Chapter 6
Civic Participation and Other Interventions That Promote Children's Tolerance of Migrants

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> *I do not like the word tolerance, but I cannot think of a better one.*
>
> Ghandi (1869–1948). (Cited in UNESCO 1997)

6.1 Tolerance Toward Migrants

Reflecting the growing political and scholarly debates about international migration and the so-called refugee crisis in the last few decades, the research on tolerance (and more generally on attitudes toward migrants) has flourished, making tolerance one of the focal concepts in peace psychology (Noor & Christie, 2015; Rapp, 2017). A lack of tolerance implies the rejection of people whom we perceive as different, for example, members of a social or ethnic group other than ours, or people who are different in political or sexual orientation. A lack of tolerance toward foreigners is a contemporary problem in many countries, often related to phenomena like xenophobia, racism, antisemitism, romaphobia and antigypsyism. Its manifestations comprise a wide range of actions from avoidance to hate speech to physical injury or even murder. For all of these reasons, studying the factors that promote tolerance during different stages of an individual's development increasingly becomes an important issue for social science research (Côté & Erickson, 2009; Gniewosz & Noack, 2008).

In this chapter, we begin by providing a definition of 'tolerance', illustrating the wide range of attributes associated with the concept in the literature. Second, we identify some key paths through which tolerance can develop at different stages of an individual's development. Through a literature review, we will track some of the factors that can increase tolerance toward migrants during early and late stages of

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development. Finally, we will conclude by presenting an overview of methodological approaches that practitioners have at their disposal to promote tolerance toward migrants.

6.1.1   Defining Tolerance: Positive and Negative Connotations

In general terms, tolerance means accepting the fact that human beings, naturally diverse in their appearance, situation, speech, behaviour and values, have the right to live in peace and to be as they are. On the other hand, intolerance may take the form of marginalization of vulnerable groups and their exclusion from social and political participation, as well as violence and discrimination against them (UNESCO, 1995, see also UNESCO, 1997).

Tolerance does not require to solve all differences; rather, it entails a reciprocal respect of our rights as human beings (see Rapp, 2017). For this reason, from a certain point of view, tolerance often refers also to the ability to put up with something potentially disagreeable (Freitag & Rapp, 2015; Langerack, 1994; Rapp, 2017). The fact that the object of tolerance is something potentially disagreeable and that negative attitudes are not completely eliminated has led some influential authors to suggest that other concepts, such as 'acceptance' and 'respect' for other social groups (defined by different sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnicity, etc.), should be preferred to 'tolerance'. For example, Schirmer, Weidenstedt and Reich (2012) argue that 'being tolerated' often means 'being put up with' or 'being grudgingly ignored'. According to these authors, multicultural approaches that are based on tolerance may send misleading signals, as they implicitly state that members of ethnic and racial minorities are actually not welcome.

While acknowledging the legitimacy of the above positions, in this contribution we start from the assumption that tolerance has important consequences for democratic life. Indeed, people's effort to control prejudice (i.e. negative evaluations, beliefs or feelings directed at people because of their ethnicity) and tolerate other groups is crucial to sustaining democratic norms (Freitag & Rapp, 2015). For example, with specific reference to migration, tolerance implies the belief, based on equalitarian principles and a political conviction, that migrants and non-migrants should be treated equally (Van Zalk, & Kerr, 2014). This requires just and impartial legislation, law enforcement and judicial and administrative process. In this sense, even if a complete (i.e. without any kind of rejection) acceptance would be desirable, we emphasize here that tolerance represents a more realistic goal that helps civil societies to cope with rising levels of diversity stemming from increased migration and individualism (Rapp, 2017, p. 42).

The fact that tolerance represents not only a desirable personal value but also a democratic virtue and a necessity for a free, modern and open society (Rapp, 2017) is also demonstrated by the negative effects of intolerance. While tolerance is usually accompanied by social cohesion and non-hostility (Morley, 2003; Paluck, 2011), prejudice and intolerance are accompanied by discrimination and violence

(e.g. Cabrera, Nora, Terenzini, Pascarella, & Hagedorn, 1999; Jasinskaja-Lahti, Liebkind, & Perhoniemi, 2006; Oakley, 1997). One of the consequences of intolerance is that migrant communities can become socially and economically marginalized. Examples of migrants living as marginalized groups within society may coincide with minority ethnic groups, religious groups and seasonal workers (Andersson, 2003; Eldering & Knowrth, 1998; Laverack, 2009). In a new country, migrants are often faced with restricted legal rights and lower socio-economic status which can lead to feelings of exclusion and poor physical and mental health, accompanied by a limited understanding of how to access healthcare and social services: in one word, they are powerless (Laverack, 2009).

The reasons listed above emphasize the importance of tolerance toward migrants as a necessity for peace, rather than a cherished principle (UNESCO, 1995). In the next section, we provide some insights about the factors which influence its development.

6.1.2   A Developmental Approach on the Study of Tolerance

The most important insights about the development of tolerance come from the extensive multidisciplinary research that focused on the development of national and racial prejudice. This literature showed that prejudice developed at a very young age in children, and both descriptive and experimental research has by now mapped out the changes that occur with age and the main factors that influence such changes (for a review, see: Raabe & Beelmann, 2011).

In many parts of the world, in multicultural societies, prejudice seems to begin around age 4 to 5 (Aboud et al., 2012). However, despite this growing body of research, the processes through which individuals develop tolerance (or intolerance) toward migrants remain partially unclear. For example, some findings showed a peak in prejudice in middle childhood and a slightly decreasing trend until late childhood. However, the results concerning the differences between age groups showed also significant heterogeneity, indicating that the developmental trend is not universal, reflecting the role of many coexisting factors.

Recent research has adapted an ecological approach, focusing on various influencing factors (i.e. Ashy, 2011) across individual and social-environmental levels of explanation. For example, numerous studies focused mostly on individual factors, such as cognitive or social-cognitive abilities, like classification skills, social perspective-taking abilities (Bigler, Jones, & Loblinger, 1997; Smetana, 2006), lay theories[1] (Levy, Karafantis, & Ramírez, 2008), moral development (Killen, Margie, & Sinno, 2006) and group norm understanding (Abrams & Rutland, 2008).

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[1] Much literature confirms that people's perceptions are guided by their lay (naïve, implicit, folk or common sense) theories, helping them to understand, predict, control and respond to their social world.

Other approaches emphasized the role of family factors, such as having parents with negative intergroup attitudes (Miklikowska, 2016; White & Gleitzman, 2006); social-environmental factors, such as having a friendship with an out-group member (Feddes, Noack, & Rutland, 2009; Van Zalk & Kerr, 2014); or intergroup contact[2] experiences (Tropp & Prenovost, 2008). Finally, some research applied a more developmental perspective, focusing on motivational processes, such as ethnic awareness and ethnic identity development (Nesdale, 1999; Rutland, Abrams, & Levy, 2007).

It is also reasonable to assume that the effect of such factors is not the same across development stages. In other words, it is possible that a specific factor could play a key role for the development of tolerance at one developmental stage (rather than in another one). However, the evidence on this point is quite scarce and leads to conflicting results. For example, even if Tropp and Prenovost (2008) found that intergroup contact had a positive effect independently from the age of children and adolescents (i.e. contact had almost the same effect in each age group), the same researchers suggested that early contact experiences would be instrumental in nurturing the long-term development of positive intergroup attitudes. This would imply that earlier contact experiences would be more important than later ones. On the other hand, later developmental stages like adolescence and young adulthood are important periods to study attitudes toward migrants, as both social identity and peer relationships undergo crucial changes (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Bukowski & Kramer 1986; Newcomb et al. 1999). It is especially during these stages of development that young people tend to gradually make contact with a variety of others who are different from themselves and their families. Moreover, during this period individuals increase their abstract reasoning abilities, which represent a necessary condition to understand tolerance principles (Hjerm, 2009), but which are not really consolidated before adolescence (Rydgren, 2004).

6.2 Evidence from the PIDOP and the CATCH-EyoU Projects

Past research suggests that tolerance toward migrants increases with age and that school (e.g. school climate; Gniewosz & Noack, 2008) and social and political voluntary associations (Côté & Erickson, 2009) may represent important learning contexts for democratic attitudes, favouring the development of tolerance. To test this hypothesis, and to clarify the role of different forms of participation that may involve young people at different developmental stages, we set up two studies based on two

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[2] Contact between members of different groups has long been advocated as a productive means for reducing intergroup prejudice. The empirical evidence supports this notion, with hundreds of studies indicating that people (especially people from dominant groups) gain more positive attitudes toward other groups (typically non-dominant groups) by communicating with members of those groups (Harwood, 2017).

different sets of data, from the PIDOP (Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation) project and the CATCH-EyoU (Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solutions)[3] project.

Both sets of data were collected in Italy, where the issue of tolerance/intolerance toward migrants has become increasingly more prominent in the past decade. It is a topic that has been adopted by politicians as a means to increasing their popularity (Rivera, 2012), often scapegoating migrants for the dissatisfaction and resentment many Italians feel about their social and living conditions (Bonomi 2008; Rivera, 2012).

In Study 1 we investigated the relationship between different forms of civic and political participation and tolerance toward migrants. The sample consisted of 1240 adolescents and young adults. Females were 46.5% and the mean age was 20.07 years (min. 14, max. 29). Participants completed a paper questionnaire, with the following variables considered for analysis: age, gender, migrant status, parents' education, different forms of participation and tolerance toward migrants. Participation was assessed asking if, in the last year, they took part in a list of activities. In accordance with the factor analysis, items assessing participation were grouped into 'online' (e.g. linking news or videos with a social or political content, discussing social or political questions on the net, connecting to a group dealing with social or political issues on a social network), 'unconventional' (writing political messages or graffiti on walls, political actions which might be considered illegal) and 'civic' (donating money, engaging in volunteer work, taking part in concerts or events with a social or political cause). Tolerance was assessed through four items measuring the support for some migrants' rights (for more information on the methodology, see Tzankova, Guarino, & Mazzoni, 2019). The analyses were conducted separately for adolescents and young adults using SPSS. Tolerance toward migrants was regressed on the following variables: age, gender, migrant status, parents' education and three forms of participation.

In Study 2 we investigated the relationship between different forms of participation, school climate and tolerance toward migrants and refugees.[4] The sample consisted of 1732 adolescents and young adults; 60.7% were female and the mean

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[3] PIDOP (Processes Influencing Democratic Ownership and Participation) was a multinational research project which examined the processes which influence democratic ownership and participation in nine European countries. PIDOP was supported by a grant received from the European Commission seventh Framework Programme, FP7-SSH-2007-1, Grant Agreement no: 225282.

CATCH-EyoU (Constructing Active Citizenship with European Youth: Policies, Practices, Challenges and Solutions – www.catcheyou.eu) had the aim to identify the factors, located at different levels (psychological, developmental, macrosocial and contextual) influencing the different forms of youth active engagement in Europe. CATCH-EyoU was funded by the European Union, Horizon 2020 Programme, Grant Agreement number 649538. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are the sole responsibility of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Commission.

[4] In the study questionnaire, the term 'refugee' was used to refer to a displaced person who was forced to cross national boundaries and cannot return home safely. The use of the term was intentionally broad and did not necessarily reflect only those persons who fit the definition of 'refugee' according to international conventions.

age was 19.73 years (min. 15, max. 30). Participants completed a paper questionnaire and the following variables were considered for analysis: age, gender, migrant status, parents' education, school climate, different forms of participation and tolerance toward migrants and refugees. Participation was assessed asking if, in the last year, they took part in a list of activities, which partially differed from study one and were grouped into online (similar to study 1), civic (similar to study 1), political (traditional political participation, like working for a political party or for a political candidate) and protest (e.g. taking part in a political event where there was a physical confrontation with opponents, taking part in an occupation of a building or a public space). The measure of school climate was assessed only in the adolescents' group and focused on perceived fairness (e.g. 'our teachers treat us fairly', 'the rules in our school are fair'). The analyses were conducted separately for adolescents and young adults using SPSS. In the main analyses, tolerance toward migrants and tolerance toward refugees were regressed on the following variables: age, gender, migrant status, parents' education, school education and the four forms of participation.

Results were largely consistent across the two studies and showed that some sociodemographic characteristics (being female, migrant and with higher educated parents) were positively associated with higher tolerance toward migrants. We also found that civic forms of participation were the most predictive of tolerance, suggesting that these forms of participation provide more opportunities of contact with 'differentiated others' in a democratic environment. Online participation was associated with more tolerance only among young adults, probably because of the differences in Internet usage between adolescents (to communicate with their own peer group) and young adults (to interact with a high number of distant people). Protest was significantly related with tolerance toward refugees (but not toward migrants) among young adults, suggesting that tolerance toward refugees would be more related to radical and manifest forms of participation (i.e. politicization of the 'refugee crisis'). School climate did not demonstrate a clear effect on tolerance. Although the correlational nature of the study design is insufficient to establish a causal relationship between variables, the findings emphasize the importance of civic and political participation as a 'school for democracy' in which young people may learn a range of civic skills and enhance their tolerance toward migrants.

6.3   Different Approaches for Increasing Tolerance

According to UNESCO, laws are necessary but not sufficient for countering intolerance in individual attitudes. For this reason, different strategies need to be developed to foster tolerance and awareness of human rights in children.

The research we reviewed when writing this chapter showed that the development of tolerance is a complex process, which is influenced both by individual and social factors. While some of them are relatively stable, many others can be modified through experience. In this regard, the Member States of the UNESCO meeting in

Paris in 1995 declared that education for tolerance 'should aim at countering influences that lead to fear and exclusion of others, and should help young people to develop capacities for independent judgement, critical thinking and ethical reasoning' (UNESCO, 1995). In the following section, we present some approaches that – consistently with this statement – can be useful for increasing tolerance toward migrants among native children and adolescents.

6.3.1 Global Citizenship Education

Global citizenship refers to a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasizes political, economic, social and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, national and global (UNESCO, 2015). UNESCO has promoted global citizenship education since the launch of the UN Secretary-General's Global Education First Initiative (GEFI) in 2012, which made fostering global citizenship one of its three education priorities (UNESCO, 2015). This approach identifies specific learning objectives that should be pursued in different domains (cognitive, emotional, behavioural), at different developmental stages. In this frame, tolerance is one key learning objective that should be reached together with other values and skills that enable people to live together peacefully.

One advantage of global citizenship education has to do with its universal value, which implies that it is not restricted to a specific regional area. For example, even if there is some evidence that specific interventions may increase the feeling of similarity and tolerance toward other Europeans (e.g. Dolejšiová & López, 2009), there is also evidence that European identification can be a predictor of intolerance toward migrants, suggesting that having a more inclusive (e.g. continental) border does not equal having a more tolerant attitude toward migrants from other continents (e.g., Licata & Klein, 2002). With the adoption of a universalistic perspective, global citizenship education overcomes such limits, aiming at promoting tolerance toward all the human beings, from all regions of the world.

6.3.2 Intercultural Dialogue and Intercultural Competence Education

Cultural diversity is an essential condition of human society which brings about new social and political challenges. In this context, intolerance, discrimination and violence can threaten peace and the very essence of local and national communities. The essential objective of intercultural dialogue is to enable people to live together peacefully and constructively in a multicultural world, promoting understanding and interaction.

In 2008, the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue (2008) defined intercultural dialogue as the open and respectful exchange of views between individuals and groups from different ethnic, religious, linguistic and national backgrounds on the basis of mutual understanding and respect, arguing that such dialogue is crucial for promoting tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, preventing conflicts and achieving social cohesion.

In 2015, in light of the high numbers of refugees and asylum seekers arriving in the EU, national culture ministers agreed to create a new policy coordination group on intercultural dialogue, focussing on the integration of migrants and refugees in societies through the arts and culture (European Union, 2017). This group's report (executive summary), published in 2017, includes 46 case studies and 23 recommendations focussed on three main themes: empowerment through intercultural dialogue and the arts, intersectoral and partnership working and evaluation of intercultural dialogue objectives and projects.

Both documents observe that the competence that is required for participating in intercultural dialogue is not given to individuals by default. Intercultural competence can be described as the specific attitudes, knowledge, understanding, skills and actions which together enable individuals to understand themselves and others in a context of diversity and to interact and communicate with those who are perceived to have different cultural affiliations from their own (Spitzberg & Changnon, 2009; Huber & Reynolds, 2014). This competence needs to be learned, and providers of education (including education professionals, public authorities, civil society organizations, religious communities and the media) have a crucial role to play in equipping citizens with such competence.

In this sense, intercultural education should not be interpreted as being limited to 'formal education' (i.e. the structured education and training system that runs from pre-primary and primary through secondary school and on to higher education and lifelong learning). Intercultural learning can also occur through non-formal education (i.e. education outside the formal educational setting) and informal education (i.e. the lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from influences and resources in his or her own social environment) and it includes key competence areas like democratic citizenship, language and history.

For readers interested in the application of intercultural dialogue, a volume edited by Josef Huber and Christopher Reynolds (2014) presents a detailed description of how intercultural education can be implemented by actors in the formal, non-formal and informal educational spheres. This work explains the principles of pedagogical planning that should be used, relevant methods of learning and teaching, issues to consider when implementing intercultural education in each of the three educational domains and issues concerning assessment and evaluation. A wide range of approaches and concrete activities are presented, in order to promote the intercultural competence of individuals. Overall, such approaches emphasize that in the case of formal education, intercultural education cannot be a separate school subject but is instead a holistic approach which should be embedded throughout the school curriculum, with all teachers, irrespective of the age of their students and the

subject they teach, having responsibility for its implementation (see also Barrett, 2018).

6.3.3   Community-Based Approach

According to our results, civic and political participation contribute to the development of tolerance; this may happen through different processes, for example, providing a context for intergroup contact, offering people from different backgrounds the opportunity to interact, sharing common goals and learning democratic values 'in practice'. Community-based approaches, even if not directly referring to intercultural dialogue, are a powerful tool for promoting tolerance between migrant and non-migrant populations by engaging them in a participative and empowering process. The process needs to be based on critical insights regarding the relationship between professionals who implement interventions, the communities with which they work and the structural and symbolic dynamics of power and privilege that operate within and between these communities (Sandler, 2007).

The literature identifies many approaches which are consistent with these premises. For example, in the field of health, stakeholders make alliances with community leaders, integrating users as active agents, promoting social participation and generating positive relations between migrant populations and other community groups, advocating and supporting migrants in their collective actions aimed at gaining equal health rights and so encouraging social justice (Balcazar et al., 2004; García-Ramirez et al., 2011). In the youth field, community-based projects are usually aimed at identifying common interests between diverse groups of young people, mobilizing peers, working collectively to address community and human rights issues in schools and communities and promoting inclusiveness (Watts & Flanagan, 2007).

In this sense 'tolerance', rather than being an object of education, represents an outcome (an achievement) of the empowerment process, which implies the recognition of migrant minorities as main actors, rather than passive objects of the tolerance (or intolerance) from the majority. To achieve true tolerance, the world views and perspectives of different individuals and groups need to be taken into account, especially the most vulnerable, who are usually also the most silenced and forgotten (García-Ramírez, de la Mata, Paloma, & Hernández-Plaza, 2011).

6.4   Conclusion

Alarmed by the recent rise in acts of intolerance, violence, racism, exclusion, marginalization and discrimination directed against migrant minorities, we opened this chapter with the UNESCO definition of tolerance and emphasizing its importance.

Tolerance means respecting the rich diversity of our world's cultures, of different forms of expression and ways of being human (UNESCO, 1995).

Starting from a similar assumption, we shed some light on the main factors which can promote tolerance, with a specific focus on childhood and adolescence, as they are key life periods in which individuals develop attitudes toward others. In line with the socioecological perspective, such factors can be placed at different levels of society and can play a different role at different developmental stages. More specifically, in regard to adolescence and young adulthood, we emphasized the importance of taking part in different forms of civic and political participation.

Moving to a more applied focus, we described two broad educational approaches, global citizenship education and intercultural competence education, which have been specifically developed for promoting tolerance and can be fruitfully applied in the migration domain. Moreover, we showed how community approaches (based on the promotion of civic and political participation) can promote fruitful interaction between migrants and receiving societies.

The content of this chapter has some important implications for the well-being of children and adolescents. First, inscribing the concept of 'tolerance' as an aim of global citizenship education and of intercultural competence education means recognizing its usefulness also for those who are usually considered as the 'advantaged' ones. Indeed, the competences that allow people to live peacefully are beneficial for all the human beings, migrants and non-migrants, who are inevitably living in a new multicultural globalized world. On the other hand, although it goes beyond the scope of this chapter, we must recognize that migrant children and adolescents are often the victims of intolerance, with serious consequences on their personal and social well-being (e.g. Hernandez & Charney, 1998; Lustig et al., 2004). The construction of a more tolerant society will thus be integral to improving their well-being.

With regard to specific interventions to promote tolerance in childhood and adolescence, we must recognize that they are not widespread, they are rarely informed by developmental theory and research (Killen et al., 2011) and previous reviews evaluating the effects of interventions in childhood and adolescence found mixed results (Paluck & Green, 2009; Aboud et al., 2012). We strongly believe that developing tolerance toward migrants should represent not only a cherished principle but also a necessity for peace and for the economic and social advancement of all peoples. In 1995, Member States of UNESCO pledged to support and implement programmes of social science research and education for tolerance.[5] In this chapter we provided an overview of the complexity of this task, illustrating some of the main resources that practitioners and policymakers have at their disposal. Future research,

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[5] 'This means devoting special attention to improving teacher training, curricula, the content of textbooks and lessons, and other educational materials including new educational technologies, with a view to educating caring and responsible citizens open to other cultures, able to appreciate the value of freedom, respectful of human dignity and differences, and able to prevent conflicts or resolve them by non-violent means' (UNESCO, 1995).

accompanied by a systematic evaluation of relevant interventions, is necessary in order to provide further suggestions for more effective strategies.

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