Political Tolerance, Racist Speech, and the Influence of Social Networks*

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Objective. This study examines the influence of ethnic and racial network diversity on young people’s attitudes about speech rights in Canada by examining the impact of diversity on racist groups’ speech compared to other objectionable speech. Methods. After reviewing prior work on diversity and political tolerance judgments, the study presents multinomial logistic regressions to assess the impact of network diversity on three types of political tolerance dispositions. The data are drawn from the Canadian Youth Study, a sample of 10th- and 11th-grade students in Quebec and Ontario (N = 3,334). Results. The analysis suggests that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity in one’s social networks decreases political tolerance of racist speech while simultaneously having a positive effect on political tolerance of other types of objectionable speech. Conclusions. The dual effects arguably represent an evolving norm of multicultural political tolerance, in which citizens endorse legal limits on racist speech. Future work should assess the extent to which target group distinctions in political tolerance judgments have evolved over time and across age cohorts.

Political tolerance refers to a willingness to allow disliked opinions, lifestyles, preferences, or worldviews to be expressed publicly by others (Stouffer, 1963; Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979, 1982). In recent years, many advanced industrialized democracies have struggled with how to balance rights to free speech with laws that are intended to prevent mass intolerance of minority groups. Holocaust denial laws, for example, restrict people’s right to publicly challenge the occurrence or nature of the mass genocide of Jews in Europe during World War II. Holocaust denial is a crime in a number of Western democracies, including Belgium, France, and Germany, and is limited in other countries by broader hate speech legis-

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lation, such as in Canada and the United Kingdom (Boyle, 2001; Douglas-Scott, 1999; Coliver, Boyle, and D’Souza, 1992).

The enforcement of such legislation is often highly contested, but the widespread presence of such restrictions shows that democratic states can (and do) set limits on speech. Political tolerance research provides a wealth of evidence on the sources of political intolerance (for a review, see Sullivan and Transue, 1999), yet it remains unclear whether support for legally backed forms of censorship aimed at reducing hate speech have the same foundations as politically intolerant dispositions more generally. In other words, it is unclear whether some people make a principled distinction between hate speech and other speech they find objectionable.

Social scientists are only beginning to make sense of the ways people’s actual experiences with social diversity influence their attitudes toward racist speech. Despite increased interest in the past 15 years into the effect of social networks on political behavior and attitudes, little research has focused on social network composition and the types of attitudes people hold toward democratic rights. A long tradition in social psychology documents how creating cooperative relationships between people from different backgrounds can decrease intergroup prejudice (Allport, 1958), yet little effort has been made to see how diverse contact influences individuals’ political tolerance judgments (see, however, Mutz, 2002, 2006; Cigler and Joslyn, 2002). This article suggests that social networks are a key, underexplored variable for understanding political tolerance judgments, especially when distinctions between racist speech and other forms of speech are conceptualized into our understanding of civil liberties judgments.

How does racial and ethnic diversity affect the limits that individuals place on speech rights? The hypothesis tested here is that white youth with affective ties to racial minorities will be more likely to ascribe to a multicultural form of tolerance—one that makes distinctions between exclusionary forms of speech, which are illegal in most Western democracies, and other forms of objectionable speech. The analysis is based on a unique youth data set, the Canadian Youth Study (CANYS), which includes detailed social network information (Stolle et al., 2006). Evidence that network diversity influences the type of speech people tolerate suggests an evolving norm of multicultural political tolerance that reflects the legal balancing act performed between individual rights to speech and the need to ensure social inclusion and prevent discrimination.

Political Tolerance and Contact

The ability to deal with diversity has long played an important role in the discourse around political tolerance. Being exposed to a diverse group of peers and ideas arguably leads people to reconsider their position or values and try to reconcile others’ point of view (Coser, 1975; Mutz, 2002; Reich
and Purbhoo, 1975; Huckfeldt, Mendez, and Osborn, 2004). Exposure to diversity is typically argued to foster the development of more general cognitive skills necessary for applying abstract democratic principles to concrete situations (Nie, Junn, and Stehlik-Barry, 1996; Vogt, 1997). Part of the reason for this is that “diversity provides an incentive to lessen complete reliance on established beliefs and predispositions” (Marcus et al., 1995:7), which in turn might help individuals look past their initial dislike of a group.

Many previous studies mention exposure to diversity to explain relationships between demographic characteristics, political participation, and political tolerance, but there is almost no research that directly tests the exposure-tolerance link. There are two notable exceptions. One is the limited literature that addresses the urban/rural cleavage on political tolerance. People living in urban areas consistently report higher levels of political tolerance than those living in rural areas (Stouffer, 1963; Nunn, Crockett, and Williams, 1978; Wilson, 1985, 1991; Moore and Ovadia, 2006). The urban diversity hypothesis essentially argues that urban areas expose people to greater social diversity (Wilson, 1985, 1991). The logic, as expressed in Stouffer’s (1963:122) original study of political tolerance in the United States, is that urban dwellers are forced to “rub shoulders” with a variety of people (see also Wirth, 1938).

Perhaps the main shortcoming of this research is that there is no direct measure of actual exposure. Relying on community-level Census data in the United States, actual contact between groups is simply an assumption, and an unlikely one given what is known about residential segregation in urban centers in the United States (Iceland, Weinberg, and Steinmetz, 2002). Furthermore, the mechanisms by which such contact is argued to increase tolerance are underspecified. Although Stouffer originally argued that exposure increases one’s ability to deal with dissenting ideas, there is a substantial gap in theorizing about this relationship when it comes to exposure between groups defined by salient social characteristics.

Work by Mutz (2002, 2006) provides the only direct test of how network diversity (in her case, diversity of political opinions) can affect political tolerance judgments. As she notes, “[t]he capacity to see that there is more than one side to an issue, that a political conflict is, in fact, a legitimate controversy with rationales on both sides, translates to greater willingness to extend civil liberties to even those groups whose political views one dislikes a great deal” (Mutz, 2006:85). In essence, exposure to political diversity is argued to increase cognitive skills, like perspective taking, needed to deal with diversity, which in turn leads to a greater willingness to extend civil liberties to objectionable groups.

There are two reasons why this line of thinking might apply to other types of diversity, such as racial and ethnic diversity. First, one might argue that many political disagreements are based, at least partially, in salient social groups that structure how individuals interpret and experience the society in
which they live (Young, 1990:42–48). Voting behavior research has long documented how religious identification, class, racial identity, and other salient social categories influence people’s political opinions (Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee, 1954). One might expect, therefore, that being exposed to a variety of people may expose an individual to a variety of political perspectives. A second, related possibility is that exposure to social diversity may increase the cognitive skills that are argued to increase political tolerance, such as perspective taking and the ability to deal with conflict. This line of reasoning would hold even if greater social diversity is not directly related to greater political diversity among one’s associates.

The cognitive empowerment view suggests that greater diversity should promote a willingness to extend civil liberties to a variety of groups; however, an equally plausible alternative hypothesis can be found in social psychological research on intergroup contact. This research generally finds that contact decreases prejudice among social groups primarily through a process of identification with out-group members (Allport, 1958; Tafjel and Turner, 1986; Pettigrew, 1998a). Contact with the targets of tolerance judgments has been shown to increase political tolerance (Golebiowska, 1996). Yet, racially and ethnically diverse social networks may potentially decrease political tolerance of racist speech by promoting more positive attitudes toward the groups at which such speech is directed. This extension of the contact hypothesis may only apply to racist speech that directly challenges racial equality. While social intolerance is often associated with political intolerance in general (Stenner, 2005), exposure to racial and ethnic diversity should also lead to a type of political tolerance that views racist speech as out of bounds; that is, outside the realm of legitimate political debate and discourse.

There is evidence to suggest that people are capable of similar reasoning. Experimental research on political tolerance demonstrates that an appeal to ideas of social equality can make politically tolerant responses more difficult (Dow and Lendler, 2002; Gibson, 1998; Gross and Kinder, 1998; Cowan et al., 2002; Sniderman et al., 1996; Druckman, 2001). For example, several studies have shown that when respondents are primed about equality issues before being asked to make a tolerance judgment for racist groups, they are more likely to deny such groups’ civil liberties (Druckman, 2001; Cowan et al., 2002). Although this relationship works in the opposite direction as well, there is some evidence that politically tolerant responses are more malleable when other issues are raised than vice-versa (Peffley, Knigge, and Hurwitz, 2001; Gibson, 1998). When concern about racial equality is evoked, people appear to be more willing to restrict the civil liberties of groups they deem socially intolerant.

There is also a large body of research that argues that increases in contextual diversity tend to promote intolerance (Blumer, 1958; Giles and Buckner, 1993; Tolbert and Grummel, 2003). The “threat hypothesis” suggests that as areas become increasingly diverse, out-group hostility increases. This line of research applies mostly to contextual diversity, where actual interaction is not assumed.
There are two possibilities, then, for how exposure to racial and ethnic diversity may affect political tolerance judgments. On the one hand, political tolerance research suggests that exposure is likely to increase the cognitive skills that make tolerance more likely. On the other hand, social psychological research suggests that racial and ethnic diversity may make tolerance of racist speech less likely.

These two processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive when distinctions across target groups are incorporated into our understanding of political tolerance. Exposure to racial and ethnic diversity may have different effects on political tolerance judgments, depending on the type of target group (Harell, 2010). Similar to political diversity, racial and ethnic diversity should be positively related to an individual’s cognitive capacity to deal with politically diverse speech. In general, this should lead to more political tolerance. However, racial and ethnic diversity should also make racist speech more threatening and increase identification with the intended victims of such speech. This, in turn, should decrease tolerance of such speech. The expected outcome is that those with more racially and ethnically diverse networks are most likely to be “multicultural tolerators” — people who are willing to allow objectionable speech, yet favor limits on speech that threatens the social inclusion of minorities in society. Those not exposed to racial and ethnic diversity should be less likely to make distinctions across speech, and other variables should push them either toward intolerance or tolerance.

Diverse social networks, then, may provide citizens with the cognitive skills needed to tolerate ideas they find objectionable (see, e.g., Stouffer, 1963; Duch and Gibson, 1992; Mutz, 2002), the cognitive impact of racial and ethnic diversity may extend only to groups that are seen as legitimate actors in democratic debate; such exposure may make racist speech seen as particularly illegitimate. The result of this process is the development of target group distinctions in the willingness to extend civil liberties judgments, which is argued to represent a more multicultural form of tolerance. This logic can be stated more formally as follows.

H₁: Individuals exposed to more racial and ethnic diversity should be less tolerant of racist speech.

H₂: Exposure to racial and ethnic diversity should increase tolerance of other types of objectionable speech.

Social networks are hypothesized to be key in explaining target group distinctions. Social networks capture the relational ties between individuals.

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2There is, however, a tension between focusing on social networks and diversity. People tend to associate with others who are similar with respect to demographic variables like race and gender as well as attitudinal and behavioral attributes (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001; Kandel, 1978; Joyner, 2000). This tendency for “like to attract like” is known
Such ties allow for the distribution of information, norms, and ideas among people (Granovetter, 1973, 1983; Coleman, 1988; Burt, 1997; Lin, Cook, and Burt, 2001). The focus on social networks is important because social psychological research suggests that certain conditions must be met: namely, contact must be among individuals of relatively equal status where shared goals and activities are cooperative in nature (Allport, 1958). In such settings, consistent evidence suggests that intergroup animosity can be reduced, and that larger, supra-ordinate identities can be formed among members of formerly dissimilar groups (Gaertner and Dovidio, 2000; Dovidio et al., 2001).

The logic developed in this article is that social networks influence attitudes, consistent with the largely experimental work on the contact hypothesis (see, e.g., Abrams, Hogg, and Marques, 2005; Brown and Hewstone, 2006; Pettigrew, 1998b; Dovidio, Gaertner, and Kawakami, 2003). However, outside the laboratory, the direction of causation is less clear. The people that one chooses to associate with are likely a result of one’s attitudes toward social diversity as much as they are a cause of them (Stolle and Hooghe, 2004). Exposure and attitudes likely exist within a reciprocal relationship, especially if we think about an individual’s networks over the lifecourse rather than at a given moment in time (Kandel, 1978). Although youth experiences with diversity may have a lasting impact on their attitudes about social diversity and political tolerance, there is certainly a risk that young people’s willingness to make friends with people from different backgrounds is partly shaped by preexisting attitudes about racial and ethnic diversity. While the cross-sectional research design employed here cannot address the issue of causality directly, controlling for preexisting attitudes toward social diversity is certainly a necessary first step to assess whether social networks appear to have an independent effect on political tolerance attitudes.

Data and Methods

The data used for this analysis are drawn from the Canadian Youth Survey (CANYS) conducted among 10th- and 11th-grade students in Quebec and Ontario, Canada during the 2005–2006 school year (Stolle et al., 2006). Students were sampled in schools from seven cities selected to vary in terms of size. The two largest cities were selected in each province (Toronto and Montreal), along with two medium-sized cities of approximately 150,000 inhabitants, and three small towns with approximately 15,000 inhabitants. As homophily and is a significant barrier to cross-group ties. Yet, evidence will be provided that such cross-group ties are present among the youth sampled in this study.

3The names of the medium and small-sized cities may not be disclosed to ensure the anonymity of the schools in the study.
Schools in each city were selected to vary in terms of the socioeconomic status of students and the homogeneity of the student population. In the medium and small towns, all school boards were contacted and an effort was made to survey as many schools as possible. Two classes, on average, were surveyed, with an average response rate of 94 percent in each class. Within each city in the sample, the socioeconomic and linguistic backgrounds of the students are similar to the city in which they were sampled, and the distribution of schools approximates the language and public/private distribution of schools in each city. The sample, while not representative, is suggestive of the context within these seven cities.

In total, 3,334 respondents completed the self-administered questionnaire. The average age of respondents was 16 years old. The gender breakdown was 58 percent female and 42 percent male. The gender imbalance reflects the inclusion of several private girls schools in the sample. Boys-only schools are less common in general, and this is true in the school sample as well. The racial composition of the sample was 62 percent white and 38 percent nonwhite. It should be noted that for nonwhite respondents, contact with those from different ethnic and racial backgrounds can include both majority and other minority group members. Furthermore, nonwhite respondents may already self-identify as the targets of racist speech. There is little reason, therefore, to believe that the logic in this article should apply in a similar manner for minority youth. For this reason, the analysis is limited to white youth (N = 2,071).

A sample in Canada is ideal for testing how attitudes toward racist speech compare to other types of objectionable speech. Canada has both civil and criminal laws that prohibit hate speech, and court challenges to this legislation have consistently failed (Sumner, 2004). The focus on youth is also intentional, as one might expect younger generations to be more likely to see racist speech as harmful given the increasingly diverse nature of Western societies. This is consistent with recent work that has found heightened intolerance of racist speech among the most recent generation of university graduates in the United States (Chong, 2006).

The dependent variable is constructed from a political tolerance battery. Modified from commonly used tolerance batteries to make it amenable to a self-administered survey, the goal was to include a number of potentially objectionable groups that differ in the exclusionary nature of their speech. The final battery includes five different potentially objectionable groups: racists, skinheads, radical Muslims, gay rights activists, and Quebec sepa-

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4For detailed information about the sample characteristics, see the CANYS technical report.
5The high percentage of nonwhite respondents reflects the oversampling of urban areas in this study. Consistent with immigration patterns in Canada, the largest group of nonwhite respondents is of Asian descent.
6Of the 2,071 white respondents, 90 percent provided valid responses for the entire battery.
ratists. Racists and skinheads were included to represent racist groups that promote exclusionary ideas. For each group, the respondent is asked to indicate whether it should be allowed to (1) hold a peaceful march in the respondent’s neighborhood and (2) talk on television about the members’ views. The answer categories are dichotomous (yes or no). The respondent was also asked to indicate his or her level of agreement or disagreement with each group on an 11-point Likert scale. The inclusion of this last item allows replication of a modified version of the “least-liked” methodology created by Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus (1979) while still ensuring comparisons across different types of target groups.

Based on the reported tolerance of different types of groups, respondents are coded as falling into three categories:

1. **Intolerant**: These individuals do not support speech rights for any group they found objectionable.

2. **Multicultural Tolerators**: Individuals who support speech rights for at least one group they found objectionable, but did not extend speech rights to an exclusionary groups.

3. **Absolute Tolerators**: Individuals who extended speech rights, irrespective of the target group.

The coding is based on whether each respondent was willing to allow at least one objectionable group and one exclusionary group to both have civil liberties, controlling for prior disagreement. Among white respondents who found at least one of each type of group objectionable, 27 percent were intolerant, 12 percent fell into the absolute tolerance category, and fully 61 percent of young people made a distinction between exclusionary groups and other groups, only permitting the latter to express themselves publicly.

The main independent variables are questions about the composition of the respondents’ networks. Each respondent was asked how many of their close friends (strong ties) and how many of the other people at school they speak with other than their close friends (weak ties) were from a different race or ethnicity than them. Answers varied on a seven-point scale from

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7 A fourth category is, of course, possible: those who only support exclusionary groups but not the other groups. While theoretically possible, this response pattern is extremely unlikely (about 2 percent of all respondents) and reflects the fact that exclusionary speech does seem to be particularly reprehensible to young citizens in a multicultural country like Canada. These respondents have been dropped from the analysis.

8 Two dummy variables were created: one dummy for if they allowed racists and/or skinheads to participate in both civil liberties activities (those who did not disagree with at least one of these groups were dropped) and one dummy if they allowed at least one of the other groups they found objectionable to participate in both civil liberties. The combination of responses to these dummy variables was used to create the three categories of the dependent variable. Because political tolerance requires prior disagreement (Sullivan, Piereson, and Marcus, 1979), respondents who did not disagree with at least one of each type of group were excluded from the analysis (N = 363).

9 In the English version, the questions referred only to a “different race” rather than “race and ethnicity.”
0 = none to 6 = all, where higher scores always indicate more diversity. Due to the high intercorrelation between answers to these two questions ($r = 0.66$), the scales were combined into a single additive scale that ranges from 0 to 6.\textsuperscript{10} The resulting scale is skewed toward 0, with a mean of 2.0.

In an attempt to partly control for attitudinal dispositions toward racial minorities, a scale measuring closeness to minorities was developed based on responses to three questions. Respondents were asked to rate how close they felt to three groups: Muslims, immigrants, and blacks. These groups represent three salient categories of minorities in Canada. Answers run from 0 to 10, where 10 meant feeling close to the interests, feelings, and ideas of the group, and 0 meant feeling distant from that group. The responses were compiled into a single additive scale, ranging from 0 to 1 (alpha = 0.835).

The inclusion of this variable is essential in order to minimize the potential that a social network effect is spurious, resulting from the relationship between racial tolerance and political tolerance that has been noted in previous research (Stenner, 2005). While controlling for closeness to minorities does not solve the issue of causality between racial tolerance and social network diversity, it does strengthen the argument that social networks may have an independent effect on political tolerance judgments above and beyond any relationship between racial and political tolerance.

In addition, contextual factors that may affect the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds are included as controls as well. Contextual diversity may confound the impact of actual interaction on political attitudes by limiting the opportunity for some youth to make cross-group friendships (in homogenous areas) and by counteracting identification in areas characterized by diversity that do not result in positive interaction. In other words, diverse areas may confound the effects of network diversity on political attitudes. To control for this, the natural log of the mean level of visible minorities per school is included as a control. The measure of racial diversity is calculated based on the number of racial minorities sampled in each school.\textsuperscript{11}

Because network diversity and tolerance judgments are also influenced by a host of demographic and political variables, a number of additional control variables are also included in the models, including level of political activism (0 to 5 or more), political knowledge (scale from 0 to 1 based on three questions), organization involvement (0 to 4 or more organizations), gender ($1 = \text{female}$), urban/rural ($1 = \text{urban}$), parental education level ($1 = \text{one or both parents university educated}$), religious affiliation (nonreligious is ref-

\textsuperscript{10}In instances when respondents provided valid responses to only one of the two network questions, that value was used in the scale. Four percent of the final scale is based on only one of the two questions.

\textsuperscript{11}An official breakdown of the entire student population at each institution would be preferable, but record keeping of this type of information varied substantially across schools and prevented a reliable school-reported measure.
Network Diversity and Multicultural Tolerance

Table 1 reports the mean network diversity score by type of political tolerance. The expectation is that those with more racial and ethnic diversity in their networks will be more likely to fall into the multicultural tolerance category. In the first column, results are reported for all white respondents. Consistent with expectations, those categorized as multicultural tolerators have the highest mean network diversity. However, these differences are not significant when the standard errors are adjusted for the clustered nature of the data.

Clearly, having friends from different racial and ethnic backgrounds is partially dependent on one’s opportunities to meet such people. Given the contingent nature of network diversity on one’s context, it is useful to examine the relationship between network diversity and tolerance attitudes in contexts where such diversity is possible. In the second column of Table 1, mean network diversity is presented only for respondents from schools where at least 10 percent of the sample was nonwhite. The pattern is consistent with expectations. Those in the multicultural tolerance category report, on average, that more of their friends and school acquaintances are from a different racial or ethnic background compared to those in the intolerant category ($p<0.10$). The difference between multicultural and absolute tolerance, however, is not significant.

### TABLE 1
Mean Network Diversity by Type of Tolerance Among White Youth

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Network Diversity Scale (0–6)</th>
<th>White Respondents</th>
<th>White Respondents in Schools with 10%+Visible Minority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean (s.e.) N</td>
<td>Mean (s.e.) N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intolerant</td>
<td>1.89 (0.12) 422</td>
<td>2.14 (0.13) 317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multicultural tolerator</td>
<td>2.07 (0.14) 934</td>
<td>2.49 (0.12) 656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absolute tolerator</td>
<td>2.00 (0.12) 185</td>
<td>2.20 (0.13) 149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.01 (0.11) 1,541</td>
<td>2.40 (0.11) 1,122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Table provides mean network diversity score by type of tolerance. Robust standard errors are reported, adjusted for the clustered nature of the data. See text for detailed coding of variables.

**Source:** Canadian Youth Study.
Given the potential for school context to affect both network diversity and political tolerance, as well as a host of other variables, Table 2 presents multinomial logistic regressions to test whether racial and ethnic diversity in one’s networks help distinguish between types of tolerance, after controlling for other important predictors. The raw coefficients are presented, with robust standard errors adjusted for the clustered nature of the data. As predicted, the racial and ethnic diversity in one’s networks has a significant negative effect on both intolerance \((p < 0.05)\) and absolute tolerance \((p < 0.05)\), and the size of the coefficients are similar.\(^{12}\) This means that racial and ethnic diversity in one’s networks increases the probability of being in the multicultural tolerance category, compared to both intolerance and absolute tolerance. It should be noted that these effects are robust with the inclusion of controls for attitudes toward minorities and the contextual

\(^{12}\text{Because there was a difference in the wording of the network diversity variables in the French and English version of the survey in Canada, the model was run separately with a variable for language of survey (not shown). No substantial differences in the variables of interest are observed.}\)
diversity of the school setting. In other words, testing directly for exposure to racial and ethnic diversity in one’s social networks suggests that such diversity can affect the types of tolerance judgments that young people make. While greater diversity pushes people away from intolerance, consistent with the political tolerance literature’s diversity hypothesis, this does not appear to extend to exclusionary groups that directly challenge the socially tolerant behaviors of these young people.

To highlight these effects, Figure 1 presents the predicted probabilities that a white youth in Canada will be in a given tolerance category as racial and ethnic diversity increases. CLARIFY is used to obtain the predicted probabilities and 95 percent confidence intervals (King, Tomz, and Wittenberg, 2000). For each one unit increase in racial and ethnic diversity, predicted probabilities are estimated where all interval level values are set at the sample mean, except gender, which is set to male, and the religious denomination variables, which are set to 0, making the nonreligious the default category.

FIGURE 1
Predicted Probabilities of Tolerance by Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Whites

NOTE: CLARIFY is used to obtain predictions and 95% confidence intervals. See text for details of estimation.
SOURCE: Canadian Youth Study.

When the model in Table 2 is run separately for those in schools with at least 10 percent nonwhite respondents, the network effects remain negative and significant (results not shown).
The pattern conforms to theoretical expectations. As network diversity increases from lowest to highest, the probability that a respondent is a multicultural tolerator increases from 50 percent to 75 percent for nonreligious men when all other variables are held at their means.\textsuperscript{14} The probability of intolerance or absolute tolerance decreases. While the difference between the predicted probabilities is not significant when network diversity equals 0, at every other point in the estimate the difference between multicultural tolerance and the two other categories are significant. This is precisely the pattern that was expected: exposure to racial diversity is significantly linked to the likelihood that an individual will express a more multicultural form of tolerance. It also appears, as expected, to be related to a decreased probability of both intolerance and absolute tolerance.

In sum, there is substantial support for the finding that young whites with more diverse networks are more likely to express a multicultural form of tolerance in Canada. Those surrounded by racially and ethnically diverse friends are more likely to allow a group they find objectionable to hold a peaceful march in their neighborhood and to talk on public television about their views. However, tolerating racist groups, as absolute tolerators do by definition, becomes increasingly unlikely. If tolerance of all speech, even racist speech, is the democratic ideal, as it appears in much of the literature, then increasing racial and ethnic diversity would seem to have uninvited consequences for democratic politics. Yet the evidence presented here provides reason for optimism in the sense that diversity does increase tolerance of some types of speech, while at the same time making support for the rights of exclusionary groups less likely. These findings suggest that the link between exposure to racial and ethnic diversity and attitudes about civil liberties is a development of distinctions across types of speech. Young Canadians who are able to make friends with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds appear to be more tolerant, both socially and politically. Yet, they are also more likely to differentiate the types of speech they see as legitimate in democratic debate.

\section*{Conclusion}

This study examined the extent to which exposure to racial and ethnic diversity influences tolerance judgments among youth in Canada. Despite a long tradition of emphasizing the benefit of exposure to diversity, little empirical research has examined the ways such exposure affects tolerance judgments. This article tested the argument that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity would have divergent effects on tolerance judgments de-\textsuperscript{14}Changing the simulation criteria does not change the direction of effects in Figure 1, although it does shift the levels. Given that the average response on the racial and ethnic ties scale was about 2, the estimations approximate the distribution in the full sample.
pending on the nature of speech that a young person was being asked to tolerate. Consistent with expectations, Canadian youth with more diverse networks were most likely to fall in the multicultural tolerance category that distinguishes between most speech and racist speech.

The contributions to the literature from this article are at least threefold. First, while the relationship between exposure and social tolerance is well documented, the relationship between exposure and civil liberties judgments has received little attention in previous research. Although Gibson (2004, 2006) and Stenner (2005) have begun to look more systematically at the relationship between social tolerance and political tolerance, the research presented here provides a more robust examination of the contact hypothesis by including actual exposure to racial and ethnic diversity. Furthermore, the focus on how exposure may have different effects depending on the nature of the objectionable speech is an addition to a literature that largely constructs political tolerance as a unidimensional concept. Finally, the focus on racial and ethnic diversity is intentional in order to address the source of many of the identity-based conflicts that emerge in multicultural democracies. In general, then, this article suggests strongly that there are benefits of examining the ways actual exposure to social diversity can and does influence the ways people respond to questions of rights in multicultural democracies.

Exposure to diversity obviously does not take place in a vacuum—it is likely to be strongly affected by the larger context in which such interaction occurs, including the overall levels of diversity in a country and the norm environment in which such diversity is experienced. Future research must explore whether the legal environment in Canada and its history of multiculturalism is uniquely likely to foster the types of relationships observed here. Is Canada representative of other advanced democracies in this respect, or is it an outlier? While the evidence presented here can only speak directly to the Canadian context, it does show the potential for racial and ethnic diversity to influence a key democratic value. Contemporary democracies are becoming more diverse and with this change have also come intense conflicts between individual rights and social inclusion. This study provides an insight into how the next generation may be inclined to resolve this conflict. In doing so, it points to the potentially powerful effect of social networks in shaping democratic values.

REFERENCES


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