

**“You Have No Right to Tell Us How to Govern Our
Country”:
Weakening Group Equality Norms and Democratic
Erosion in Western Publics**

Beyza E. Buyuker, University of Illinois – Chicago

Alexandra Filindra, University of Illinois – Chicago

Eva Green , University of Lausanne

Anita Manatschal, University of Neuchâtel

Research Question

What is the role of intergroup dynamics in shaping majority group attitudes toward the norms of democracy?

Why important?

1. Signals of erosion of democratic norms and institutions around the globe (*e.g., Foa and Mounk 2017, Levitsky and Ziblatt 2018*)
2. Rise of anti-minority sentiments
 1. Role of ascriptive identities



Then-President Trump suggested that as individuals who “originally came from countries whose governments are a complete and total catastrophe,” these legislators had no authority to tell “the people of the United States...how our government is to be run” (Rogers & Fandos, 2019)

Theoretical Background

1. Candidate Ascriptive Traits & Platforms

(e.g., Gonzalez Juenke & Sampaio, 2010; Portmann & Stojanović, 2019; Stout, 2015; Sylvain & Brouard, 2011)

2. Political Tolerance

(e.g., Stouffer, 1992 [1955]; Sullivan et al., 1982)

3. Norms of Social Equality

(e.g., Mendelberg, 2001; Tesler, 2016; Tesler & Sears, 2010)

Argument

When members of the native majority are exposed to information related to a politician's ascriptive background, or their support for a social justice agenda, these outgroup cues are likely to activate the feelings associated with outgroups.

The more negative these associations are the more likely they are to induce majority group respondents to withdraw their support for the politician's political rights.

Hypothesis

- ◇ H_1 : Exposure to the outgroup priming should produce a statistically significant and positive main effect, such as that those who receive the priming should express stronger support for anti-democratic norms toward the politician
- ◇ H_2 : The positive effect of the outgroup priming on support for anti-democratic norms should be stronger among those with higher levels of anti-immigrant attitudes.
- ◇ DV: Support for Anti-democratic norms
- ◇ IV: Anti-immigrant attitudes

Data

◇ Priming Experiments

Experiment I – US

(N=2816, January-February 2021, Non-Hispanic Whites)

Experiment II – Switzerland

(N=2392, January-April 2021, German speaking Swiss Adults)

- ◇ Case selection: US (high salience) vs. Switzerland (low salience)
- ◇ Sample Provider: Lucid, opt-in online panel
- ◇ Gender within age quotas

Priming Experiments

Treatment: Outgroup Priming

Policy issue (age vs diversity quota) & Background of the politician (native vs immigrant)

Outcome: Support for anti-democratic norms

Key moderators: Anti-immigrant attitudes



U.S. STATE PROPOSES DIVERSITY QUOTAS FOR TEACHING JOBS

MINNESOTA (AP) — On Jan 22nd, a member of the Minnesota State Assembly, [**Samuel Huntington/Halim Mohamed**], introduced legislation seeking to impose diversity quotas in the teaching workforce. The proposal requires public schools to adopt quotas mandating a minimum number of teachers with a racial and ethnic minority background in their schools.

The discussion on increasing minority educators in the profession recently attracted substantial attention. “The teaching profession is currently dominated by whites and there are not enough teachers from racial and ethnic minorities in our schools” said [**Huntington/Mohamed**], after introducing the bill.

— Rich Davis in Minnesota contributed to this report.

Measures

DV: Anti-democratic norms

- ◇ *The parliamentarian/legislator should no longer be able to present his views in the media or social media*
- ◇ *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from running for office in the future*
- ◇ *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from introducing new proposals*
- ◇ *The public prosecutor should investigate the parliamentarian/legislator*
- ◇ *The parliamentarian/legislator should be banned from holding political rallies*
- ◇ *The legislature should reprimand the parliamentarian/legislator for his actions*
- ◇ *Journalists who support the parliamentarian/legislator should be investigated* (agree/ disagree 4-pt scale)

(Cronbach's Alpha Experiment I=0.94 , Experiment II=0.95)

Measures

Moderator: Anti-immigrant attitudes

- ◇ *Immigrants cause crime rates to increase* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *Immigrants are generally good for (country's) economy* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *Immigrants take jobs away from (country nationality) people* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *(Country's) culture is generally undermined by immigrants* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *Legal immigrants who are not citizens should have the same rights as (country nationality) citizens* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *(Country) should take stronger measures to exclude illegal immigration* (true/untrue, 4-pt scale)
- ◇ *The number of immigrants to (country) nowadays should be..." increase or decrease* (5-pt scale)

(Cronbach's Alpha Experiment I=0.80 , Experiment II=0.76)

Results

Table 1. Experimental Results - Support for Anti-democratic Norms

	US		Switzerland	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
<i>Treatment</i>				
Age by Immigrant	-0.029 (0.02)	-0.099 *** (0.04)	-0.017 (0.01)	0.006 (0.05)
Diversity by Native	-0.025 (0.02)	-0.163 *** (0.04)	0.001 (0.01)	0.003 (0.05)
Diversity by Immigrant	-0.048 *** (0.02)	-0.224 *** (0.04)	-0.017 (0.01)	-0.148 *** (0.05)
Anti-immigrant Attitudes	0.471 *** (0.02)	0.267 *** (0.05)	0.515 *** (0.03)	0.451 *** (0.07)
<i>Interaction</i>				
Age by Immigrant*Anti-immigrant		0.151 ** (0.07)		-0.045 (0.10)
Diversity by Native*Anti-immigrant		0.293 *** (0.07)		-0.004 (0.10)
Diversity by Immigrant*Anti-immigrant		0.372 *** (0.07)		0.251 *** (0.09)
N	2816	2816	2392	2392
Adj R ²	0.163	0.172	0.279	0.281

Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors

All predictors are coded on a 0–1 scale, so all coefficients can be thought as maximum effects.

Controls include age, gender, education, income.

***p<0.01; ** p<0.05 (two-tailed)

Results

Figure 1. Effects of treatments at various levels of anti-immigrant attitudes

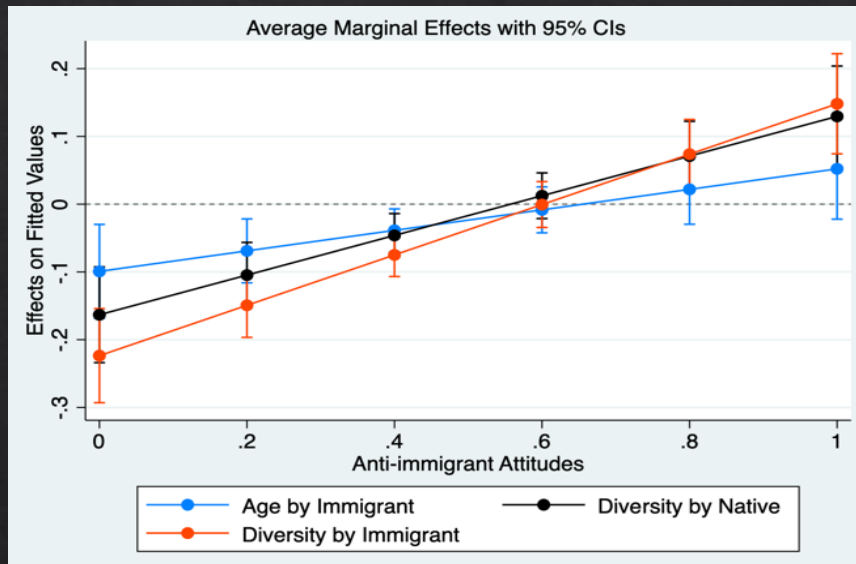


Figure 1a - US

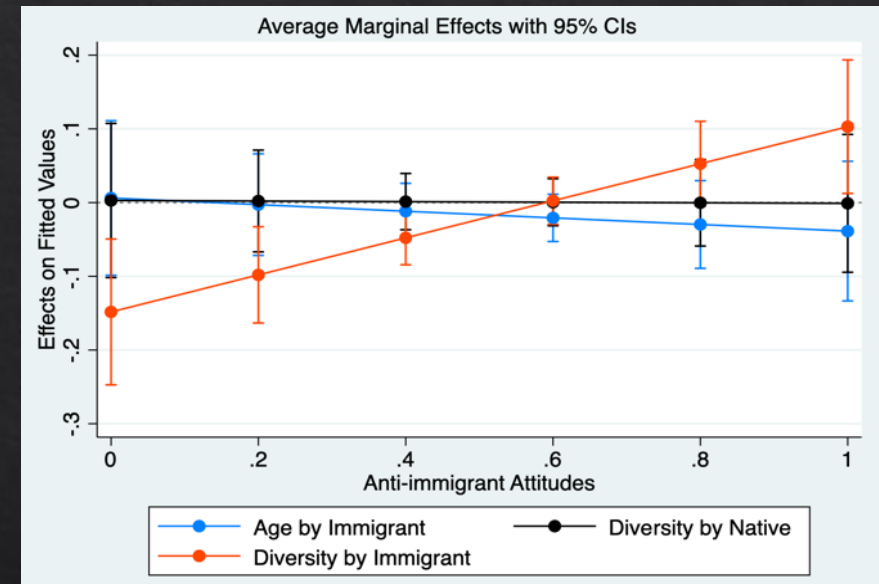


Figure 1b - Switzerland

Findings

- ◆ We provide evidence from two priming experiments that when outgroup considerations are experimentally primed, individuals who score high on anti-immigrant attitudes become more supportive of anti-democratic norms, as hypothesized.
- ◆ Individuals with more positive views about immigrants are more likely to respond with a backlash against penalizing the politician and reaffirm democratic norms when exposed to the outgroup priming, especially in the diversity by immigrant condition.
- ◆ This effect is **not limited** to support for a contraction of the politician's civil liberties (e.g., freedom of media), but **may extend to** a decline in support for broader democratic norms (e.g., government investigation of the politician and journalists)

Next Steps

- ◇ What about minority groups? What makes them more/less supportive of democratic principles?
- ◇ Role of in-group identities, emotions and other mechanisms to be taken seriously

Thank you!