

Youth attitudes toward difference and diversity: a cross-national analysis**

This paper analyses youth attitudes toward difference and cultural diversity. Firstly, we analyse data from 65 countries showing that youths are more tolerant than older people toward both stigmatised groups and groups perceived as racially or ethnically different. Findings also show that political conservatism is a very stable predictor of intolerance to difference. Secondly, we study the appraisals of cultural diversity in 21 European countries, showing that youths express greater openness to cultural diversity than older people. In this new study, while values of conservation correlate negatively with openness to cultural diversity, values of self-transcendence correlate positively.

Keywords: intolerance; cultural diversity; youths; discrimination; prejudice.

Atitudes dos jovens face à diferença e diversidade: uma análise transnacional

Analisam-se as atitudes dos jovens perante a diferença e a diversidade cultural. Examinam-se dados de 65 países, mostrando-se que os jovens são mais tolerantes relativamente a grupos estigmatizados e a grupos percebidos como diferentes a nível étnico ou racial. Os resultados também mostram que o conservadorismo político é um preditor estável da intolerância à diferença. Seguidamente, estudam-se as avaliações da diversidade cultural em 21 países europeus, mostrando-se que os jovens são mais abertos à diversidade cultural. Enquanto os valores de conservação se correlacionam negativamente com a abertura à diversidade cultural, os valores de autotranscendência correlacionam-se positivamente.

Palavras-chave: intolerância; diversidade cultural; juventude; discriminação; preconceito.

Societies are more culturally diverse today. Diversity comes from outside through new communication technologies, easier long-distance travel, labour migrations, refugees, new transnational religious and aesthetic movements, etc. However, diversity is also a product of transformations occurring within societies themselves, through the emergence and legitimisation of new identities, the formal and informal rights attributed to minorities and people

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represented as different, and through the acceptance of diversity as a social value. Despite its “polysemous” nature, cultural diversity is today a social phenomenon and the object of theorising, empirical research, and policy decisions (Kivisto, 2002). It is in this context that our paper addresses the relationship between youths¹ and diversity in a large range of countries, contributing to the knowledge concerning predictors of attitudes toward difference and tolerance toward diversity.

The issue of how young people deal with cultural difference is still an important research topic. Indeed, several studies have already shown that young people are less prejudiced and less intolerant toward people perceived as being different from older people (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Vala, Lima and Lopes, 2004). However, these studies were carried out in European countries, and there is still doubt as to whether their findings can be extended to other countries. Moreover, recent European survey studies have consistently shown that although youths register higher scores of openness to change (which may facilitate tolerant attitudes), the studies also showed that young people share fewer universalistic values, which may foster prejudiced attitudes and less openness to cultural diversity (Ferreira, 2006; Menezes, 2005). However, other studies have demonstrated that ethnic prejudice has been decreasing since the late 1970s (Brown, 1995), and that this decrease is a result of learning the anti-prejudice norm that occurs in late infancy and adolescence (Monteiro, França and Rodrigues, 2009; Rutland *et al.*, 2005). This supports the hypothesis that youths are more diversity oriented and less prejudiced against people perceived as being different from older people.

As a whole, the research referred to suggests that it is important to clarify the relationship between youths and difference, considering a wide range of non-western countries. In order to analyse this problem, we establish a conceptual distinction between two dimensions of the relationship between youths and diversity: the first concerns the reaction of youths to members of groups perceived as being “different”, stigmatised, or inferiorised; while the second considers the relationship with diversity as a social asset (Costa-Lopes *et al.*, 2008).

To address the first dimension of the relationship between youths and diversity, we put together an analytical presentation on the issue of how youths react to members of groups perceived as “different”, based on data from the World Values Survey (1999/2000 wave; Inglehart *et al.*, 2004)².

For the second, we analyse the attitudes toward cultural diversity. Here, we will not address the reactions to specific social categories, but rather the attitude toward the value of diversity as an organising principle of social

¹ There is no consensus on what the term “youth” implies or how it is defined in terms of age intervals. We consider the UN’s definition of “youth” as a person aged between 15 and 24.

² www.worldvaluessurvey.org/

relations. Specifically, we examine the attitudes toward diversity, heterogeneity, and pluralism in our societies. Data from the *European Social Survey* — 1/2002³ will be used to carry out this analysis.

In the conclusions of the paper, and based upon the results presented and discussed, we examine some strategies to decrease the negative attitudes toward diversity and the orientation toward prejudiced attitudes.

HOW YOUTHS DEAL WITH PERCEIVED DIFFERENCES

Based on data from the *World Values Survey* (1999-2000 wave), we start with the first aspect of the relationship between youths and diversity: youth reactions to members of groups perceived as being “different”.

The *World Values Survey* (WVS) is organised as a network of social scientists and constitutes a highly comprehensive and wide-ranging survey of human values and social attitudes. It is an ongoing academic project to assess the state of socio-cultural, moral, religious, and political values of different cultures around the world; gathering data from more than 60 countries on five continents (Inglehart, 2003).

Attitudes toward groups and people perceived as different can be operationalised in many ways, but probably the most powerful way of understanding whether someone is (in)tolerant to difference is to assess whether a person is willing to embrace the existence of persons or groups perceived as different in his/her everyday life, namely in his/her neighbourhood. With this in mind, as a measure of intolerance to difference, we considered a classic measure of social distance (Bogardus, 1933) that consists of identifying groups that the respondent would prefer not to have as neighbours (e. g., people of a different race, people of a different religion, emotionally unstable people, etc.)⁴.

CONCEPTUALISATIONS AND LEVELS OF INTOLERANCE TO PERCEIVED DIFFERENCE

The first step of this analysis⁵ sought to identify the dimensions of difference around which people organise their perceptions, and also to understand whether a specific conceptualisation of difference is shared by

³ www.europeansocialsurvey.org; see also www.atitudessociais.org/

⁴ The question was as follows: “On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?” Respondents could choose more than one group.

⁵ For all the analysis using data from WVS, 65 countries from five continents were considered.

youths in comparison to that of older respondents. Thus, a statistical analysis of the measure of social distance used in the WVS was conducted⁶ in order to identify dimensions according to which people's responses are conceptually organised. This analysis yielded three aspects, corresponding to three categories of people included in the WVS questionnaire. This means that when identifying the groups of people they would rather not have as neighbours, respondents made a clear distinction between *stigmatised* people (people with AIDS, homosexuals, emotionally unstable people), *racialised* or *ethnicised* people (immigrants, people of a different race, people of a different religion), and the category of *political extremists* (left-wing and right-wing extremists). Due to the aim of this paper, this last category is excluded from the subsequent analyses; and only the categories of perceived differences (stigmatised people and racialised/ethnicised people) are considered further. Separate *Homals* analysis for youth respondents and older respondents achieved the same results, allowing for the conclusion that, in terms of difference representation, there is no distinction between youths and older people.

Considering the aspects found in this analysis, we computed a measure of stigma intolerance (with the three items referred to above; $\alpha = .88$), a measure of racial intolerance (with the other three items mentioned above; $\alpha = .93$) and a general measure of intolerance to difference/diversity with the six items ($\alpha = .86$). Therefore, this general intolerance measure could vary between 0 (no intolerance, no groups rejected) and 6 (high intolerance, all groups rejected).

We can now address our first question: considering these data, are youths more or less intolerant to difference than the older generations? A simple means comparison, considering the responses from all 65 countries, shows that youths are significantly less intolerant than older generations (see table 1). Looking at each aspect of intolerance, one can gather that the youths also present lower levels of stigma intolerance than do older respondents; and a similar tendency is found for racial intolerance, though this difference is not statistically significant. Another noteworthy result is that the mean levels of stigma intolerance are significantly higher than the levels of racial intolerance. This is especially important if one considers how the institutional discourse on intolerance is predominantly focused on the need to respect people perceived as ethnically or racially different, often neglecting other facets of intolerance.

⁶ We used a statistical procedure named *optimal scaling (Homals)*, which seeks homogeneity amongst categories of variables, based on non-linear associations between categorical items (Pestana and Gageiro, 1998).

**Mean levels of intolerance:
youths vs. older respondents**

[TABLE 1]

	Youths (<24)	Others (>24)
General intolerance (a)	1.50a*	1.55b
Stigma intolerance (b)	1.10a	1.15b
Racial/cultural intolerance (b)	0.40a	0.41b

* Different letters indicate statistically significant differences at $p < .001$ (test F).

(a) Scale: 0 — no intolerance to 6 — high intolerance.

(b) Scale: 0 — no intolerance to 3 — high intolerance.

Source: *WVS 1999/2000*.

In order to evaluate whether this pattern of responses is equally present across countries, we considered the taxonomy of “cultural regions” adopted by Norris and Inglehart (2003), though the taxonomy is considered by the authors themselves to be rather reductionist. This taxonomy places a country in a given “cultural region” based on its predominant religion and/or geographical idiosyncrasies. The authors considered eight cultural regions, from which we considered seven, since the number of WVS respondents in the “sinic-confucian” region was inferior to other cultural religions, and that would have diminished the validity of the comparisons we wished to perform in the subsequent analyses (see table 2).

Classification of societies in cultural regions

[TABLE 2]

Protestant	Catholic	Islamic	Orthodox	Central Europe	Latin America	Sub-Saharan Africa
Australia	Austria	Albania	Belarus	Croatia	Argentina	Nigeria
Britain	Belgium	Azerbaijan	Bosnia	Czech Republic	Brazil	South Africa
Canada	France	Bangladesh	Bulgaria	East Germany	Chile	Tanzania
Denmark	Ireland	Egypt	Georgia	Estonia	Colombia	Uganda
Finland	Italy	Iran	Greece	Hungary	Dominican Republic	Zimbabwe
Iceland	Malta	Jordan	Macedonia	Latvia	El Salvador	
Netherlands	Portugal	Morocco	Moldova	Lithuania	Mexico	
New Zealand	Spain	Pakistan	Serbia	Poland	Peru	
Northern Ireland		Turkey	Montenegro	Slovakia	Uruguay	
Norway			Romania	Slovenia	Venezuela	
Sweden			Russia			
Switzerland			Ukraine			
United States						
West Germany						

Source: Adapted from Norris and Inglehart (2003).

Considering that taxonomy of countries, we compared the mean levels of intolerance of youths and older generations in each cultural region. As far as the index of general intolerance is concerned, results lend support to the fact that youths are less intolerant than older generations (see table 3). In fact, except for Latin America and Sub-Saharan Africa countries, the levels of (general) intolerance are significantly lower for youths. In Latin America, the same tendency is present (but non-significantly), but for African countries the tendency is significantly opposite: the older respondents show lower levels of intolerance. For racial intolerance, all regions are characterised by a pattern of lower levels of intolerance for youths, though not all differences are accompanied by statistical significance. For intolerance toward stigmatised people, the same pattern is observed. However, in countries included in the Sub-Saharan Africa category older people express less intolerance than younger people. That is, except for this last region, these data allow us to identify a consistent pattern of less intolerance against people perceived as different amongst more younger people than older people.

**Mean levels of intolerance: youths vs. older respondents
by cultural region**

[TABLE 3]

		Protestant	Catholic	Islamic	Orthodox	Central Europe	Latin America	Sub-Saharan Africa
General intolerance (a)	Youths	0.58a*	0.73a	2.03a	1.74a	1.15a	1.43a	1.99a
	Others	0.75b	0.95b	2.71b	2.04b	1.43b	1.48a	1.91b
Racial/cultural intolerance (b)	Youths	0.12a	0.18a	0.76a	0.23a	0.25a	0.23a	0.53a
	Others	0.15b	0.25a	0.81b	0.33b	0.31b	0.24a	0.59a
Stigma intolerance (b)	Youths	0.49a	0.55a	1.27a	1.51a	0.91a	1.18a	1.47a
	Others	0.60b	0.70b	1.47b	1.71b	1.11b	1.24a	1.36b

* Different letters indicate statistically significant differences at $p < .001$ (F test).

(a) Scale: 0 — no intolerance to 6 — high intolerance.

(b) Scale: 0 — no intolerance to 3 — high intolerance.

Source: WVS 1999/2000.

Further analyses showed that the effect of “cultural region” on the orientation toward intolerance was greater than the effect of age⁷, and a statistical comparison of intolerance across “cultural regions” showed that intolerance

⁷ $\beta_{\text{cultural region}} = .387$; $\beta_{\text{age}} = .075$ (difference between slopes: $.312$; $t(1, 84547) = 74.20$; $p < .001$). Also, further analyses revealed that the interaction involving these two predictors is very weak ($\beta_{\text{cultural region} \times \text{age}} = .025$; $p < .001$), indicating that the effects of age on intolerance do not vary substantially across cultural regions (see table 3). The interaction effect is statistically significant due to the large N of respondents, but the effect size is very low.

is higher in Orthodox, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Islamic countries and less strong in Protestant and European Catholic countries.

So far, we should underscore that, despite the fact that the cultural region effects are stronger than the age effect, this effect is present in all regions with the exception of Sub-Saharan Africa.

PREDICTORS OF INTOLERANCE TO PERCEIVED DIFFERENCE

Since these results supported the hypothesis that young people are less intolerant than older people, we will now systematically examine the social and psychological factors underlying these attitudes. In order to do so, we conducted several regression analyses⁸ on the measure of general intolerance to difference. The variables included in these analyses were chosen according to their theoretical relevance, their association with intolerance, and negative intergroup attitudes in earlier studies, as well as their independent association with our measure of intolerance⁹. These variables may be classified into three groups: positional variables, psychological individual differences, and social and political values (see *appendix*).

- a) Positional variables. Age and schooling are the typical variables included in this group of predictors. The effect of age was already evaluated and given that, in this new analytical step, we are only interested in the predictors of youth attitudes, the only positional social variable included is educational level. Regarding the *educational level*, many studies show an association between this variable and prejudice¹⁰ (e. g., Wagner and Zick, 1995). But in some other studies, this variable is not relevant (e. g., Pedersen and Walker, 1997), or its relevance is only demonstrated in predicting the blatant forms of prejudice (e. g., Vala, Brito and Lopes, 1999). However, it does seem plausible that lower levels of education are associated with lower cognitive flexibility and complexity, which would make those with lower educational levels more likely to accept the low complexity of ideological principles sustaining intolerance to difference (Tetlock, 1986).
- b) Psychological individual differences. At this level of analysis, we considered two variables: *life (dis)satisfaction* and *interpersonal trust*.

⁸ A regression analysis examines the predicting value of specified independent variables (our possible predictors) in the variation of a dependent variable (in our case: intolerance).

⁹ For each independent variable (predictor), and before their inclusion in the regression analyses, correlation analyses were performed in order to verify if their association with the dependent variable was statistically significant.

¹⁰ Prejudice and intolerance are very closely related concepts in both theoretical and empirical terms.

Life (dis)satisfaction may be interpreted as a measure of frustration. Indeed, Dollard *et al.* (1939) stated, in their frustration-aggression theory, that acts of aggression usually follow some sort of frustration, and that aggression is normally directed at minorities and vulnerable people. This hypothesis came to be known as the *scapegoat hypothesis* (Hovland and Sears, 1940). Consequently, one may posit the hypothesis that the higher the feeling of life dissatisfaction (frustration), the higher the negative attitudes toward minorities (“symbolic aggression”). Concerning *interpersonal trust*, we know that this belief promotes civic responsibility and encourages tolerance and cooperation between people of different groups (Putnam, 2000) and, in this sense, may foster tolerance toward those who are different. On the other hand, distrust may constitute a predictor of intolerance in the sense that this attitude may be associated with the perception of social meaningless, the inability to decode the complexity of social relations, and the perception of the other as a potential danger. In sum, we expect life satisfaction and interpersonal trust to be negatively associated with intolerance to diversity.

- c) Social and political values. We considered three aspects of social and political values: *political conservatism*, *moral conservatism*, and *materialistic/post-materialistic orientations*. Concerning political conservatism, Jost and colleagues (Jost, Glaser, Kruglanski and Sulloway, 2003) went through fifty years of literature on the psychology of political conservatism and analysed attitudes and responses of more than 20,000 individuals included in various types of literature and approaches from different countries and groups. This thorough analysis allowed Jost and colleagues to identify the central core of political conservatism: resistance to change and a tolerance for inequality. The strength of conservatism may be entirely grasped if one considers the variety and importance of psychological motivations that are at the root of such a position. According to the authors, some of the common psychological factors linked to political conservatism include: fear, intolerance to ambiguity, uncertainty avoidance, and need for cognitive closure. Consequently, we can predict that high scores in conservatism are positively associated with high scores in intolerance.

As proposed in the seminal research on prejudice by Adorno *et al.* (1950), conservatism may be analysed at the level of political beliefs (e. g., trust in “strong” leaders, distrust of democratic institutions) and at the moral level (e. g., obedience and coercion as fundamental values). We hypothesise that high levels of moral conservatism will be associated with higher levels of intolerance.

Less studied and, probably, more complex is the possible link between the endorsement of post-materialistic values *vs.* materialistic

values (Inglehart, 1997) and attitudes toward difference. Post-materialistic orientation indicates concerns with freedom and citizenship, values that are in opposition to intolerance. In fact, a study by Inglehart (1997) showed that the more the adherence to materialistic values the more the orientation toward discrimination. As a result, a negative association is expected between adherence to post-materialism and intolerance to difference.

As stated above, in order to analyse the contribution of the described variables to predict intolerance to difference, regression analyses were performed. This type of analysis serves to help understand the direction and magnitude of the associations between the predictors and intolerance.

We conducted preliminary analyses considering data from all 65 countries and considering only the responses from youths. In these analyses, two other factors were considered that refer to structural economic and social aspects, specifically the UN's Human Development Index (HDI) and the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). The inclusion of these two variables in this preliminary analysis served to test the hypothesis that the predictors selected for representing the more subjective aspects of the individual experience were able to predict the levels of intolerance, over and above those of other socio-structural predictors (HDI and GDP). The results of this first step show that HDI is negatively correlated with tolerance toward difference: the higher the HDI, the lower the degree of intolerance. This first step also showed that, for young people, all the predictors of our model are significantly associated with the levels of intolerance, with the exception of moral conservatism¹¹. To sum up, the higher the levels of education, life satisfaction, interpersonal trust, and adherence to post-materialistic values, the lower the levels of intolerance or prejudice. On the other hand, the higher the adherence to political conservatism beliefs, the higher are the levels of intolerance. More importantly, and what this analysis served to show, is that the individual predictors chosen were relevant and significant predictors that explain the variation of the levels of intolerance over and above the variance explained by the structural factors¹².

In a subsequent step, we performed new regression analyses for each cultural region, no longer considering HDI and GDP as predictors¹³. Table 4 summarises the results of these analyses.

¹¹ The same regressions were conducted for the older respondents and these analyses yielded very similar results, with the exception that moral conservatism was indeed a significant predictor of intolerance for older respondents.

¹² The variation of the explained variance obtained with the addition of the individual predictors to a model that considered only the structural factors was statistically significant: $F_{\text{change}} = 479,22; p < .001$.

¹³ An accurate analysis using these different types of predictors (structural and individual) would be by means of a multilevel analysis. Since this aspect was not a fundamental one in

Predictors of intolerance to difference in youths by cultural region

[TABLE 4]

	Protestant	Catholic	Islamic	Orthodox	Central Europe	Latin America	Sub-Saharan Africa
Degree	-(a)	-	.17***	-.067***	-	-	-
Life satisfaction	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal trust	-.09**	-.08*	-.20***	-	-	-	.08***
Political conservatism10***	.10***	.09***	.12***	.15***	.15***	.23***
Moral conservatism13***	.07***	-	.11***	-	-	-
Post-materialism	-.07*	-	.05*	-.10***	-	-	-
Explained variance (adj. R ²)	5.5%#	3.0%	8.8%	5.9%	2.5%	2.5%	6.3%

* $p < .01$; ** $p < .005$; *** $p < .001$

(a) beta n. s.

The reduced values of explained variance are due to the sample’s heterogeneity and to the noise derived from the application of the questionnaire in different languages and contexts.

Source: WVS 1999/2000.

Across cultural regions, results follow our hypotheses and consistently show that political conservatism and post-materialist values are the most powerful predictors of youths’ intolerance toward people and groups seen as different at the cultural level or toward stigmatised people¹⁴. The positive association between political conservatism and intolerance may derive from its functionality in the cognitive domain. As proposed by Jost *et al.* (2003), political conservatism may be studied as a special case of motivated social cognition, serving to reduce fear, anxiety, uncertainty, and ambiguity, and to explain order and justify social inequalities amongst groups and individuals. As far as post-materialistic orientation is concerned, the negative association between this and intolerance may probably be justified by the association between post-materialism and the values of freedom, participation, and citizenship — values that promote an inclusive view of society. In a less consistent manner, interpersonal trust and degree of schooling are (as predicted) negatively associated with intolerance¹⁵.

this work, we limited ourselves to these regressions and we take a more thorough look at the regressions by cultural region, where the structural predictors are no longer included. However, a growing number of studies using multilevel analysis have also shown that prejudice is more associated with individual variables than with structural contextual variables (Ramos, Vala and Pereira, 2008; Scheepers, Gijsberts and Coenders, 2002; Quillian, 2006).

¹⁴ In the exceptional case of Islamic countries, post-materialism is positively associated with intolerance. Further studies would be necessary to elucidate the reasons for such inconsistency.

¹⁵ Schooling is a very important predictor of intolerance when we consider all respondents. When we consider only the sample of youths, the minor importance of schooling is due to the relative homogeneity (low variance) of this group on this variable.

HOW YOUTHS DEAL WITH CULTURAL DIVERSITY

As stated above, we established a conceptual distinction between attitudes toward people and groups perceived as different, and attitudes toward cultural diversity as a social value. We will now answer the question as to how youths deal with cultural diversity. As in the previous section, we will initially compare the attitudes of youths and older respondents. We will then examine the predictors of youth attitudes toward cultural diversity.

ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY

In order to grasp youth attitudes toward cultural diversity, we used data from the *European Social Survey-1/2002*, an academically-driven social survey designed to chart and explain the interaction between Europe's changing institutions and the attitudes, beliefs, and behaviour patterns of its populations. Therefore, the data are available only for European countries¹⁶.

Attitudes toward diversity are now evaluated, not in negative terms (intolerance or social distance) but rather as the idea that cultural diversity can constitute enrichment for a society or a country (for a review, see Park and Judd, 2005). In fact, the measure created with these data revolves around the idea that the existence of different customs, religions, and languages is an asset for a society (see *appendix*).

In an initial analysis, we compared the mean levels of youth and older respondent attitudes toward cultural diversity. Adhering to the pertinence of comparing across cultural regions, the European countries of this survey were classified according to the same taxonomy used above (Norris and Inglehart, 2003). However, considering that only European countries are present in this survey, the only cultural regions considered in these analyses were "Protestant" (Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Norway, Switzerland, and UK), "Catholic" (Austria, Belgium, France, Italy, Luxembourg, Portugal, and Spain) and "Central Europe" (Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and Slovenia).

Results show that, in comparison with the older respondents, both in the combined results of all countries and in each cultural region, young respondents more easily embrace the idea that social and cultural diversity should be seen as fruitful instead of as a threat or as a source of insecurity (see table 5). However, it should be mentioned that there was a general tendency not to

¹⁶ The countries used in these analyses were: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and UK.

embrace cultural diversity. In fact, except for the youth from Protestant countries, for both youths and older respondents, and in every other cultural region, the mean levels of openness to diversity were statistically below the midpoint of the scale used.

Means of openness toward cultural diversity

[TABLE 5]

	All countries (n = 35,677)	Protestant (n = 15,726)	Catholic (n = 15,089)	Central Europe (n = 4,862)
Youths (< 24 yrs)	2.83a*	3.04a	2.86a	2.83a
Older respondents (> 24 yrs)	2.60b	2.85b	2.51b	2.22b

* Different letters indicate statistically significant differences at $p < .001$ (test F).
Scale: 1 — low openness to 5 — high openness to diversity.

Source: ESS-1/2002.

PREDICTORS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD CULTURAL DIVERSITY

The first step of our analysis was to identify the factors that underlie the pattern of attitudes identified above. Due to the aims of the present study, analyses were carried out only for youths and, based on our previous results, we will consider only social values as the possible key predictor of positive attitudes toward cultural diversity. Specifically, we will use the categories of values included in the Schwartz (1992) typology of human values.

Social values are conceptualised as desirable objectives that serve as guiding principles in people’s lives, constituting socially accepted representations of basic motivations (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000). Schwartz’s (1992) proposal is the most structured and consistently validated model of human values. This model organises ten basic values in a bi-dimensional structure composed of four types of high-order values that, in turn, represent two basic and bipolar conceptual dimensions: one that opposes values of *self-transcendence* to values of *self-enhancement*; and another that opposes values of *openness to change* to values of *conservation*¹⁷. The first dimension reflects the conflict between accepting others as equals and concern for their own well-being (*self-transcendence*) versus the pursuit of individual success and the control over others (*self-enhancement*). The second dimension reflects the conflict between the desire of intellectual autonomy, free-

¹⁷ Though this set of values strongly resembles values of conservatism, due to its specificity within this model, the author intentionally uses the term *conservation*.

dom of action and orientation toward change (*openness to change*) in opposition to obedience, the preservation of traditional practices and the protection of stability (*conservation*).

We expect that the endorsement of values of *conservation* (in opposition to the values of openness to change), reflecting the protection of tradition and social order, will predict a more negative attitude toward cultural diversity, in the same way that we expected political and moral conservatism to be positively associated with intolerance. Moreover, the above quoted studies on the relationship between conservatism, “need for cognitive closure”, and intolerance to uncertainty may also be applied to the *conservation* values, as defined in the Schwartz typology. On the contrary, *self-transcendence* values (in opposition to *self-enhancement* values), values that promote tolerance and the concern for equal opportunities for all human beings, are expected to predict positive attitudes toward social and cultural diversity (Ramos and Vala, 2009).

Regression analyses yielded results consistent with the hypotheses anticipated in our theorising (see table 6). Thus, youths that share values of *conservatism* (and lower values of *openness to change*) are less inclined to accept cultural diversity and to consider that it constitutes the enrichment of a society or a country. On the contrary, this inclination to view diversity as an asset is facilitated by a higher salience of *self-transcendence* values (and lower salience of *self-enhancement* values). This pattern of results holds true for all of the cultural regions in these analyses.

Impact of conservation and self-transcendence values on youths’ openness toward cultural diversity

[TABLE 6]

	All countries (n = 5,113)	Protestant (n = 2,167)	Catholic (n = 1,712)	Central Europe (n = 992)
Conservation (minus openness to change)	-.19***	-.12***	-.14***	-.18***
Self-transcendence (minus self-enhancement)	.20***	.17***	.25***	.14***
Explained variance (adj. R ²)	7.2%	3.9%	8.0%	3.9%

*** Predictors statistically significant at $p < .001$.

Scale: 1 — low openness to 5 — high openness to diversity.

Source: ESS-1/2002.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The main goal of this paper was to look at empirical data and theoretical work in order to design a broad map for the representations of difference

and diversity amongst youths. Our study was motivated by the ambiguous results of earlier studies, some of which showed that youths express higher levels of *openness to change*, an orientation positively associated with openness to cultural diversity; and others, that young people share fewer universalistic values, which may be at the root of more negative attitudes toward other groups and diversity in general.

Using data from 65 countries (WVS data), the first part of our paper showed that youths express lower levels of intolerance to groups and people seen as different, i. e., to stigmatised people and to people perceived as ethnically or racially different. This result is consistent across world regions, except in the countries included in the Sub-Saharan Africa category, where older people expressed less intolerance than younger people, a result that deserves future attention. Moreover, it was possible to identify a consistent pattern that yields a relationship between political conservatism and negative attitudes toward people perceived as different in all the countries surveyed.

In the same vein, young people showed more openness to cultural diversity than older people in European countries (ESS data). In all the countries studied, as well as in the three regions considered in Europe according to the taxonomy of Norris and Inglehart (2003), this result was consistent, albeit the statistical size of the age effect was not very expressive. A second highly significant result is that in every country, both young and older people express levels of openness to diversity substantially lower than the mid-point of the scale, meaning that cultural diversity is not positively evaluated. Young people from Protestant countries constitute an exception to this pattern of results.

As a whole, these results can be understood in the context of the role that *openness to change* (in opposition to *conservation*) plays in the explanation of the attitudes toward diversity. Indeed, *openness to change* is a predictor of openness to cultural diversity and, as shown in earlier studies (Ferreira, 2006), young people express a higher adhesion to these kinds of values than do older people. We can also advance the hypothesis that if young people's attitudes toward diversity depend on *openness to change* (*vs. conservation*), older people who share this same attitude anchor it more on *self-transcendence* values, since the same study has shown that older people adhere more easily to self-transcendence values.

This paper showed that representations, values, and ideologies (and the cognitive and emotional factors that feed them) are important factors *per se* that can organise and sustain tolerance and intolerance. In fact, the major result regarding the predictors of intolerance to difference and diversity indicates the importance of values, namely the negative impact of conservatism and the positive impact of *openness to change*. Indeed, one of the major results presented above indicates a strong positive relationship between the values of conservatism (political conservatism and *conservation* values) and

intolerance to difference and diversity and a strong positive relationship between *openness to change* and a higher appreciation of cultural diversity.

We can therefore suggest that strategies addressing the problem of intolerance and prejudice should also focus on those values. Sadly, this has not previously been the case with most of the strategies considered in the mainstream literature targeting prejudiced attitudes (e. g., Stephan and Stephan, 2001), even though several theorists have long recognised the indisputable importance of values. Indeed, as early as the 1950s, Allport (1954) gave salience to personal values as a major tool to fight prejudice.

Despite the fact that these strategies aiming for change have poorly regarded the importance of values and their ideological counterpart, some strategies oriented to change the views and attitudes of those who express intolerance, albeit indirectly, have been based on the importance of social values. Such is the case of the Social Identity Complexity model proposed by Roccas and Brewer (2002), a model that stresses cognitive complexity and, indirectly *openness to change*. Social identity complexity refers “to the nature of the subjective representation of multiple ingroup identities” (Roccas and Brewer, 2002, p. 88). A high social identity complexity occurs “when an individual recognizes that each of his or her group memberships incorporates a different set of people as ingroup members and the combined representation is the sum of all of these group identities.” (Brewer and Pierce, 2005, p. 428). This complex ingroup identity is more inclusive and promotes tolerance. The consequences of this approach are well described in the writings of Amin Maalouf. In *Les identités meurtrières*, he argues that “if we see our identity as made of multiple belongings, some of them linked to an ethnical history and some not; from the moment we can see in each of us, in our own origins, in our trajectory, the diverse confluences and the diverse contributions [...] from this moment emerges a different relationship with the others”. This impressive analysis nicely shows that self-complexity and cross-cutting category memberships can increase the perception of the value of others (now seen as individuals) and the quality of the interpersonal interactions.

Another aspect to bear in mind is that this paper argues for a multidimensional conceptualisation of diversity. In this vein, it is not only important to distinguish between attitudes toward cultural diversity and attitudes toward people seen as different and inferior, it is also important to distinguish between what we called stigmatised people and people perceived as racially different. Indeed, our findings showed that intolerance toward stigmatised people (e. g., people with AIDS, homosexuals, and emotionally unstable people) is stronger than the intolerance toward people perceived as ethnically or culturally different. This may indicate that it is perceived as less anti-normative to discriminate against the former than the latter, and probably that most of the initiatives and policies designed to deal with the problem of diversity have been more focused on cultural and racial issues.

APPENDIX

VARIABLES USED IN THE ANALYSES

(codes before variables indicate names or labels used in the database)

World Values Survey

Stigma intolerance

“On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?”

a127 — “emotionally unstable people”

a130 — “people who have AIDS”

a132 — “homosexuals”

Racial intolerance

“On this list are various groups of people. Could you please sort out any that you would not like to have as neighbours?”

a129 — “immigrants”

a130 — “people who have AIDS”

a132 — “homosexuals”

General intolerance

Measure composed of 6 items: 3 items from stigma intolerance and 3 items from racial intolerance.

Scale: 0 — no groups rejected to 6 — all groups rejected.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES USED IN THE REGRESSION ANALYSES

Positional variables

Schooling/educational level: × 025 — “What is the highest level you have reached in your education?” Scale: 1 — lowest to 8 — highest.

Psychological individual differences

Life satisfaction: a170 — “All things considered, how satisfied are you with your life as a whole these days?” Scale: 1 — dissatisfied to 10 — satisfied.

Interpersonal trust: a165 — “Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?” Options: 2 — most people can be trusted; 1 — can’t be too careful.

Socio-political values

Political conservatism: an index composed of the three following indicators.

270 A) I’m going to describe various types of political systems and ask what you

think about each as a way of governing this country. For each one, would you say it is a very good, fairly good, fairly bad or very bad way of governing this country? e114 — “Having a strong leader who does not have to bother with parliament and elections” (scale: 4 — very good to 1 — very bad). B) I’m going to read off some things that people sometimes say about a democratic political system. Could you please tell me if you agree strongly, agree, disagree or disagree strongly, after I read each of them? e123 — “Democracy may have problems but it’s better than any other form of government”(inverted); e122 — “Democracies aren’t good at maintaining order” (scale: 1 — agree strongly to 4 — disagree strongly). Index scale: 1 — low conservatism 4 — high conservatism.

Moral conservatism: “Here is a list of qualities that children can be encouraged to learn at home. Which, if any, do you consider to be especially important?” a042 — “Obedience”. Scale: 1 — important to 0 — not mentioned.

Materialism/post-materialism: “There is a lot of talk these days about what the aims of this country should be for the next ten years. On this card are listed some of the goals that different people would give top priority.” e003 — if you had to choose, which of the things on this card would you say is most important? e004 — and which would be the next most important? Options: “maintaining order in the nation; giving people more say in important government decisions; fighting rising prices; protecting freedom of speech”. Recoding: 1 — materialists; 2 — mixed; 3 — post-materialists.

European Social Survey

Openness toward cultural diversity

“It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs and traditions.”
Recoded to 1 — strongly agree to 5 — strongly disagree.

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES USED IN THE REGRESSION ANALYSES

Human values

The PVQ (portrait values questionnaire; Schwartz, 2002). Scale was used. Each of the values is measured through items assessing the identification of the interviewee with a person having certain characteristics. Each item depicts a common motivation reflecting individual aims and aspirations. For each “portrait”, the respondent is asked to indicate the extent to which each person is similar to them. Recoded to a scale from 1 — not at all like me to 6 — very much like me.

Conservation: formed by three motivational types: security, tradition, and conformism

Security:

1. A person who gives importance to living in a place where people feel safe. Anything that can put their security at risk is avoided.

2. A person for whom it is important that the government guarantees their security against all threats. A strong state is needed so it can defend its citizens.

Tradition:

1. A person for whom it is important to be humble and modest. They try not to attract attention.
2. A person who gives importance to tradition. Everything is done in accordance with religion and family.

Conformism:

1. A person who thinks that people should do as they are told. People should always follow the rules even when no one is watching.
2. A person for whom it is important always to behave as we should. Doing things that others would say are wrong must be avoided.

Openness to change: formed by three motivational types: stimulation, hedonism, and self-direction

Stimulation:

1. A person who likes surprises and is always looking to do new things. They think it is important to do lots of different things in life.
2. A person who is looking for adventure and likes taking risks. They want to have a life full of emotions.

Hedonism:

1. A person for whom it is important to have a good time. They like to look after themselves.
2. A person who is looking to take every opportunity to have fun. It is important to do things that give them pleasure.

Self-direction:

1. A person who gives importance to having new ideas and being creative. They like doing things in their own way.
2. A person for whom it is important to make their own decisions about what to do. They like to be free and independent of others.

Self-transcendence: formed by two motivational types: universalism and benevolence

Universalism:

1. A person who thinks that it is important for everyone to be treated equally; believing that everyone should have the same opportunities in life.

2. A person for whom it is important to listen to people who are different from themselves. Even when disagreeing with someone, there is still the desire to understand that person.
3. A person who really believes that people should protect nature. Protecting the environment is important for them.

Benevolence:

1. A person for whom it is important to help those around them. They enjoy looking after their well-being.
2. A person for whom it is important to be loyal to friends. They are very committed to those to whom they are close.

Self-enhancement: formed by two motivational types: power and achievement

Power:

1. A person for whom it is important to be rich. They want to have a lot of money and expensive things.
2. A person for whom it is important to have other people's respect. They want people to do what they say.

Achievement:

1. A person who gives a lot of importance to being able to show their abilities. They want people to admire what they do.
2. A person for whom it is important to be successful. They like to be recognised by other people.

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