Relative Probabilities from the Logistic Regression (Main Effects) by Country*

	female	immig	nation (negat.)	trust	women's rights	know- ledge	under- stand	co- operate	classr.- climate	20 % immig. in c
Denmark	0.42	0.25	n.s.	0.64	0.28	0.51	0.47	n.s.	n.s.	n.s.
England	n.s.	0.22	n.s.	0.60	0.31	n.s.	0.55	0.38	n.s.	n.s.
Germany	n.s.	0.33	0.43	0.61	0.30	0.54	0.41	0.72	0.60	n.s.
Switzerland	0.41	0.19	0.43	n.s.	0.35	0.61	0.61	0.53	n.s.	n.s.
USA	0.35	n.s.	n.s.	0.43	0.27	0.79	0.49	0.43	n.s.	n.s.

Table 6

Relative Probabilities (Interaction Effects) and Pseudo R<sup>2</sup> McKelvey by country

	Interaction Female x Immig	Interaction Female x 20 % Immig. in Class	Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> McKelvey
Denmark	n.s.	n.s.	0.29
England	n.s.	n.s.	0.11
Germany	3.83	0.66	0.26
Switzerland	n.s.	n.s.	0.23
USA	n.s.	n.s.	0.25

Figure Caption

*Figure 1.* Positive attitudes towards immigrants: mean values in 28 countries (Torney-Purta et al., 2001)

*Figure 2.* Item-By-Score-Map for Positive Attitudes Towards Immigrants (Torney-Purta et al., 2001)

*Figure 3.* Positive Attitudes Towards Immigrants by country

Country	Mean Scale Score	8	10	12
Australia	10.0 (0.08)		●	
Belgium (French)	10.0 (0.09)		●	
Bulgaria	▼ 9.7 (0.10)		●	
Chile	▲ 10.4 (0.03)			●
Colombia	▲ 10.8 (0.04)			●
Cyprus	▲ 10.8 (0.03)			●
Czech Republic	10.0 (0.06)		●	
Denmark	▼ 9.6 (0.05)		●	
England	▼ 9.7 (0.07)		●	
Estonia	▼ 9.7 (0.04)		●	
Finland	9.8 (0.06)		●	
Germany*	▼ 9.2 (0.07)		●	
Greece	▲ 10.6 (0.05)			●
Hong Kong (SAR)	▲ 10.5 (0.05)			●
Hungary	▼ 9.5 (0.05)		●	
Italy	▼ 9.8 (0.05)		●	
Latvia	▼ 9.5 (0.05)		●	
Lithuania	▼ 9.6 (0.03)		●	
Norway	▲ 10.3 (0.07)			●
Poland	▲ 10.6 (0.06)			●
Portugal	▲ 10.3 (0.03)			●
Romania	10.2 (0.06)		●	
Russian Federation	9.8 (0.06)		●	
Slovak Republic	▼ 9.7 (0.05)		●	
Slovenia	▼ 9.4 (0.05)		●	
Sweden	▲ 10.7 (0.08)			●
Switzerland*	▼ 9.4 (0.07)		●	
United States	▲ 10.3 (0.06)			●

( ) Standard errors appear in parentheses.

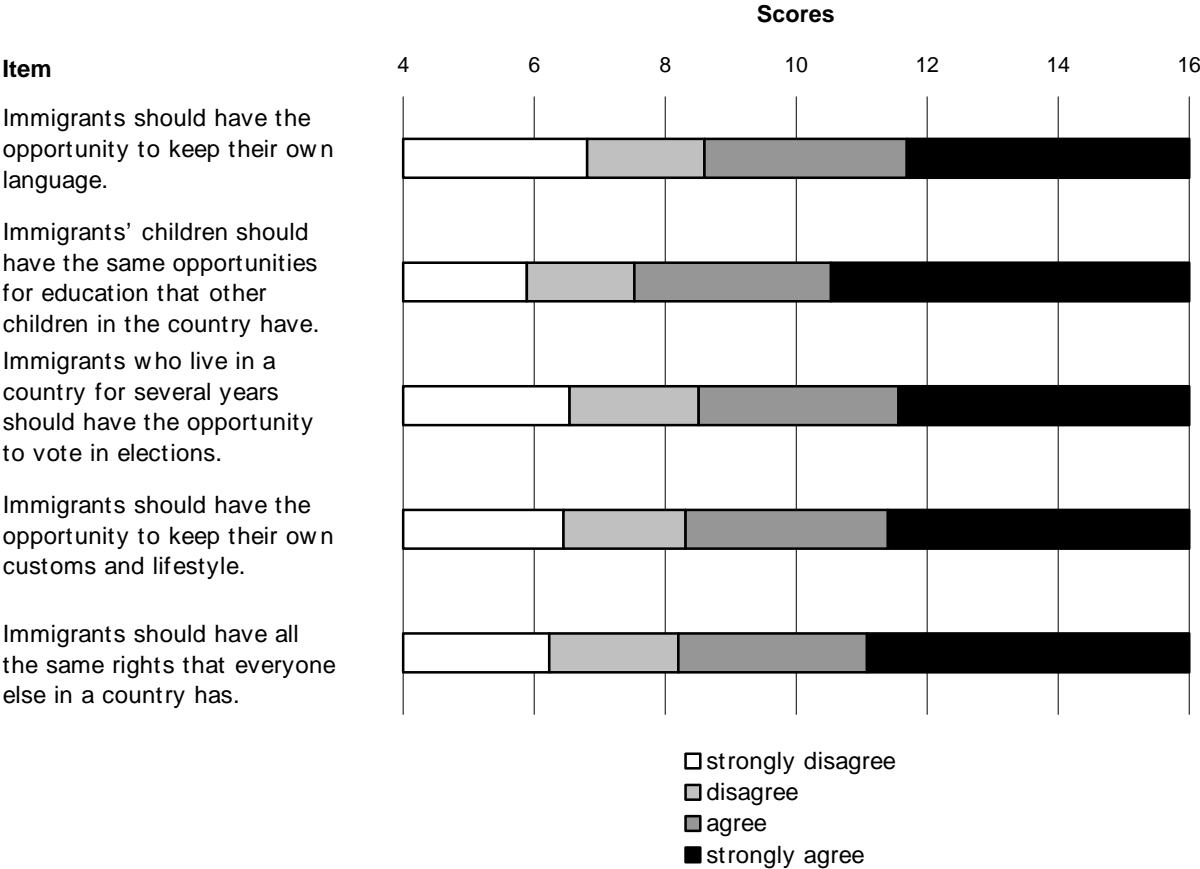
● = Mean (± 2 SE).

▲ Country mean significantly higher than international mean of 10.

▼ Country mean significantly lower than international mean of 10.

\* In German the word "immigrants" was translated as "foreigners".

Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested in 1999.



NOTE: The bars indicate the expected response of an item for a given scale score on the horizontal axis. International item frequencies based on all 28 equally weighted country data.

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Source: IEA Civic Education Study, Standard Population of 14-year-olds tested 1999.

