

## **Social Diversity and the Development of Political Tolerance**

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**Abstract:** Advanced industrialized democracies have seen an increase in the ethnic and racial diversity of their populations, and the impact of this diversity for democratic politics has received increasing attention. In this paper, I examine the impact of increasing social diversity on young people's attitudes about speech rights in two countries: Canada and Belgium. In particular, this paper will examine how socially tolerant young people respond when asked to extend civil liberties to exclusionary groups, such as racists and skinheads. Drawing on a unique comparative dataset composed of close to 10,000 young people in these two countries, the results suggest that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity in one's social networks increases political intolerance of exclusionary speech. Importantly, this targeted intolerance does not seem to extend to other types of objectionable speech. In fact, exposure to racial and ethnic diversity has a positive effect on the political tolerance of other types of objectionable speech. A dual mechanism is proposed to explain these diversity results. The paper suggests that racial and ethnic diversity is a key reason for the development of a more multicultural form of tolerance among the youngest generation, which balances individual rights against concerns about social inclusion. The implications of these findings are then discussed in relationship to the larger literature on political tolerance.

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## **Introduction**

The role of social diversity in explaining political tolerance is a neglected area of research. Little focused research has actually examined how living in more diverse settings impacts individuals' tolerance judgments, despite a long tradition in social psychology of documenting how creating cooperative relationships between people from different backgrounds can decrease inter-group prejudice (Allport 1958). The key question examined in this paper is whether racial and ethnic diversity impacts the types of tolerance judgments an individual makes. I will argue that white youth with affective ties to people from racialized minorities will be more likely to ascribe to a more multicultural form of tolerance – one which makes distinctions between exclusionary forms of speech which are illegal in most Western democracies and other forms of objectionable speech. I will argue that exposure to racialized minorities fosters the types of target group distinctions that underpins multicultural tolerance.

This paper will argue that social networks are a key, under-explored variable in understanding political tolerance judgments, especially when distinctions between exclusionary speech and other forms of speech are conceptualized into our understanding of civil liberties judgments. The paper begins with a synopsis of what is known about network effects and the types of relationships that one expects to find between network diversity and political tolerance. This review underpins the causal argument developed later that increased social diversity – especially racial and ethnic diversity – is an essential part of understanding why some young people draw the line at exclusionary speech. After outlining the composition of young people's networks, we turn to an empirical exploration of how racial and ethnic diversity impacts political tolerance judgments among youth in Canada and Belgium using the Comparative Youth Study.

## **Political Tolerance and Contact**

Tolerance is traditionally understood to imply restraint when confronted with a group or practice found objectionable (Heyd 1996; Mendus 1988, 1989; Horton and Nicholson 1992). *Political* tolerance typically refers to individual-level attitudes or institutional arrangements that permit groups to express opinions or maintain practices that a majority find objectionable (Stouffer 1963; Sullivan et al. 1979, 1982). Political tolerance thus refers to the willingness to refrain from preventing people (or groups of people) from expressing their disliked opinions,

lifestyles, preferences, or world views (McKinnon 2003, 55-61; see also Walzer 1997; Weissberg 1998).

People's ability to deal with diversity has long played an important role in the discourse around political tolerance. Being exposed to a diverse group of people and ideas is argued to lead people to reconsider their position or values and try to understand others' point of view (Cosser 1975; Mutz 2002b; Reich and Purbhoo 1975; Huckfeldt et al. 2004). In general, exposure to diversity is argued to foster the development of more general cognitive skills necessary for applying abstract democratic principles to concrete situations (Nie et al. 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 target group.

While many previous studies mention exposure in their explanations relationship between demographic characteristics, political participation, and political tolerance, there is almost no research that directly tests the exposure-tolerance link, especially when it comes to diversity defined by salient demographic characteristics.<sup>1</sup> The one exception to this is the limited literature that addresses the urban/rural cleavage in political tolerance. People living in urban areas consistently report higher levels of political tolerance than those living in rural areas (Stouffer 1963; Nunn et al. 1978; Wilson 1985, 1991; Moore and Ovadia 2006). Stouffer's (1963, 122) original study argued that the main reason that living in an urban area decreased intolerance was because urban areas were heterogeneous and forced people to "rub shoulders" with a variety of people.<sup>2</sup> Attempts have been made to test this hypothesis, primarily through the inclusion of community-level data which capture contextual differences between cities and rural areas. Wilson (1985; 1986; 1991), for example, finds that the size of one's community is modestly associated with providing more political tolerant responses. More importantly, he shows that the effect of community size is greatest for those individuals who move from rural areas to more urban environments. The reason size of community is argued to matter is because it exposes the individual to greater social heterogeneity.<sup>3</sup> More recently, Moore and Ovadia (2006) have directly tested the extent of social heterogeneity using census-tract information

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<sup>1</sup> For a good overview of the common correlates of intolerance, see Sullivan and Transue (1999).

<sup>2</sup> See also Wirth (1938).

<sup>3</sup> By looking at the distribution of responses to a variety of attitudes toward deviant behavior, Wilson (1986) has found support for the idea that larger communities have a wider distribution of attitudes toward deviance, which he defines as social heterogeneity.

about the religious, educational and racial composition of an area. They attribute the urban/rural gap in political tolerance primarily to higher levels of education in urban areas, and find no support for their measure of racial heterogeneity (ibid, 2214).<sup>4</sup>

Theoretically, this line of research provides support for the idea that exposure to people who differ on salient social characteristics should increase political tolerance, yet the empirical support for this contention is limited. Moore and Ovdia's study measured racial heterogeneity directly, and no significant effects were found for living in a more racially diverse area. 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 U.S. (Iceland et al. 2002). Furthermore, the mechanisms by which such contact is argued to increase tolerance are underspecified. While 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.

What research has been done at the individual-level has focused almost exclusively on political diversity (i.e. exposure to a diversity of opinions about politics).<sup>5</sup> This literature provides a useful starting point for examining the potential impact of other types of diversity on political tolerance. Mutz (2002b; 2006) in particular shows that when one's personal networks include people with divergent political opinions, one is more likely to be politically tolerant.<sup>6</sup> In her work, the presence of network diversity is measured by the presence of close friends who differ in their political outlook from the respondent. She demonstrates that exposure to such "cross-cutting networks" increases respondents' ability to provide rationales for opposing political opinions (see also Huckfeldt et al. 2004). This in turn is linked to greater political tolerance, measured as the average agreement on a four-point scale that a disliked group should

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<sup>4</sup> In Canada, education levels in an area have also been found to be more important in explaining immigrant and minority attitudes than the racial composition of the area (Blake 2003).

<sup>5</sup> A partial exception is the work by Joslyn and Cigler (2002) that examines political tolerance from a social capital perspective. They find that certain types of associations that are likely to expose individuals to "cross-cutting cleavages" increase political tolerance. However, the assumption of exposure to cross-cutting cleavages is left untested as there is no measure of actual diversity within organizations.

<sup>6</sup> See also Duch and Gibson (1992), who have conducted an aggregate-level study of the ideological diversity in 12 European countries. They report that ideological diversity, measured by the presence of radical party voting in each country, is associated with higher levels of political tolerance in mature democracies.

be allowed to do six different civil liberties activities. In an experimental confirmation, she further provides evidence that people exposed to opposing political rationales provide more politically tolerant responses using the least-liked methodology, and this is especially true for individuals that already had a high perspective-taking ability and were leery of inter-personal conflict. This work provides a detailed analysis of how such exposure may be linked to politically tolerant responses through a perspective-taking mechanism. 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).<sup>7</sup> This dynamic is illustrated in Figure 1. In essence, exposure to political diversity is argued to increase cognitive skills needed to deal with diversity, which in turn lead to a greater willingness to extend civil liberties to objectionable groups.

<figure 1 about here>

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 which structure how individuals interpret and experience the society in which they live (Young 1990, 42-8). Voting behavior research has long documented how religious identification, class, racial identity and other salient social categories influence people's political opinions.<sup>8</sup> One might expect, therefore, that being exposed to a variety of people may expose an individual to a variety of political perspectives. In other words, ethnocultural, class, or gender diversity in one's networks may be significantly correlated with the types of political diversity to which one is exposed. If this is the case, then exposure to these other types of diversity may similarly function to increase political tolerance of all types of speech. 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 was not directly related to greater political diversity among one's associates. The mechanisms

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<sup>7</sup> Emphasis was included in original text.

<sup>8</sup> See, for example, early studies of voting behavior in the U.S., such as Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee (1954) and Campbell et al. (1960).

linking exposure to tolerance would function similarly, though: knowing people from different backgrounds might make it easier for an individual to see things from a variety of perspectives and acknowledge the legitimacy of different viewpoints.

When it comes to racial and ethnic diversity, this line of reasoning would suggest that greater diversity promotes a willingness to extend civil liberties across target groups. Yet, an equally plausible alternative hypothesis is by social psychological research which has long been concerned with the impact of exposure to ethnocultural diversity on people's attitudes. This research generally finds that contact decreases prejudice among social groups primarily through a process of identification with out-group members (Allport 1958; Tajfel and Turner 1986; Pettigrew 1998a; Dovidio et al. 2003; Brown and Hewstone 2006).<sup>9</sup> As an individual gets to know people from different backgrounds, there is a general tendency for out-group hostility to diminish. Furthermore, such contact may then lead to a new, inclusive identity that subsumes the former categories (Gaertner and Dovidio 2000). If exposure to racial and ethnic diversity tends to reduce prejudice, then the impact of such exposure on political tolerance may actually result in less willingness to extend civil liberties to specific types of target groups that promote prejudice.<sup>10</sup>

This reasoning is in line with experimental research on political tolerance demonstrating that an appeal to ideas of social equality in the U.S. 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). While 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

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<sup>9</sup> Whereas the social psychological literature tends to focus on contact, there is also a large body of research which 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 an area becomes increasingly diverse, out-group hostility increases, especially in less privileged areas and in the absence of meaningful contact (Oliver and Mendelberg 2000; McLaren 2003; Branton and Jones 2005).

<sup>10</sup> A handful of studies have employed the inter-group contact framework to political tolerance, although in slightly different ways than those proposed here. For example, Gibson (2000; 2004, 240-55; 2006) has drawn on the general inter-group framework to understand the intervening role of threat and identity in tolerance judgments. However, the most direct application of the contact hypothesis has been done by Golebiowska (1996; 2000; 2001), who looks at contact with target group members. She shows that contact with racists and gays increases political tolerance of both groups, especially when an individual gets to know the target group member before finding out the individual is either racist or gay.

vice-versa (Peffley et al. 2001; Gibson 1998). This suggests that when issues of racial equality are raised, people are more willing to curb the civil liberties of socially intolerant groups.

If such value conflict decreases tolerance of exclusionary speech, then individuals who are exposed to greater racial and ethnic diversity may be particularly susceptible to appeals for social inclusion. This extension of the contact hypothesis may only apply to exclusionary speech which directly challenges racial equality and is based on the idea that contact with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds should increase identification with the minority groups that exclusionary speech aims to denigrate. While social intolerance is often associated with political intolerance in general (Stenner 2005), I will suggest that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity should lead to a type of political tolerance that views exclusionary speech as outside the realm of legitimate political debate.

The idea that a correlate of intolerance will be limited to specific target groups challenges the prominent measurement of political tolerance as a group-blind approach (Harell 2008). Despite the fact that there are the legislative restrictions on hate speech and holocaust denial in most established democracies (Boyle 2001; Cohen-Almagor 2000; Douglas-Scott 1999; Coliver et al. 1992), the conceptualization and measurement of political tolerance has focused primarily on the presence of an objectionable outgroup, with little consideration for how political tolerance judgments may not only vary in level, but nature, across various target groups. Yet, there may be good reason to assume that people may be less willing to tolerate the intolerant (Sniderman et al. 1996, 55-64).

To capture such a dynamic, I have developed elsewhere the concept of exclusionary speech as a subset of potentially objectionable forms of speech. It is defined as speech that 1) exclusionary goals, 2) the intent to harm identifiable groups and 3) which originates from people in positions of authority or privilege may be more difficult for people to tolerate than other types of objectionable speech. I argue that people may well be differently disposed to the restrictions that they place on certain types of speech, and that in fact a person's tolerance disposition can be captured by looking at their responses to two types of groups: those associated with exclusionary speech and those who are found objectionable for other reasons. I define multicultural tolerance as those who are generally tolerant, but place the limits on exclusionary speech in line with contemporary jurisprudence in many established democracies. In this paper, I will examine the

following sections, I will examine the extent to which racial and ethnic diversity can help tolerance judgments across types of speech.

### **A Model of Social Network Effects**

To summarize the previous subsection, there have been no studies that examine directly the impact of racial and ethnic diversity on the ways in which an individual makes civil liberties judgments across target groups.<sup>11</sup> The literature suggests two possibilities for how exposure to racial and ethnic diversity may impact political tolerance judgments. On the one hand, political tolerance research suggests that exposure is likely to increase the cognitive skills that makes tolerance more likely. On the other hand, social psychological research suggests that racial and ethnic diversity may make tolerance of exclusionary speech less likely. I will argue that these two processes are not necessarily mutually exclusive when distinctions across target groups are incorporated into our understanding of political tolerance. Two hypothesis in particular emerge:

*Hypothesis 1:* Individuals exposed to more racial and ethnic diversity should be less tolerant of exclusionary speech.

*Hypothesis 2:* Exposure to racial and ethnic diversity should increase tolerance of other types of speech.

Diverse social networks may well equip people with cognitive skills needed to “put up with” ideas they find objectionable (see, for example, Stouffer 1963; Duch and Gibson 1992; Mutz 2002b).<sup>12</sup> However, consistent with the perspective developed here, the cognitive impact of racial and ethnic diversity may only extend to groups which are seen as legitimate actors in democratic debate and such exposure may make exclusionary 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 I argue represents a more multicultural form of tolerance.

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<sup>11</sup> This is not to say that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity has not been used as an explanatory variable for other political attitudes. In particular, the logic of inter-group contact has been applied to the study of generalized trust. While much of this research shows a negative impact of diversity on trust (Alesina and Ferrara 2002; Hero 2003; Delhey and Newton 2005; Putnam 2007), recent work that incorporates actual contact – rather than simply contextual diversity – has resulted in positive effects that are in line with the contact hypothesis (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Stolle et al. forthcoming).

<sup>12</sup> Others suggests that exposure to a diversity of opinions increases attitudinal ambivalence by making a person more aware of the justifications that exist on both sides of an issue (Mutz 2002a; Huckfeldt et al. 2004; Mutz 2002b). However, see also Page (2007) for a discussion of how differences in perspective lead to better group decision making.



<figure 2 about here>

This causal logic is illustrated in Figure 2. In sum, racial and ethnic diversity may decrease tolerance of exclusionary speech by fostering identification with the minorities at which such speech is aimed. At the same time, racial diversity may also foster the cognitive skills that increase tolerance for other objectionable groups. This causal logic only applies to members of the majority group. Whites may not feel individually threatened by exclusionary speech or have any pre-existing identification with members of minority groups. However, when they have positive contact with minorities, identification with the targets of exclusionary speech should increase, leading to the target group differentiation that underpins multicultural tolerance. This logic does not apply to racialized minorities, for whom exclusionary speech may be seen as a direct threat.

The main independent variable is exposure among whites to racial and ethnic diversity. Based on the contact hypothesis, I am interested in exposure that occurs primarily in social networks. Social networks capture the relational ties between individuals. Such ties allow for the distribution of information, norms and ideas among people (Granovetter 1973, 1983; Coleman 1988; Burt 1997; Lin et al. 2001). The focus on social networks is important because for the identification process in Figure 2 to occur, 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 inter-group 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).<sup>13</sup> The types of social networks examined here are likely to entail such conditions, as I will focus on friendship and acquaintance networks among adolescents.

There 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 (Joyner 2000; Gibson 1992; McPherson

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<sup>13</sup> While not a direct measure of prejudice, work in political science that looks at actual interaction has found some support for the idea that increased sociability and contact in diverse settings can improve (or at least counteract a decline) in values like generalized trust (Marschall and Stolle 2004; Stolle et al. 2008).

and Smith-Lovin 1987; Mutz 2006; Kandel 1978). This tendency for 'like to attract like' is known as homophily and is a significant barrier to cross-group ties. Moreover, racial and ethnic dissimilarity appears to be one of the most salient characteristics on which social networks segregate (McPherson et al. 2001). This is particularly true among more intimate relationships. People are exposed to the most diversity among "weaker ties", i.e. people who are not as central in their networks (Granovetter 1973, 1983). In sociological research, such weak ties are arguably a source of new information and perspectives that are not available among relatively homogenous groups of close friends (ibid, see also Page 2007).

In contrast, the more affective mechanism based on identification with racialized minorities is likely to occur in closer relationships. While contact between whites and racialized minorities in closer friendships is less likely to occur given the principle of homophily, when it *does* the impact on a person's willingness to extend civil liberties to exclusionary groups should be the greatest. I expect that exposure to racialized minorities will have the greatest impact among closer networks of young people.

Figure 2 illustrates the causal logic from exposure to identification that is consistent with the inter-group contact literature. The veracity of this suggestion has been extensively replicated, primarily in laboratory experiments where the order of contact and attitude change can be controlled (see, for example, Abrams et al. 2005; Brown and Hewstone 2006; Pettigrew 1998b; Dovidio et al. 2003). However, outside of 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 life course rather than at a given moment in time (Kandel 1978). The research design employed here is unable to distinguish the direction of causality between these two variables, despite the fact that a large body of research in social psychology provides compelling evidence that the order is from exposure to attitudes. This sort of dynamic process can not be fully modeled with the cross-sectional data employed here. While 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.

To summarize, exposure to racial and ethnic diversity will have different effects on political tolerance judgments, depending on the type of target group. Similar to political diversity, I expect racial and ethnic diversity to relate positively to an individual's cognitive capacity to deal with politically diverse speech. In general, this should lead to more tolerance of some objectionable speech (i.e. non-exclusionary speech). However, racial and ethnic diversity should also make identification with the intended victims of exclusionary speech more likely. This, in turn, should decrease tolerance of exclusionary speech. The expected outcome is that those with more racial and ethnic diversity in their networks will be most likely to be multicultural tolerators: people who are more 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 absolute tolerance.

## **Data and Methods**

The data used for this analysis is drawn from the Comparative Youth Survey (CYS) which was conducted among 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students in Canada and Belgium during the 2005-2006 school year. For the Canadian sample, students were sampled in schools from seven cities in Ontario and Quebec. The cities were selected to vary in terms of size and were 'matched' across provinces. More specifically, 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. Schools were intentionally selected to vary in terms of the socio-economic status of students and the homogeneity of the student population.<sup>14</sup> In the medium and small towns, all school boards were contacted and an effort was made to survey as many schools as possible in each setting. In total, 3334 respondents completed the self-administered questionnaire. Within each city in the sample, the socio-economic 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 the cities. The sample, while not representative, is suggestive of the context within these seven cities.

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<sup>14</sup> Provincial educational statistics, when available, were combined with census tract information, statistics gathered from individual school websites, and rankings from an independent report conducted by the Frasier Institute to ensure variation in terms of the ethnic and socio-economic composition of schools

The Belgian sample was a stratified sample of secondary schools in ten provinces in the French and Flemish communities, with an over-sampling of five additional Dutch-speaking schools in Brussels. The schools were randomly selected and match the distribution of schools types present. In total, 6265 students completed the survey. The average age of respondents in both the Belgian and Canadian surveys was 16 years old.

Youth samples in Canada and Belgium are ideal case countries in which to test how attitudes toward exclusionary speech compare to other types of objectionable speech. Both Canada and Belgium have civil and criminal laws which prohibit hate speech, and court challenges to this legislation have consistently failed. The focus on youth is also intentional, as one might expect younger generations to be more likely to see exclusionary speech as harmful given the increasingly diverse nature of the Western societies. Following Lijphart's (1971, 692) discussion of case selection, these are "hypothesis generating" case countries used to test the feasibility of the hypothesis that young people's attitudes toward exclusionary speech differ.

The dependent variable is constructed from a political tolerance battery. Modified from commonly-used tolerance batteries, the goal was to include a number of potentially objectionable identity-based groups that differ in the exclusionary nature of their speech, their ideological association, and their salience in the two contexts. The final battery includes five different potentially objectionable groups: racists, skinheads, radical Muslims, gay rights activists, and Quebec/Flemish separatists. Racists and skinheads were included to represent exclusionary groups. For each group, the respondent is asked to indicate whether they should be allowed to 1) hold a peaceful march in the respondent's neighborhood and 2) talk on television about their views. The answer categories are dichotomous (yes or no). The respondent was also asked to indicate their 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 and colleagues (1979) while still ensuring comparisons across different types of target groups. A tolerance score is calculated for each target group and activity pair by limiting the analysis to individuals who expressed prior disagreement with the group.

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 objectionable group.

- 2) *Multicultural Tolerators*: Individuals who support speech rights for objectionable groups, but do not extend them to exclusionary groups.
- 3) *Absolute Tolerators*: Individuals who extend 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 do *both* civil liberties, controlling for prior disagreement. The breakdown is presented in Table 1.<sup>15</sup>

<table 1 about here>

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.<sup>16</sup> Answers varied on a seven point scale from 0=none to 6=all, where higher scores always indicate more diversity. Obviously, contextual factors impact the opportunity to interact with people from different backgrounds 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. To control for this, the log of the mean level visible minorities per school is included as a control.

One of the key mechanisms that is argued to link racial and ethnic diversity to tolerance is through identification with racialized minorities. To capture this, a Closeness to Minorities scale was developed by on responses to three questions. Respondents were asked to rate how close they felt to three groups: Muslims, immigrants and blacks. Answers ran 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 that I

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<sup>15</sup> Disagreement with the group means the respondent rated the group between 0 and 4 on the 0-10 disagree/agree scale.

<sup>16</sup> In the English version of the Canadian survey, the questions referred only to a "different race" rather than "race and ethnicity."

will refer to as the Closeness to Minorities scale. It ranges from 0 to 1 (Alpha=.835).<sup>17</sup> Unfortunately, there is no direct measure of the cognitive mechanism in Figure 2.

Because network diversity and tolerance judgments are both impacted 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, political knowledge, organization involvement, gender, parental education level, religious affiliation and religiosity. Further information about coding of control variables is available in the appendix.

### **Exposure to Diversity among Youth in Canada and Belgium**

Advanced, industrialized democracies are becoming composed of more and more people from different ethnic groups as a result of increasing immigration from outside of Europe. Increasing diversity has led to heightened awareness and concern about the impacts of racialized diversity for democratic politics (Putnam 2007). If diversity is to have a positive impact, the contact hypothesis literature suggests that it will likely come from people's actual interaction across lines of differences. In this section, the actual exposure young people have to racial and ethnic diversity will be examined among majority group members.

I will be focusing specifically on racial and ethnic diversity within the social networks of white youth. A variable for whites is derived based on self-reported "racial" categories in the Canadian sample and imputed based on immigration data in the Belgian sample.<sup>18</sup> A dummy variable was then created to separate students who would be considered white or European descent from those who would be seen as belonging to racialized minorities in the Canadian and Belgian contexts. Figure 3 presents the breakdown of the network variables in the two countries for whites. As expected, the reported levels of diversity tend to be greater among acquaintances (on the right) than it does among close friends (on the left). This is consistent with people's tendency toward homophily in their networks. Both measures, however, are highly correlated implying that those with diverse close friend networks are more likely to have diverse acquaintances, and vice versa ( $r=.656$ ).

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<sup>17</sup> The scale reaches acceptable levels of reliability in both country samples as well (Alpha=.72 in MYS and .86 in BYS).

<sup>18</sup> In the Belgian sample, the country of origin for the respondent and her parents were available. Given the recent immigration of racialized minorities to Belgium, respondents who were from, or for whom at least one parent was from, a country of outside of Europe and North America were coded as racialized minorities. In the Canadian sample, when "race" was unclear or missing, responses to an open-ended question about ethnic background were used to impute a racial category to respondents.

<figure 3 about here>

There is also a clear tendency for Canadian youth to report higher levels of network diversity than Belgian youth. In the Canadian sample, young people scored on average 1.7 on the racial and ethnic diversity scale for close friends (or less than "a few") and 2.3 for acquaintances at school (or more than "a few"). Belgian youth reported on average 0.9 on the racial diversity scale (about "almost none") for close friends and 1.7 for acquaintances (less than "a few").<sup>19</sup> The divergence may not be surprising given the intentional over-sampling of urban areas in the Canadian sample. The large metropolitan areas are more likely to provide opportunities to meet people from different racial and ethnic groups. The CYS data reflect this greater opportunity: in the Canadian sample, 38 percent of the respondents are coded as racialized minorities compared to only 14 percent in Belgium. While this difference is partly a result of the sampling techniques, it should be noted that Canada is generally more ethnically and racially diverse than Belgium. This means that Canadian youth in general may have more opportunities for cross-group friendships.

<table 2 about here>

Table 2 reports the mean levels of racial and ethnic diversity for whites. There is clear evidence that young people in the Canadian sample have higher levels of racial and ethnic diversity in their friendship networks.<sup>20</sup> When we look at the reported diversity of actual networks among whites, Canadian youth report significantly more racial diversity among both their close friends and among their acquaintances ( $p < .01$ ). White youth in Canada were also more likely to be found in schools where there was a higher level of diversity. For white respondents, the average percent of racialized minorities in the schools sampled in Canada was 24 percent minority, compared to only 7 percent in Belgium ( $p < .01$ ).<sup>21</sup> In general then, white

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<sup>19</sup> Using independent samples t-test, the differences between the two countries are significant. Because the sampling techniques in the two samples are not identical, it is difficult to ascertain whether these results are due to differences in samples, differences in the two populations, or an artifact of question-wording.

<sup>20</sup> Obviously, there is likely some sampling effect, as the whites that were sampled were more likely to be found in schools where they had an opportunity to meet minority group members.

<sup>21</sup> The measure of racial diversity at school is calculated based on the survey responses of the students sampled in each school. While an official breakdown of the entire student population at each institution would be preferable, record-keeping of this type of information varied substantially across schools and prevented a reliable school-

youth in Canada appear to have greater exposure to diversity, in their schools and in their networks.

While the focus here is on whites, it is notable that a similar pattern is evident when racialized minorities are examined separately (not shown). It has been well-documented that ethnic and racial minorities tend to have more diverse friendships than those from the majority (see, for example, McPherson et al. 2001, 420-2). This is also true in both the Canadian and Belgian data.<sup>22</sup> Yet, similar to the majority results, Canadian minorities also tend to report more racial and ethnic diversity in their networks than Belgian minorities ( $p < .01$ ). This suggests that Belgian youth, whether they are from the white majority or from a racialized minority, are more segregated in their networks than Canadian youth.

Among majority group members, then, networks appear to be more homogenous than diverse. Among whites in both Canada and Belgium, Table 2 provides evidence that homogeneity, rather than diversity, more accurately describes young people's social networks. This is consistent with sociological research on homophily. Yet, clearly some exposure to racial and ethnic diversity does occur to varying degrees in these two countries. The impact such diversity may have on political tolerance judgments will be the focus of the remainder of this paper.

### **Network Diversity and Multicultural Tolerance**

The basis of the contact hypothesis is that exposure to out-group members reduces out-group hostility and facilitates shared identity. Certainly, when considering the impact of the composition of one's networks outside of a controlled experiment, the diversity may be both a cause and a consequence of the types of attitudes that one holds about out-group members. Yet, the literature does make clear that we should expect individuals with more racially and ethnically diverse networks to also express greater identification with minorities. The claim here is that diverse networks, and the socially tolerant attitudes that accompany them, should make multicultural tolerance more likely. The first step in assessing the validity of this claim is to

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reported measure. The CYS is based on two classes on average per school, and every effort was made to arrange for typical classrooms to survey. Schools were asked to provide classrooms that were part of the general curriculum for which any student in the school would likely be involved, rather than special-tracked classes.

<sup>22</sup> For racial and ethnic diversity among close friends, Canadian minorities report on average 2.9 compared to 1.7 among Canadian whites ( $p < .01$ ). Belgian minorities report 1.9 versus 0.9 among Canadian whites ( $p < .01$ ). A similar pattern emerges for acquaintances: Canadian minorities report 3.5 versus 2.3 for whites, and Belgian minorities report 2.5 versus 1.1 for whites ( $p < .01$  in both cases).



establish that network diversity and identification with minorities are in fact significantly related in these two samples.

<table 3 about here>

Table 3 presents the correlations between the Closeness to Minorities scale and three measures of diversity in the networks of white youth. As expected, whites who report more racial and ethnic diversity in their networks are more likely to feel close to minorities. As suggested earlier, the relationship appears to be strongest for racial and ethnic diversity among close friends and is a similar level in both country samples ( $p < .01$ ,  $r \approx .3$ ). When it comes to acquaintances at school, the relationship is not as strong (.27 in Canada and .23 in Belgium) but remains statistically significant ( $p < .01$ ). For contextual diversity, the correlation drops to .16 in the Canadian sample, but remains slightly stronger in the Belgian sample ( $r = .24$ ). While the direction of causality can not be established, there is clearly support for the underlying assumption that white youth who have friends that are from different racial and ethnic backgrounds are also more likely to express feeling close to minorities. As hypothesized, this relationship appears strongest for racial and ethnic diversity among close friends. While other variables may impact people's identification with minorities, having racially and ethnically diverse networks appear to be at least partially related to such attitudes.

These findings should not be surprising as they replicate a consistent finding in the social-psychological literature. What is of interest for the research presented here is the way in which network diversity and identification with minorities impact civil liberties judgments across target groups. Table 4 provides an initial bivariate examination of the relationship between network diversity, identification and tolerance types for white youth. The working hypothesis is that network diversity, and in turn identification with minorities, will make target group distinctions consistent with multicultural tolerance more likely. This leads to the expectation in Table 4 that multicultural tolerators should report higher mean levels of racial and ethnic diversity and identification with minorities than the intolerant and absolute tolerators.

<table 4 about here>

The results are partly in line with expectations. In every case, multicultural tolerators report more ethnic and racial diversity among their close friends and acquaintances than either the intolerant or absolute tolerators, although these differences are not always significant. Additionally, in the Belgium case multicultural tolerators also report feeling closer to minorities ( $p < .01$ ). While these results generally fit with expectations, they are substantively small and fail to reach statistical significances in many cases. Further analysis is required to ascertain the extent to which these small differences are sustained, or even strengthened, in a multivariate analysis where other confounding factors are controlled for.

In Table 5 and 6, multinomial logistic regressions are presented for white youth in each country. The models test whether racial and ethnic diversity in one's networks help to distinguish between types of tolerance, after controlling for other important predictors (Model 1).<sup>23</sup> In a second step, closeness to minorities is added to the model in order to assess closeness as an intervening variable between network diversity and tolerance judgments (Model 2). Network diversity is measured with a composite score for reported diversity among close friends and among acquaintances. The two measures have been combined initially because of their high intercorrelation ( $r = .66$ ) with the aim of getting a general measure of overall network diversity.<sup>24</sup> The analysis is limited to white youth in each sample, and the raw coefficients are presented, which provide the direction and significance of effects. The analysis was limited to white, European-descent respondents.

The results in both samples provide support for the dynamic discussed in this chapter, although there is some variation between the two case countries. In Table 5, the results for Canadian youth in Model 1 suggest, as predicted, that racial and ethnic diversity in one's networks has a significant negative effect on both intolerance *and* absolute tolerance, and the size of the coefficients are similar.<sup>25</sup> This means that racial and ethnic diversity in one's networks increases the likelihood of multicultural tolerance. Surprisingly, the impact of racial and ethnic diversity remains negative and significant for both intolerance and absolute tolerance in Model 2 when the Closeness to Minorities scale is introduced into the model. This is contrary

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<sup>23</sup> Model 1 was restricted to respondents who had valid responses across all variables in Model 2. In total, this meant that 25 respondents in Canada and 51 respondents in Belgium who had valid responses to all items in Model 1 were excluded to ensure comparability across models.

<sup>24</sup> Further analysis will subsequently present the results for the close friends and acquaintances measures separately.

<sup>25</sup> Because there was a difference in the wording of the network diversity variables in the French and English version of the survey in Canada, a second set of models was run which includes a control variable for language of survey. No substantial differences in the variables of interest are observed.

to expectations that identification with minorities was the main way in which racial and ethnic diversity translated into multicultural tolerance. Instead, increases in racial and ethnic diversity among one's networks appear to increase the likelihood of multicultural tolerance, even after controlling for identification with minorities.

<table 5 and 6 about here>

Table 6 presents the same models among Belgian youth. Considering Model 1, the coefficients for racial and ethnic diversity are only significant in distinguishing absolute from multicultural tolerators. The effect is significant, negative, and similar in size to the Canadian model ( $p < .10$ ). However, no similar effect is evident for intolerance. Furthermore, in Model 2, the impact of racial and ethnic diversity is reduced to insignificance when identification with minorities is introduced. Feeling closer to minorities has a negative and significant impact on intolerance and absolute tolerance, which is as expected. There is, however, generally a poorer fit in the Belgian data and fewer controls variables appear to help distinguish between types of tolerance.

One difficulty in the Belgian data is that the amount of exposure to racial and ethnic diversity tends to be quite low. On the racial and ethnic diversity composite scale, Belgian youth report on average a 1.0 on the 0 to 6 scale, the equivalent of "almost none" on the original scales. One possible reason that fewer significant effects were found in Table 6 for Belgian youth is the skewed nature of this variable. An option to address this problem is to transform the variable of interest to make the distribution more linear. A log transformation is one way to address skewness in a variable. When a log transformation of the racial and ethnic ties scale is included in the model, the log of racial and ethnic ties remains negative for absolute tolerance, as in the models presented in Table 6; however, it fails to reach statistical significance (not shown). This provides limited support for the results in Table 6 for absolute tolerance, despite the skewed nature of the racial and ethnic diversity variable. However, in Model 2, when the closeness variable is included, the coefficient for intolerance is positive (as in Table 6) but reaches borderline significance ( $p = .12$ ). In other words, there is some suggestion in this data that racial and ethnic diversity may increase the probability of intolerance compared to multicultural

tolerance in the Belgian data.<sup>26</sup> This is not consistent with expectations, and suggests caution in interpreting the results in Belgium as in line with the hypothesized relationships.

In order to better highlight the estimated effects, Figures 4 present the predicted probabilities that a white youth will be in a given tolerance category as racial diversity among close friends increases and closeness to minorities increases. For each level of racial and ethnic diversity, predicted probabilities are estimated where the value of the Closeness to Minorities scale is set to the sample mean among respondents who reported having that level of racial and ethnic diversity.<sup>27</sup> The choice to vary network diversity and closeness simultaneously reflects the theoretical perspective presented here that network diversity and attitudes toward minorities are causally related. All other variables are set to their means, except gender which is set to female and the religious denomination variables which are set to 0, making the non-religious the default category.

In Canada, the pattern conforms to theoretical expectations. As network diversity increases, the probability that a respondent is a multicultural tolerator increases from 51 percent for "none" to 69 percent "almost all" for non-religious women when all other variables are held at their means.<sup>28</sup> The probability of intolerance or absolute tolerance decreases. 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.

<figure 4 about here>

The results in the Belgian sample, however, fail to conform to the hypothesized pattern. Network diversity does appear to be related with a decreased likelihood of being an absolute tolerator (from 14 percent to 8 percent), as was found in the Canadian sample. Yet, there is no

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<sup>26</sup> Weak but similar findings are obtained when dummy variables are included instead of a log transformation as well (analysis not shown). However, neither alternative modeling technique when run on the Canadian data changes the direction or significance of results in that sample, suggesting the findings are robust in the Canadian context.

<sup>27</sup> CLARIFY is used to obtain the predicted probabilities (King et al. 2000).

<sup>28</sup> This upward pattern is obtained regardless if closeness to minorities is varied or is simply set at its mean. The 'all' category was not estimated, given the small number of respondents at the extreme of this scale. Given that the average response on the racial and ethnic ties scale was about 2, the estimations are only slightly higher than the distribution in the full sample, which result because of the decision to set sex as female, who tend to be more likely to be multicultural tolerators than men. Changing the simulation criteria does not change the direction of effects in Figure 4, although it does shift the levels.

discernible impact for multicultural tolerance, and the probability of intolerance actually increases 6 percentage points as racial and ethnic diversity increases from "none" to "about half".<sup>29</sup> This suggests that unlike their Canadian counterparts, white Belgian youth who have more friends from racially different backgrounds express more intolerance.<sup>30</sup> While no significant positive effect was found in Table 6, there was some evidence in the alternative modeling that in contrast to no diversity, low levels of racial and ethnic diversity were positively associated with the likelihood of intolerance. The vast majority of observations in Belgium occur at 'none', 'almost none' and 'a few', and there is no way to tell from the current data if higher levels of ethnic and racial diversity would reproduce the negative effect found among Canadian youth.<sup>31</sup> Part of the case selection was driven by the assumption that higher levels of diversity would facilitate the type of positive intergroup interaction that is argued to underpin multicultural tolerance. One possibility is that the overall levels of diversity are simply too low in Belgium, and the effects of networks in such contexts simply do not behave similarly as more diverse contexts where intergroup friendships have become more common.

In sum, there is substantial support for the finding that young whites with more diverse networks are less likely to ascribe to an absolute form of tolerance in either Canada or Belgium. For those surrounded by racially and ethnically diverse friends in both countries, tolerating exclusionary groups, as absolute tolerators do by definition, became increasingly unlikely. If absolute tolerance is the democratic ideal, as it appears in much of the literature, then increasing racial and ethnic diversity would seem to have dire consequences for democratic politics. Yet, the Canadian data provide reason to question the extent to which contact with racial and ethnic diversity leads to political intolerance.

Young Canadians with more racially and ethnically diverse networks were not only less likely to be absolute tolerators, they were also significantly less likely to be politically intolerant. These findings suggest that the link between exposure to racial and ethnic diversity and attitudes about civil liberties is a development of distinctions across target groups. In Canada, young people who are able to make friends with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds

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<sup>29</sup> Limiting the variation on the diversity scale was intentional to reflect the skewed nature of this variable in the Belgian data. Over 95 percent of the Belgian sample score from 1 to 4 on this scale.

<sup>30</sup> Again, these results are not simply an artifact of how the simulation was specified. When gender and religious affiliation are specified differently, a similar pattern emerges.

<sup>31</sup> It should be noted that when dummy variables are used for the racial and ethnic diversity variable in the Canadian model, there is no evidence of a curvilinear effect of diversity on intolerance. The dummy variables for low levels of diversity are not significant.

appear to be more tolerant, both socially and politically. Yet, they are also more likely to display nuance in the types of speech that are seen as legitimate for democratic debate. A similar dynamic was not fully supported in Belgium, however, suggesting that network effects may partly be contingent on the contexts in which they occur.

### **A Further Test of the Causal Mechanisms**

In the previous subsection, the measure of racial and ethnic diversity was aggregated for both close friends and acquaintances at school. This measure was intended to be a measure of overall exposure to racial and ethnic diversity among peers. However, along with the extent of diversity, other features of networks may also be important, such as the strength of ties. A breakdown of diversity measures for acquaintances and close friends provides a further test of the ways in which network diversity can impact tolerance judgments. Recall that the key mechanism which underpins hypothesis 1 was an affective mechanism whereby interaction with people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds was argued to make exclusionary speech appear more threatening because it attacks minorities with whom the respondent more strongly identifies. Such an affective mechanism should logically work best among closer ties. Previously, the correlation between the close friends measure, the acquaintance measure, and the Closeness to Minorities scale were presented, and as expected, racial and ethnic diversity among close friends was more strongly related to feeling close to minorities than diversity among weaker ties.

However, hypothesis 2, that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity should increase tolerance of other types of speech, relies largely on a cognitive mechanism. A greater diversity of people was argued to expose an individual to a wider variety of political perspectives and facilitate the ability of people to see things from another person's point of view. This argument was drawn from research that examines the importance of political diversity (Mutz 2002b, 2006) and was argued to extend to racial and ethnic diversity for two possible reasons: 1) either racial and ethnic diversity was likely to underpin important differences in political perspectives and/or 2) many types of diversity develop people's perspective-taking ability and other cognitive skills.

Sociological research has long argued that weaker ties are more likely to expose individuals to a greater amount of diversity and to provide new information that is not available among closer ties (Granovetter 1973, 1983). Given the principle of homophily discussed earlier,

closer friends are more likely to share many perspectives, preferences and ideas even in the presence of racial and ethnic diversity. In other words, racial and ethnic diversity may have a stronger impact on increasing tolerance of other types of speech when it occurs among weaker ties. This is because weaker ties may provide greater opportunity for differences in 'race' and ethnicity to overlap with differences in opinions. The weak ties argument implies, therefore, that racial and ethnic diversity may be conducive to increasing levels of tolerance for other objectionable speech only in so far as such diversity is a proxy for exposure to a diversity of ideas.

In sum, a distinction between strong and weak ties leads to further expectations about the impact of racial and ethnic diversity on political tolerance judgments:

- 1) Racial and ethnic diversity among closer ties should be more important in distinguishing multicultural from absolute tolerators. This is because the affective mechanism in the model (identification) which causes an intolerance of exclusionary speech should work best in stronger relationships.
- 2) Greater racial and ethnic diversity among acquaintances should be more important in distinguishing the intolerant from multicultural tolerators. This is because weaker ties are argued to expose the individual to a wider variety of perspectives than is available among closer friends which facilitate greater tolerance of other objectionable speech.

<table 7 about here>

Table 7 presents the coefficients for racial and ethnic diversity among close friends and acquaintances entered separately into the models presented in Tables 5 and 6. The analysis proceeds in three steps: Model 1 includes only the two network measures, as well as the controls; Model 2 adds the Closeness to Minorities scale to the model; and finally, Model 3 adds in a measure of exposure to political diversity, which was included in the CYS and asked in the same question format as racial and ethnic diversity.<sup>32</sup> The inclusion of political diversity in Model 3 is a test of whether the impact of racial and ethnic diversity is spurious: rather than being a cause of tolerance dispositions, it may simply be related to the extent to which people are exposed to a

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<sup>32</sup> Respondents were asked how many of their 1) close friends and 2) other people at school they talk to, disagreed with them about politics on a scale from 0 to 6, where 0 means "none" and 6 means "all". The two questions were used to create an additive scale standardized from 0 to 6.

diversity of political viewpoints. To simplify the presentation, only the variables of interest are presented.

The distinction between strong and weak ties generally performs as expected for Canadian youth. In Model 1, greater racial and ethnic diversity among acquaintances in Canada is negatively related to intolerance as an outcome compared to multicultural tolerance ( $p < .01$ ). Likewise, greater racial and ethnic diversity among close friends is negatively related to absolute tolerance as an outcome compared with multicultural tolerance ( $p < .10$ ). Neither the inclusion of feeling close to minorities nor the inclusion of exposure to political diversity change in any substantial way the size or significance of these effects. In other words, while the impact of racial and ethnic diversity is strong, there is less support for the hypotheses that this relationship is caused by increased identification or increased political diversity. Instead, the impact appears to be robust to the inclusion of these potentially intervening variables. Political diversity seems to have an independent, positive effect on the likelihood of absolute tolerance ( $p < .10$ ) as might be expected from the literature but falls short of significance in decreasing the probability of intolerance ( $p = .17$ ).

The Belgian models are less consistent with the hypotheses developed in this paper. As with earlier models, there is no evidence that greater racial and ethnic diversity decreases the likelihood of intolerance, either among close ties or among acquaintances. Diversity among close friends, however, does significantly decrease the likelihood of absolute tolerance compared to multicultural tolerance ( $p < .05$ ), as predicted. This effect of diversity among close friends appears to be slightly mediated by identification with minorities, as measured by the Closeness scale. The inclusion of political diversity has an independent, negative effect on the likelihood of intolerance compared to multicultural tolerance ( $p < .01$ ).

The analysis in Table 7 provides an important nuance to the findings in the previous subsection. As expected, racial and ethnic diversity among stronger ties (i.e. close friends) appears to be an important indicator in distinguishing absolute from multicultural tolerators. This is consistent with an affective mechanism that should apply when ties are more intimately related to the respondent. However, there is only partial evidence that this affective mechanism is identification as measured by the Closeness to Minorities scale. Only in the Belgian data did the inclusion of this variable reduce the size and significance of the impact of diversity among close friends, although there was still evidence of an independent effect of network diversity



among close friends. In contrast to the findings for close friends, racial and ethnic diversity among weaker ties (i.e. acquaintances at school) was negatively related to intolerance in the Canadian data ( $p < .01$ ), which is consistent with a more cognitive mechanism. The finding was robust across models, and there was no evidence that this was simply an artifact of greater political diversity in one's networks. No parallel effect, however, was found for Belgian youth. If the impact of weak ties is more about the breadth of contacts with diverse others, rather than the depth of that contact, then one possibility is that network diversity for weaker ties in Belgium is simply too low.<sup>33</sup> As suggested earlier, it may take higher levels of diversity than are typically present among Belgian youth to result in a meaningful reduction in intolerance.

## Conclusion

This paper has examined the extent to which exposure to racial and ethnic diversity impact tolerance judgments among youth in Canada and Belgium. Despite a long tradition of emphasizing the benefit of exposure to diversity, little empirical research has examined the ways in which such exposure impacts tolerance judgments. This paper presented and tested the argument that exposure to racial and ethnic diversity would have divergent effects on tolerance judgments depending 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 be multicultural tolerators who distinguish between most speech and exclusionary speech. However, the extension of these results to the Belgian case provided mixed results, suggesting that exposure to diversity 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.

The contributions to the literature from this paper 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 absolute political tolerance, I provide a more robust examination of the contact hypothesis by including *actual* exposure to racial and ethnic diversity.

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<sup>33</sup> The mean level of racial and ethnic diversity among acquaintances for white youth in Belgium is only 1.1, compared with 2.3 for whites in Canada, and the standard error is almost half the size (.016 vs. .30). This suggests that there is just very little racial and ethnic diversity in Belgian acquaintance networks.

Furthermore, I expect exposure to have different impacts depending on the nature of the objectionable speech. This focus on differences across target groups is an addition to a literature that largely constructs political tolerance as a uni-dimensional concept. Finally, my 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.

Future research is needed that examines the extent to which these network effects are found among older generations. In addition, experimental work is required to more accurately capture the mechanisms that underpin the findings reported in this paper. In general, however, the paper suggests strongly the fruitfulness of examining the ways in which actual exposure to social diversity can and does impact the ways in which people respond to civil liberties dilemmas. It also speaks more generally to recent concerns that growing racial and ethnic diversity may be a challenge for democratic politics. The findings presented here suggest that social diversity may in fact impact the ways in which people think about democratic rights, but the direction of change is not necessarily less democratic. Rather, growing social diversity may simply make the balancing act between competing democratic ideals like individual rights and social inclusion take on a new dimension.

## Table and Figures

Figure 1

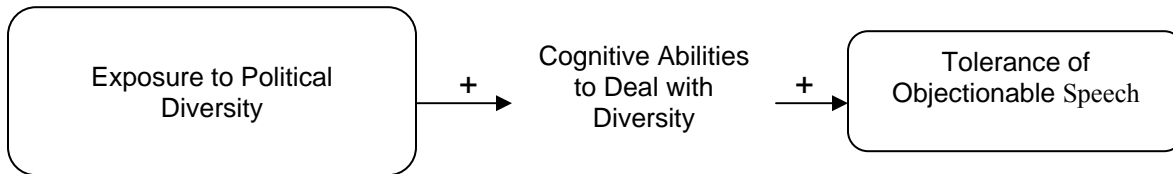


Figure 2

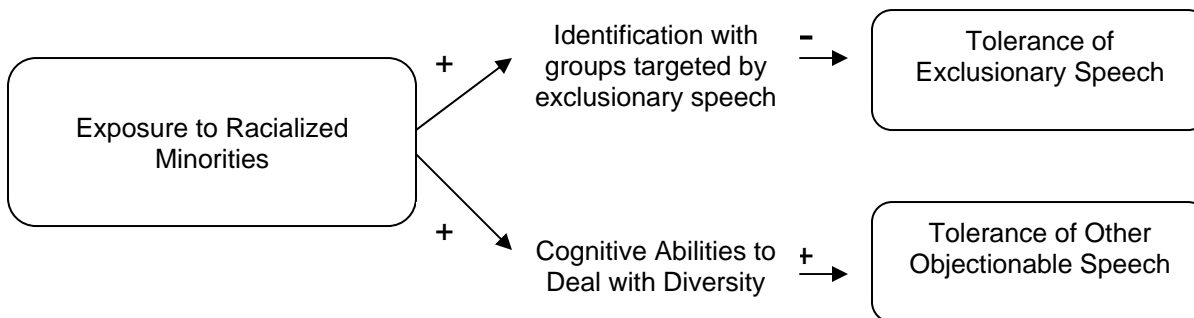
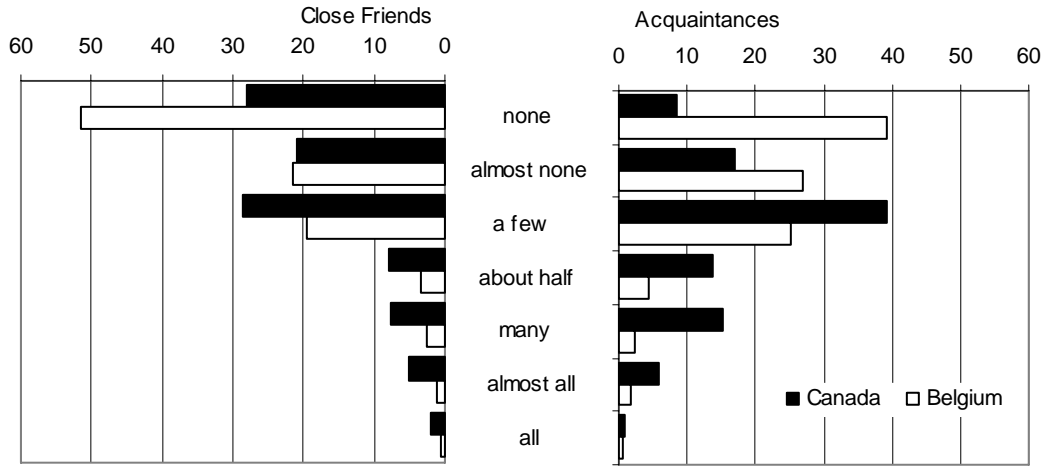
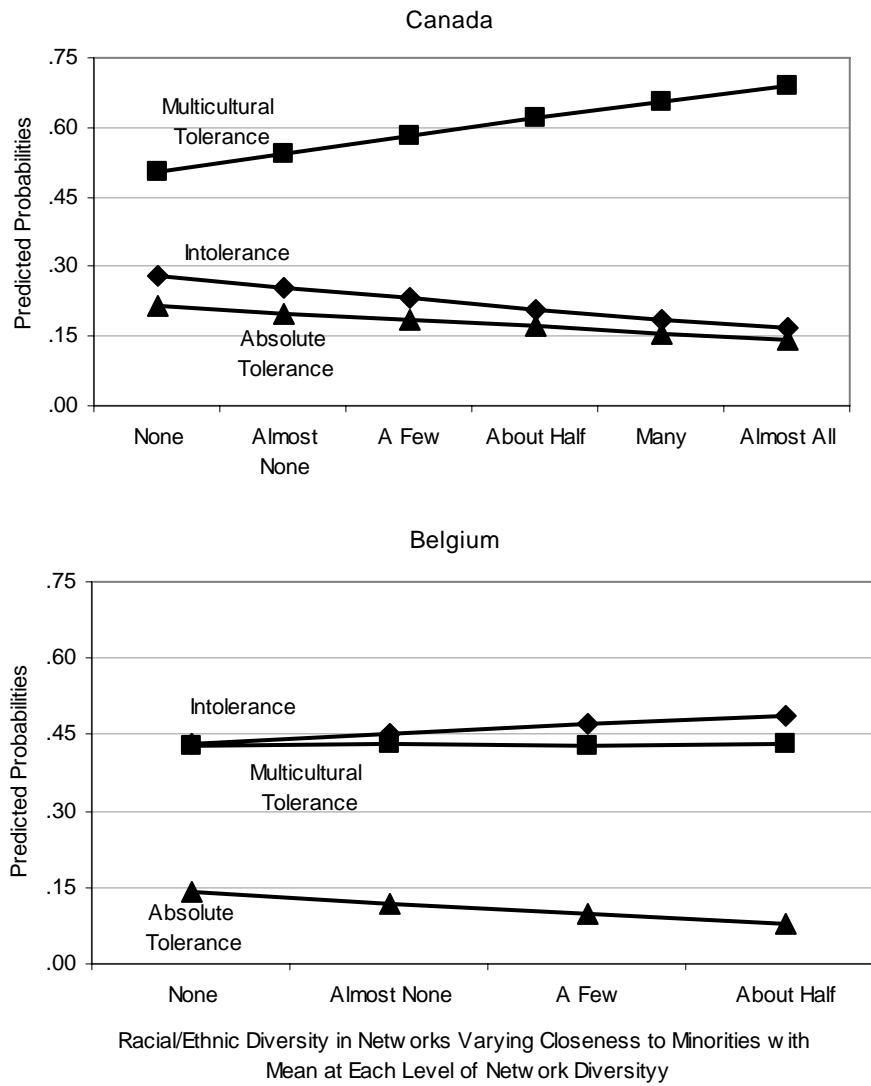


Figure 3: Distribution of Racial and Ethnic Network Diversity among Whites



Note: Bars represent percent of sample indicating each level of diversity. Source: Comparative Youth Study.

Figure 4: Predicted Probabilities of Tolerance by Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Whites



Source: CYS. CLARIFY is used to obtain predictions. See text for details of estimation.

Table 1: Breakdown by Type of Tolerance

		Canada	Belgium
Intolerant	%	38%	52%
	N	1043	2362
Multicultural Tolerator	%	52%	38%
	N	1424	1733
Absolute Tolerator	%	10%	10%
	N	278	438
Total		2745	4533

Note: Cells are column percentages. Breakdown excludes 1598 respondents who did not find at least one of each type of target group objectionable, as well as 788 respondents who failed to complete the tolerance battery. Source: Comparative Youth Study.

**Table 2: Exposure to Racialized Diversity among Whites**

	<b>Canadian Sample</b>	<b>Belgian Sample</b>	
<u>Exposure to Diversity among Whites</u>			
Average % Racialized Minority at School Among Whites	24%	7%	***
Mean racial/ethnic diversity of acquaintances (scale 0-6)	2.32	1.11	***
Mean racial/ethnic diversity of close friends (scale 0-6)	1.69	0.89	***

Note: \*\*\* p<.01, \*\* p<.05, \* p<.10. Source: Comparative Youth Study.

**Table 3: Exposure to Diversity and Closeness to Minorities among White Youth**

	Closeness to Minorities Scale (0-1)	
	Canadian Youth	Belgian Youth
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Close Friends (0-6)	0.29 *** n=1967	0.35 *** n=4719
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Acquaintances at School (0-6)	0.27 *** n=1958	0.23 *** n=4699
% Racialized Minority in School	0.16 *** n=1972	0.24 *** n=4761

Note: Pearson's correlations are reported and the sample is limited in each sample to white respondents. \*\*\*  $p < .01$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*  $p < .10$ . Source: Comparative Youth Study.



**Table 4: Diversity, Identification and Types of Tolerance among Whites**

	<b>Intolerant</b>	←sign.→	<b>Multicultural Tolerator</b>	←sign.→	<b>Absolute tolerator</b>
<b>Canada</b>					
Closeness to Minorities Scale (0-1)	0.46	←p=.165→	0.48	←p=.254→	0.50
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Close Friends (0-6)	1.61	←p=.112→	1.74	←p=.448→	1.65
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Acquaintances at School (0-6)	2.19	←p=.002→	2.40	←p=.627→	2.35
<b>Belgium</b>					
Closeness to Minorities Scale (0-1)	0.28	←p=.000→	0.33	←p=.000→	0.27
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Close Friends (0-6)	0.90	←p=.097→	0.96	←p=.000→	0.72
Racial/Ethnic Diversity Among Acquaintances at School (0-6)	1.09	←p=.209→	1.14	←p=.121→	1.03

Note: Analysis limited to white respondents. Significance was calculated for intolerance vs. multicultural tolerance and multicultural tolerance vs. absolute tolerance in separate ANOVA tests. Numbers represent mean scores on each scale for each type of tolerance. Source: Comparative Youth Study.

**Table 5: Network Diversity, Identification and Tolerance Types among White Youth in Canada**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Intolerant Coef. (robust s.e.)	Absolute Tolerance Coef. (robust s.e.)	Intolerant Coef. (robust s.e.)	Absolute Tolerance Coef. (robust s.e.)
<b>Racial/Ethnic Diversity †</b>	-0.167 (.07) **	-0.143 (.08) *	-0.171 (0.08) **	-0.159 (0.09) *
<b>Closeness to Minorities</b>				
Log of % Minority in School	0.186 (.23)	0.140 (.27)	0.069 (0.33)	0.292 (0.39)
Political Knowledge Scale	-1.182 (.19) ***	-0.061 (.30)	-1.180 (0.19) ***	0.142 (0.27)
Political Activism Scale	-0.158 (.04) ***	-0.097 (.06) <sup>a</sup>	-0.159 (0.04) ***	-0.054 (0.30)
Number of Organizations	0.002 (.06)	0.162 (.08) *	0.001 (0.06)	-0.101 (0.06) *
Female	-0.465 (.14) ***	0.184 (.22)	-0.467 (0.14) ***	0.159 (0.09) *
Parent(s) University Educated	-0.350 (.15) **	-0.051 (.20)	-0.349 (0.15) **	0.176 (0.22)
Catholic	0.123 (.20)	-0.523 (.21) **	0.121 (0.20)	-0.529 (0.21) **
Other Christian	0.413 (.24) *	-0.247 (.27)	0.413 (0.24) *	-0.247 (0.27)
Jewish	-0.296 (.43)	-0.859 (.40) **	-0.295 (0.43)	-0.852 (0.40) **
Religious Attendance	0.254 (.06) ***	0.096 (.13)	0.254 (0.06) ***	0.097 (0.13)
Constant	1.049 (.37) ***	-0.859 (.51) *	1.033 (0.36) ***	-0.931 (0.51) *
N	1398	1398	1398	1398
McFadden's Pseudo R-Squared	0.056	0.056	0.056	0.056
Nagelkerke Pseudo R-Squared	0.118	0.118	0.118	0.118

Note: † Racial and Ethnic Diversity is a composite scale for both friends and acquaintances at school. Results are multinomial logistic regressions for types of tolerance, where multicultural tolerance is the reference category. Analysis is limited to white respondents. Model 1 contains only respondents without missing cases on the Closeness scale. Source: Comparative Youth Study. \*\*\* p<.01; \*\* p<.05; \* p<.10, <sup>a</sup> p=<.15. Standard errors have been adjusted to account for school clusters using Stata's cluster command.

**Table 6: Network Diversity, Identification and Tolerance Types among White Youth in Belgium**

	Model 1		Model 2	
	Intolerant Coef. (robust s.e.)	Absolute Tolerance Coef. (robust s.e.)	Intolerant Coef. (robust s.e.)	Absolute Tolerance Coef. (robust s.e.)
<b>Racial/Ethnic Diversity †</b>	0.052 (.06)	-0.172 (.09) *	0.073 (.06)	-0.128 (.09)
<b>Closeness to Minorities</b>				
Log of % Minority in School	-0.278 (.28)	-0.062 (.17)	-0.381 (.20) *	-0.776 (.32) ***
Political Knowledge Scale	-0.644 (.16) ***	-0.363 (.23) <sup>a</sup>	-0.253 (.28)	-0.016 (.18)
Political Activism Scale	-0.130 (.03) ***	0.061 (.05)	-0.637 (.16) ***	-0.349 (.23) <sup>a</sup>
Number of Organizations	-0.104 (.04) ***	-0.035 (.06)	-0.121 (.03) ***	0.080 (.05) *
Female	-0.322 (.11) ***	-0.093 (.12)	-0.100 (.04) ***	-0.027 (.06)
Parent(s) University Educated	-0.129 (.12)	0.044 (.15)	-0.312 (.11) ***	-0.072 (.13)
Catholic	0.022 (.10)	-0.114 (.15)	-0.125 (.12)	0.050 (.15)
Other Christian	0.093 (.35)	-0.410 (.59)	0.016 (.10)	-0.125 (.16)
Jewish	na	na	0.099 (.35)	-0.403 (.58)
Religious Attendance	0.092 (.06) <sup>a</sup>	0.077 (.10)	0.096 (.06) <sup>a</sup>	0.086 (.10)
Constant	0.400 (.37)	-1.062 (.36) ***	0.470 (.37)	-0.935 (.35) ***
N		2865		2865
McFadden's Pseudo R-Squared		0.022		0.024
Nagelkerke Pseudo R-Squared		0.048		0.051

Note: † Racial and Ethnic Diversity is a composite scale for both friends and acquaintances at school. Results are multinomial logistic regressions for types of tolerance, where multicultural tolerance is the reference category. Analysis is limited to white respondents. Model 1 contains only respondents without missing cases on the Closeness scale. Source: Comparative Youth Study. \*\*\* p<.01; \*\* p<.05; \* p<.10, <sup>a</sup> p<=.15. Standard errors have been adjusted to account for school clusters using Stata's cluster command.

**Table 7: Strong vs. Weak Ties and Types of Tolerance**

Canada					
	Intolerance			Absolute Tolerance	
	Coef.	(robust s.e.)		Coef.	(robust s.e.)
<b>Model 1</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.037	(.05)		-0.108	(.06) *
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	-0.235	(.07)	***	-0.034	(.10)
<b>Model 2</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.031	(.05)		-0.111	(.07) a
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	-0.249	(.08)	***	-0.034	(.10)
Closeness to Minorities	0.056	(.32)		0.303	(.39)
<b>Model 3</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.034	(.05)		-0.120	(.07) *
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	-0.229	(.08)	***	-0.057	(.10)
Closeness to Minorities	-0.040	(.34)		0.359	(.41)
Political Diversity Scale	-0.093	(.07)		0.212	(.12) *
Belgium					
	Intolerance			Absolute Tolerance	
	Coef.	(robust s.e.)		Coef.	(robust s.e.)
<b>Model 1</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.012	(.04)		-0.197	(.09) **
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	0.041	(.05)		0.032	(.07)
<b>Model 2</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.025	(.04)		-0.154	(.09) *
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	0.049	(.05)		0.025	(.08)
Closeness to Minorities	-0.373	(.20)	*	-0.713	(.32) **
<b>Model 3</b>					
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Close Friends	0.016	(.04)		-0.162	(.09) *
Racial/Ethnic Diversty - Acquaintances	0.067	(.05)		0.006	(.08)
Closeness to Minorities	-0.432	(.20)	**	-0.717	(.32) **
Political Diversity Scale	-0.123	(.05)	***	0.059	(.07)

Note: Results are multinomial logistic regressions for types of tolerance, where multicultural tolerance is the reference category. Analysis is limited to white respondents. Standard errors have been adjusted to account for school clusters using Stata's cluster command. Controls were included in each model for: log of % racialized minority, political knowledge, political activism, involvement in organizations, female, parental education, religious denomination and religious attendance. Full models available in the Appendix. Source: Comparative Youth Study. \*\*\* p<.01; \*\* p<.05; \* p <.10, a p=<.15.

## Appendix

**Political Knowledge Scale:** A standardized, additive scale was created from 0-1, where higher scores indicated more correct answers. In the Belgian Youth Study, the scale was created based on four questions: 1) Who is the President of the European Commission? 2) What is the Belgian Federal Parliament composed of? 3) Who is the Minister of Justice in the Belgian Federal Government? 4) What political party does the Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt belong to? In the McGill Youth Study, the scale was based on three multiple choice questions: 1) Who is the provincial premier of your province? 2) Who is the new governor general? 3) What does the Supreme Court do?

**Political Activities Scale:** An additive scale was created based on responses to the following questions: In the past 12 months, have often have you...

... deliberately worn a patch, sticker, button or T-shirt for a political or social cause?

... signed a petition?

... taken part in a legal march or protest?

... raised or donated money for a cause?

... boycotted certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons?

... deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons?

... participated in illegal protest activities?

... forwarded an email with political content?

... wrote or displayed a political statement publicly?

... attended a show or cultural event with political content?

Answers were recoded so 0=never done, 1=participated at "a few times" or "often". The Alpha Cronbach score is .666. The scale was truncated at 5 activities in the analysis.

**Organizational Involvement:** Respondents were asked to indicate the types of organizations they had been involved in during the past 12 months. Respondents were allowed to check all that apply. The responses were truncated in the analysis at 4 or more organizations.

**Parental Education:** 1=one or both parents completed university, 0=otherwise.

**Religion:** Respondents were asked: "What, if any, is your family's religious background?" Dummy variables were created for the following categories: Catholic, Other Christian (including Protestant, Orthodox, and Other Christian), Jewish, and Muslim, leaving the non-religious and others as the reference category.

**Religious Attendance:** In the past 12 months, about how often did you attend religious services? 1=never, 2=a few times a year, 3=a few times a month, 4=once a week, 5=more than once a week.

**Female:** 1=female, 0=male.

**Urban/Rural:** In the Belgian Youth Study, schools located in major metropolitan areas (>100,000 inhabitants) were coded as urban. In the McGill Youth Study, schools sampled in Montreal and Toronto were coded as urban. 1=Urban, 0=Rural.

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