

PER ADMAN & PER STRÖMBLAD
2017:1

Abandoning intolerance in a tolerant society:

The influence of length of residence on the recognition of political rights among immigrants



Linnæus University

Discrimination and Integration Studies

Centre

Abandoning intolerance in a tolerant society: the influence of length of residence on the recognition of political rights among immigrants.

ABSTRACT

This paper presents and empirically evaluates the idea that individual level political tolerance is influenced by the overall tolerance in society. Hence, the expectation is that more politically tolerant attitudes would be developed as a consequence of exposure to a social environment in which people in general are more inclined to accept freedom of speech, also when the message (or the messenger as such) challenges one's own values and beliefs. The theoretical base of the analyses is a learning model, according to which more broad-minded and permissive attitudes, from a democratic point of view, are adopted as a result of (1) an adjustment stimulated by mere observation of an overall high-level of political tolerance in society ('passive learning'), and (2) an adjustment due to cognition and interaction within important spheres in society ('active learning'). Using survey data, we explore empirically how length of residence among immigrants in high-tolerance Sweden are related to attitudinal measures of political tolerance, and to what extent a time-related effect is mediated through participation in 'learning institutions' of education, working-life, civil society and political involvement. In concert with expectations, the empirical findings suggest that an observed positive effect of time in Sweden on political tolerance may be explained by a gradual adoption of the principle that political rights should be recognized. Such an adoption, however, seems to require participation in activities of learning institutions, as we find that passive learning alone is not sufficient

Contact information

Per Adman
Uppsala University
Department of Government
per.adman@statsvet.uu.se

Per Strömblad
Linnaeus University
Centre for Labour Market and Discrimination Studies
per.stromblad@lnu.se

Would hitherto intolerant persons develop more broad-minded and permissive attitudes, if they spend some time in a tolerant social environment; and if so, why? Is mere observation of tolerant behaviour sufficient in this regard, or is personal interaction with tolerant people essential for bringing about such attitudinal changes? In this paper, we explore differences in political tolerance, thus challenging assumptions of rigidity in the level of tolerance acquired early in life (e.g. Gibson 2011:419–420). Utilizing a dynamic feature of appropriate cross-section data, this study aims to explore how various mechanisms of ‘learning’ may explain differences between different population categories, when it comes to the willingness to allow freedom of expression in contemporary multicultural democracies.¹

Political tolerance is habitually understood as the propensity of a person to support political rights for groups whose members share values and/or a way of life disliked by the same person (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007; Sullivan et al. 1982; Stouffer 1955). In the abstract, it may be fairly comfortable to embrace principles of fundamental democratic privileges, such as freedom of speech for all citizens (or, yet more inclusive, for all members of given society). However, defending the right to, in actual practice, publicly express viewpoints that appear to be light-years away from one’s own may be considerably more demanding. It is much to expect from the devoted pro-choice activist, that s/he primarily will contemplate over the blessings of democracy, when passing by an anti-abortion demonstration. Likewise, a Christian, who strongly believes that all people should conform to the norms of Bible verses condemning homosexuality, would probably have to struggle to appreciate the value of pluralism when a political majority legalizes same-sex marriage.

Nevertheless, although assessments of the ‘pliability’ of intolerance (Gibson 2011) may differ, scholarly efforts have been devoted to understanding possible changes in this regard. According to learning theories, political tolerance may be fostered through participation in various institutional or social settings; such as schools, work places and civil society associations (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003; cf. Finkel 2003). Although a touch of democratic romanticism may be present in optimistic expectations of this kind (cf. Adman 2008), the basic mechanism would not have to be particularly

¹ The research reported in this paper is related to previous work, in which we have explored differences in institutional trust (Strömblad and Adman 2010; Adman and Strömblad 2015) and social trust (Fritzell and Strömblad 2011) between immigrants and the native majority population in Sweden.

enigmatic. If tolerance is not a congenital frame of mind, but rather a complex concept that has to be intellectually acquired (Sullivan et al. 1981; Sniderman 1975), some effort should indeed be necessary for an individual to become tolerant; leaving behind, that is, earlier developed more inconsiderate, perhaps also antagonistic, viewpoints. Exposing oneself for a diverse set of opinions—indirect, as various perspectives are conveyed in education (or even in diverse mass media), or direct, through personal experiences from observing and meeting people—would assumingly help a person to appreciate democratic rights in less egocentric fashion. If this is true, an interesting question is of course to what extent the more precise conditions of such learning may be disclosed. Specifically, what kind of mechanisms ought to be present, for a development of tolerant attitudes among individuals in a given social environment?

Reasonable theoretical motivations for the idea that tolerance may be learned notwithstanding, significant inter-country differences remain to be explained (Viegas 2007, 2010; Weldon 2006; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). True, variation in political tolerance is hardly random; rather, scholars (although results from different studies hardly correspond fully) have identified patterns linked to macro characteristics such as socioeconomic development, political culture, and democratic transition. Put bluntly, citizens of richer countries having a longer democratic history tend to show higher acceptance for the political rights of ‘disliked groups’ than citizens in less wealthy and recently democratized countries.² Considering these well-established findings, what is to be expected when people migrate from countries with differing (aggregate) levels of tolerance? From a neutral learning perspective—that is, considering that potential contextual effects may be negative as well as positive—it seems reasonable that migration, due to the change of environment, could engender an increase as well as a decrease in political tolerance; depending, of course, on whether the migrant moves to a more or less tolerant setting. To our knowledge, however, systematic analyses of migration-related changes in political tolerance are rare in previous research.³ In

² Furthermore, the study by Peffley and Rohrschneider (2003), taking socioeconomic development and democratic longevity into account, also suggests that tolerance is encouraged in federalist (rather than centralist) political systems.

³ The migration perspective notwithstanding, compared with a series of other socio-political attitudes and behavioural patterns (e.g. social/institutional trust and political participation) political tolerance does not seem to be ‘mapped’ with the same frequency in large-scale comparative surveys; hence, relevant data are not as readily available for scholars.

an effort to contribute to this field of research, we set out to explore one possible scenario in this respect. Specifically, we focus our intention on immigrants in Sweden – a group whose members in general, given that Sweden habitually rank very high in comparative studies on tolerance (Viegas 2007, Weldon 2006; cf. Kirschner, Freitag and Rapp 2011; Hadler 2012), may be expected to 1) have lower levels of tolerance, in comparison with the native population, but 2) become more tolerant over time, due to positive influences from contacts and observations in the new home country.

Exploring the explanatory value of potential ‘learning’ from this particular point of departure, we utilize information on the multi-dimensional heterogeneity of the specific population category chosen; for example in terms of origin, cultural and religious background, reasons for migration, and also—considering post-migration experiences—the quantity and quality of interactions with the majority population and various institutions in society. Taking such differences into account help us investigate to what extent involvement in learning institutions, and thus encounters with people of different origin, affect the level of political tolerance.

In the reminder of this paper, we first take a closer look at the theoretical model, according to which political tolerance may be fostered through social interaction as well as by means of pure perceptually based assessment; this section also specifies the hypotheses to be tested. In the following section, we describe the empirical data as well as our considerations and specifications of the central variables in the study. Next, results from our empirical analyses are presented and evaluated in terms of the theoretical model. Finally, in the concluding section, we summarize our findings and discuss their implications for the prospects of political tolerance in contemporary multicultural welfare states.

Learning to be tolerant—what may be expected?

To specify expectations derived from a perspective of learning on political tolerance, we may picture a politically intolerant person, being convinced that people with ‘unacceptable opinions’ should face tighter restrictions regarding democratic rights’—at least when it comes

to the freedom to publicly trying to convince opponents.⁴ Why and under what circumstances, then, would s/he reconsider such a stance?

Following the more pessimistic outlooks in the literature, the question may certainly seem to presume too much. Reviewing relevant studies on efforts to ‘foster’ desirable attitudes such as tolerance (for instance through government sponsored training programs; e.g. Finkel 2003), Gibson, being a leading scholar within this field, is cautious when it comes to expectations in this respect: ‘It may very well be that basic orientations toward foreign and threatening ideas are shaped at an early age, and, although environmental conditions can ameliorate or exacerbate such propensities, core attitudes and values are fairly resistant to change’ (2011:420).

Moreover, based on evidence from a number of his own and other studies—performed in different regions of the world—Gibson (2011) concludes that tolerance is more pliable than intolerance. Providing respondents with arguments for tolerance, initially intolerant persons seemed to be highly reluctant to change their views; at least in comparison with the contrary scenario, in which tolerant respondents were much easier persuaded to reconsider their position. Hence, a fairly disheartening, though empirically supported, hypothesis is that tolerance—similar to what conventional wisdom would say about trust—is much more difficult to cultivate than to devastate.

Nevertheless, previous research also provides some support for the idea that individuals may be influenced in such a way that they become more politically tolerant. As mentioned, the basic suggestion of the learning model is that tolerance is a cognitively complex concept, the principles of which have to be grasped through some sort of internalised experiences (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003; cf. Gibson 2011; Finkel 2003). Tolerance, that is, may hardly be regarded as an instinctive position. Rather, it may be developed among individuals in auspicious settings, where they eventually begin to see the point in equal distribution of political rights. The settings may be referred to as ‘socializing

⁴ It may very well be less challenging for the politically intolerant person to agree that all citizens, regardless of their opinion on more or less controversial matters, should have the right to vote in general elections. The ‘silent’ act of casting a vote is, while it is performed, probably not associated with visible, high-pitched, persuasion in the same vein as, for example, a public demonstration. Thus, the latter mentioned act will more often be considered as provoking, or outright dangerous, in the eyes of an opponent.

institutions’ (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007:93) or ‘learning institutions’, as we will refer to them. In a democratic society, such institutions are assumed to jointly contribute to citizens’ education when it comes to fundamental values and norms of democracy. Activities in schools, officially sanctioned by public authorities, intuitively comes to mind; indeed, compulsory as well as non-compulsory schooling of citizens (at various levels, from primary school to university education) probably provide the prime example of a learning institution when it comes to encouraging political tolerance. Education within the democratic society is assumed to provide knowledge and insights into different ideologies and viewpoints (cf. Almgren 2006).⁵ Hence, as a student one should reach at least a rudimentary understanding of arguments behind the variety of political stances in society, including, then, those that one does not approve of.

Aside from such curriculum-based broader understanding, however, tolerance is presumably learned also as a by-product of social interaction in schools. To the extent that the diversity of society (for example, in terms of ethnicity and religion) is mirrored in the composition of participants in educational institutions, students are provided with opportunities to interact with fellow students from different backgrounds. Following the optimism of the classic contact hypothesis in social psychology (Allport 1954; cf. Pettigrew and Tropp 2006), such pluralism may be expected to reduce prejudice and help people to see the benefits of tolerance. Hence, members of ‘out-groups’ may gradually be regarded with less suspicion, even if one does not adopt their opinions.

Outside of educational institutions, activities in other institutional setting may also provide opportunities to interact with people with different standpoints. Notably, learning may be expected to continue within the realms of working-life. Unlike educational institutions, which are supposed to convey democratic norms as a part of the curriculum, most employees are probably not subject to explicit democracy courses during their workdays. Still, similar to schools, workplaces are social environments in which people interact and perhaps may obtain a deeper understanding of different viewpoints (Mutz & Mondak 2006; Pateman 1970; but see

⁵ Still, it should be mentioned that schools, unsurprisingly, differ in how well they manage to transmit democratic norms to their students (Jormfeldt 2011).

Adman 2008, for a critical appraisal).⁶ If work, hence, is a potential seedbed for political tolerance, then lack of work, all other things being equal, should reduce the likelihood of developing tolerant attitudes.

Moving beyond institutional settings essentially resulting from mandatory or non-mandatory education, or from the need of paid work, organizational life should represent another potential platform for learning tolerance. The role of voluntary associations in civil society has a prominent place in democratic theory, at least since Mill (1991[1861]; cf. Strömblad and Bengtsson 2017) developed ideas on organizations as schools in civic competence. By the same token, they habitually draw scholarly attention as potential sources of interpersonal trust, and hence also a social capital that may be reproduced outside the associations as such (Putnam 1993, 2000; cf. Paxton 2007). Thus, although involvement in voluntary associations less frequently has been explicitly analysed as a predictor of political tolerance (but see Mutz and Mondak 2006)⁷, civil society may very well represent an accompanying learning institution in this regard.

Finally, but not least important, scholars have pointed out that political tolerance reasonably could be encouraged through direct experience of utilizing democratic rights (Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003; cf. Gibson and Duch 1991). Those who themselves are active in political life, for instance by taking part in political meetings or by joining a political party, are assumed to become more prone to, in both word and deed, advocate political freedom also for one's political opponents. In line with this, results from Peffley's and Rohrschneider's (2003:252–254) study, encompassing seventeen countries, suggest that both democratic stability on the country level (taking differences in prosperity into account) and democratic activism on the individual level promote political tolerance among ordinary citizens. Similarly, Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton (2007:100–105) demonstrate that individual level democratic activism (unlike several other variables, for example political

⁶ Analogous to the question of diversity in schools, the actual level of pluralism of political opinions at a given workplace should reasonably depend on the extent to which staff recruitment is marked by heterogeneity.

⁷ The study by Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton (2007) explicitly acknowledges the potential importance of civil society organizations. Due to data restrictions, however, their analyses include a (dichotomous) measure of membership, but no measure of actual activity involving interaction.

interest and religiosity) has such an expected positive effect, in the USA as well as in both Eastern and Western Europe.

Summing up the expectations, for the purpose of this study, the learning model should be able to provide explanations for the presumed time-related increase in political tolerance among immigrants in Sweden. If migrants in general are influenced by the attitudes of the majority population in this respect, Sweden constitutes a promising most-likely case of an overall auspicious setting—given the country’s previously mentioned track record, based on tolerance surveys. Still, the story may not be as simple as it first seems. Considering learning again, one may distinguish analytically between an *active* and a *passive* component, which may function simultaneously or separately. With this conceptualization, all four ‘learning institutions’ described above (educational institutions, workplaces, voluntary associations, and political life) are in one way or the other expected to be influential due to ‘active learning’. Developing tolerant attitudes as a consequence of involvement in these institutional settings would in each case require personal attendance; otherwise, no social interaction would take place.

However, in an effort to contribute to the precision of the learning model, we also utilize the specific choice of population category in this study to provide some clue on ‘passive learning’ as well. Schematically, for the latter type of learning no actual personal interaction is necessary. Instead, one may assume that the overall social environment provides knowledge and insights by a pure perceptual mechanism. By observing, that is, political discussion and (non-hostile) political battles in a democratic society—via mass media as well as informal channels—the merits of tolerant attitudes may be perceived, even for a person with hitherto poor access to the learning institutions.

Figure 1 provides a graphic representation of our analytical approach utilizing the learning model. Before operationalizing the variables (in the next section of the paper), the causal diagram highlights the principal relationships that we need to investigate, in order to test the hypotheses.

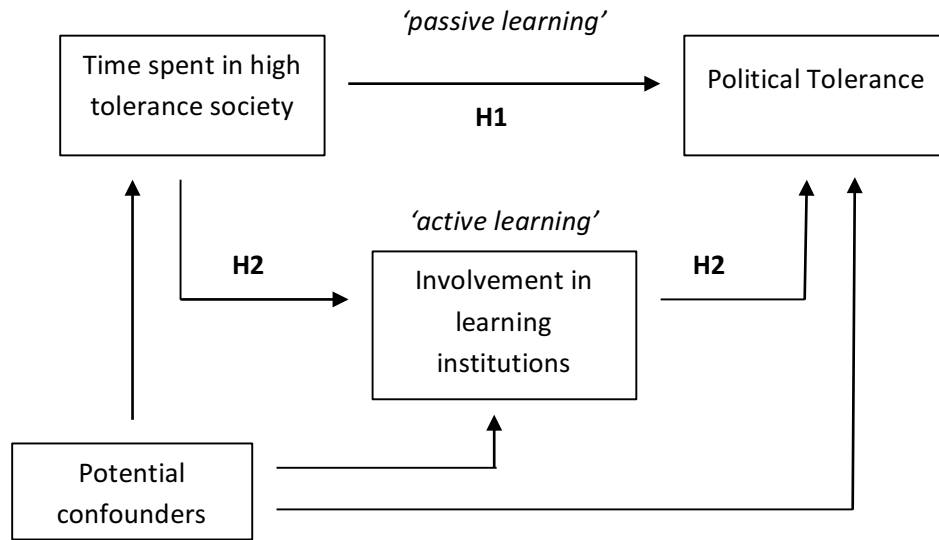


Figure 1. Analytical approach using the learning model.

As indicated by the graph, we put the learning model to test by formulation of two sequential hypotheses. The first hypothesis, H1, is based on the idea that Sweden may represent a high-tolerance society, in general thus providing an encouraging context in this respect for those who migrate to this country. Hence, H1 states that, among immigrants in Sweden, political tolerance increases with length of residence.

However, to buttress the developed version of the learning model also the second hypothesis, H2, should be empirically supported. Picturing a set of intervening variables in a hypothetical causal chain, H2 states that a positive effect of length of residence on political tolerance to a significant extent is explained by greater involvement in learning institutions. As noted in Figure 1, we consider such a scenario a case of active learning. An alternative scenario, then, is thus the case of passive learning, according to which purely perceptually based information is sufficient to influence individual level political tolerance. The empirical result compatible with such a possibility, we may argue, translates into a support for the first hypothesis but not for the second. Alternatively, to distinguish also the remaining possible outcome, it may be that a positive effect of length of residence is fully explained by relevant institutional involvement. In this case then, only the second hypothesis would be supported once the

hypotheses are simultaneously evaluated, whereas the reasonable interpretation would be that active learning is required and passive learning in itself is insufficient.

Measuring political tolerance and its causes—considerations and data

A common definition of political tolerance is ‘the willingness to respect political rights of individuals who belong to other groups’ (e.g. Finkel et al. 1999). Often it is added that this willingness should apply also to groups that one explicitly dislikes. Hence, political demonstrations and meetings conducted by one’s political opponents—and other groups one is against—should be accepted (Sullivan et al. 1982:784).⁸

There are two dominating traditions as how to measure the concept in surveys. The first one is represented by Stouffer (1955), who in his seminal work focusing on the USA in the 1950s, examined individual’s tolerance for actions undertaken by certain ‘target groups’. More precisely, people were classified as intolerant if they denied civil liberties to socialists, atheists, or communists. This ‘fixed-group’ approach (Gibson 2013) was later criticized for being confounded by the unpopularity of the selected groups. Sullivan and his colleagues (1979) therefore developed the content-controlled method, in which the respondents first are asked which group they like the least, and then whether they are willing to extend political rights to that group (such as arranging a political meeting). The groups are selected from all over the political spectrum. This approach has also been criticized in different ways; for example, for only considering left-wing and right-wing extremists, and for providing a too vague picture of the degree of a person’s tolerance level, as only one least-liked group is selected (e.g. Mondak and Sanders 2003:495–496).

This criticism is taken into consideration when political tolerance is defined and measured here. A given respondent’s willingness to allow political rights to several specified groups in society will be investigated, and no attention is paid to whether the respondent dislikes the group or not. Furthermore, tolerance will be regarded as a scale, ranging from full tolerance to

⁸ A closely related concept is social tolerance, i.e. whether other (disliked) groups are considered as socially equal (e.g. accepted as neighbours). The relationship between various manifestations of political and social tolerance is clearly interesting, yet beyond the scope of this study.

full intolerance, depending on the number of groups one is tolerant or intolerant against (cf., the ‘breadth’ of intolerance; Gibson 2006). Finally, we only include groups that undoubtedly should be politically respected, namely stigmatized groups and ethnic minorities. The measure is then adequate, without question, as the political rights of these groups should be accepted, and may be considered as a ‘baseline tolerance measure’ from any reasonable democratic perspective.⁹

For the empirical analyses, we make use of the Swedish Citizen Survey 2003 (‘Medborgarundersökningen 2003’). To our knowledge, it is the most complete source of information on political tolerance in Sweden and very suitable for investigating a large number of explanatory factors. Furthermore, it contains numerous questions on immigration-specific experiences and life circumstances. The survey employed face-to-face interviews with a stratified random sample of inhabitants in Sweden (age 18–80).¹⁰

Our measure of *political tolerance* is based on four items. The respondents were asked whether they thought that homosexuals, people of a different race, people with AIDS, and drug addicts, respectively, should be allowed to hold public meetings. The answers were summarized in an additive index variable, measuring the number of groups to which one is

⁹ According to some researchers, an approach like this one does not allow a more precise establishment of the level of intolerance since, they argue, this is a dichotomous question: either you are tolerant, or you are not. Establishing such a level is however not the purpose of this paper. We have undertaken the main analyses presented below also using a summarized dichotomous measure on tolerance (i.e. dividing between on the one hand those who tolerate all groups and on the other hand those who are intolerant against at least one group). We have also used an index measure on political tolerance where several further groups were included, such as left-wing and right-wing extremists, and racists (this index variable is less skewed than the one being used in the analyses below). The results are very similar to those presented in this paper.

¹⁰ Principal investigators were Karin Borevi, Per Strömblad, and Anders Westholm at the Department of Government, Uppsala University. The fieldwork was carried out in 2002 and 2003 by professional interviewers from Statistics Sweden. The interviews averaged about 75 minutes in length. Funding was supplied by the Bank of Sweden Tercentenary Foundation, and by the Government Commission of Inquiry on the Political Integration of Immigrants in Sweden. The overall response rate was 56.2 per cent. All analyses in this paper have been conducted with proper adjustments for the stratified sampling procedure. The survey employed a complex sampling scheme, increasing the selection probability for refugees and for immigrants from developing countries, while under-representing immigrants from Nordic and Western European countries. At the same time, the design allows for necessary adjustments to produce representative samples of the total population, the native population and the population of immigrants, respectively. In total, 858 respondents in the sample (originally selected on the basis of official registry data) had at some point in time migrated to Sweden.

tolerant.¹¹ It was transformed to a scale 0–100, anchored in 0 = intolerance towards all groups and 100 = tolerance towards all groups (see appendix for descriptive statistics of all variables in the analyses).

The primary independent variable, *time in Sweden*, measures a respondent's length of residence in the new home country. The measure is quite detailed as it takes into account the number of years as well as months the respondent has been living in Sweden (thus also taking into account temporary periods abroad). Expecting a diminishing rate of return of time in this regard—a learning effect should reasonably be more pronounced for relatively recent immigrants, than for those who already have spent several decades in the country—the variable was logarithmically transformed prior to the analyses.

Turning to the learning institutions, *post-migration education* measures the number of years spent in combined full-time schooling and occupational training in Sweden.¹² As for the potential importance of working life, the dummy variables *weak labour force attachment* (coded 1 for respondents that are unemployed, or on disability/early retirement pension, or not working for other reasons; and 0 otherwise) and *pensioner* (coded 1 for those who are retired; and 0 otherwise) separates respondents in the corresponding categories from those who are employed, and thus may take part in social interaction at workplaces. Regarding possible acquirement of tolerance in civil society organizations, we include a measure of *associational activity*, based on questions on engagement in 28 different types of voluntary associations. The measure includes a wide-ranging array of recreational organizations, interest and identity organizations, as well as ideological organizations. The information was summarized in an additive index variable.¹³ Finally, we capture respondents' practical use of democratic rights

¹¹ Results from a principal component analysis suggest that it is reasonable to regard the items as one-dimensional. A single factor is retained based on the Kaiser criterion, explaining 56 per cent of the variance, and with factor loadings varying 0.3–0.7.

¹² As a control variable, also pre-migration education, accomplished outside of Sweden is taken into account.

¹³ Specifically, the different types of associations are: 'Sports club or outdoor activities club'; 'Youth association (e.g. scouts, youth clubs)'; 'Environmental organization'; 'Association for animal rights/protection'; 'Peace organization'; 'Humanitarian aid or human rights organization'; 'Immigrant organization'; 'Pensioners' or retired persons' organization'; 'Trade union'; 'Farmer's organization'; 'Business or employers' organization'; 'Professional organization'; 'Consumer association'; 'Parents' association'; 'Cultural, musical, dancing or theatre society'; 'Residents' housing or neighbourhood association'; 'Religious or church organization'; 'Women's organization'; 'Charity or social-welfare organizations'; 'Association for medical patients, specific

by the measure of *political participation*, thus incorporating conventional forms of participation as well as more recently recognized non-parliamentary ways to bring about societal change (cf. Teorell et al. 2007; Stolle et al. 2005; Barnes and Kaase 1979). Again, we use an index variable consisting of items on a total of 19 different modes of participation included in the survey (such as voting, party activities, personal contacts, protests, and political consumerism).¹⁴ Analogous to the expected non-linear effects of length of residence, the variables associational activity and political participation were logarithmically transformed as well.

As indicated in our presentation of the analytical model above, a series of control factors will be accounted for. The demographic factors age and gender have sometimes been found to correlate with tolerance. Younger individuals usually show higher levels of tolerance than older, and some studies have found men to be more tolerant than women (e.g. Bobo and Licari 1989; Golebiowska 1999; cf. Togeby 1994). The variable *female* is coded 1 for women and 0 for men, and *age* is the respondent's age the year the interview took place. As for potentially important migrant-specific variables, we also control for possible acquirement of Swedish citizenship (the corresponding variable is coded 1 if the respondent is a Swedish citizen, and 0 otherwise). Furthermore, potential differences due to reasons for migration is captured by the variable *refugee* (coded 1 for people who migrated to Sweden either because they were refugees themselves, or because they accompanied or joined a relative with refugee

illnesses or addictions'; 'Association for disabled'; 'Lodge or service clubs'; 'Investment club'; 'Association for car-owners'; 'Association for war victims, veterans, or ex-servicemen'; and 'Other hobby club/society'.

¹⁴ Political participation has been shown to be a multidimensional concept (e.g. Verba and Nie 1972), but for reasons of simplicity an index variable consisting of items on all different participation forms are used here. A scree-test, based on a factor analysis, in fact gives some support to treating political participation as a one-dimensional phenomenon (for a similar approach, see e.g. Verba et al 1995, especially p. 544). The items included in the index are, besides voting in the local elections (2002), whether one—in trying to bring about improvements or to counteract deterioration in society—during the last 12 months: has contacted a politician; has contacted an association or an organization; has contacted a civil servant on the national, local or county level; is a member of a political party; has worked in a political party; has worked in a (political) action group; has worked in another organization or association; has worn or displayed a campaign badge or sticker; has signed a petition; has participated in a public demonstration; has participated in a strike; has boycotted certain products; has deliberately bought certain products for political, ethical or environmental reasons; has donated money; has raised funds; has contacted or appeared in mass media; has contacted a lawyer or judicial body; has participated in illegal protest activities; or, has participated in political meetings. However, separate analyses have also been undertaken where the different participation items are sorted according to a standard multidimensional approach (separating between voting, party activities, contacting, and unconventional participation). The results thus obtained are very similar to those presented in this paper.

status; and 0 for those who came to Sweden for other reasons, such as for work or studies). Finally, we constructed a set of dummy variables separating immigrants in three categories based on their respective origins in different regions of the world (Myrberg 2007). The first category ‘west’ (used as a reference category the statistical analyses in the next section) consists of immigrants from western and Anglo-Saxon countries; specifically, other Scandinavian countries, North-western Europe, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, and the USA. Next, the second category ‘east’ consists of immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe. Finally, the third category ‘south’ consists of immigrants from Africa, the Middle East, Asia, and Latin America.

Time-related tolerance—empirical results

In this section, the developed version of the learning model is put to an empirical test. Before presenting estimations from corresponding regression equations, a brief look into the data suffice to conclude that initial expectations are born out, when it comes to differences between immigrants in Sweden and native Swedes. Specifically, given the measure of political tolerance on a 0–100 scale, the mean tolerance level proved to be 87.8 in the first mentioned population category and 93.4 in the latter. The difference as such is statistically significant ($p < 0.01$), and yet approximately 6 percentage points does not seem to indicate a huge gap, we argue that it is nonetheless substantially interesting. In view of the rather ‘cautious measure’ of political tolerance—not demanding more than respect for a few, arguably vulnerable, groups’ right to hold political meetings—a high level of tolerance is reasonably anticipated, along with a low variability of scores (indeed, the standard deviation of the entire sample proved to be a fairly modest 17.5). At any rate, given the principal aim of this study, the observed difference in political tolerance suggests that prior influences from the socio-political contexts of other countries are important; but hence also that the significance of length of residence in the new home country is worth exploring, in line with the specified hypotheses.

Moreover, a somewhat closer look on differences due to origin reveals that migrants from some regions of the world, in comparison with others, clearly tend to report lower levels of political tolerance in Sweden. Echoing previous findings in comparative research (e.g.

Marquart-Pyatt and Paxton 2007:99), we find that non-European immigrants from countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America as well as immigrants from Eastern Europe (the ‘south’ and ‘east’ categories, respectively, specified in previous section) score almost 10 percentage points lower than native Swedes. While these differences also are highly statistically significant ($p < .001$, in both cases), there is no distinguishable difference in political tolerance between the Sweden-born population and immigrants from the Western world.

Considering the well-known (though far from perfect) association between country of origin and length of residence in Sweden (cf. SCB 2013), there are obvious reasons to try to disentangle a possible time-related impact of a general ‘high-tolerance exposure’ in the new home country from attitudinal inertia associated with origin.

The empirical results summarized in Table 1 provide us with some guidance in this effort. As the table shows, two regression models were estimated, based on the same sample of respondents with a migrant background. Model 1, to begin with, includes the primary independent variable time in Sweden, along with the series of potential confounders which otherwise may have created a spurious association. Studying the result for the time variable, we note that the first hypothesis (H1) receives some empirical support. Controlling for demographic and other potentially influential differences among immigrants, the statistically significant and positive coefficient suggests that time spent in a high tolerance society indeed stimulate the development of politically tolerant attitudes. Since the OLS estimation is based upon a logarithmic transformation of the length of residence, a possible interpretation of the coefficient is that a 10 per cent increase in the time spent in Sweden would be associated with somewhat less than a 1-point increase on the political tolerance score. Considering the non-linear relationship, time may thus after all have a fairly substantial impact in this respect; that is, among people that rather recently have migrated to Sweden.

Table 1. Predicting political tolerance among immigrants in Sweden, considering time-related differences and involvement in learning institutions.

	Model 1	Model 2
Time in Sweden (log)	7.1 (2.6)***	4.0 (2.7)
Female	-0.6 (1.8)	-0.9 (1.7)
Age	-0.6 (0.4)	-0.8 (0.4)*
Age squared	0.001 (0.004)	0.006 (0.005)
Pre-migration education	0.3 (0.2)	0.4 (0.3)
Swedish citizen	-0.4 (2.2)	- 1.0 (2.4)
Refugee	-2.1(2.3)	-2.5 (2.2)
<i>Origin</i> (West = ref.)		
East	-7.3 (2.7)***	-5.5 (2.7)**
South	-10.3 (2.4)***	-8.8 (2.4)***
Post-migration education		0.6 (0.2)**
<i>Labour market position</i> (Employed = ref.)		
Weak labour force attachment		- 5.3 (3.1)*
Pensioner		-7.0 (5.5)
Associational activity (log)		0.04 (0.7)
Political participation (log)		4.4 (1.5)***
Constant	95.3	94.3
<i>N</i>	696	696
<i>R</i> ²	.086	.130

Statistical significance: *** $p < .01$ ** $p < .05$ * $p < .10$

Note: Entries are ordinary least-squares (OLS) estimates with standard errors in parenthesis. The sample is weighted to be representative of people who have immigrated to Sweden. The dependent variable political tolerance runs from 0 (no group is politically tolerated) to 100 (all four groups are politically tolerated).

Evaluating the results regarding the control variables as well, we note that the previously mentioned differences between immigrants from different regions of the world essentially remain. Interestingly, however, taking origin into account, immigrants who have acquired Swedish citizenship do not report higher political tolerance than non-Swedish citizens. Similarly, we find no discernible tolerance differences between refugees and those who have immigrated for other reasons. Contrary to some previous studies, we also do not find any

differences in political tolerance related to gender or age, among immigrants in Sweden. Furthermore, although the length of pre-migration education seems to be positively associated with respect for political rights, the coefficient is statistically insignificant. In contrast, as we will examine shortly, this is not the case when participation in educational institutions in Sweden is scrutinised.

Moving forward, the results based on estimation of Model 2 provide a basis for evaluating also the second hypothesis (H2). Recall that H2 (once H1 has received empirical support) stated that a positive time-related effect on political tolerance to a substantial degree should be explained by anticipated positive links via involvement in learning institutions (see Figure 1 above). Before a further empirical examination of these links, however, we may—in line with expectations—observe a sizable decrease (compared to Model 1) of the regression coefficient of time in Sweden. As a matter of fact, the coefficient is no longer statistical significant. This result suggests that, in support of H2, a substantial part of the difference in political tolerance between immigrants with varying length of residence in Sweden may be explained by their respective levels of institutional involvement. Seemingly, a relatively short period in Sweden is not enough to get access to the four learning institutions represented in our analytical model; at least not to the same extent as a lengthier residence. This, in turn, also appears to have detrimental consequences for political trust. Among immigrants in Sweden, other things being equal, taking part in post-migration education, having a job rather than being unemployed, and participating politically, represent activities that in each case seem to encourage political tolerance. With the exception of activity in voluntary associations (a variable for which no direct effect is discernible in Table 1), the results thus suggest that institutional involvement of the kind explored here represents active learning in line with theoretical assumptions—by means of education in a more narrow sense, or as by-product of social interaction with people of different backgrounds.¹⁵ On the other hand, the final estimation does not provide any evidence for the idea that passive learning may take place as well in this regard. Considering that the positive effect on political tolerance of length of

¹⁵ Further analyses revealed statistically significant and positive effects of time in Sweden on participation in all four learning institutions (i.e., setting the learning institutions as dependent variables, in four separate regression analyses). We also re-ran the models in Table 1 using ordered logit analysis. The findings (available from the authors upon request) are, in general, highly similar to what is reported in Table 1, although the effect of time in Sweden is not statistically significant in Model 2 (the coefficient is positive, but $p = .26$).

residence in Sweden is, in effect, explained by the better possibilities to participate in learning institutions, simply observing a more tolerant society does not seem to be sufficient.

Yet even stronger relationships might be found, should more comprehensive and fine-grained measures of institutional involvement become available, we note that the small set of such factors accounted for here is sufficient to analytically remove the ‘direct’ link between length of residence in Sweden and political tolerance. Hence, although passive learning is a theoretically conceivable contextual effect in the explored setting, the empirical data suggest that such an effect is too weak to be identifiable.

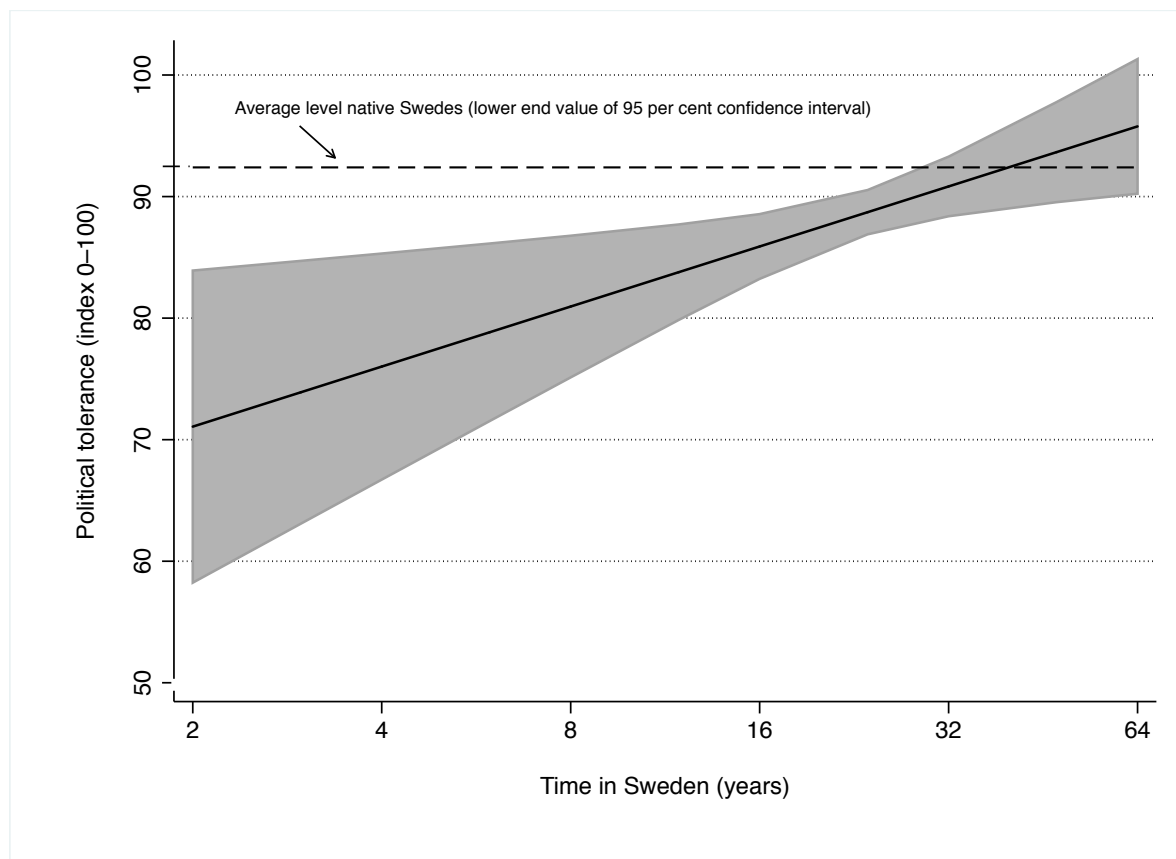


Figure 2. Predicted levels of political tolerance among immigrants, based on the estimated relationship with length of residence in Sweden according to Model 1 in Table 1 (i.e., controlling for background characteristics, but before taking involvement in learning institutions into account). The grey shaded area displays 95 percent confidence intervals around the estimates.

The overall positive time-effect is graphically illustrated in Figure 2, displaying variation in predicted levels of political tolerance among immigrants with different lengths of residence in Sweden. Importantly, the positive relationship depicted by the solid line in the graph does not

take the learning institution effects into account (i.e., the predictions are based on the Model 1 estimation results above). Thus, the importance of time in Sweden as such is illustrated.

Considering the log-transformation of the time-variable (manifested in the scale of the x-axis; roughly representing the actual empirical range of the variable), we notice that, in general, immigrants eventually tend to adapt to the average level of political tolerance among native Swedes (represented by the dashed line in the graph).¹⁶ However, yet time gradually encourages active learning, the adaptation is expected to take considerable time; according to our prediction equation, around 30 years (judging from the intersection in the graph, where the dashed line crosses the confidence interval of the solid line).

In general, immigrants in Sweden are prone to develop a greater respect of democratic rights over time. Such a development is slow, however, and seems to require active input via educational institutions and workplaces, and preferably also that immigrants make use of their democratic rights by active political involvement.

Conclusion

In this paper, we have explored the idea that more politically tolerant attitudes may be developed as a consequence of exposure to a comparatively tolerant social environment. Taking the theoretical point of departure in a learning model, we have tried to study the role of time in this respect; both as an indicator to overall exposure to a given societal level of tolerance, and in terms of anticipated positive relationships between time and participation in important social institutions through which tolerance may be fostered and encouraged.

To assemble an empirical test bed, we used survey data including rich and detailed information on a representative sample of immigrants in Sweden. Utilizing a dynamic feature of these data, we empirically evaluated the importance of length of residence in Sweden—a high-tolerance society from a comparative point of view. As expected, we were able to demonstrate that political tolerance among immigrants in Sweden in general seems to increase

¹⁶ As noted in Figure 2, native Swedes' average level of political tolerance is conservatively estimated, since the dashed line corresponds to the lower end value of a 95 per cent confidence interval (92.4, whereas the previously mentioned mean estimate is 93.4).

over time in the new home country. Controlling for an extensive series of possible confounding factors (including origin), spending more time in Sweden seems to encourage a more comprehensive recognition of political rights among people who have migrated to this particular country. Moreover, in concert with theoretical expectations, our analyses suggest that the positive time-related effect is mediated through participation in ‘learning institutions’ of education, working-life, and political involvement. Hence, once migrated to Sweden, an initially intolerant person is likely to adopt more broad-minded and permissive attitudes regarding political rights, as s/he over time receives better possibilities to meet and appreciate tolerant viewpoints as a by-product of educational, work-related and political activities.

In the wake of widespread global migration flows, contemporary welfare states are characterised by increasing ethnic diversity in the population, and Sweden is no exception in this respect. In this paper, we have utilised the Swedish setting, to analyse how an overall politically tolerant context may influence attitudes among people with prior experiences from, in general, less tolerant contexts. Yet our findings may be regarded as a questioning of assumptions of rigidity, when it comes to levels of (in-)tolerance acquired early in life, it is important to keep in mind that the evidence presented is based on previous, rather than future, conditions of integration in Swedish society. Clearly, the possibilities to get access to learning institutions—or experiencing, presumably highly important, equal treatment once inside such institutions—may very well be different in time-periods mapped by future studies. Hence it should not be taken for granted that the future, in Sweden or elsewhere, will be characterised by integrative institutions, and thus provide time for tolerance.

Table A.1. Descriptive statistics.

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Standard deviation</i>
Political tolerance (index)	0	100	88.2	21.1
Time in Sweden (years)	2.2	73.5	27.5	15.2
Female	0	1	0.55	0.50
Age	20	82	49.1	15.2
Pre-migration education (years)	0	25	9.1	5.4
Post-migration education (years)	0	24	4.1	5.0
Weak labour force attachment	0	1	0.14	0.35
Pensioner	0	1	0.16	0.37
Swedish citizen	0	1	0.73	0.44
Associational activity (index)	0	9	1.04	1.28
Political participation (index)	0	19	3.29	3.09

Note: $n = 696$.

References

- Adman, P. 2008. 'Does Workplace Experience Enhance Political Participation? A Critical Test of a Venerable Hypothesis', *Political Behavior* 30:115–138.
- Adman, P. and P. Strömblad 2015. 'Political Trust as Modest Expectations: Exploring Immigrants' Falling Confidence in Swedish Political Institutions', *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 5:107–116.
- Allport, G.W. 1954. *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, Mass.: Addison-Wesley
- Almgren, A. 2006. *Att fostra demokrater. Om skolan i demokratin och demokratin i skolan*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.
- Barnes, S.H. and M. Kaase et. al. 1979. *Political Action: Mass Participation in Five Western Democracies*. Beverly Hills: Sage.
- Bobo, L. and F.C. Licari 1989. 'Education and political tolerance testing the effects of cognitive sophistication and target group affect', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 53:285–308
- Finkel, S. E. 2003, 'Can Democracy be Taught?', *Journal of Democracy* 14:137–151.
- Finkel, S.E., L. Sigelman and S. Humphries 1999. Democratic Values and Political Tolerance. In Finkel S.E., et al. (eds.) *Measures of Political Attitudes*. New York: Academic Press.
- Fritzell, J. and P. Strömblad 2011. 'Segregation och social tillit', in Alm, S., O. Bäckman, A. Gavanas, A. and A. Nilsson (eds.) *Utanförskap*. Stockholm, Dialogos.
- Gibson, J. L. 2013. 'Measuring Political Tolerance and General Support for Pro-Civil Liberties Policies. Notes, Evidence, and Cautions', *Public Opinion Quarterly* 77:45–68.
- Gibson, J. L. 2011. 'Political Intolerance in the Context of Democratic Theory.' In Goodin, R.E. (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gibson, J.L. 2006. 'Enigmas of intolerance: Fifty years after Stouffer's communism, conformity, and civil liberties.', *Perspectives on Politics* 4: 21–34.
- Gibson J. L. and R. M. Duch 1991. 'Elitist Theory and Political Tolerance in Western Europe', *Political Behavior* 13:191–212.
- Gibson, J.L. and R.D. Bingham 1982. On the Conceptualization and Measurement of Political Tolerance. *American Political Science Review* 76:603–620.
- Golebiowska, E. A. 1999. 'Gender gap in political tolerance', *Political Behavior* 21:43–66.
- Hadler, M. 2012. 'The influence of world societal forces on social tolerance. A time comparative study of prejudices in 32 countries', *The Sociological Quarterly* 53:211–237.
- Jormfeldt, J. 2011. *Skoldemokratins fördolda jämställdhetsproblem. Eleverfarenheter i en könssegregerad gymnasieskola*. Växjö: Linnaeus University Press.
- Kirschner, A., M. Freitag and C. Rapp 2011. 'Crafting tolerance: the role of political institutions in a comparative perspective', *European Political Science Review* 3:201–227.
- Marquart-Pyatt, S. and P. Paxton 2007. 'In Principle and in Practice: Learning Political Tolerance in Eastern and Western Europe', *Political Behavior* 29:89–113.

- Mendus, S. 1999. *The Politics of Toleration: Tolerance and Intolerance in Modern Life*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press
- Mill, J. S. 1991[1861]. *Considerations on Representative Government*. Amhurst: Prometheus Books.
- Mondak, J.J. and M.S. Sanders 2003. 'Tolerance and intolerance, 1976–1998', *American Journal of Political Science* 47:492–502.
- Mutz, D.C. and J.J. Mondak 2006. The Workplace as a Context for Cross-Cutting Political Discourse. *The Journal of Politics* 68:140–155.
- Myrberg, G. 2007. *Medlemmar och medborgare. Föreningsdeltagande och politiskt engagemang i det etnifierade samhället*. Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis.
- Pateman, C. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Paxton, P. 2007. 'Association Memberships and Generalized Trust: A Multilevel Model Across 31 Countries', *Social Forces* 86:47–76.
- Peffley, M. and R. Rohrschneider 2003. 'Democratization and Political Tolerance in Seventeen Countries: A Multi-Level Model of Democratic Learning', *Political Research Quarterly* 56:243–257.
- Pettigrew T.F. and L.R. Tropp 2006. A Meta-analytic Test of Intergroup Contact Theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90: 751–783.
- Putnam, R.D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Putnam, R. D. 1993. *Making democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- SCB 2013. *Integration – en beskrivning av läget i Sverige*. Integration, rapport 6. Stockholm: Statistiska centralbyrån.
- Sniderman, P. A. (1975). *Personality and democratic politics*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Stolle, D., M. Hooghe, and M. Micheletti. 2005. 'Politics in the Supermarket. Political Consumerism as a Form of Political Participation', *International Political Science Review* 26: 245–269.
- Stouffer, S. 1955. *Communism, Conformity and Civil Liberties*. New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers
- Strömblad, P. and P. Adman 2010. 'From Naïve Newcomers to Critical Citizens? Exploring Political Trust Among Immigrants in Scandinavia', in Bengtsson, B., P. Strömblad and A-H. Bay (eds.) *Diversity, Inclusion and Citizenship in Scandinavia*. Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Strömblad P. and B. Bengtsson 2017. 'Collective Political Action as Civic Voluntarism: Analysing Ethnic Associations as Political Participants by Translating Individual-Level Theory to the Organizational Level', *Journal of Civil Society* 13:111–129.
- Sullivan, J.L., J. Piereson, and G.E. Marcus 1979. 'An alternative conceptualization of political tolerance: Illusory increases 1950s–1970s', *American Political Science Review* 73:781–794.
- Sullivan, J. L., G.E.Marcus, S. Feldman and J.E. Piereson 1981. *The sources of political tolerance: A multivariate analysis*. *American Political Science Review*, 75:92–106

Sullivan, J., J. Piereson, and G.E. Marcus 1982. *Political Tolerance and American Democracy*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Teorell, J., M. Torcal, and J. R. Montero 2007. 'Political Participation: Mapping the Terrain'. In van Deth, J., J.R. Montero and A. Westholm (eds.) *Citizenship and Involvement in European Democracies: A Comparative Perspective*. London: Routledge.

Togeby, L. 1994. 'The disappearance of a gender gap: Tolerance and liberalism in Denmark from 1971 to 1990.' *Scandinavian Political Studies* 17:47–68.

Verba, S., K.L. Schlozman and H. E. Brady 1995. *Voice and Equality: Civic Voluntarism in American Politics*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Verba, S. and N.H. Nie 1972. *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper and Row.

Viegas, J.M.L. 2007. 'Political and Social Tolerance'. In van Deth, J., J.R. Montero and A. Westholm (eds.) *Citizenship and Involvement in European Democracies: A Comparative Perspective*. London: Routledge.

Viegas, J. M.L. 2010. 'Political Tolerance in Portugal and Spain: The Importance of Circumstantial Factors', *Portuguese Journal of Social Science* 9:93–107.

Weldon, S.A. 2006. 'The institutional context of tolerance for ethnic minorities. A comparative, multilevel analysis of Western Europe', *American Journal of Political Science* 50: 331–349.