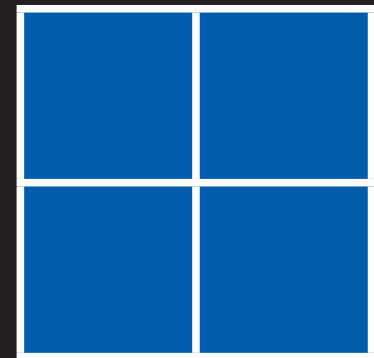


# Classroom Diversity and its Relation to Tolerance, Trust and Participation in England, Sweden and Germany

Jan Germen Janmaat

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# **Classroom Diversity and its Relation to Tolerance, Trust and Participation in England, Sweden and Germany**

**Jan Germen Janmaat**

## **Abstract**

The belief in educational circles is widespread that ethnically mixed schools contribute to inter-ethnic tolerance, trust and community cohesion. Several recent studies from the field of political science, however, have found that trust and participation are lower in ethnically diverse neighborhoods. This paper explores the relation between ethno-racial diversity and civic attitudes in England, Sweden and Germany using data from the IEA Civic Education Study among 14-year olds. Controlling for various conditions at the individual and classroom level, it finds a positive effect of classroom diversity on ethnic tolerance in Sweden and Germany, which is in agreement with the contact perspective on inter-ethnic relations. However, the effect of diversity varies substantially across the three outcomes of interest and the three countries examined. It is therefore tentatively concluded that country-specific factors shape this effect to a significant degree.

**Key words:** classroom diversity, civic attitudes, majority-minority relations, contact and conflict perspectives

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## **Introduction**

Desegregation has been a prime educational objective throughout the western world over the last forty years. Initially, the effort to create ethnically and racially mixed schools was motivated by indignation about racial inequality and discrimination produced by segregated school systems. The Civic Rights movement in the US came to epitomize this effort in its struggle to achieve civic equality, integration and emancipation for African Americans. The term ‘desegregation’ itself was very much part of and restricted to a social justice discourse.

From the late 1990s, however, the objective of mixed schools also started to be embraced by scholars concerned about declining levels of community cohesion and growing ethnic and religious intolerance. These scholars felt that the prevailing practices of multiculturalism and recognition of minority cultures had only reinforced the isolation of ethnic and racial minorities and had led to more divisiveness. Herbert (2001), for instance, argued that faith schools serving the needs of particular ethnic groups constitute a kind of ‘educational apartheid’ segregating rather than integrating various ethnic communities. A string of events in the early 2000s – the terrorist attacks of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 the racial disturbances in the Northern English towns of Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, and the London and Madrid underground bombings – added great weight to the analysis of these scholars and led to the adoption of their views by various policy makers and government advisers. Thus, the authors of the Cattle Report, commissioned by the British Home Office, claimed that ethnically segregated schools had contributed to the racial tensions and disorders in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley, and explicitly called for admissions policies with a cap on the proportion of pupils of the same cultural or ethnic background at 75 per cent in schools in multi-cultural areas (Cattle, 2001).

These authors had some reason to assume that integrated schooling would benefit intergroup relations and overall social cohesion, as many studies have demonstrated a positive effect of ethnic mixing on tolerance and intercultural understanding. However, as we will discuss below, most of these studies concern inter-racial relationships,

particularly between White and African Americans, in the United States, and focus exclusively on ethnic tolerance or racial prejudice as the outcomes of interest. Studies examining the effect of diversity on civic attitudes other than or in addition to ethnic tolerance in contexts outside the United States are rare.

The lack of such studies would not be a problem if the findings for the American studies on inter-racial relationships could be generalized to other national contexts and other civic attitudes, but we cannot assume from the onset that this is possible. On the one hand, it could be argued that many of the immigrant minorities in western European states are in much the same socially disadvantaged position as African Americans. The same patterns on inter-ethnic/racial relationships could thus apply in western European contexts. On the other hand, the century-old history of subordination and exclusion of African Americans in the United States is unique and has no parallel in ethnic majority/minority relations in western European states, most of which have become substantial immigration societies only from the 1950s. What helps to combat ethno-racial prejudice in America may therefore not be effective in western Europe. Indeed, in a review of studies on the effect of inter-racial contact, Ray (1983) found remarkable differences across English-speaking countries. While studies conducted in America and Canada produced evidence in support of the notion that inter-racial contact helps to break down stereotypes, the evidence from Britain and Australia pointed in the reverse direction (contact with blacks leading to more prejudice among whites). In a similar vein, it cannot be assumed from the onset that the effect of diversity extends to other civic attitudes because these attitudes have been shown to constitute a highly diverse set of dispositions, some of which are entirely unrelated, or worse negatively related, to one another (Green, Preston and Janmaat, 2006; Newton and Norris, 2000; Janmaat, 2008; Tolsma et al. 2008).

In view of these considerations this paper will focus on three western European immigration societies (England, Germany and Sweden) and examine how diversity is related not only to ethnic tolerance, but also to political participation and trust. There is good reason to extend our analysis to the two last-named qualities. A high rate of political

participation among all groups in society is indispensable for an effective and responsive democracy (APSA Task Force on Inequality and American Democracy, 2004). Generalized trust has been said to be conducive to macro-level benefits like economic development and institutional performance and micro-level assets such as health and happiness (Knack and Keefer, 1997; Putnam, 1993; Fukuyama, 1995). We will use survey data on the civic attitudes of 14-year-old students and construct a measure of ethno-racial diversity at the classroom level to explore the relationships between diversity and the three outcomes mentioned above. As explained below, the impact of diversity at such a micro level of analysis is likely to be quite different from that of diversity at the neighbourhood, city or national level.

The next section reviews the theory and existing research on diversity and civic attitudes. Subsequently, various contextual features of the three countries are discussed. The third section explains the database, the indicators and the methods used. The fourth section presents the results of the analyses and discusses these in relation to the theory reviewed. The conclusion sums up.

## **Diversity and Civic Attitudes**

Putnam (2007) has observed that two contrasting theoretical perspectives apply when investigating the impact of ethno-racial diversity on civic attitudes: the conflict and the contact perspective. In the conflict perspective, the relative size of the minority group (or groups) is crucial. The larger this size, the more members of the dominant group will feel threatened, the tighter will be their in-group bonding and the more prejudiced they will become vis-à-vis the minority group(s) (Blalock, 1967; Quinlan, 1995; Bobo, 1999). According to Blalock (1967), this regularity applies because a growing share of minority groups in the population increases the competition over scarce resources between groups and gives minority groups more opportunities to mobilize politically and challenge the privileges of the dominant group. By implication, hostility to out-groups should be minimal in homogenous settings.

By contrast, the contact perspective postulates that isolation breeds stereotypes. Prejudice can be overcome and intercultural understanding can be enhanced if groups mingle and interact. However, inter-group interaction only yields such positive outcomes if it occurs (1) on the basis of equality, (2) in settings of common experiences and common objectives, and (3) on a frequent, lasting and intensive basis (Allport, 1954; Gurin et al, 2004). If these conditions are not met, inter-racial contact can produce the very opposite of tolerance and racial equality, as is illustrated by the system of Apartheid in post war South Africa.

It could be argued that these conditions apply above all in the micro environment of the classroom or school. In a diverse class pupils of different ethnic groups cannot avoid interaction on a daily basis, are equal in status (at least nominally) and share the same school experience (Kokkonen et al, 2008). Thus, we would expect the contact perspective to receive much support from micro-level studies in educational settings. A brief review of such studies confirms this proposition. Recent studies in the US by Frankenberg et al (2003) and Holme et al (2005), for instance, found that the experience of racially mixed schools left graduates with a better understanding of different cultures and an “increased sense of comfort in interracial settings” (*ibid.*, p. 14). Research by Ellison and Powers (1994) and Sigelman et al (1996), moreover, shows that the tolerant attitudes and interracial friendships developed in racially integrated schools persist into adulthood. Holme et al (2005) further claim that the daily experience of interracial schooling is much more effective in this regard than multicultural curricula or student exchange programs.

Studies in the United Kingdom have also found support for the contact perspective. For instance, Bruegel (2006), investigating inter-ethnic friendships among pupils of 12 primary schools in London and Birmingham, reaches conclusions similar to Holme et al. In her view, “the day-to-day contact between children has far more chance of breaking down barriers between communities, than school twinning and sporting encounters” (*ibid.*, p. 2). Given her positive appraisal of ethnically mixed schools, she is skeptical of policies promoting school choice as these might have the unintended effect of promoting

segregation. In addition, Billings and Holden (2007) found ethnic prejudice and ideas of racial superiority among white 15-year olds in Burnley to be particularly strong in homogenously white schools. Other research in the UK focusing on community relations in Northern Ireland has argued that integrated (i.e. mixed faith) schools “impact positively on identity, out-group attitudes, forgiveness and reconciliation” (McGlynn et al, 2004, p.1). However, these UK studies are all based on samples of a mere handful of schools, which limits the generalizability of their findings.

Moreover, educational research has largely turned a blind eye to the effects of diversity on civic attitudes other than tolerance and intercultural understanding. Nonetheless, there are a few studies that have focused on such attitudes. In one of the rare semi-experimental studies on this topic, Gurin et al (2004) have found that the participation of University of Michigan students in a multicultural programme involving intensive contacts with ethnic and racial others significantly enhanced the perception of commonality in values, inter-group cooperation, and participation in Campus political activities among Whites, African Americans and Asian Americans alike. Campbell (2007), however, reports a negative correlation between classroom diversity and political discussion in the United States. Finally, Kokkonen et al (2008) found classroom diversity in Sweden to relate in contrasting ways to various civic orientations. Controlled for various individual background and classroom conditions, diversity showed a negative link with civic knowledge and skills, a positive one with political trust and no relation to ethnic tolerance (for the native majority). This mixed bag of results all the more suggests that we should be careful to assume the positive effect of diversity on favorable out-group perceptions to extend to other civic values.

Whereas education studies are relatively silent with respect to the link between diversity on the hand and generalized trust and political engagement on the other, the political science literature is rich on this topic, particularly concerning generalized trust. The findings of this literature have been remarkably inconsistent. On the one hand, many studies have found a negative relation between diversity and social capital outcomes, including trust, at sub-national levels (Luttmer 2001; Alesina and Ferrara 2002; Costa

and Kahn 2003; Soroka, Johnston and Banting 2004; Putnam 2007). Focusing on Canada, Soroka, Johnston and Banting (2004), for instance, observed that interpersonal trust diminishes as the proportion of visible minorities in census tracts increases. Similarly, in his study of community cohesion in the United States, Putnam (2007) found that neighborhood racial diversity reduces both in- and out-group trust, constituting thus in his view a *constricting* effect. He moreover found that this negative link extended to other civic attitudes such as cooperation, altruism, political efficacy and confidence in local institutions.

On the other hand, there are studies finding either no link, when you control for income inequality, between diversity and social capital outcomes (Letki, 2008; Tolsma et al, 2008) or a positive link (Oliver and Wong, 2003). Particularly intriguing are the findings of Marschall and Stolle (2004). Examining the link between local area conditions and trust in metropolitan Detroit, they find that contextual conditions have different effects for whites and blacks. While generalized trust among whites is primarily a function of neighborhood social status, among blacks it is mainly driven by neighborhood racial heterogeneity and neighborhood sociability with ethnic others (i.e. the more racially diverse the area and the higher the level of social interaction with ethnic others, the more trusting blacks are, controlling for neighborhood social status). Marschall and Stolle explain the apparent contradiction with studies finding a negative link between diversity and trust by pointing to the crucial role played by interaction: only when people of different racial or ethnic backgrounds are in direct contact with one another can diverse surroundings contribute to generalized trust. Studies finding a negative effect, they remark, have generally ignored the role of actual interaction.

As we argued earlier, interaction between children of different ethnic or racial groups cannot be avoided in the micro-environment of the classroom, the level at which we will assess the effect of diversity. Marschall and Stolle's observations thus lead us to expect that diversity has a positive impact not only on ethnic tolerance but also on other civic outcomes such as trust and participation. They moreover alert us to the possibility that this effect can vary by ethnic group. If Marschall and Stolle's findings also apply in our

study, we would expect ethnic minorities, who are roughly in the same socio-economic position as blacks in America<sup>1</sup>, in particular to benefit from diversity.

And yet it needs to be emphasized that tolerance, trust and participation are not the same and may respond in different ways to diversity. Mutz (2002), for instance, noted that diverse environments at the very micro-level dampen participation in confrontational activities as people seek to avoid conflicts with those in their immediate surroundings. Conflict avoidance could indeed be the mechanism explaining Campbell's (2007) earlier noted finding that classroom diversity is negatively related to political discussions. He proposed that teachers in diverse classes may wish to avoid topics that could lead to heated debate and open conflict between students of different ethnic groups. Campbell (2006) further notes that homogeneous social networks contribute to the kind of participation based on strong shared norms of civic engagement. This, in his view, explains why voter turnout in presidential elections tends to be highest in communities where political divisions and competition are lowest.

Moreover, certain characteristics of majority-minority relations in western Europe may undermine the positive effect of classroom diversity on civic outcomes. One of these has already been mentioned: the difference in socio-economic status. Often, immigrant minorities are in a socially disadvantaged position by comparison to the ethnic majority. This inequality may contribute to a sense of resentment among the minorities towards the majority and a sense of threat among the majority. We should not forget that the contact perspective only assumes interethnic interaction to have positive effects under conditions of *equality*. Possibly, cultural differences compounded by socio-economic differences give children of majority and minority backgrounds such different life experiences that they find it very difficult to relate to one another in mixed classrooms. Second, the ethnic proportions are not stable. Across the board in western Europe the share of immigrant groups in the population has increased, particularly in metropolitan areas. It is these

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<sup>1</sup> Of course ethnic minorities in western Europe vary in the degree of social disadvantage. Some groups are equal to or higher than the native majority in socio-economic status (e.g. the Chinese). However, without exception the largest ethnic minority groups in western European countries are in a disadvantaged position vis-a-vis the majority (e.g. Black Caribbeans in Britain; Turkish in Germany; North Africans in France).

dynamics which have been found to contribute to levels of distrust and intolerance among the dominant group (Hooghe et al, 2006). In sum, a positive link between classroom diversity and various civic outcomes is not a foregone conclusion. Because of the contrasting findings from the literature and the other stated reservations, we do not formulate explicit hypotheses.

### **Ethnic Minorities in England, Germany and Sweden**

Selecting England, Germany and Sweden is interesting because in addition to sharing a number of similarities these countries also differ in important ways. If the analyses below find diversity to be related in similar ways to the three civic outcomes across the three countries, the similarities would appear to be more important than the differences. If, by contrast, the effect of diversity varies across the three countries, the importance of contextual differences is underlined, thus limiting the cross-national generalizability of this effect.

The similarities concern the size of ethnic minority groups and their socio-economic position. Definitional differences concerning the identification of ethnic minorities aside, it can be said that all three countries have fairly sizable ethnic minority populations: the British census of 2001 classifies 8.9% of the population in England as non-white (including mixed) (Office for National Statistics, 2009); according to Statistics Sweden (2009) first and second generation immigrants made up 14.5% of the Swedish population in 2000; the July 2000 estimate of the German population classifies 8.5% of the population as ethnic minority groups (with Turkish immigrants being the most prominent among them) (Abacci Atlas, 2009). In all three countries most ethnic minorities are at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder, having the poorest educational credentials, working in low-status jobs and showing the highest unemployment rates (Heath and Cheung, 2007).

The differences concern the origin of immigrant groups, the reception by the receiving society and the nature of the education system. England distinguishes itself from Germany and Sweden with regard to the origin of ethnic minorities and the history of their immigration. As a legacy of its days as an imperial power, the United Kingdom experienced a large inflow of immigrants from its ex-colonies, most notably from the Indian subcontinent and the Caribbean, starting as early as the end of the 1950s. Due to this early immigration, many of the descendants of these groups are now third generation migrants. Moreover, as people from the British Commonwealth, the immigrants were accustomed to expressing themselves in English, the lingua franca in their countries of origin. This proficiency in English helped them and their offspring to navigate the opportunities in British society. By contrast, immigration to Germany and Sweden started a good decade later and originated from countries (Turkey, ex-Yugoslavia, Italy, more recently from Somalia, Iran and Iraq) that historically had no specific cultural or linguistic links with the receiving countries. As a result, immigrants and their descendants in these countries have more difficulty than their British counterparts in gaining a refined command of the dominant language.

With regard to the reception of immigrants by the receiving society, Germany clearly set itself apart from the other two countries until quite recently. Until well into the 1990s Germany refused to consider itself as an immigration society committed to the integration of immigrants and their offspring. The immigration from the late 1960s was seen as a temporary phenomenon and it was expected that the immigrants concerned (*Gastarbeiter*) would eventually return to their countries of origin. This attitude was reflected in policy: immigrants and their children *born in Germany* were barred from adopting German citizenship and the native language education provided for immigrant children was designed to facilitate their eventual return to and re-integration in the sending society. This posture changed dramatically however following the assumption of power by the Red-Green coalition government in 1999. Naturalization policy was brought in line with that of other western-European states and immigrants and their offspring were finally accepted as full members of German society. By contrast, Britain and Sweden have from the onset been more accepting of immigrants and have

consequently sought to promote their integration and participation in the receiving society from early on. This historical difference is important as the survey data that we use for our analyses was collected in 1999, i.e. before the reforms of the new government in Germany took effect. Consequently, at that time ethnic minorities in Germany may have still felt excluded by the receiving society.

A final remarkable difference concerns the education system. Sweden's full comprehensive system, characterized by mixed ability classes from primary all the way up to and including upper secondary education, contrasts markedly with Germany's early selection system which assigns children to different tracks (high status academic and low status pre-vocational) on the basis of ability from as early as the age of ten. England falls somewhere in between these extremes with a formally comprehensive system that has nonetheless retained some selective schools and that permits grouping by ability practices inside schools (Green et al, 2006). These large system differences between the three countries have important consequences for degrees of ethnic segregation. As ethnic minority children often fall behind the ethnic majority in achievement levels, they tend to be assigned to the low-ability schools or tracks in Germany and England. As a result they are overrepresented in these tracks and will have fewer opportunities to come into contact with children of the ethnic majority than their equivalents in countries with comprehensive systems such as Sweden (Crul and Vermeulen, 2003).

## **Data, Indicators and Method**

We explore the relationships between diversity and social capital by analyzing data of the IEA Civic Education Study (Cived) (Torney-Purta et al, 2001). This study consisted of a large scale survey conducted in April 1999 among a sample of 90,000 14-year-olds in 28 countries worldwide. To date, the Cived study has not enjoyed the same level of popularity as other large international surveys addressing civic values, such as the World Values Survey, the ISSP and the Eurobarometer. This is somewhat surprising given the quality of the data. Not only are the national samples much larger in the Cived study

(around 3000 respondents in each country), the non-response is also significantly lower than in the other surveys. One of the advantages is that respondents of immigrant origin are represented to a sufficient degree (the share of these minorities ranges between seven to twenty per cent of the national samples of a number of western European states). Given the nested character of the national samples, with one class being selected in 120-200 sampled schools in each participating country, the Cived study further allows researchers to explore both contextual effects (such as diversity) and individual-level factors. We selected the national samples of England, Sweden and Germany, composed, respectively, of 3043, 3073 and 3700 students selected in 128, 138 and 169 schools (i.e. classes).

### *Dependent Variables*

Three entries in the Cived database were chosen to tap trust, ethnic tolerance and participation, our outcomes of interest. The entry for trust represents a single item, while those for ethnic tolerance and participation are composite indices which each capture several items. The indices have been created by the Cived methodological experts and represent internally coherent scales which are conceptually equivalent across the three countries (see Schultz 2004, pp.105-119). The item tapping trust asks respondents how much of the time they trusted the people “who live in this country” with the categories: (1) ‘never’, (2) ‘only some of the time’, (3) ‘most of the time’, (4) ‘always’. The index tapping participation has alpha reliabilities of .77 for England, .72 for Germany and .76 for Sweden and combines items asking respondents about their future political participation as adults:

When you are an adult, what do you expect that you will do?’

1. ‘Join a political party’
2. ‘Write letters to a newspaper about social or political concerns’
3. ‘Be a candidate for a local or city office’

(Categories: ‘I will certainly not do this’, ‘I will probably not do this’, ‘I will probably do this’, ‘I will certainly do this’)

The higher the value on this index the higher the stated willingness of the respondent to participate later in life.

The index tapping ethnic tolerance has alpha reliabilities of .90 for England, .89 for Germany and .90 for Sweden and consists of the following five items:

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

The first and the fourth item clearly tap into the notion of respect for and positive acceptance of cultural difference, which is what ethnic tolerance is essentially about for many scholars (e.g Heyd, 1996, Walzer, 1997). The other items can also be said to represent ethnic tolerance to the extent that the latter is understood as including the principle of civic equality (i.e. accepting cultural others as fundamentally equal and entitled to the same rights and opportunities). Theoretically it seems plausible to assume an intimate connection between notions of acceptance and civic equality. After all, expressing disagreement with the items on civic equality implies privileging the native majority over immigrants, a mindset which intuitively goes together with racism, ethnocentrism and prejudice – the very antonyms of ethnic tolerance. We thus assume the five-item index to be a good proxy of ethnic tolerance. The higher the values on this index, the more the respondent agrees with the five statements and the more tolerant we consider him/her to be.

### ***Independent Variables***

We used six control variables to assess whether the effect of classroom diversity is not spurious. We first discuss the individual-level control variables as the classroom-level

conditions, including diversity, are based on these variables. The individual-level variables are: (1) *gender* [0 – girl; 1 – boy]; (2) *social background* (scale with six values based on the item ‘number of books at home’)<sup>2</sup>; (3) *civic competence* (a ready-made composite measure based on the results of a civic knowledge and skills test); (4) *ethnoracial identity* [0 – ethnic majority; 1 – ethnic minority] (based on the “which best describes you” item). The importance of each of these conditions in shaping different civic outcomes has been amply demonstrated in the literature and need not be repeated here.

The construction of the last-named variable requires more explanation however. Regrettably, the item on which ethno-racial identity is based was asked differently in the three states. In England, the question was indeed “which best describes you?” with the categories ‘White’ (N=2593); ‘Black Caribbean’, ‘Black African’, ‘Black Other’ (100); ‘Indian’, ‘Pakistani’, ‘Bangladeshi’, ‘Chinese’ (156) and ‘Other’ (123). Youngsters in Germany were asked “What is your state citizenship (Staatsangehoerigkeit)?” and could choose from ‘German’ (3383); ‘Italian’ (25); ‘Turkish’ (94) and ‘Other’ (117). In Sweden the question was “Do you most often feel you are ...” with the answer categories ‘Swedish’ (2386); ‘Finnish’ (54); ‘Arab’, ‘Iranian’, ‘Kurdish’ and ‘Turkish’ (178); ‘Bosnian’, ‘Croatian’, ‘Serb’, ‘Albanian’, ‘Polish’ (62); ‘Something else, which is...’ (43). We created the *ethnoracial identity* variable by labelling those who reported belonging to the dominant group (White, German, Swedish) as the ‘ethnic majority’ and those who affiliated with other, non-western nations and ethno-racial groups as the ‘ethnic minority’. The categories ‘Finnish’ and ‘Italian’ were excluded from the analysis because of the difficulty of fitting them in either the ethnic majority or ethnic minority category (see also the comment below).

Despite the drawback of differential wording, the “which best describes you” item has the distinct advantage of capturing both first and second (and possibly third) generation migrants in all three countries (also in Germany – due to its restrictive citizenship regime,

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<sup>2</sup> This item is strongly correlated with ‘education mother’ and ‘education father’; unlike Hooghe et al (2007) we chose not to create a composite index combining all three items because of high numbers of missing values on the education items.

which applied at the time of the survey, respondents of immigrant background born in Germany could not have claimed German state citizenship). Other items in the survey that could be used to distinguish ethnic minorities from the ethnic majority have more serious shortcomings: the place of birth item only identifies first generation migrants and the item on the use of the state language substantially underestimates the ethno-racial diversity in England (no less than 95.8% of the respondents report that they “always or almost always” speak English at home). We have to acknowledge, however, that not any marker will completely capture majority/minority identity because of the socially constructed and therefore dynamic nature of identity. With the passing of time and generations minorities may adopt hybrid identities and may, depending on the case, cease to be viewed as different from the majority. New dividing lines will emerge separating the in- from the out-group. Thus any marker used to distinguish minority from majority groups is likely to have only temporary validity.

We used two class-level conditions as control variables. The first of these – *classroom climate* – is the class average of a ready-made index in the database labeled as ‘an open climate for classroom discussion’. Previous research by Torney-Purta (2002, 2004) on the same dataset has shown that this variable is strongly correlated to various civic attitudes. The second is *classroom status*, which is the classroom average of the aforementioned individual social status. Many studies have pointed to the importance of this contextual condition for a range of civic outcomes. Letki (2008) found low neighbourhood status to be particularly harmful for both formal and informal forms of social capital. In similar vein, Oliver and Mandelberg (2000) note that residents in low status neighbourhoods are often exposed to crime, decay and disorder, leading them to develop feelings of anxiety, distrust and suspicion of strangers .

Finally, we used the percentage of respondents identifying with an ethnic minority (i.e. the ethnic minority category of the ethnoracial identity variable) as a measure of classroom ethnoracial diversity, our main variable of interest (henceforth simply called ‘diversity’). Properly speaking this measure refers to *density*, which does not necessarily correspond to diversity. Density, for instance, is high and diversity low in situations

where a single ethnic minority group makes up the majority of the school population. Density measures, however, have the distinct advantage of not being colour blind like the more traditional measure of diversity, the Herfindahl Index of Fractionalization (Tolsma et al, 2008). Unlike the latter, density measures are able to distinguish a situation of an 80% native majority and a 20% ethnic minority from its mirror image (80 % ethnic minority and 20 % native majority). Being able to distinguish between the two situations is crucial for this study as we aim to assess whether diversity has different effects for the ethnic majority and ethnic minority.

Table 1 provides the descriptives of all variables. To begin with the dependent variables, it can be seen that the distribution of scores on the trust variable appears to approximate a normal distribution in all three countries and among all groups (the mean in all groups is not far from 2.5, the mid-point of the four point scale), which means that it can be analyzed as a continuous variable in a linear regression model. The ethnic tolerance and participation indices can likewise be treated as continuous variables. If we compare the minority to the majority group a remarkable consistent pattern emerges across the three countries. In all countries minority students appear less trusting, quite a lot more tolerant and also slightly more willing to participate than majority students. As the ethnic tolerance measure reflects attitudes to immigrants it is not surprising to find minority respondents showing higher levels of tolerance. These higher levels are likely to be connected to an awareness among minority students that they are themselves (descendants of) migrants and are seen as such by the dominant group. They may in other words have identified with immigrants. Having restrictive opinions on immigrants as a minority student would thus entail agreeing to be placed in a subordinate position with respect to the ethnic majority, which, understandably, few minority students would find appealing. In this sense, our ethnic tolerance measure is likely to have only tapped tolerance levels among majority students. Yet, we need to take the possibility into account that this measure does reflect the ethnic tolerance levels of *some* ethnic minority groups.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics

England						
	All		Ethnic majority		Ethnic minority	
	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)
<i>Dependent variables</i>						
Trust	2.68	(0.80)	2.72	(0.80)	2.44	(0.80)
Ethnic tolerance	9.75	(2.23)	9.60	(2.12)	10.81	(2.69)
Participation	9.66	(1.89)	9.62	(1.86)	9.96	(2.06)
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Diversity*	0.13	(0.18)	0.09	(0.12)	0.39	(0.28)
Class status	4.40	(0.53)	4.41	(0.52)	4.36	(0.59)
Classroom climate	9.98	(0.83)	9.96	(0.82)	10.13	(0.86)
Social background	4.40	(1.32)	4.44	(1.31)	4.14	(1.33)
Civic competence	99.41	(18.81)	99.72	(18.81)	98.28	(18.72)
Gender (% girl)	50.00		50.00		52.00	
Identity (% ethnic minority)	12.80		0.00		100.00	
N (%)	2972.00	(100.00)	2593.00	(87.20)	379.00	(12.80)
Germany						
	All		Ethnic majority		Ethnic minority	
	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)
<i>Dependent variables</i>						
Trust	2.54	(0.81)	2.54	(0.80)	2.43	(0.89)
Ethnic tolerance	9.18	(2.20)	9.04	(2.12)	11.29	(2.29)
Participation	9.63	(1.88)	9.61	(1.86)	9.87	(2.14)
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Diversity*	0.06	(0.09)	0.05	(0.08)	0.21	(0.16)
Class status	4.42	(0.63)	4.44	(0.62)	4.09	(0.70)
Classroom climate	10.34	(0.74)	10.35	(0.74)	10.25	(0.81)
Social background	4.42	(1.30)	4.48	(1.27)	3.47	(1.39)
Civic competence	99.03	(18.64)	99.97	(18.48)	91.63	(17.30)
Gender (% girl)	50.00		50.00		53.00	
Identity (% ethnic minority)	5.90		0.00		100.00	
N (%)	3594.00	(100.00)	3383.00	(94.10)	211.00	(5.90)
Sweden						
	All		Ethnic majority		Ethnic minority	
	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)	mean	(SD)
<i>Dependent variables</i>						
Trust	2.68	(0.77)	2.72	(0.74)	2.53	(0.87)
Ethnic tolerance	11.00	(2.45)	10.67	(2.39)	12.50	(2.07)
Participation	9.82	(1.96)	9.80	(1.92)	9.95	(2.19)
<i>Independent variables</i>						
Diversity*	0.12	(0.19)	0.07	(0.12)	0.39	(0.27)
Class status	4.61	(0.60)	4.72	(0.50)	4.07	(0.74)
Classroom climate	10.37	(0.86)	10.37	(0.83)	10.36	(0.88)
Social background	4.61	(1.29)	4.80	(1.18)	3.62	(1.34)
Civic competence	99.55	(20.32)	101.89	(20.22)	87.69	(16.56)
Gender (% girl)	52.00		50.00		51.00	
Identity (% ethnic minority)	10.60		0.00		100.00	
N (%)	2669.00	(100.00)	2386.00	(89.40)	283.00	(10.60)

\* Values range from 0 (100% ethnic majority) to 1 (100% ethnic minority)

Possibly, the more established ethnic minorities and/or those with little contact with other groups have more intolerant views on immigrants than the recently immigrated minorities. After all, the former are likely to see newly arrived immigrants as dangerous and therefore unwanted competitors for the same jobs, houses and other scarce resources. We further note that the three outcome measures are strikingly uncorrelated to one another in all three countries. None of the bivariate correlations have a coefficient of more than .07 or less than -.07 (these results can be obtained from the author). This confirms the observation of the aforementioned studies that civic attitudes do not form a coherent set of dispositions. Consequently, we will analyze the outcomes separately.

With regard to the independent variables the cross-country pattern is also fairly uniform. In all three countries minority students have a lower score on civic competence, are from more modest social backgrounds, and are enrolled in lower status classes than majority students. Nonetheless, the difference between the minority and majority varies between the countries. In England minority students have almost the same score on civic competence as majority students, while in Sweden minority students lag on average as much as 14 points behind majority students. This undoubtedly reflects the better command of the dominant language by the minority groups in England by comparison to their Swedish and German counterparts. Also on social background and class status the differences between minority and majority students are smaller in England.

Remarkably, it is not Germany but Sweden and England which show the largest differences between classes in levels of diversity (see the standard deviations). In other words, ethnic segregation would seem to be most pronounced in the states with comprehensive systems, not in the one which practices early selection. We need to take into account, however, that the percentage of minority respondents is much smaller in Germany (5.9%) than in England (12.8%) and Sweden (10.6%). As a result, the ethnic diversity variable is very much skewed towards the 100% majority end in Germany with many classes showing levels of diversity clumped around the mean. In other words, the low between-class dispersion in Germany is likely to be a statistical artifact. This impression is confirmed by the fact that Germany does have the highest standard

deviation on class status, suggesting that *social* segregation is indeed most salient in this country. We further observe that in view of the census data presented earlier the Cived samples are likely to have underestimated the proportion of ethnic minority youth in Germany and Sweden and to have overestimated this proportion in England.

### ***Method of Analysis***

Since our independent variables are pitched at two levels (classroom and individual) and our dependent variables are at the individual level, the appropriate method to explore the relationships between diversity and social capital is a multi-level analysis. This is all the more required given the nested structure of the data. A structure of this kind, with students being nested in classes, classes in schools, and schools in countries, precludes the use of more conventional multiple regression techniques since these require that observations are independent. Using such techniques to analyze nested data would result in an underestimation of the standard errors of the contextual variables (and therefore an overestimation of the effects of these variables). (Hooghe et al, 2007; Snijders and Bosker, 1999).

We used Mlwin software to analyze a two-level random intercept model consisting of classrooms (level 2) and students (level 1) with diversity, classroom status and classroom climate entered as class-level variables and gender, social status, civic competence and ethnoracial identity entered as individual-level variables. We will conduct separate analyses for the majority and minority groups.

## **Results and Discussion**

We start by presenting the results of the so-called zero model, which displays the distribution of the variance in our outcome measures across the classroom (L2) and individual (L1) levels without any of the variables entered in the analysis (see Table 2).

As we can see, more than 10 per cent of the variance in ethnic tolerance is located at the classroom level in all three countries. By contrast, the between-class variance in trust and participation is much smaller, representing no more than 1.6 to 4.4 percent of the total variance across the board. According to Duncan and Raudenbusch's (1999) rule of thumb on the distribution of variance across levels of analysis, the former (i.e. more than 10%) represents a large effect size and the latter a small to medium effect size. A small effect size implies that class-level factors, such as diversity, are unlikely to be strong determinants of the outcomes of interest. Thus, the zero model provides a preliminary indication that diversity and the other classroom-level variables are likely to be quite insignificant drivers of trust and participation but quite important ones for ethnic tolerance.

Table 2. Distribution of Variance in Outcome Measures across Classes and Individuals (%)

		Ethnic tolerance	Trust	Participation
England	Individual level (L1)	88.5	98.4	95.6
	Class level (L2)	11.5	1.6	4.4
	N	2752.0	2558.0	2651.0
Germany	Individual level (L1)	84.2	96.3	98.1
	Class level (L2)	15.8	3.7	1.9
	N	3649.0	3370.0	3506.0
Sweden	Individual level (L1)	81.1	98.3	98.3
	Class level (L2)	18.9	1.7	2.9
	N	2984.0	2726.0	2778.0

We can now turn to the results of the multilevel analyses (Tables 3-5, one for each civic outcome). Models I-IV in the three tables represent respectively (I) an analysis including only classroom-level variables, (II) an analysis with all the explanatory variables, (III) an analysis with all variables based on ethnic majority respondents only, (IV) an analysis with all variables using ethnic minority respondents only.

To begin with ethnic tolerance (Table 3), it can be seen that diversity is positively related to tolerance in all three countries controlling only for the two other classroom-level variables (Model I). In other words, diversity exerts an independent effect on ethnic

tolerance irrespective of the social composition of the class and the classroom climate for open discussion. However, to assess whether diversity constitutes a true contextual effect or whether it merely represents the sum of individual differences in ethnic tolerance, individual-level controls need to be included (Model II). We see that diversity retains its significant and positive relation to tolerance in Sweden and Germany. In other words, classroom ethnic composition matters in these countries: the higher the proportion of ethnic minorities in class the more tolerant the students are, taking into account their ethnic and social background, gender, and civic competence levels. This effect, moreover, is quite substantial for Germany: as the proportion of ethnic minorities moves from minimum to maximum (0 to .67), so ethnic tolerance levels increase by 2.1 points ( $.67 \times 3.1$ ) on a scale ranging from 4.0 to 14.2. This finding is clearly in full agreement with the contact perspective, particularly so since the positive effect of diversity also applies when investigating only ethnic Swedish and ethnic German respondents (Model III). As noted earlier, since the items composing the ethnic tolerance index all refer to immigrants we believe that the index essentially captures the tolerance levels of the ethnic majority only. To then find that ethnic majority respondents are indeed more tolerant the more diverse their classroom is all the more supports the contact argument. Interestingly, diversity also shows a significant positive effect among the ethnic minority group in Germany. As the minority students are likely to have identified with the object of the tolerance items (i.e. immigrants), the correct interpretation of this finding most probably is that minority students become more assertive and insistent on their rights the larger their share in the classroom population is (Kokkonen et al, 2008, have also observed this phenomenon for Sweden).

Table 3. Determinants of Ethnic Tolerance

England								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	<b>0.97</b>	(0.43)	-0.75	(0.47)	-0.88	(0.53)	-0.37	(0.90)
Classroom status	-0.17	(0.15)	-0.31	(0.16)	-0.26	(0.16)	-0.30	(0.43)
Classroom climate	-0.21	(0.11)	<b>-0.29</b>	(0.11)	<b>-0.22</b>	(0.11)	-0.55	(0.29)
Gender (girl = 0)			<b>-0.60</b>	(0.09)	<b>-0.67</b>	(0.09)	0.03	(0.31)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>1.53</b>	(0.14)	-		-	
Social background			<b>0.08</b>	(0.03)	<b>0.10</b>	(0.04)	-0.04	(0.11)
Civic competence			0.011	(0.02)	<b>0.01</b>	(0.003)	0.013	(0.008)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		6.30		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	9.80		2.40		-		-	
N	2752.00		2688.00		2348.00		340.00	

Germany								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	<b>5.16</b>	(0.65)	<b>3.10</b>	(0.66)	<b>2.85</b>	(0.73)	<b>3.12</b>	(1.56)
Classroom status	<b>0.31</b>	(0.10)	0.10	(0.10)	0.09	(0.12)	-0.09	(0.36)
Classroom climate	<b>0.40</b>	(0.09)	<b>0.30</b>	(0.09)	<b>0.31</b>	(0.09)	0.27	(0.24)
Gender (girl = 0)			<b>-0.49</b>	(0.07)	<b>-0.50</b>	(0.07)	-0.37	(0.30)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>1.99</b>	(0.16)	-		-	
Social background			-0.02	(0.03)	-0.02	(0.03)	0.01	(0.12)
Civic competence			<b>0.017</b>	(0.002)	<b>0.017</b>	(0.002)	0.018	(0.011)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		7.70		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	43.70		43.70		-		-	
N	3649.00		3564.00		3361.00		203.00	

Sweden							
	I		II		III (majority)	IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	
Diversity	<b>2.62</b>	(0.45)	<b>1.06</b>	(0.05)	<b>1.80</b>	(0.60)	-0.74 (0.79)
Classroom status	0.09	(0.15)	-0.06	(0.16)	-0.09	(0.17)	-0.15 (0.30)
Classroom climate	<b>0.45</b>	(0.08)	<b>0.34</b>	(0.08)	<b>0.34</b>	(0.09)	<b>0.29</b> (0.15)
Gender (girl = 0)			<b>-1.04</b>	(0.08)	<b>-1.11</b>	(0.09)	-0.41 (0.23)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>1.91</b>	(0.20)	-		-
Social background			0.02	(0.04)	0.04	(0.04)	-0.10 (0.10)
Civic competence			<b>0.024</b>	(0.002)	<b>0.024</b>	(0.002)	<b>0.034</b> (0.007)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		10.50		-		-
Explained variance L2 (%)	45.30		61.70		-		-
N	2984.00		2624.00		2353.00		271.00

Nb: The coefficients in Tables 3, 5 and 6 which are significant at a .05 level or less are given in bold.

Note: The coefficients and standard errors of Model IIIa of England are: *average minority competence x diversity* *-.10 (.055)*; classroom status *-.24 (.16)*; classroom climate *-.21 (.11)*; gender *-.67 (.11)*; social background *.10 (.04)*; civic competence *.01 (.003)*. We did not include diversity and average minority competence in the model because of multicollinearity.

In England, however, the relation between diversity and tolerance changes from a significant positive to a not-significant negative one for all respondents (Model II), the ethnic majority (Model III) and ethnic minorities (Model IV) once individual factors are included in the analysis. A possible explanation for the non-significant relationship found for all respondents is that ethnic minorities who make up a majority in the school have equally low tolerance scores as white students in majority white schools. This is what the aforementioned Cantle report and the contact perspective essentially posit: segregation as such, no matter if this concerns white or ethnic minority groups, is linked to intolerance and racial tensions. If this situation indeed applies, the non-relationship should represent a non-linear bell-shaped curve, with white students in homogeneously white classes and ethnic minority students in classes where a single ethnic minority group makes up the majority showing the lowest levels of tolerance and students in mixed classes showing the highest levels of tolerance<sup>3</sup>. For this to be the case, three conditions have to be met,

<sup>3</sup> We have to highlight here that our diversity measure (see again the previous section) considers a classroom in which the vast majority of students belongs to one single ethnic minority as equally diverse as a school in which the vast majority of students belong to different ethnic minorities. It cannot tell these two

however: (1) our measure of ethnic tolerance (attitudes on immigrants) is indeed capturing ethnic tolerance among ethnic minorities and not group assertion (see again the discussion on p 17); (2) many of the most diverse classrooms represent cases in which one ethnic minority group makes up the majority of the students in the class (see note 3); (3) the ethnic tolerance levels of minority groups who make up the majority in the class are significantly lower than those of students in a minority position. We can explore the second and the third condition. If we find these conditions to be present, we can be quite confident that the first condition is also met since the pattern is then so closely matching the prediction of the contact perspective.

We examined classrooms with a more than 50 per cent enrollment of ethnic minority students in further detail to assess the above conjecture. Just seven classrooms have such an ethnic composition in the English sample. The second condition is indeed met as six of these seven classrooms represent cases where one ethnic minority makes up the majority of the students. We further found that the mean ethnic tolerance level of minority students who make up the majority is slightly higher than that of groups who are in a minority (including white students) in these seven classrooms (10.24 to 10.02, the difference not being significant). This result obviously means that the third condition is not present and that the contact perspective is not supported. The latter after all would expect to find *lower* ethnic tolerance levels among groups who make up the majority. Interestingly, however, different patterns emerge once we calculate separate tolerance levels for ethnic minorities who are in a minority position and whites who are in a minority position. The former have an average tolerance score of 11.76, while the latter have a mean score of no more than 8.63. If we compare these scores to the average score of the minorities in a majority position, we find that the latter have a significantly higher score than the minority white students but a significantly lower score than the minority students in a minority position. Thus the contact perspective ‘works’ when we compare the minority groups in a majority position to minority groups in a minority position, but does not apply when we compare the former to whites in a minority position. However,

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situations apart. It could thus well be that many of the “most diverse” classes in the English sample are in fact classes where the majority belongs to one single minority group.

these observations are only very provisional since they are based on a sample of seven classrooms. Future research should dramatically oversample schools where one minority group forms the majority to explore the validity of the contact hypothesis in a more rigorous way.

Another way to explore the possibility of a bell-shaped relation between diversity and tolerance is to restrict the multilevel analysis to the 50 per cent least diverse classes (i.e. with a white majority of 51 per cent or more). If the relation represents a bell-shaped curve we should expect to see a positive relation between diversity and tolerance up to the 50 per cent point. Conducting this analysis, we find, however, that diversity is not related to ethnic tolerance controlling for all other factors (diversity has a coefficient of  $-.47$  with an SE of  $.73$ ). Thus, the second test of the bell-curve supposition fails to find support for it as well. Since it is particularly the white students whose ethnic tolerance scores are not in line with contact theory, it is worth exploring this group in further detail (i.e. Model III).

Possibly one explanation for the different results of the white British students compared to the ethnic German and Swedish students is the longer history of immigration in Britain. It could well be that this longer history has made white British youth, also those in mono-ethnic schools, become more accustomed to ethnic minorities than their counterparts in Sweden and Germany. In other words, the longer presence of ethnic minorities in Britain may have had the effect of leveling out attitudinal differences between children in diverse and homogenous classes. If this is indeed the causal mechanism then we should expect to see the diversity effect dissipate in Sweden and Germany as well with the passing of time. Unfortunately, this hypothesis cannot be tested with the data at hand.

Another possible explanation for the non-relation between diversity and tolerance among white students in England is that it also reflects a non-linear relationship, but a different one than the one explained above. Possibly, interethnic contact only contributes to the out-group tolerance of the dominant group (i.e. white British) up to a certain level of diversity. After some critical level the dominant group could feel more intimidated by

(ever larger proportions of) ethnic minorities and become more intolerant as a result. In other words, after some point the mechanism proposed by conflict theory may apply. The relation between diversity and tolerance in England may thus resemble a bell-shaped curve with white respondents in classrooms with middling levels of diversity showing the highest tolerance levels. The idea of the dominant group feeling threatened in very diverse surroundings seems quite plausible for England as it is in this country that ethnic minorities do not fall far behind the majority in SES and civic competence. White British children may feel that they have to compete with almost equally competent and verbally skilled ethnic minority children in situations where they are in the minority. By comparison, their counterparts in Sweden and Germany may not have this sense of competitive anxiety, even in very diverse surroundings, because their ethnic minority peers (still) lack the skills to assert themselves successfully.

To assess a possible bell-shaped relation between diversity and ethnic tolerance among the dominant group, we selected the white respondents, transformed the ethnic diversity measure into a classification with six classes and simply calculated the mean ethnic tolerance level for each class (see Table 4). If the relation were bell-shaped we would expect the classes in the middle to show the highest and those at the extremes to show the lowest levels of tolerance. We see that the tolerance level in the *most* diverse class is indeed dramatically lower than in any of the other classes, but in the *least* diverse class (100% white) this level is not lower but higher than in the other classes. This pattern is actually in agreement with the conflict hypothesis: the more diverse the surroundings, the more intolerant the white group becomes. It is worth repeating that Table 3 also shows a negative relation between diversity and tolerance for white respondents in England (see Model III) although this relation is not significant. Possibly, therefore, it is the assertiveness of the ethnic minorities (as expressed by their relatively high SES and civic competence levels) which makes white British students feel more intimidated the more diverse their surroundings become.

Table 4. Classroom Diversity and Ethnic Tolerance among White Students in England

		Mean ethnic tolerance level of white students	Ethnic tolerance of white students x average minority competence (correlations)	N
Classroom ethno-racial diversity	0-50% white	8.49	-0.38*	34
	50-75% white	9.57	-0.18*	160
	75-85% white	9.28	-0.36***	254
	85-95% white	9.60	0.01	661
	95-99% white	9.49	0.05	499
	100% white	9.78	-	743

\* P < .05; \*\* P < .01; \*\*\* P < .001

If this mechanism indeed applies, we would expect to see the positive relationship between diversity and tolerance among white students in Germany and Sweden change to a negative one as the ethnic minorities in these countries manage to come on a par with their native peers in social status and verbal competence. More cynically, the results suggest that ethnic tolerance may well thrive under conditions of *inequality*, which would be in total contrast to what contact theory claims. In other words, as long as ethnic minorities are still in a subordinate position, the ethnic majority ‘cherishes’ them and celebrates diversity. However, as soon as they start to assert themselves and to compete with the ethnic majority for scarce resources, the latter adopts a more intolerant and defensive attitude. Possibly therefore, the notion of ethnic competition, which is at the heart of conflict theory, is crucial to understanding the differences between the three countries in the relationship of classroom ethnic diversity to ethnic tolerance.

We created a measure representing the classroom average of the civic competence of ethnic minorities (henceforth labeled ‘average minority competence’) to capture the status position of ethnic minorities. If the conflict perspective applies, one would expect to find a negative correlation between average minority competence and the tolerance levels of white students and to see this correlation grow stronger the more diverse the classroom becomes. The second column of Table 4 provides support for the first part of this hypothesis: we indeed find a negative and significant correlation between average minority competence and the ethnic tolerance levels of white students in three classes of

the diversity classification. Yet, we do not see this correlation become stronger the more the proportion of non-white students increases (the correlation in the most diverse group has the most extreme value (-.384) but its significance is not impressive given the low number of observations). Moreover, if we add the interaction term ‘average minority achievement x diversity’ to our multilevel model (see Model IIIa in the note below Table 3), we find no significant relationship between this variable and the ethnic tolerance levels of white British students (the relationship is negative though and is bordering on significance). In other words, controlling for all other factors white students’ tolerance is not affected by the competence of their ethnic minority classmates the more diverse the classroom becomes.

Having tried various options, we have thus not been able to account for the remarkable cross-national difference in the relation between diversity and tolerance. It would seem that several, as yet intractable, country-specific factors are at work which modulate the effect of ethnic diversity on tolerance. Thus, in terms of finding puzzling cross-country differences in the effect of diversity, our study is fully in line with Ray’s aforementioned study on the effect of inter-racial contact on prejudice.

The patterns for trust differ dramatically from those of ethnic tolerance (see Table 5). Controlling only for the other class-level conditions (Model I), diversity is *negatively* related to trust in all three countries, which at first sight seems to provide support for the conflict perspective. Diversity loses its significant effect everywhere, however, once we control for the individual-level conditions (Model II). It represents, in other words, a classical example of a spurious correlation. The individual-level condition responsible for this is clearly ethnic identity: in all three countries ethnic minority students are much less trusting than ethnic majority students (in Germany this effect is almost significant). The effect of diversity on trust thus represents merely the sum of the trust levels of majority and minority respondents. Interestingly, though, diversity resumes its significant negative relation with trust among the ethnic majority in Germany (Model III). In other words, *ceteris paribus*, the more diverse the classroom, the less trusting ethnic German students

Table 5. Determinants of Trust

England								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	<b>-0.38</b>	(0.10)	-0.11	(0.12)	-0.01	(0.15)	-0.22	(0.18)
Classroom status	<b>-0.09</b>	(0.03)	-0.06	(0.04)	<b>-0.10</b>	(0.04)	0.15	(0.10)
Classroom climate	-0.00	(0.02)	0.01	(0.03)	-0.00	(0.03)	0.01	(0.07)
Gender (girl = 0)			0.01	(0.03)	0.02	(0.03)	-0.07	(0.09)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>-0.25</b>	(0.06)	-		-	
Social background			-0.01	(0.01)	-0.00	(0.02)	<b>-0.084</b>	(0.037)
Civic competence			<b>-0.002</b>	(0.001)	<b>-0.003</b>	(0.001)	0.002	(0.003)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		1.60		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	70.00		60.00		-		-	
N	2558.00		2498.00		2189.00		309.00	

Germany								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	<b>-0.39</b>	(0.19)	-0.31	(0.20)	<b>-0.45</b>	(0.21)	0.83	(0.53)
Classroom status	-0.14	(0.03)	<b>-0.16</b>	(0.03)	<b>-0.17</b>	(0.03)	0.04	(0.14)
Classroom climate	0.01	(0.02)	0.02	(0.02)	0.02	(0.03)	0.09	(0.09)
Gender (girl = 0)			0.01	(0.03)	0.00	(0.03)	0.05	(0.13)
Identity (majority = 0)			-0.11	(0.07)	-		-	
Social background			<b>0.03</b>	(0.01)	<b>0.03</b>	(0.01)	0.03	(0.05)
Civic competence			-0.001	(0.001)	-0.001	(0.001)	0.002	(0.005)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		1.00		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	29.20		37.50		-		-	
N	3370.00		3294.00		3111.00		183.00	

Sweden								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	<b>-0.41</b>	(0.11)	-0.23	(0.14)	-0.24	(0.16)	-0.49	(0.35)
Classroom status	<b>-0.09</b>	(0.04)	-0.05	(0.04)	-0.03	(0.04)	-0.24	(0.14)
Classroom climate	0.02	(0.02)	0.03	(0.02)	0.03	(0.02)	0.04	(0.07)
Gender (girl = 0)			0.03	(0.03)	0.02	(0.03)	0.10	(0.10)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>-0.16</b>	(0.06)	-		-	
Social background			-0.02	(0.01)	-0.026	(0.015)	0.00	(0.05)
Civic competence			0.000	(0.001)	0.001	(0.001)	-0.001	(0.004)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		3.60		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	30.00		40.00		-		-	
N	2726.00		2392.00		2151.00		242.00	

are. A similar relation was not found in England and Sweden. Thus, in second instance the conflict perspective does seem to be endorsed by the finding for Germany.

And yet this conclusion may be premature as the strong negative link of minority identity with trust raises the issue how the trust item was interpreted by the respondents. Possibly, the specific words “the people *who live in this country*” (see previous section) have led ethnic majority respondents to understand it as a question on *in-group* trust while for ethnic minority respondents they indicated *out-group* trust, i.e. trust in members of the dominant group. If true, the finding for Germany would not be in accordance with conflict theory since this theory assumes that in-group solidarity increases among members of the dominant group as their environment becomes more diverse. Instead, it would support Putnam’s constrict perspective which, as noted before, postulates that people are less trusting of both the ethnic out- and in-group the more diverse the area in which they live is. It could also be said to support contact theory to the extent that this theory considers in- and out-group trust to be mutually exclusive.<sup>4</sup> In other words, by enhancing out-group trust diversity should automatically diminish in-group trust. Unfortunately, we cannot assess how the respondents have interpreted the trust item since the Cived study does not have questions on in/out group attitudes with which the trust

<sup>4</sup> According to Putnam (2007) this is what contact theory implicitly assumes.

item could be correlated. It is vital that future surveys include such questions in order for research into this matter to be carried forward.

We further note that diversity is not related to trust among ethnic minority respondents in any of the countries (Model IV). This, however, is likely to be due to the poor quality of minority subsample: the number of observations is small, the standard errors are large and only in one case is there a significant relation between an independent variable and trust (the negative link between social background and trust in England). Diversity could have well been positively related to trust in Germany (this relationship being close to significant with a coefficient of .83 and an SE of .53) if the sample of minority students had been larger.

Finally, the results for participation are also unique (Table 6). This time it is only in Sweden that diversity shows a distinct link to the outcome of interest: while diversity is unrelated to participation in Germany and England, even in Model I, it shows a positive and significant relation in Sweden in Models I, II and III. As the coefficient is more than three times as large as its standard error (see Model II), this relationship, moreover, is quite strong. In other words, taking into account all controls at the individual and classroom level, students in Sweden, both all students (Model II) and ethnic majority students (Model III), express a greater willingness to participate later in life, the more diverse their classrooms are. Evidently, the aforementioned causal mechanisms proposed by Mutz – that of conflict avoidance in diverse micro-level settings dampening participation – and Campbell – homogenous settings being conducive to participation based on strong shared norms of civic engagement – do not apply in the Swedish case. The Swedish result, moreover, is not in line with Campbell's (2007) findings on the effect of classroom racial composition on intention to vote in America. Using the same CIVED data he found that racial composition mattered neither for White nor Black students controlling for a range of individual and contextual level variables including classroom climate. The unique results for Sweden, by comparison to both the United States and the two other countries of this study, only reinforce the impression that

country-specific factors prevent diversity from showing a uniform effect across western immigration countries.

Table 6. Determinants of Participation

England								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	0.42	(0.28)	0.14	(0.32)	-0.04	(0.40)	0.43	(0.48)
Classroom status	0.15	(0.10)	0.06	(0.11)	0.09	(0.11)	0.09	(0.28)
Classroom climate	0.09	(0.07)	0.09	(0.07)	0.13	(0.08)	0.09	(0.18)
Gender (girl = 0)			-0.03	(0.08)	-0.04	(0.08)	0.02	(0.24)
Identity (majority = 0)			<b>0.29</b>	(0.13)	-		-	
Social background			<b>0.09</b>	(0.03)	<b>0.10</b>	(0.03)	0.03	(0.10)
Civic competence			0.001	(0.002)	0.002	(0.002)	-0.003	(0.007)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		1.10		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	16.50		12.70		-		-	
N	2651.00		2591.00		2273.00		318.00	

Germany								
	I		II		III (majority)		IV (minority)	
	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)	Coefficient	(SE)
Diversity	0.76	(0.41)	0.52	(0.45)	0.47	(0.48)	-0.29	(1.28)
Classroom status	0.08	(0.06)	-0.04	(0.08)	-0.04	(0.08)	-0.27	(0.33)
Classroom climate	0.09	(0.05)	0.08	(0.05)	0.102	(0.054)	-0.25	(0.20)
Gender (girl = 0)			0.09	(0.07)	0.08	(0.07)	0.29	(0.32)
Identity (majority = 0)			0.29	(0.15)	-		-	
Social background			<b>0.12</b>	(0.03)	<b>0.14</b>	(0.03)	-0.05	(0.13)
Civic competence			0.000	(0.002)	0.000	(0.002)	0.01	(0.01)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00		1.40		-		-	
Explained variance L2 (%)	15.20		1.50		-		-	
N	3506.00		3425.00		3238.00		187.00	

Sweden				
	I	II	III (majority)	IV (minority)
	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)	Coefficient (SE)
Diversity	<b>0.68</b> (0.30)	<b>1.18</b> (0.36)	<b>1.18</b> (0.42)	1.52 (0.90)
Classroom status	0.07 (0.10)	0.09 (0.11)	0.04 (0.12)	0.43 (0.35)
Classroom climate	0.06 (0.05)	0.04 (0.06)	0.08 (0.06)	-0.16 (0.17)
Gender (girl = 0)		-0.05 (0.08)	-0.07 (0.08)	0.12 (0.28)
Identity (majority = 0)		-0.09 (0.17)	-	-
Social background		0.05 (0.04)	0.06 (0.04)	-0.04 (0.12)
Civic competence		<b>0.005</b> (0.002)	<b>0.005</b> (0.002)	-0.005 (0.009)
Explained variance L1 (%)	0.00	2.20	-	-
Explained variance L2 (%)	18.70	40.20	-	-
N	2778.00	2457.00	2219.00	238.00

## Conclusion

The findings lead us to formulate two broad conclusions. First, advocates of desegregation will be pleased to hear that on balance we found more support for the contact than for the conflict perspective. Ethnic majority students in Germany and Sweden turned out to have significantly more tolerant views on immigrants the more diverse their classrooms were, controlling for all relevant individual and classroom conditions. This is broadly in line with American research showing that desegregation helps to combat racial prejudice among whites.

Still, the degree of support for the contact perspective is perhaps disappointing if one considers that the classroom, as the micro-environment in which we assessed the effect of diversity, meets all the conditions contact theory holds to be crucial for interethnic contact to have positive effects: in classrooms pupils share common experiences and interact as equals on a sustained and daily basis. However, aside from its positive effect on ethnic tolerance in the two aforementioned countries, diversity was found to be not related or negatively related to trust, and showed a positive link with participation in one country (Sweden) only.

This brings us to the second overall conclusion: the effect of diversity differs markedly not only across civic outcomes but also across countries. In other words, any relationship found between diversity and some civic outcome in America need not apply in other western states, nor can it be assumed that diversity is related in the same way across different civic outcomes within one country.

Particularly striking in our study was the non-relationship between diversity and ethnic tolerance in England, which contrasted sharply with the positive relationship observed in Germany and Sweden. We explored whether the non-relationship in England represented a situation in which ethnic minorities in a majority situation had equally low tolerance levels as whites in majority white schools, but found no support for the idea reflected in the Cattle report that segregation of both white and ethnic minority groups is connected to lower tolerance levels. The limited number of schools in the English sample where a single ethnic minority group makes up the majority made this finding highly provisional, however. We also postulated that the cross-country difference in the relation between diversity and ethnic tolerance *among white students* might be linked to the social status and competences of ethnic minorities. In England the status and competence gap between the white majority and ethnic minorities is small by comparison to Germany and Sweden. Because of this white British students possibly experienced more competitive anxiety (expressed as lower tolerance levels) than their ethnic German and ethnic Swedish peers. The anxiety, moreover, might become more intense the more diverse the classrooms they were enrolled becomes. This interpretation would obviously be in agreement with the conflict perspective. However, putting this interpretation to the test in our multilevel model, we could not find a significant relationship between the tolerance levels of white British students and the average civic competence of ethnic minority students. We were thus left with an unaccountable cross-national difference in the relation between diversity and tolerance and concluded that possibly one or several country-specific conditions could explain this difference.

An important task for future research is to assess whether one or several common factors can account for the country variations in the effect of diversity or whether we have to

come to terms with the idea that irreducible, nationally unique configurations of conditions fundamentally shape the impact of diversity at the school level. Our provisional results suggest that the latter may well be the case. Obviously, the policy implication is that policy makers have to be very cautious in borrowing and implementing a straight copy of a successful education policy on – say - community cohesion from a different state, however close to one’s own country this state is in political tradition and culture.

We have to end with two important limitations. First, we could not determine whether majority and minority respondents interpreted the trust item as referring to generalized trust (in the anonymous fellow citizen) or to in/out group trust. Knowing the exact nature of the trust being tapped is essential to evaluate the explanatory power of the contact, conflict and Putnam’s constrict perspectives. It is therefore essential that future surveys on social attitudes among youngsters include items on in/out group perceptions and trust. Second, we have essentially performed a cross-sectional analysis using a single point in time database. This raises the issue of direction of causality and selection effects. In theory it is possible that, for instance in the cases of Germany and Sweden, more tolerant ethnic majority children self-selected in diverse classes. This would have the effect of reversing the causal order between diversity and ethnic tolerance: parents who are more tolerant from the beginning “create” diverse classrooms by sending their children to schools with a mixed ethnic intake (or vice versa, intolerant parents sending their children to all-white schools – which would have the same effect). Although a selection effect can partly be neutralized by controlling for individual background variables (as we have done) and is likely to be small in societies with limited school choice such as Sweden (Kokkonen 2008), we cannot rule out that some self-selection has occurred. To eliminate this bias and establish the “value added” effect of diversity, it is indispensable that future survey studies adopt a longitudinal panel design with repeated measures of the outcomes of interest.

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