Adolescents’ Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Rights and Nationalism in 25 Countries

Carolyn Barber, University of Missouri—Kansas City, barberce@umkc.edu
Judith Torney-Purta, University of Maryland, College Park, jtpurta@umd.edu
Katherine Fennelly, University of Minnesota, fenne007@umn.edu

Abstract

As they mature, adolescents shape their notions of citizenship and of national identity. They have experiences that may persuade them to support the rights or other minorities or, alternatively, to believe that limiting the opportunities of others enhances the position of their own group. In spite of this, most research on adolescents’ national identity and their attitudes toward out-groups has been conducted in a single country, such as the Netherlands or the United States. In the present study we analyze the association between support for immigrant rights and protective nationalism among nationally representative samples of 14-year-olds in 25 countries (tested in the IEA Civic Education Study). Adolescents in countries with greater religious diversity and more restrictive citizenship policies had lower levels of support for immigrants’ rights. Showing the importance of context, attitudes of protective nationalism were associated with negative attitudes toward immigrants’ rights in countries with larger proportions of foreign-born youth and in more academically oriented schools. In examining characteristics of schools that might reduce negative attitudes, students who believed that their schools fostered trust and valued student participation had more positive attitudes toward immigrant rights.

Keywords: nationalism, immigrants, social attitudes, adolescence, school contexts

Introduction

International migration is a global phenomenon with important political and social implications. In 2008 there were some 200 million international migrants, representing 3% of the world population. In spite of the magnitude of this global movement, or perhaps because of it, anti-immigrant sentiments are prevalent in many countries (Coenders, Gijsberts, & Scheepers, 2004; Simon & Lynch, 1999). Cross-national differences in adult attitudes toward immigrants and views on their rights have been related to conceptions of national identity that are based upon shared ethnicity and cultural affinity, sometimes at the exclusion of other groups (Joppke, 2005; Koopmans & Statham, 2000; Lewin-Epstein & Levanon, 2005).
Although there are a number of cross-national studies of nationalism and adult attitudes toward immigrants’ rights, there is little research on these topics among adolescents. Exceptions include studies by Haste (2006) and Haste and Hogan (2006), some research in the Netherlands (Verkuyten, 2004, 2009; Verkuyten & Steenhis, 2005), and school-based studies in the US. The latter studies, as Levy and Hughes (2009) note, are often situated in schools where special efforts are being made to combat prejudice, thus posing a threat to validity.

We build on previous work and extend it to a cross-national comparison of adolescents’ attitudes and their determinants using data from IEA Civic Education Study (CIVED: Torney-Purta, Lehmann, Oswald, & Schulz, 2001). We examine attitudes toward rights for immigrants and perceptions of national threats, and their associations with diversity at national and school levels, country policies toward immigrants, and characteristics of schools.

Research That Frames the Study of Attitudes toward Immigrants and Nationalism

Attitudes toward Immigrants and National Identity

Nationalism. National identity can be expressed as nationalism (exclusionary or chauvinistic feelings of national superiority) or as patriotism (expressing positive feelings about one’s country). At the individual level a need for group identification can lead to nationalistic, hostile reactions toward other nations. The benefits of nationalism for the individual include a sense of status or self esteem; however, supernationalism breeds intolerance and prejudice (Druckman, 1994). In contrast, expressions of pride in one’s country that permit criticism in order to foster positive change have been called constructive patriotism (Schatz, Staub, & Levine, 1999; Davidov, 2009).

Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Rights. Negative attitudes toward immigrants per se, and attitudes toward the granting of rights to immigrants are distinct but overlapping constructs. Permission to join the national community implies access to benefits and rights that are the domain of citizens. Attitudes toward rights for immigrants are often measured by agreement with statements regarding whether immigrants should be permitted to stay in the country, or to become full members by acquiring legal or social benefits. On the one hand, individuals who adhere to exclusionary conceptions of national identity would be expected to oppose both the admission of immigrants to the country, and the granting of basic rights. On the other hand, citizens of countries with strong emphases on civil and human rights may oppose the admission of large numbers of immigrants, but have relatively favorable views of immigrants’ rights for those who are resident in the country (Gorodzeisky & Semyonov, 2009).
Connecting Nationalism with Attitudes toward Immigrants. Exclusionist conceptions of national identity are hypothesized to be the source of negative perceptions of immigrants, particularly when they are based upon ethnicity, rather than civic membership or citizenship (Castles & Miller, 2003; Lewin-Epstein & Levanon, 2005). This link between nationalism and ethnic preference is illustrated by the finding that a majority of adult respondents in 17 of the 21 countries surveyed in the 2003 European Social Survey expressed a preference for few or no immigrants of a different background from the majority population (Facchini & Mayda, 2006). High levels of nationalism, particularly when associated with protective feelings about the nation, are also correlated with adults’ perceptions of immigrants as threats (Coenders & Scheepers, 2004; Rajzman, Davidov, Schmidt, & Hochman, 2008).

Similarly, as they mature, children move from a focus on themselves to an understanding of their place within groups. They learn to conform to group norms and to distinguish between “friends and foes”—the basis for out-group hostility (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). The mere formation of groups results in preferences for one’s own group and the perception that it is better, friendlier, more competent and stronger than other groups. A similar process with respect to the larger community results in nationalism that ties individuals’ self-esteem to that of the nation. Thus, addressing the cultural and national factors that relate to attitudes toward immigrants and national among adults may also be important in understanding the contexts in which they develop among adolescents.

Cultural and National Factors in Relation to Anti-immigrant Attitudes

Cultural dissimilarity. A quarter of a century ago Zolberg et al. (1981) argued that highly homogeneous cultures with a dominant religion and little recent immigration would have lower thresholds of tolerance for cultural dissimilarity than heterogeneous societies. More recently, however, researchers have emphasized the importance of perceived differences between natives and immigrants, concluding that the larger the differences between two cultures’ values, religion and visibility, the greater the problems in intercultural relations (Stephan, Ybarra, & Morrison, 2009; Ward, cited in Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Both Coenders and Scheepers (2004) and Pehrson, Vignoles, and Brown (2008) reported that the association between nationalist attitudes and exclusionist reactions to immigrants varied with the degree of ethnic diversity in a country. The sheer proportion of immigrants from different backgrounds may also influence attitudes: Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders (2002) found that within countries where there were larger proportions of non-EU citizens there was stronger support for ethnic exclusionism—particularly among manual laborers.

Among adolescents a high proportion of foreign-born youth can be hypothesized to affect support for immigrants’ rights in opposing ways; on the one hand larger numbers of immigrant
students should increase opportunities for contact (and thus foster positive attitudes). On the other hand, it may increase the perception of competition or threat on the part of native-born students, and thus decrease support for immigrant rights. Verkuyten and Stenhiss (2005), for example, found that contact between asylum seekers and Dutch adolescents was associated with more negative attitudes.

**Countries’ policies toward immigrants.** At the national level more or less restrictive immigration policies both reflect prevailing attitudes and influence them. Policies regarding the number of immigrants to be admitted, their skills, background characteristics and national origins influence perceptions of their similarity or dissimilarity to natives, and their entitlement to resources (Deaux, 2006). Citizenship policies that determine who is formally admitted to membership in the society can also affect natives’ concepts of national identity. Fourteen-year-olds are socialized within this national context of attitudes toward foreigners as reflected in their exposure to adults’ attitudes, to government policies regarding immigrants and immigration, and to national discourse on these topics. We plan to investigate how national policies designed to control the influx of immigrants or delay their eligibility for citizenship are related to the association between adolescents’ attitudes toward immigrants’ rights and their conceptions of national identity.

In summary, we hypothesize that many of the contextual factors that have been found to be associated with adults’ attitudes will also be influential for adolescents. In addition to these broad cultural and national factors, it is useful to examine more proximal contextual characteristics that can influence adolescents’ attitudes uniquely. School is one context that is thought to be especially relevant to attitude formation among adolescents (Hello, Scheepers, Vermulst, & Gerris, 2004).

**Educational Context in Relation to Immigrant Attitudes**

**Contexts for cognitive development.** There are many reasons to suspect that the school context would have a profound influence on attitude formation. Education (and school context in particular) is hypothesized to increase cognitive complexity, or the ability to undertake sophisticated analyses of problems that contradict ethnic stereotypes. The cognitive component of this socialization works in several ways, including increasing knowledge of diverse norms and values. Overall, schooling increases exposure to political communications and values that promote tolerance and eschew prejudice (Zaller, 1992). Sidanius (1988) cites numerous studies finding that prejudice is correlated with such cognitive traits as intolerance of ambiguity, cognitive rigidity, and low levels of abstract reasoning. This suggests that classroom practices that teach young people to engage in cognitively complex discussions have the potential to reduce negative attitudes toward immigrants.
Educational institutions can socialize students to apply their developing cognitive skills toward understanding and respecting diversity by teaching democratic value orientations and models of positive participatory behavior (Rubin & Giarelli, 2008). According to recent research on programs designed to increase student input, schools serve as institutions in which young people can practice the skills necessary for participation in the larger society (Pasek, Feldman, Romer, & Jamieson, 2008). According to Levy and Hughes (2009), fostering identification with the school as a unit can be beneficial in reducing prejudice. We expect that students who report stronger connections to and participation in their schools will show greater support for immigrants’ rights. Also through participation, students gain experience in working with classmates of varying backgrounds and learn to appreciate different perspectives. In addition, teachers may model respect for diverse perspectives by facilitating class discussions in which differing viewpoints are respected. We expect that students who have learned to respect diversity will exhibit greater support for immigrants’ political rights.

**Demographic composition of schools.** Given that peers work together in a school, it is also useful to examine the demographic composition of schools to further understand the context in which students are developing social attitudes. Since studies by Lipset (1960) half a century ago, researchers have demonstrated that educational attainment mitigates prejudice toward out-groups (e.g., Boehnke, Hagan, & Hefler, 1998; Gniewosz & Novak, 2008, both in Germany). Adolescents’ attitudes toward immigrants may also be influenced by the percentage of foreign-born residents in their schools, with attitudes more negative where many immigrant students are present (Gimpel & Lay, 2008; Hjerm, 2005).

An advantage of the CIVED study is that it includes representative samples of students surveyed in their schools; this permits us to consider how adolescents are affected by everyday experiences in settings in which they have opportunities for contact with peers who are immigrants. In previous analyses of CIVED data in the United States the aggregate socioeconomic status of students in individual schools was shown to influence attitudes (such as attitudes toward voting and support for immigrants’ rights) over and above the effects of individual-level SES (Torney-Purta, Barber, & Wilkenfeld, 2007; Wilkenfeld, 2009). The availability of these data in the CIVED Study allows us to examine three potential mechanisms for SES influences on adolescents’ attitudes toward immigrants’ rights, and national identity: through their parents (whose education and resources define individual SES), through their schools, via interactions with peers of varying socioeconomic levels and national origins, and by fostering high educational aspirations (as shown in Barber & Torney-Purta, 2009, in an analysis of political efficacy and support for women’s rights).


**Research Questions**

In sum, we expect that many of the national variables associated with adult support for immigrants’ rights and national identity will have similar associations among adolescents. In addition, we will examine the ways in which adolescents’ school experiences are related to their attitudes toward immigrant rights. These are our research questions:

1. To what extent are adolescents’ attitudes toward immigrants’ rights correlated with chauvinism, or protective nationalism?

2. What country-level demographic or contextual characteristics and policies are associated with adolescents’ support for immigrants’ rights? How are these country-level variables related to the correlation between attitudes toward immigrants’ rights and protective nationalism?

3. What school-related characteristics (school context variables and individual perceptions of experiences at school) are related to support for immigrants’ rights? How are these school-level variables related to the correlation between attitudes toward immigrants and protective nationalism?

**Data Sources and Methods**

We analyzed data from nationally representative samples of adolescents that participated in the CIVED study. (Torney-Purta et al. 2001; Schulz & Sibberns, 2004). These data, which were collected in 1999, provide valuable information on the development of civic and political attitudes in today’s young adults. In the present study we limited the analysis to data from twenty-five CIVED countries (excluding Cyprus, Hong Kong, and Latvia, which lacked certain indicators central to this analysis) to test models of the determinants of adolescent attitudes toward immigrants’ rights. As a result, a total of 83,026 students from 3787 schools were used at the first stages of this analysis. To account for differential probabilities of selection, a sampling weight was calculated for each participating student. These weights are used in analysis to ensure national representation.

**Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Rights**

The primary outcome of interest is the Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Rights scale, described in Torney-Purta et al. (2001). The five items administered in the CIVED survey in 1999 were simplified versions of items used prior to 1997 with adults or older adolescents. Students were asked to rate on a four-point scale how strongly they agreed with each of these items, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Confirmatory factor analysis
was used to determine the uni-dimensionality of the scale, and item response theory (IRT) analyses to assess the comparability of items across all countries (Schulz & Sibbern, 2004). The resulting measure is an IRT scale set to have an international mean of 10 and a standard deviation of 2 across all countries in the full CIVED samples. Using a classical measurement approach, the alpha reliabilities across countries averaged .82. Average students in the CIVED sample (i.e., those with a scale score of 10) “agreed” with all items. The item about rights to education was most frequently endorsed; the item about rights to keep one’s native language was least frequently endorsed.

**Protective Nationalism**

In the scales developed for the IEA CIVED study two dimensions of national identity were measured: one was related to positive attitudes (e.g., “I have great love for this country”) and one related to protective attitudes (e.g., “we should stop outside influences on our country”) (Schulz & Sibbern, 2004). The latter variable, which we call “protective nationalism,” is similar to scales of chauvinistic patriotism examined in the cross-national adult studies reviewed above. It is an IRT scale described in Husfeldt and authors (2005) that assesses agreement with items measuring perceptions that ”outside influences” are harmful to the nation, similar to what is sometimes called exclusionism. Two examples items are, “to help protect jobs in this country, we should buy products made in this country” and “we should keep other countries from trying to influence political decisions made in this country.” We add this to our model first because of our interest in the relationship of protective nationalism to support for immigrants’ rights as it is predicted by contextual variables.

**Predictors of Immigrant Rights and its Association with Protective Nationalism**

The general purpose of this analysis is to examine how individual attitudes toward immigrants and toward nationalism are influenced by both proximal and distal social contexts. A three-level hierarchical linear model, in which students are nested within schools that are further nested within countries, enables us to examine these complex relationships. Predictor variables were considered at each level of analysis. Country-level variables consist of indicators of openness and diversity identified after considering a variety of data sources, while school- and individual-level variables were constructed from the CIVED data set.

**Country-level variables.** To select appropriate country-level measures of policies toward immigrants, we considered a wide range of variables, including numbers and categories of immigrants, support for anti-immigrant parties and policies regarding acceptance of refugees, naturalization and family reunification. Of these we selected three for inclusion in the present analysis based upon face validity of the measures and the availability of comparable
national-level data for the IEA countries in the late 1990s. These were percentage of foreign-born residents, diversity, and years to citizenship (see Appendix for description). Lower requirements are seen as a proxy for openness to immigrants since citizenship confers membership in a country and its formal rights and obligations (Gilbertson, 2006). However, the measure is limited in that does not account for cross-national variations in the extent to which ethnic nationals born outside of the country are either automatically considered citizens, or are put on a faster track to citizenship than other foreign nationals.

Second, the percentage of foreign-born residents in a country can be used as a crude measure of government openness to immigrants, with the caveat that there is wide cross-national variation in the extent to which unauthorized migrants are included in counts of the foreign-born. In spite of this caveat the advantage of the measure is that it is comparable in meaning across countries, as it was computed by aggregating data from the CIVED survey on the proportion of students in the country who reported that they were foreign-born.

Finally, we used measures of religious diversity (and at exploratory stages, of ethnic diversity) developed by Fearon (2003) and Alesina, Devleeshauwer, Easterly, Kurlat, & Wacziarg (2003) to capture the amount ethnic and religious diversity in each country. Fearon computed his measure of ethnic diversity by identifying 822 ethnic groups in the 160 countries that had a population of at least half a million residents in 1990. The average country had at least five ethnic groups, comprising more than 1% of the population, and half of the countries in his study had between three and six such groups. Using these categories he employed a measure of aggregate ethnic diversity which was the probability (between 0 and 1) that any two randomly selected individuals in a given country would be from different ethnic groups. Alesina et al. (2003) developed a comparable measure of religious diversity. Their work has been widely used in studies of political and ethnic conflict (e.g., Bangura, 2006; Hooghe, Reeskens, Stolle, & Trappers, 2009; Montalvo & Reynal-Querol, 2005).

**School-level variables.** At the middle level of analysis, we included variables related to characteristics of schools aggregated from students’ reports and identified in the literature as important predictors of student attitudes. These include the average socioeconomic status among students in a school, the proportion of foreign-born students in the school, and average expected educational attainment among students in a school. Average socioeconomic status in a school and proportion of foreign-born youth in a school each capture key demographic characteristics of a student’s school (and, by proxy, the surrounding community), and are therefore important to consider as controls for potential sources of within-country variation in contexts. Expectations of educational attainment are also included here.

**Student-level variables.** This final category included individual demographic information
Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism

(gender, immigrant status, and socioeconomic status), as well as students’ perceptions of their in-school experiences (openness of the classroom climate for discussion, confidence in the value of students’ participation in the school, reports from students that they have learned to understand people with different viewpoints and to work in groups, and their general levels of trust in schools). In addition, we included several variables that capture characteristics of students’ individual experiences in school and that may influence their attitudes toward immigrants’ rights. Scales of perceived openness of classroom discussion climates and confidence in the value of participation are IRT scales created as part of the original analysis of CIVED data (Schulz & Sibberns, 2004). The remaining three are individual items that were included in order to examine how students’ attitudes toward their schools relate to their attitudes toward society.

_Missing data._ Given the limited amount of missing data in these predictor variables, we chose to use listwise deletion to remove any case with missing data on any variable. This resulted in an analytic sample of 69,746 students in 3774 schools in the 25 countries. For further information on variable construction, see the Appendix.

_Statistical Methods_

In order to understand the relation between country-level characteristics and adolescents’ support for immigrants’ rights, we computed bivariate correlations between country-level means for the outcome variable and country-level predictors. We were also interested in examining the relationship between national indicators and the strength of the association between immigrant attitudes and protective nationalism among 14-year-olds in the study. From this initial analysis, we identified a small number of country-level variables worthy of further examination as predictors in a multilevel model of adolescent attitudes because of their salience to our research questions and the completeness of data available for CIVED countries. Together with bivariate correlations at the school and student levels, these basic analyses also allowed us to assess potential multicollinearity among predictor variables.

While country-level correlational analyses are useful for initial identification of relevant predictors, they mask within-country variations in adolescents’ attitudes that may be due to individual student characteristics or school effects. To take these into account in our final analyses, we developed a series of three-level hierarchical linear models (HLM models: Raudenbush, Bryk, Cheong, & Congdon, 2005) of students’ attitudes. The design of our models follows the CIVED sample, in which students are nested within schools, which are nested within countries. There are several advantages to using HLM models for this analysis. First, the nested sampling design allows for the partitioning of variance at the student level (within schools), at the school level (between schools), and at the country level (between
countries). Secondly, the HLM models allow us to introduce student- and school-level statistical controls to study whether country-level differences are due to the composition of sampled adolescents within a country (e.g., proportions of foreign-born youth), as opposed to country-level policy variables. Thirdly, HLM builds more complex models, in which predictors are considered at all three levels, while taking sample clustering into account.

All of the characteristics of adolescents and their schools were centered on their grand means in order to control effects across all levels of analysis. However, protective nationalism was centered on its group mean, with random effects, in order to examine its relationship with attitudes toward immigrant rights, and to facilitate the modeling of cross-level interactions. This allowed us to identify characteristics of countries and schools that moderate the relationship between the two individual-level variables.

Using this basic design, we computed four models of support for immigrants’ rights. In Model 1, the primary focus was on country-level variables associated with average support for immigrants’ rights. In this model, the only student- and school-level variables considered were protective nationalism, average socioeconomic status and proportion foreign-born at the school level, and gender, immigrant status, and socioeconomic status at the individual level. Once these variables were in place, we added country-level variables, one at a time, to see whether they were still significantly related to the outcome. In this step, we also used country-level variables to moderate the relationship between protective nationalism and support for immigrant rights. This is also referred to as a “cross-level interaction” between protective nationalism and country-level variables.

We then looked within countries to determine how aspects of educational context influence adolescents’ support for immigrants’ rights. In Model 2, we looked at how variables associated with students’ schools, and their subjective experiences within their schools, were related to average support for immigrants’ rights by considering them as predictors of the intercept. In this step we also tested the extent to which these educational variables moderate the relationship between protective nationalism and support for immigrants’ rights. School-level education variables were also added as they modeled the protective nationalism slope.

**Results**

**Descriptive Statistics**

We begin by reporting the average levels of support for immigrants’ political and economic rights (see the first column of Table I), as well as the country’s rank order among the 25-country samples analyzed here. The strongest support for immigrants’ rights was found in
Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism

Colombia, Sweden, Greece, and Poland. The weakest support was found in Germany, Slovenia, Switzerland, and Hungary.

The second set of columns of Table I reports the average levels of protective nationalism among students in each of the 25 countries, and each country’s rank order. Greece, Poland, Romania, and Portugal are the countries in which students have the highest levels of protective nationalism. The lowest are found among students in England, Germany, Norway, and the United States.

Also included in this table are the within-country bivariate correlations between support for immigrants’ political and economic rights and the level of protective nationalism. As indicated in Table 1, the correlations vary greatly across countries. Based on previous literature, we expected to see mostly negative correlations between immigrant rights attitudes and protective nationalism. Negative correlations are indeed found in approximate one-third of the countries in our sample, including (in descending order) Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, the United States, England, and Australia. However, in a smaller number of countries (Belgium [French], Slovenia, Finland, Slovak Republic, Italy, and Estonia) the association between these two attitudes is not statistically significant, and in the remaining countries there is a positive association between support for immigrants’ rights and protective nationalism. In other words, in countries such as Bulgaria, greater protective nationalism is found among students who also have greater support for immigrants’ rights. In order to explore these findings, in the next step of the analysis we examined country-level characteristics and policies as they related to the within-country correlations.

Country-Level Bivariate Correlations

In Table 2, we report two series of bivariate correlational analyses. The first series (in Row 1) examines the correlation between average levels of support for immigrants’ rights in a country and various country-level characteristics and policies. The correlation between the degree of ethnic diversity in a country and positive attitudes toward immigrant rights was not statistically significant. However, there was a significant negative correlation between average support for immigrant rights in a country and its degree of religious diversity. In addition, because the negative correlation between the years to citizenship variable and support for immigrants’ rights was statistically significant at $p < .10$, we thought it worthy of inclusion in a more complex analysis with statistical controls.

The second series of correlations (in Row 2) show the relationship between country-level characteristics and the strength and direction of the association between support for support
for immigrants’ rights and protective nationalism. This analysis enabled us to explore why some countries demonstrate nonsignificant, or even positive, correlations between these two attitudes (as reported in Table 1) The relationship between these them is marginally related to the amount of religious diversity in a country, such that greater religious diversity is associated with a stronger, more negative relationship between protective nationalism and support for immigrants’ rights. Protective nationalism is most strongly and negatively related to support for immigrants’ rights in countries with higher proportions of foreign-born adolescents. In other words, supporting immigrants’ rights and protecting one’s country are only thought to be antithetical in nations where the proportion of immigrants exceeds a particular threshold. Note that with only one exception (Russian Federation), in every country where 8 percent or more of the population is foreign born, high protective nationalism is significantly associated with low support for immigrant rights.

[Insert Table 2 About Here]

Hierarchical Linear Models

The HLM analyses permit a more complete examination of the relationship between country-level characteristics and adolescents’ attitudes, after implementing controls at the student and school levels. In partitioning the variance in adolescents’ attitudes toward immigrants, we found that 5 percent of the variance in the Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants scale was due to differences among countries, and that 8 percent was due to differences among schools. Although these proportions are small, the reliability of the measure of Support for Immigrants’ Rights at the country level (λ > .95) indicates that these country-level differences are robust and worthy of further modeling with HLM.

All HLM models are presented in Table 3. The first model presented is a “base” model, in which the only predictor variable is protective nationalism. This model presents all random effects addressed in subsequent models: average attitudes toward immigrants’ rights in a country (country-level variance in the intercept), differences between countries in how protective nationalism and attitudes toward immigrant rights are related to one another (country-level variance in the slope), differences between schools in average levels of support for immigrants’ rights (school-level variance in the intercept), and differences between schools in the relation between protective nationalism and attitudes toward immigrants’ rights (school-level variance in the slope). Variance between individuals, regardless of group membership (student-level variance), is also reported here.

[Insert Table 3 About Here]

Model 0 illustrates the model with our control variables added. Before adding other country-
and school-related indicators, we took into account the students’ genders, socioeconomic, and immigrant statuses, as well as the average socioeconomic status and proportion of immigrants in the schools that they attend. Being female, of high SES and foreign-born, and attending a high-SES school were all positively related to support for immigrants’ rights (Model 0, rows 8-10).

In Model 1, which focuses on identifying country-level predictors of support for immigrants’ rights, two variables were statistically significant. There was less support for such rights in countries with greater religious diversity (Model 1, row 2), and in countries with longer waits for eligibility for citizenship (Model 1, row 3). Additionally, while the proportion of foreign-born youth in the country does not predict average support for immigrants’ rights in a country (Model 1, row 4), it does moderate the relationship between such support and protective nationalism (Model 1, row 17). As was suggested in the descriptive statistics, protective nationalism is positively related to support for immigrants’ rights in countries with the fewest foreign-born youth, but negatively related to support for rights in countries with the most foreign-born youth. This is also illustrated graphically in Figure 1.

[Insert Figure 1 About Here]

Altogether, Model 1 explained 55% of the variability among countries in average support for immigrants’ rights (Row 21, model 1). The addition of this cross-level interaction term also explained 44% of the country-level variability in the association between protective nationalism and support for immigrants’ rights (Row 22, model 1).

In Model 2, we added within-country variables to determine how educational contexts related to students’ average support for immigrants’ rights. Several aspects of school experiences related to students’ attitudes toward immigrants’ rights. Students who reported a more open classroom climate for discussion, who were confident that student participation in school decision-making was valued, who learned about respecting others with different opinions, who learned to work in groups, and who trusted the school were more supportive of immigrant rights (Model 2, rows 11-15). The effect for confidence in the value of student participation was the strongest, while the effect for trust in schools was weakest. At the school level, we added one additional variable. Students who attended schools in which many students had expectations of further education beyond secondary school had higher support for immigrants’ rights (Model 2, Row 7).

We next examined cross-level interactions, in which characteristics of schools are used to predict the relation between protective nationalism and support for immigrants’ rights. In this analysis, we found that the relationship between protective nationalism and support for
immigrants’ rights is the most negative among students attending schools with the highest educational expectations (Model 2, Row 18).

Overall, these variables account for 13% of the student-level variance (Row 23, Model 2), and 40% of the school-level variance in support for immigrants’ rights (Row 19, Model 2). This model further reduced the country-level variance in these attitudes by 17%, suggesting that differences across countries, in educational expectations, and in how students perceive their schools helps explain differences in average support for immigrants’ rights. Finally, adding a term for the interaction of educational expectations and protective nationalism explained 9% of the variability between schools in how protective nationalism related to support for immigrants’ rights.

**Discussion**

There is a large and growing literature on cross-national attitudes toward immigrants, but few researchers have studied individuals at the time when their attitudes are being formed—in adolescence. Those studies that exist have been confined to one or two countries. During adolescence, as young people begin to define the boundaries of personal group membership and to differentiate themselves from others, they receive messages that may persuade them to support immigrant rights or, alternatively, to believe that limiting the opportunities enhances the position of their own group (Esses, Dovidio, Jackson, & Armstrong, 2001). Our analysis shows that 14-year-olds in over two dozen countries have formed opinions about immigrant rights that can be reliably measured, and that these attitudes are influenced by their backgrounds and experiences and by the national context and policies regarding immigration. Furthermore, there is reason to expect that adolescents’ attitudes will be relatively stable, and predictive of their opinions as adults (Hooghe & Wilkenfeld, 2008; Jennings & Stoker, 2004; Vollebergh, Iedema, & Raaijmakers, 2001).

An understanding of the determinants of attitudes toward immigrant rights has more than theoretical importance. Although many Western countries receive many immigrants, their civil and political rights are frequently limited. This is likely to be the result of conceptions of the nation-state as a culturally homogeneous entity, and of negative attitudes toward immigrants who are perceived as culturally distinct. At the heart of these attitudes are varying definitions of citizenship and national identity, topics that have emerged as a central analytic category in migration research (Koopmans & Stratham, 2000). When immigration is perceived to threaten prevailing views of nationhood citizens and their leaders may make rigid distinctions that define immigrants as undeserving of certain rights (Medrano & Koenig, 2005: 84). Indeed, in this analysis, restrictive immigration policies (as measured by of years of
residence before one is eligible to become a citizen) set by leaders were associated with lower support for immigrants’ rights in all countries.

The term “immigrant” encompasses a variety of groups from all over the globe, with differing ethnic and cultural ties to native populations. It is thus not surprising to find that the meaning of nationalism and its relationship to attitudes toward immigrants varied widely among the countries in our study. We found that it is the component of “chauvinistic patriotism” that is most likely to be associated with anti-immigrant sentiment. More specifically, the correlations seen here were non-significant in six countries, significantly negative in eight, and significantly positive in eleven others. However, many of these apparently contradictory findings were statistically accounted for by differences in the percentage of foreign-born youth in the country. This confirms Pehrson, Vignoles, and Brown’s (2008) finding that nationalism was most predictive of anti-immigrant prejudice among adults in countries where people felt that speaking the national language was very important.

Some researchers have suggested that ethnic heterogeneity within a country spawns restrictive and chauvinistic forms of nationalism. Others argue that lack of diversity and segregation reduces cross-cultural contact, leading to negative attitudes toward immigrants. Among adolescents in the CIVED study, religious diversity in a country (but not ethnic diversity) was associated with lower levels of support for immigrants’ rights. This mirrors Mayda’s (2006) analysis of data from the National Identity module of the 1995 ISSP, in which individuals who endorsed a multicultural society were less supportive of immigration as religious diversity increased within a country. Additionally, the amount of diversity in a country (in this analysis measured by the proportion of foreign-born youth) appears to influence the strength of association between protective nationalism support for immigrants’ rights. However, one should not interpret these findings to mean that contact with outgroups (in this case immigrants) necessarily increases prejudice. Understanding this finding merits further research, on the history of various religious divisions in countries with high diversity.

In addition, there is the question as to the nature of contact between native-born and immigrant youth in diverse countries. Pettigrew et al. (2008) and Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner (2008) have summarized numerous studies that demonstrate that having close friends of another cultural group reduces prejudice. However, contact without friendship potential may reduce positive affect toward immigrants on the part of native-born students—particularly (as indicated in our findings) among those who have high levels of protective nationalism. In our analysis the link between protective nationalism and support for immigrant rights was strongest in schools where students expected more education. As Coenders and Scheepers (2004) have suggested, such differences in social position may provoke ethnic competition that strengthens the relationship between anti-immigrant attitudes and chauvinistic
nationalism—particularly during times of economic uncertainty. The perceived threat of immigrant peers may be further reinforced by adolescents’ discussions with their parents.

Perhaps the most important contribution of our study is to investigate the role of education in influencing adolescents’ attitudes. A unique feature of our analysis was an examination of the school context for students in nationally representative samples. Education variables predictive of support for immigrant rights included the average educational expectations among students in the school, students’ reports of collaboration and open discussion, and students’ reports that their schools can be trusted and that participation in school is valued. These findings suggest that schools can foster support for the rights of immigrants by providing an academic climate that encourages further education, and one in which students are actively engaged, both cognitively and affectively. It is not enough to provide young people with challenging curricula that encourage them to examine opinions different from their own; students also need environments in which they feel that they can make and implement decisions. Such confidence has the potential to increase their support for the rights of diverse classmates.

There are caveats inherent in large cross-national comparisons of attitudes and policies that should be noted. The distinct histories and population compositions of the 25 countries in the CIVED study make it difficult to draw simple conclusions regarding the determinants of support for immigrant rights, or particular meanings of patriotism or nationalism. Additionally, since the CIVED data were collected in 1999 the absolute numbers and characteristics of migrants have changed, along with government policies, political climates and economic conditions. Nevertheless, The CIVED study provides a unique view of the factors influencing support for immigrant rights among today’s young adults during their formative years, and of the importance of school characteristics and climates across nations.
Appendix: Description of Predictors

Note: All continuous predictors were z-scored for ease in interpretation.

Protective Nationalism

Protective Attitudes towards Nation (IRT): See Husfeldt et al., 2005

Control Variables

1. Proportion of foreign-born students in the school. Aggregated from student-level reports of whether the individual was born in the country. (Note that no mention is made of student’s nationality or ethnicity; thus, the term “foreign-born” is preferable to “immigrant.”)

2. Average socioeconomic status in the school. Aggregated from student-level socioeconomic status (see below)

3. Gender. Self-report of whether a student is male or female (from CIVED variable ITSEX). Response options: 0 = male; 1 = female

4. Immigrant status. Self-report of whether a student was “born in the country of test.” Recoded response options: 0 = born in country [non-immigrant] 1 = not born in country [immigrant]

5. Socioeconomic status. Composite of parental education and number of books in the home.
   a. How far in school did your mother go?
   b. How far in school did your father go?

   Response options: 1 (did not finish elementary school) through 7 (completed a bachelor’s degree at a college or university)

   c. About how many books are there in your home:

   Response options: 1 (None) through 6 (more than 200)

   Procedure: Average of parent education converted to a 1 to 6 scale from a 1 to 7 scale before averaging with the six-point scale of the number of books in the home. The resulting values were then standardized across all countries, with an
international mean of 0 and SD of 1.

**Country-Level Predictors**

1. *Diversity.* Ethnic diversity (Fearon, 2003) and religious diversity (Alesina et al., 2003), as described in the text.

2. *Number of years for foreign-born residents to become citizens.* Years a foreign-born resident with no special status must live in a country to be eligible for citizenship (Waldrauch, 2006; see Fennelly & Myslajek for more information about the cross-national comparability of this indicator)

3. *Proportion of foreign-born respondents in the CIVED study.* Aggregated from student-level reports of whether an individual was born in the country.

**School-Level Predictors**

1. *Student education expectations aggregated at the school level.* Aggregated from student report of the number of years of further education the individual expects to complete.

   How many years of further education do you expect to complete after this year?

   Student-level response options are as follows: 1 (0 years) through 7 (more than 10 years)

**Student-Level Predictors**


3. *Strength to which they agree that they have learned to understand people with different viewpoints.* Response to item: In this school I have learned to understand people with different ideas. Response options: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly agree.

4. *Strength to which they agree that they have learned to work in groups with others.* Response to item: In this school I have learned to co-operate in groups with other students. Response options: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = agree, 4 = strongly
agree

5. *General level of trust in schools.* Response to item: How much of the time can you trust the following institution: Schools [educational institutions] Response options: 1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often
References


Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism

Fennelly, K., & Myslajek, C. Cross-national comparisons of government openness to immigrants and refugees. (In progress, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs).


Husfeldt, V., & Authors. (2005). Students’ social attitudes and expected political participation: new scales in the enhanced database of the IEA Civic Education Study. College Park, MD: Civic Education Data and Researcher Services, Department of Human Development, University of Maryland College Park.


Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism


Torney-Purta, J., Barber, C., & Wilkenfeld, B. (2007). Latino adolescents’ civic development in the
Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism


Table 1: Descriptive Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean SD Rank</th>
<th>Mean SD Rank</th>
<th>Correlation of PROTC and IMMIG</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>3700</td>
<td>9.23 0.07 25</td>
<td>9.29 0.05 23</td>
<td>-0.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>3104</td>
<td>9.41 0.08 23</td>
<td>9.86 0.08 14</td>
<td>-0.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3208</td>
<td>9.63 0.05 20</td>
<td>9.61 0.04 18</td>
<td>-0.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>3321</td>
<td>10.34 0.07 8</td>
<td>9.37 0.04 22</td>
<td>-0.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3073</td>
<td>10.80 0.08 2</td>
<td>9.60 0.06 19</td>
<td>-0.17**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>2811</td>
<td>10.35 0.07 7</td>
<td>9.17 0.04 25</td>
<td>-0.15**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>3043</td>
<td>9.74 0.07 16</td>
<td>9.28 0.05 24</td>
<td>-0.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3331</td>
<td>10.05 0.08 10</td>
<td>10.05 0.07 11</td>
<td>-0.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belgium (French)</td>
<td>2076</td>
<td>10.05 0.09 11</td>
<td>9.37 0.06 21</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italy</td>
<td>3808</td>
<td>9.85 0.05 14</td>
<td>9.83 0.04 15</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovenia</td>
<td>3068</td>
<td>9.40 0.05 24</td>
<td>9.58 0.04 20</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>2782</td>
<td>9.88 0.06 13</td>
<td>10.29 0.04 7</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slovak Republic</td>
<td>3463</td>
<td>9.74 0.05 17</td>
<td>10.66 0.05 3</td>
<td>0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3167</td>
<td>9.47 0.05 22</td>
<td>10.29 0.05 8</td>
<td>0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estonia</td>
<td>3434</td>
<td>9.70 0.04 19</td>
<td>9.93 0.04 12</td>
<td>0.10**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Czech Republic</td>
<td>3607</td>
<td>10.00 0.06 12</td>
<td>9.90 0.04 13</td>
<td>0.11**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lithuania</td>
<td>3494</td>
<td>9.60 0.03 21</td>
<td>10.12 0.05 10</td>
<td>0.14**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chile</td>
<td>5688</td>
<td>10.40 0.03 5</td>
<td>10.48 0.05 6</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Federation</td>
<td>2129</td>
<td>9.80 0.06 15</td>
<td>10.19 0.06 9</td>
<td>0.16**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portugal</td>
<td>3261</td>
<td>10.35 0.03 6</td>
<td>10.57 0.05 4</td>
<td>0.22**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poland</td>
<td>3376</td>
<td>10.58 0.07 4</td>
<td>11.17 0.07 1</td>
<td>0.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>3460</td>
<td>10.62 0.05 3</td>
<td>11.07 0.05 2</td>
<td>0.25**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colombia</td>
<td>4926</td>
<td>10.80 0.04 1</td>
<td>9.76 0.05 17</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romania</td>
<td>2993</td>
<td>10.20 0.06 9</td>
<td>10.55 0.08 5</td>
<td>0.26**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bulgaria</td>
<td>2884</td>
<td>9.70 0.1 18</td>
<td>9.79 0.09 16</td>
<td>0.28**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: All analyses are weighted with a normalized population weight (houseweight). Countries are arrayed with the most negative correlations between the two variables at the top of the table to the most positive correlations at the bottom of the table.

** p < .05
Table 2: Country-Level Bivariate Correlations (N=25)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Indicators</th>
<th>Years to citizenship</th>
<th>Religious diversity</th>
<th>Ethnic diversity</th>
<th>Proportion of foreign-born youth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Correlation of Country Indicators to Average Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants</td>
<td>-0.39+</td>
<td>-0.46*</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>-0.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Correlation of Country Indicators to the Relation between Attitudes toward Immigrants' Rights and Protective Nationalism</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.38+</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>-0.63**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

+ p < .10
* p < .05
** p < .01
Table 3: Summary of Hierarchical Linear Models Predicting Support for Immigrants’ Rights

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Model 0 (BASE)</th>
<th>Model 0 (Add Controls)</th>
<th>Model 1 (Add Country-Level)</th>
<th>Model 2 (Add School- and Student-Level)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intercept</td>
<td>9.96 (.09)</td>
<td>9.97 (.09)</td>
<td>9.97 (.11)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country: Years to Citizenship</td>
<td>-0.20** (.06)</td>
<td>-0.16** (.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country: Religious Diversity</td>
<td>-0.24** (.08)</td>
<td>-0.16* (.06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country: Proportion of Foreign-Born Youth</td>
<td>-0.09 (.05)</td>
<td>-0.03 (.06)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School: Average Socioeconomic Status</td>
<td>.05* (.02)</td>
<td>.05* (.02)</td>
<td>-0.06** (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School: Proportion of Foreign-Born Youth</td>
<td>.08 (.05)</td>
<td>.08 (.05)</td>
<td>.08 (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School: Average Educational Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.12** (.03)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Foreign-Born</td>
<td>.65** (.08)</td>
<td>.65** (.08)</td>
<td>.64** (.07)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Female</td>
<td>.57** (.06)</td>
<td>.57** (.06)</td>
<td>.37** (.05)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: SES</td>
<td>.08** (.01)</td>
<td>.08** (.02)</td>
<td>.05** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Class Climate Perception</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.14** (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Confidence in the Value of Participation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.42** (.01)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Learned to Understand Ppl with Different Ideas</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.21** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Learned to Work in Groups</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.12** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student: Trust in Schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>.07** (.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Nationalism</td>
<td>.03 (.07)</td>
<td>.05 (.06)</td>
<td>-.10** (.04)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective Nationalism x Country: Proportion of Foreign-Born Youth</td>
<td>-.21** (.04)</td>
<td>-.19** (.04)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School: Average Educational Expectations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.04** (.01)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Barber et al., Immigrant Attitudes and Nationalism

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Variance Components (% Reduction from Previous Step)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>19. School Variance in Rights Support</td>
<td>0.32** 0.29** (9%) 0.29** (0%) 0.24** (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. School Variance in Immig/Protective Correlation</td>
<td>0.11** 0.11** (0%) 0.11** (0%) 0.10** (9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Country Variance in Rights Support</td>
<td>0.18** 0.22** (0%) 0.10** (55%) 0.06** (40%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Country Variance in Immig/Protective Correlation</td>
<td>0.10** 0.09** (0%) 0.05** (44%) 0.04** (20%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Individual Variance in Rights Support</td>
<td>3.34 3.24 (3%) 3.24 (0%) 2.83 (15%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note:** Standard errors are in parentheses. Individuals are weighted with a normalized within-country population weight (houseweight), but all countries are weighted equally.

1: Predictor centered on its group mean. All others centered on its grand mean.

** p < .01; * p < .05
Fig. 1. Relation between Protective Nationalism and Positive Attitudes toward Immigrants’ Rights by Proportion of Foreign-Born 14-year-olds in the Country