

# Young Europeans' Constructions and Discussions of Migrancy and Racism

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This chapter examines how young people in 29 European countries, aged between 10 and 20, discussed issues around migrancy, refugees, racism and ethnicity and the values that they employed in doing so. They generally show a widespread understanding and agreement with the European values as set out in the European Convention on Human Rights, and their particular concerns when these were being violated or challenged. They drew on current events going on around them, referencing both traditional and new media.

The data was collected from 324 small groups (c. six members each) in deliberative discussions that were largely on issues determined by the group members. The analysis shows how attitudes and values were contextualised by group members and identifies some of the trigger points that focussed discussions on these values. We examine aspects of the social background and family origins of group members and how the characteristics affected discussions. We argue that the research technique of generating deliberative discussions should also be considered as a pedagogic approach, allowing young people to develop the ability and skills to listen to others and participate in discussion, particularly in understanding experiences of racism and discrimination, and give voice and potential agency to them.

## The Context of Young People's Voices

This chapter is both conceptual and empirical in its orientation, which sets it apart from the others in this volume. Rather than starting with the policies and practices that educational systems take towards migrant education, we consider how young people in Europe – of both migrant and non-migrant origins – construct attitudes towards migrants and refugees. We argue that accessing the voices of young people may provide necessary and significant starting points for the development of systems of policy and practice for migrant education. We are particularly focused on *how* these young people articulated their discussions about migrancy and racism and how they utilised contextual resources to develop and elaborate their arguments, rather than *what* particular view they came to. In terms of the *Ten Key Principles for Inclusive Systems in and around Schools*, set out in the introduction to this volume, we focus on the necessity of supporting young people in discussing their values and experiences in a deliberative context, following their specific contingent concerns and using the vocabulary and terms they use. Deliberation with peers promotes the growth of personal development and an

inclusive culture, respecting and including heritages and the marginalised groups. What we are arguing is that irrespective of who is in the discussion, simply having the discussions improves understanding and awareness, leading to personal development. We thus suggest a greater focus on the processes and structures that ensure group discussion and a curricular requirement to discuss issues of migrancy and racism, at least within the European context.

We seek to illustrate how such discussions can be developed and supported to focus on issues of social justice and equality, particularly in the data analysed with reference to racism in society, and the treatment of refugees and migrants. It not only shows the immediacy and news-led focus of the subjects of discussion but also demonstrates in many cases that young people can analyse their own and their family's experiences, or will listen to, and appreciate, the experiences of members of their discussion group and friends who have experiences of racism and discrimination, and that many young people – clearly a substantial majority – empathise with them.

Europe has been populated by diverse populations for centuries, with internal migration and the growth of large land-based polyglot empires as well as overseas imperialism contributing to this, and then a succession of population movements. Gatrell (2019) identifies five major stages in the post-1945 European migration history. This has led to demographic changes over much of Europe, including rural–urban internal migration, guest workers, migrancy from former colonies, refugees and asylum seekers and migrants created ('reframed', as Brubaker asserts [1996]) by the dissolution of the USSR and Yugoslavia, who found themselves involuntary new minorities. It was estimated that by 2014, just over a fifth of all European Union (EU) households included at least one migrant-origin person (Agafitei & Ivab, 2016). This may now be approaching a quarter of all households. In the United Kingdom, the 2021 census reported that nearly 30% of births in 2020 were to non UK–born women (Office of National Statistics [ONS], 2021). These changes are not completely homogeneous; in Central Europe, the pre-2004 members of the EU have had relatively few migrants, with the majority of the changes occurring within the 80% of the European population living in the west. The Hungarian Prime Minister recently denounced this:

western Europe is the half [*sic*] where European and non-European peoples live together. These countries are no longer nations: they are nothing more than a conglomeration of peoples .... no longer the Western world, but the post-Western world. ... here we are in Central Europe ... the West in its spiritual sense has moved to Central Europe – what is left over there is merely the post-West

(Orban, 2022).

A very substantial part of our school population is now of migrant or part-migrant origin, with, for the most part, a much greater diversity than in the past (Vertovec, 2007). Young people today have lived in this changed context throughout their school lives and their reflections on their experiences contribute to how they construct values that incorporate cultural diversity and migration and do so in ways that are different from those of older generations; these understandings are the core of this chapter.

Our analysis is based on a two-part study of young Europeans' discussions about their identities and their experiences and reflections on migrancy, racism and diversity. The first study, conducted by Ross (2015, 2019), was a qualitative study employing deliberative discussions with small groups of young people across 29 European states from 2010 to 2016, in which some 2,000 young people talked about their sense of identity with their locality, country and Europe<sup>1</sup>. Table 9.1 shows some demographic characteristics of these young people.

The second study (Ross et al., 2024) – the basis of this chapter – built on the aforementioned and is part of an Erasmus+ Jean Network Programme, *Citizenship Education in the Context of European Values* which re-analysed this particular data to examine young people's political values and how educational policies might support their learning<sup>2</sup>. We recognised that the subject matter of the data was specific to the circumstances and the time at which it was collected, but this we regard as a significant finding in itself; it must be accepted that all similar discussions will have such an immediate focus and that although the curriculum must accept that the issues of the day and the place will be those that will determine the focus of the debate, the processes by which values are discussed and elaborated remain the same. The data was not an 'opinion survey' of young people, rather it was based on a series of open-ended discussions about young people's constructions of their identity, in terms particularly of their country and Europe. It was designed not to simply find what they thought but to uncover how they constructed these thoughts, in a social setting with their peers. What were the resources they would draw on, the examples they might give, and the ways that they framed – and sometimes reframed – their positions. It was a particularly large qualitative study, with groups in a wide range of countries and communities of very varied sizes. All these discussions are inevitably based on a short period of reference. Therefore, the educator cannot plan what the focus will be and which examples discussions will revolve around; it will be different from year to year, from month to week – such as refugees in 2015, Covid in 2020 and Ukraine in 2022. We argue that educational and curricular processes must be responsive to this.

**Table 9.1 Demographic characteristics of survey data, by country of discussion**

| Country     | Number of: |         |        |              | Age range | Not local born <sup>a</sup> | Parental origin (both local) <sup>b</sup> | Parental origins (one or both from)* |     |               |      |        |             |                          |
|-------------|------------|---------|--------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-----|---------------|------|--------|-------------|--------------------------|
|             | Locations  | Schools | Groups | Young people |           |                             |   | Other country                        | EU  | Europe not EU | Asia | Africa | Middle East | N+S America, Australasia |
| Austria     | 3          | 6       | 12     | 66           | 10–19     | 1                           | 45  | 6                                    | 19  | 1             | 0    | 0      | 2           |                          |
| Belgium     | 4          | 5       | 9      | 64           | 14–19     | 3                           | 62  | 2                                    | 0   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Bulgaria    | 3          | 6       | 11     | 72           | 12–18     | 0                           | 71  | 1                                    | 0   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Croatia     | 3          | 6       | 11     | 68           | 12–17     | 2                           | 62  | 4                                    | 5   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Cyprus N+S  | 4          | 4       | 8      | 55           | 12–19     | 16                          | 48  | 4                                    | 5   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Czechia     | 2          | 4       | 8      | 47           | 12–16     | 1                           | 42  | 3                                    | 4   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Denmark     | 5          | 7       | 9      | 55           | 11–19     | 6                           | 33  | 11                                   | 11  | 1             | 0    | 4      | 1           |                          |
| Estonia     | 4          | 4       | 8      | 44           | 12–16     | 1                           | 31  | 0                                    | 13  | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Finland     | 3          | 7       | 11     | 67           | 10–19     | 5                           | 49  | 9                                    | 12  | 2             | 4    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| France      | 7          | 9       | 16     | 93           | 12–18     | 14                          | 35  | 20                                   | 34  | 6             | 46   | 0      | 7           |                          |
| Germany     | 6          | 7       | 19     | 125          | 12–19     | 8                           | 71  | 47                                   | 39  | 17            | 13   | 3      | 0           |                          |
| Hungary     | 3          | 6       | 10     | 64           | 12–18     | 2                           | 57  | 7                                    | 4   | 2             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Iceland     | 3          | 4       | 6      | 58           | 12–17     | 2                           | 50  | 7                                    | 2   | 2             | 0    | 0      | 2           |                          |
| Italy       | 5          | 19      | 20     | 137          | 12–19     | 9                           | 126                                       | 5                                    | 8   | 1             | 0    | 1      | 0           |                          |
| Latvia      | 3          | 4       | 8      | 50           | 12–17     | 0                           | 24  | 22                                   | 31  | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Lithuania   | 3          | 4       | 6      | 40           | 11–19     | 0                           | 31  | 8                                    | 7   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Luxembourg  | 1          | 2       | 4      | 27           | 12–18     | 4                           | 17  | 9                                    | 1   | 2             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| N Macedonia | 3          | 6       | 11     | 72           | 12–18     | 5                           | 47  | 3                                    | 24  | 0             | 2    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Netherlands | 4          | 4       | 8      | 52           | 12–17     | 3                           | 42  | 3                                    | 7   | 2             | 0    | 2      | 4           |                          |
| Norway      | 2          | 4       | 8      | 43           | 11–19     | 9                           | 33  | 5                                    | 7   | 4             | 4    | 2      | 0           |                          |
| Poland      | 4          | 9       | 16     | 96           | 12–18     | 0                           | 95  | 0                                    | 1   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Portugal    | 2          | 7       | 11     | 64           | 14–18     | 8                           | 52  | 6                                    | 7   | 5             | 0    | 0      | 4           |                          |
| Romania     | 4          | 10      | 16     | 105          | 12–17     | 1                           | 95  | 8                                    | 6   | 0             | 1    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Slovakia    | 2          | 3       | 7      | 42           | 12–17     | 0                           | 39  | 2                                    | 1   | 0             | 0    | 0      | 0           |                          |
| Slovenia    | 5          | 7       | 13     | 76           | 12–17     | 8                           | 55  | 10                                   | 19  | 0             | 0    | 0      | 2           |                          |
| Spain       | 6          | 9       | 20     | 122          | 11–19     | 5                           | 115                                       | 3                                    | 4   | 2             | 0    | 2      | 3           |                          |
| Sweden      | 3          | 6       | 12     | 72           | 11–17     | 8                           | 59  | 2                                    | 10  | 8             | 0    | 0      | 2           |                          |
| Switzerland | 3          | 3       | 6      | 37           | 12–19     | 3                           | 18  | 14                                   | 6   | 0             | 2    | 4      | 2           |                          |
| Turkey      | 4          | 15      | 16     | 85           | 12–19     | 0                           | 72  | 1                                    | 14  | 0             | 0    | 25     | 0           |                          |
| Total       | 104        | 182     | 324    | 1,998        | 10–19     | 124                         | 1,576                                     | 222                                  | 322 | 55            | 72   | 43     | 29          |                          |

<sup>a</sup> these numbers will total more than the country total, as some will be counted twice (parents with different origins)

<sup>b</sup> 'local' means the country in which the discussion took place, as shown in the left-hand column

We thus employ a post-structural approach to identity formation wherein identity is in a constant state of dynamic change (Zembylas, 2003), socially constructed and dependent on historic and cultural circumstances (Fawcett, 2012; Norton & Toohey, 2011). Like psychosocial and sociocultural models of identity, identity formation is both an individual and a social process, rather than being fixed, but unlike those two models, we see it as being based upon reflectivity and being relational, multiple and dynamic (Fisher, Evans, Forbes, Gayton, & Liu, 2020).

Our focus is on those parts of these discussions in which young people reflected on migration, ethnicities and diversity and how they drew on their experiences – including the experiences of the fifth of them with direct family migration experiences – to explain and evidence their views. Topics such as racism, refugees and migration were frequently raised by young people, building on both their own experiences and responding to current events, particularly in 2015–16, when the movement of over a million refugees from the war in Syria to Europe meant that migration was often *the* major topic of conversation. In our conclusions, we argue that these young people have the facility and motivation to create a different and positive discourse of migrancy and that they should be afforded the agency to do this within the policies and practices countries use to approach migrant education.

## **Young People’s Values, Views and Participation**

The EU’s *Values and Identities – A Policymakers Guide* (Scharfbillig et al., 2021) suggested that migrant rights have had increasing salience on European attitudes; ‘when talking about values ... discussions often revolve around topics such as ... immigration rights, and increasingly, respect [and] belonging’ (p. 18). They found that ‘the vast majority of EU citizens strongly support EU values’ (p. 13), but beyond observing that ‘values are formed in early life and remain relatively stable thereafter’ (p. 83), made no other mention of education or young people.

### ***Earlier Research on Young People’s Views of Migrancy and Racism: Fluctuation***

It is clear that there is widespread discrimination and intolerance ; in a 2015/6 survey, 24% of ethnic minorities in the EU mentioned having been discriminated against in the previous year (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights [EUAFR], 2017, p. 13). Of all EU citizens in 2019, 61% identified with their ethnic/racial background, while only 16% did not. However, this was slightly higher for those under 24 and those with post-18 education (EUAFR, 2020, p. 54).

There is relatively little data on young people’s attitudes towards diversity and migrants, but a 2021 Eurobarometer survey (EC, 2021) found that while 61% of respondents identified with their ethnic/racial background, 21% were non-committal and 16% tended not to identify in this way. However, younger people (aged 15–25), those studying beyond the age of 20 and those who identified as left-wing and non-religious were less likely to identify themselves with reference to an ethnic or racial background. Hanus, Tani, Béneker, and Höhnle (2022) compared changes in young people’s attitudes to migrant refugees of different cultural backgrounds between 2010 and 2017 in Czechia, Finland, Germany and the Netherlands, and found a ‘slightly positive change of world-mindedness’ in all these countries (p. 222). In the United Kingdom, Janmaat and Keating (2019) examined young people’s tolerance and intolerance towards minorities, including immigrants, and found that they are also more accepting of these groups than their parents or grandparents (2019, p. 44). But ‘a substantial

minority hold negative attitudes towards immigrants’, with intersecting and reinforcing perceptions that immigrants were both an economic and cultural threat (Keating & Janmaat, 2020, p. 1212). Debrael, d’Haenens, and De Coninck (2021) compared differences in attitudes towards immigrants and refugees and media consumption in two large samples (13–17-year-olds and 18–65-year-olds) in Flanders, hypothesising that the negative newcomer depictions were linked to negative attitudes towards immigrants and refugees. They found that while overall news consumption increased with age, young people mainly used social media, whereas adults relied more on traditional media – but that young adults (18–25) were the most welcoming group towards immigrants and refugees (p. 105).

Analyses of attitudes in Europe towards migrants changed following the events of 2015. In the previous decade, analysis had focussed on xenophobia definition issues and collecting reliable data (e.g., Brenner & Fertig, 2006) or on the balance between the resources and other factors for trade with cultural factors (e.g., O’Rourke & Sinnott, 2006). More detailed social analysis of the proponents of xenophobia and anti-immigrant discourses followed, such as Paas and Halapuu’s (2012) analysis of the European Social Survey data, which identified tolerance towards immigrants being higher in urban areas, among ethnic minorities themselves and for people with higher education and income. Schwartz (2015) suggested that individuals who were unwilling to accept migrants had broad motivational values of security and conformity and were negative towards universalism and self-direction.

After the migration events of 2015–16, there was greater focus, both contextual and empirical, on the range of responses to the refugees. Goździak and Main (2020) challenged the characterization of the 2015 movements as a ‘crisis’, observing that while there were ‘large numbers ... but do they constitute a “crisis”? Today’s exodus ... pales in comparison with the situation Germany faced, and surmounted, after World War II’ (p. 1). They also pointed to the potential ambivalence in the use of the term European values contrasting Orbán’s positioning as ‘defender of a Christian Europe, enact[ing] anti-migrant policies to protect European norms and values’ against refugees and Muslims (pp. 2–3) with Trilling’s reminder that ‘European unity, in its founding documents, was conceived of as a way of maintaining imperial power ... [by nations who had] become rich and powerful by conquering and administering huge empires’ (Trilling, 2018, para. 24).

Initial alarmist headlines about fear of immigration became nuanced. Dennison and Dražanová (2018), for example pointed out that ‘attitudes to immigration are not becoming more negative. Rather, they are notably stable and, in recent years, have become more positive’ (p. 3). Anti-immigrant attitudes would be reflected in voting for specifically anti-immigration parties, but there was not an increase in those with such views. Javdani (2020) suggested that approaching negative attitudes towards immigration should focus on prejudices and stereotypes and not assume that individual behaviour was ‘driven by material self-interest when evidence clearly suggests that it is not’ (p. 1).

But surveys of public opinion need to be approached with some caution. Bourdieu observed that polls assume:

the production of opinion is within the reach of all, [and] ... assumes that all opinions are equal, ... [that] to combine opinions that do not have the same real strength leads to ... meaningless artefacts, ... [and] assume that there is an agreement on the issues which deserve to be addressed

(1973, p. 1292).

‘Public opinion’, he concluded, ‘is an *artefact* pure and simple whose function is to conceal the fact that the state of opinion at any given moment is a system of forces and tensions’ (p. 1295).

Such criticism might be associated with the tendency of young people anticipating questions to be forms of testing, particularly those asked in educational settings, to which they are expected to provide ‘correct’ answers. Together, these factors suggest that discussions of a deliberative nature might provide a more effective methodology to determine what young people think (or do not think) about issues of race and migration. Group conversations were developed in German social science research (Bohnsack, 2000), where *gruppendifkussionsverfahren* has been described as ‘an open interview, intended to let respondents develop a topic in their own language, in their symbolic system and their relevant framework’ (Bohnsack, 2000, p. 21). Gugglberger, Adamowitsch, Teutsch, Felder-Puig, and Dür (2015) suggest it as ‘a very open and flexible method of data generation ... [I]n comparison to the more structured focus group method’ (p. 127). Wagener (2018) refers to ‘conjunctive knowledge ... implicit, action-guiding knowledge ... based and acquired in fundamental experiences ... that groups of individuals share with each other’. (p. 92).

### ***Young People’s Interest in the Political***

There is a fairly widespread belief that young people are uninterested in politics, and that this reflects a growing trend (e.g. Foa & Mounk, 2016), though there are some counter-claims (e.g. Ekström, 2016; Kiisel, Leppik, & Seppel, 2015). Hahn (1998) suggests that many studies of political socialisation construct young people as passive recipients of political messages from the social environment

Resistance to discussing politics with young people is sometimes associated with a denial that they can understand sophisticated political concepts (Maitles, 1997). Claire and Holden (2007) and Cowan and Maitles (2012) report teacher and institutional resistance to introducing anything seen as controversial in educational settings. But Hahn (1998) argues that if political or civic education is only concerned with the structure and function of government, it has little effect on young people’s attitudes or behaviour. Manning (2010) points to the ‘discourse of youth apathy typically draws upon quantitative methodologies and orthodox hegemonic notions of politics’. (p. 2). Henn, Weinstein, and Wring (2002) call this ‘conventional political science’ (p. 170), and argue that including wider forms of political participation in studies of young people’s participation would show much greater evidence of activity among young people, and higher levels of youth political participation (Henn, Weinstein, & Forrest, 2003). Quintelier (2007) argues that civic education should be more than a transfer of knowledge, but should rather, ‘play a necessary role in conveying the importance and value of politics’ (p. 177). Hahn (1998) concluded that students report that when they 1) frequently discuss controversial issues in their classes, 2) perceive that several sides of issues are presented and 3) feel comfortable in expressing their views ‘they are more likely to develop attitudes that have the potential to foster later civic participation’ (p. 233). Kudrnáč (2022) points out that the teacher’s role is vital as it is ‘the teacher that decides if and how often discussions take place that he or she consequently moderates...sets up the topic ... [and determines] how much time these discussions take from school hour’ (p. 224).

## ***Social Cognition Theory, Deliberative Discussion and Deliberative Democracy***

The three preceding sections suggest that 1) attempting to assess socio-political attitudes through direct questioning is counterproductive (Bourdieu, 1973), 2) techniques of deliberative discussion may provide a more useful methodology (Bohnsack, 2000, Gugglberger, Adamowitsch, Teutsch, Felder-Puig, & Dür 2015,) and 3) many young people do have a genuine interest in the political in their lives (Hahn, 1998; Pickard, 2019; Quintelier, 2007). Deliberative discussion has sometimes been linked (e.g., by Kudrnáč, 2022) to Habermas's theorisation of deliberative democracy (1996). Habermas argued that democracy requires people to organize and decide on common rules, which necessitates political argument and justification – essentially communicative discussions in which it is presumed that anyone can participate, introduce and challenge claims and that all who choose to participate are equal. Legitimate laws thus have ‘the assent of all citizens in a discursive process of legislation’ (Habermas, 1996, p. 110) and are the outcome of a sufficiently inclusive deliberative process of opinion and debate – the aggregate reasonableness of a ‘subjectless communication’ (Habermas, 1996, pp. 184–86) that comes from formal and informal discussion.

Developmental intergroup theory of social stereotyping and prejudice among young people (Bigler & Liben, 2006, 2007) suggests that many educational practices allow young people to adopt adult labelling of minoritised groups and prejudices. Kudrnáč (2022) proposes that classroom discussion can have a very positive effect on young people's views of immigrants and reduce anti-immigrant attitudes. In a study of 16–20-year-olds in Czech schools in 2016–17 he suggests that ‘classroom discussion fits the deliberative model even better than workplace discussion because the teacher has a moderating role’ (p 222). He posits such moderated deliberative discussion aims ‘to share diversity of opinion and attempt to reach consensus’ (ibid).

But deliberative discussion is not the same as deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy – in educational institutions, as much as in the public political sphere – is constructed to arrive at consensus and agreed solution. Moderation by a chairperson or a coordinator is part of this process. Deliberative discussion does not seek an agreed position, rather it is a construct to allow the exchange of views; to justify, defend and modify views and to acquire not simply the skills to do this but also the understanding that interpretations and assessments of principles and values can be context-specific and are malleable and subject to challenge. Debate requires a definitive conclusion, a result, or a decision (Mutz, 2006).

## **Structuring and Understanding Deliberative Discussions**

The original study that collected the data re-analysed here was conducted by Ross (2015, 2019) from 2010 to 2016. It consisted of 324 hour-long deliberative discussions with small groups of young people (average size 6; aged between 10 and 20), in 29 European states.<sup>i</sup> The first phase of discussions was in countries that joined the EU after 2004 or were candidate countries. The second group comprised longer-standing members of the EU or the European Free Trade Association EFTA. All sessions were conducted by Ross, with the support of a local social scientist, in 104 different locations of varying sizes, involving 1,998 young people. Many discussions were in English, or partly in English, with the local social scientist interpreting when this was necessary. All were recorded and transcribed. The objective was to analyse how young people constructed socio-political identities, around the locality, the country and Europe, using very loosely focussed discussions that were *between* the young people, rather than *with*

the researcher, using open-ended questions to stimulate discussion of how they identified (or not) with different societies and polities, using their own vocabulary and terms. A limited amount of demographic data was collected (birthplace, age, gender, nationality, languages spoken, parental occupations), which was used to broadly establish the representative nature of the sample.

These discussions were not focus groups, and the researcher's questions varied according to the kinds of remarks made by group members, following their interests, and as far as possible using the terms they employed (e.g., terms such as 'nation' or 'state' were used only when they had first been mentioned by a group member). After an 'ice-breaker' (usually asking each participant to describe themselves), issues of shared identity characteristics were discussed; at the point that, for example after several of them had described themselves as being 'French', or 'French and Moroccan', the question would be put 'what does it mean to be French, or French and Moroccan?' The findings of this study have been reported in detail elsewhere (principally Ross, 2015, 2019).

The analysis was wholly qualitative and showed how this generation constructed themselves as different from their parents and grandparents – as post-Cold War, largely identifying positively with increasing ethnic diversity in Europe; and as having always been internet aware (digital natives). The data showed a wide variety of responses but also had similarities; most young people were comfortable with multiple terms of identity.

In late 2020, an Erasmus+ Jean Monet Network Programme, *Citizenship Education in the context of European Values* (CitEdEV) began a study of young people's values and how educational policies might support the learning of values. The intention had been to undertake some original studies of this, but Covid-19 and the consequent disruptions of educational provision made this problematic. It was decided to re-evaluate Ross's original data in a mixed methods analysis to examine how European Values had been referred to and employed in the discussions. Several members of the CitEdEV group had been collaborators in that study and were familiar with the work and its results<sup>ii</sup>. The detail of the data was very clearly time-located, but it was argued that this in itself a relevant finding and that *any* survey would have been outdated by the time of publication and have less direct relevancy. An important conclusion would be that similar discussions in *any* educational or other context would need to take note of and respond to the socio-political conditions at that time and that discussion of underlying values would inevitably be related to that time.

'European values' were defined as those outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights (Council of Europe, 1950, 2010), the Council of Europe's construction of values and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union (European Union, 2012). The European Court of Human Rights interprets the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms; it hears applications made by individuals, groups or states. The term 'European Values' is not intended to imply that these values are exclusive to Europe or necessarily of European origin (see Trilling, 2018, above). Other groups (and individual European states) may refer to these values as being 'their' values. There are many compilations of social and political values, from the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights onwards. Many countries have long histories of establishing citizenship rights. Europe has the distinction of the European Convention to which countries are signatories and from 1950, subject to the European Court of Human Rights that makes judgements on alleged contraventions of these rights, to which the contracting governments must respond. There is some evidence that the (EU) Charter of Rights is less well known by EU citizens than the

Council of Europe (CoE) European Convention on Human Rights (53%–68% in a 2020 survey [EUAFR 2020, p. 28]). Older people are more likely to feel their human rights are more important than younger people (58% of 54–65, 70% of 54–65) (p. 15) – a finding that will be returned to in the concluding section.

These values apply to citizens and inhabitants, both at the level of the individual state and at the European level. Examples young people give that indicate the reasons why they uphold particular values (or do not do so) may be based on events in their own country, in other European countries or from countries outside Europe. From the viewpoint of this project, a person who claims not to feel themselves European, but only German, for example nevertheless might hold some or all of these ‘European values’. We do not consider the extent to which they feel themselves European, but whether they hold these values. For this analysis, we categorised these values into three major groups, the first of which is particularly the focus of this analysis (Table 9.2).

**Table 9.2 European values, categorisation for this study**

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| <p><b>1 Core fundamental human values</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Respect for life;</li> <li>b Tolerance of diversity;</li> <li>c Respect for other cultures;</li> <li>d Safety of others;</li> <li>e Inclusion in society;</li> <li>f Prohibitions on capital and unusual punishment, and freedom from persecution (grouped together here, as there were relatively few mentions of these); and</li> <li>g Human rights in general (a small residual category for less specific mentions of human rights).</li> </ul> <p><b>2 Process values:</b> the mechanisms to achieve these fundamental values:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Freedoms (of thought, speech, dress, religion, sexual orientation, etc.);</li> <li>b Equalities (for particular groups – ethnic groups, genders, etc.); and</li> <li>c Solidarity (social support for social security, education, health care, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b>3 Structural values:</b> the structures and processes by which these values are upheld:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a Democracy; and</li> <li>b The rule of law.</li> </ul> |
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The corpus of data analysed was about 1.25 million words of transcript, in which there were many uses of these values, though generally expressed in different terms, commonly with contexts and examples that illustrated how the young people saw social and political processes being used (or not being used). A subgroup of the researchers built and tested a classification system (working independently and then collaboratively) with a common set of transcripts to agree on a coding system. This was structured around these values and noted down for each mention of a value, the nature of the freedoms, equalities, rights and referred to 1) the particular aspects of solidarity mentioned; 2) the particular examples used, and whether these referred to a particular time (e.g. recently or historic) or to a particular geopolitical area; 3) or whether a particular group was ‘othered’ to illustrate non-observance of a particular value (Ross, 2018) and 4) whether the value was regarded positively or not (a criticism of a value *not* being

observed was noted as the young person *positively* supporting that value). Table 9.3 gives some examples of this coding in use.

**Table 9.3 Examples of coding**

| Young person's remark   | Value            | Example   | Location | Timing    | Othering     | Supported |
|---|------------------|-----------|----------|-----------|--------------|-----------|
| <b>Tirza, F/14<sup>iii</sup>, Linz:</b> Many people complain about ... many people coming from other countries to Austria – my grandmother is complaining all the time – I love her but I can't understand it   | Diversity        | Ethnicity | State    | Current   | Older people | Positive  |
| <b>Orla, F/13, København:</b> I think the older generations are a little more racist, like my dad – he sometimes makes some bad jokes, and I actually think that they're not OK, but he finds them funny ...  | Cultural respect | Race      | Locality | Current   | Older people | Positive  |
| <b>Terkikki, F/17, Turku:</b> France passed the law that it's forbidden to wear the niqab? ... that goes against the European Union – if there's supposed to be freedom, so how can they pass that sort of law? It's a little hypocritical in doing that and at the same time insisting [applicant] countries have some level of human rights | Democracy        | General   | State    | Current   | None         | Positive  |
|   | Freedom          | Dress     | State    | This year | French state | Positive  |

One statement could exemplify several values; and an individual could be coded as making several observations on the same value with different examples, each of which would be coded.

The group held an extensive workshop on these coding processes. Each group member was allocated about 30 transcripts to analyse and enter on an Excel sheet; there were frequent discussions on points of detail as analysis proceeded. Several examples of each person's work were cross-moderated, and significant discrepancies were resolved through discussion and re-coding.

The demographic data collected in the initial study (which included much data about ethnic origins and parental/grandparent origins volunteered in the discussions) was also coded, using a variety of international classification systems that preserved participants anonymity.

A single Excel sheet was constructed, with 1,998 rows, one per individual, with a maximum of 174 data fields on the values and their attributes (allowing for the possibility of multiple statements about each value) and the demographic fields. Most of the data fields were blank (no individual made more than nine references to values; most made far fewer). The data was then imported to an SPSS file for analysis.

Through a recoding exercise, we were able to isolate each time an individual had mentioned migrants, refugees, Roma, ethnicity, race, racism or skin colour in relation to a specific value. We then produced a simple additive index of the total number of these mentions. The data was also coded to capture whether values were discussed in a negative, positive or neutral context. This gave us a measure of the number of occasions when issues related to refugees and migrants were discussed within the context of a specific value and whether this was framed in a positive, negative or neutral manner. We then used basic bivariate correlation to assess the extent to which these positive, negative and neutral value mentions of migrants and refugees vary according to the demographic background of our participants. We were particularly interested in whether gender, parental backgrounds and region have influenced young people's values and attitudes towards migrants but we have included other demographic characteristics as well in our analysis. It is important to note that our quantitative analysis deals with observances emerging from deliberative discussions, rather than standard survey responses. We are therefore only interested in analysing positive responses – it would be speculative to make assumptions about what a null response represents (those respondents who do not mention migrants or refugees), which rules out multivariate or factor analysis approaches. However, this limitation notwithstanding, our data still allows us to show important general differences and similarities in how young people connect values to discussions of migrants and refugees.

### **How Young People Respond to the Changes in Their Societies?**

There are a number of key features about both the nature of deliberative discussions (both as a qualitative research methodology and as a pedagogical approach) and on the views and values expressed by young people in the discussions about their perceptions of the nature of migrancy, refugees and racism. This section discusses firstly the broad features of these discussions, and particularly how the focus of discussion, and the examples and arguments put forward were generally very closely related to the current and immediate experiences and events that were occurring at the location and point of time of each particular discussion. It will be argued in the final concluding section that this is critical in how educational actors, at all levels, plan to organise discussions with young people. It is also suggested that a high degree of flexibility is necessary in curriculum planning and delivery, requiring opportunistic and responsive structures that can nevertheless maintain a coherent and comprehensive coverage of values, experiences and concerns about social justice and equality.

Secondly, this section examines three particular issues of salience to the focus of this volume; how young people generally raise and respond to issues surrounding diversity in the population and the changes that continue in the nature of their societies, particularly around migration, racism and refugees. These are three areas where many young people have both direct and vicarious experiences, which they appear to want to discuss and often express concerns at the lack of opportunities to discuss, particularly in educational settings.

#### ***Deliberative Discussions***

The data that was described in the methodological section above was collected through deliberative discussions, and in both the original (political identities) and the subsequent (European values) studies, it was observed that the issues frequently used to illustrate political positions or human rights values were drawn from the events of the previous months or days – and were very often in the form of protests against perceived injustices or the flouting of values. For example in a discussion in Seville about the Syrian migrant crisis, Julio (M/13) urged that

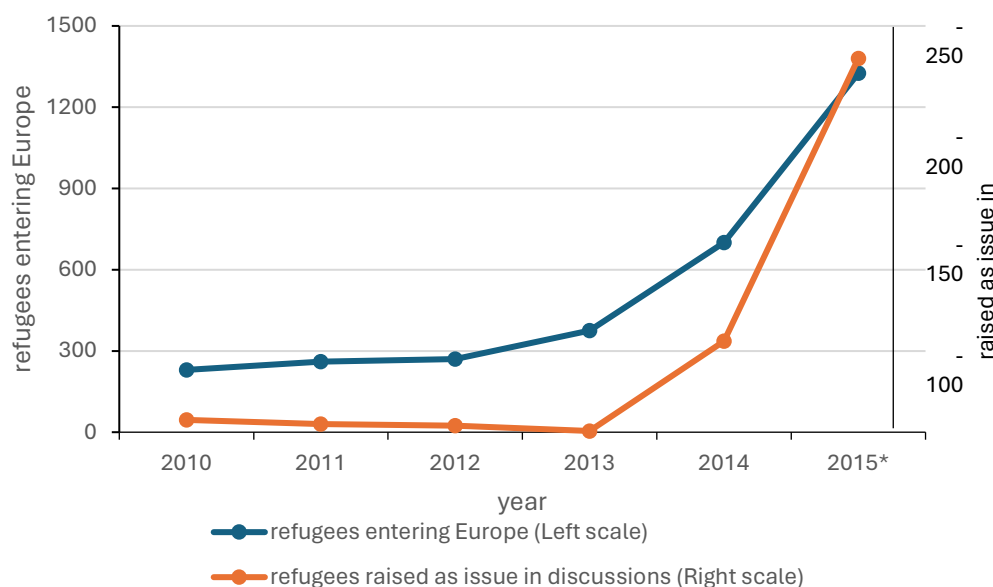
‘the European Union ... should help the immigrants *and* the people in the European community’. Several others agreed with him: Santi (M/13) said,

in all the countries some people want to help, and others don’t – I watched on TV this morning the Mayor of Calais, who entered a refugee camp and told the refugees to go to other cities, because he didn’t want the refugees in his city – I think that’s bad (29 September 2015).

Brooks (2009) and Quintelier (2007) noted young peoples’ discontent with local and national politicians.

This characteristic of contingency can be seen in the way that the refugee movements in 2015 came to dominate discussions from mid-2015. Our analysis of the occasions when refugees were brought into discussions (always unprompted) closely matches the numbers of migrants across the 2010–16 period, as shown in Figure 9.1.

**Figure 9.1 Refugees: mentioned in discussions; numbers entering Europe**



*Sources:* Pew Research Group analysis of Eurostat data 2016; analysis of dataset of discussion groups for this study

Similar effects were seen in terms of locality; many references were to particular local information, such as in Timișoara, Romania, where a group of 15- and 16-year-olds described their parents’ roles in the 1989 revolution in precise geographical detail. Local historical and cultural events were frequently used as significant reference points. Examples of this are how the Russian 2008 incursion in the Georgian South Ossetia region was cited in all the Baltic states (‘I really was afraid they might attack us’, said Jaan, M/13, in Tallinn), and references to intercommunal violence between the Albanian minority and Macedonians, 10 days before discussions, in North Macedonia.

But these discussions did not merely draw on recitations of acquired information; they were also dynamic, involving changing attitudes, refining values and arguments and drawing

contrasts with other groups of peoples and countries. At the beginning of each conversation, participants were told that they might well disagree about what other group members said and should express their own ideas if this happened. This probably led to many instances of statements beginning, ‘I disagree with [xxx] because ...’. For example, in the small Swiss town of Vevey (population 19,000), Isaac (M/14) spoke of the referenda to curb immigration ‘that’s not really cool, and I don’t like the

way these people think’. Julien (M/13, of Turkish Kurdish parentage, born in Lausanne) was one of several who joined in ‘I think racism has always been present in Switzerland ... it’s really a pity there are religious problems in Switzerland’. Isaac responded: ‘I don’t agree with Julien ... we don’t really have religious problems – we have Catholic, Protestant, Jews, and the Swiss people really “respect” these different religions’. Julien replied, ‘I don’t agree with Isaac ... for the Moslems in Switzerland it’s forbidden to build mosques, the call for prayer is forbidden ... and there are votes on not allowing Muslim women to wear the *burka*’. Isaac: ‘If they come to Switzerland they have to adapt to the Swiss rules – or bear the consequences’.

### ***Positive and Negative Comments on Ethnic Diversity and Racism***

There were many discussions about racism, and migrants and refugees, and these were very often framed around different values. Figure 9.2 sets out the numbers of instances that particular values were raised.

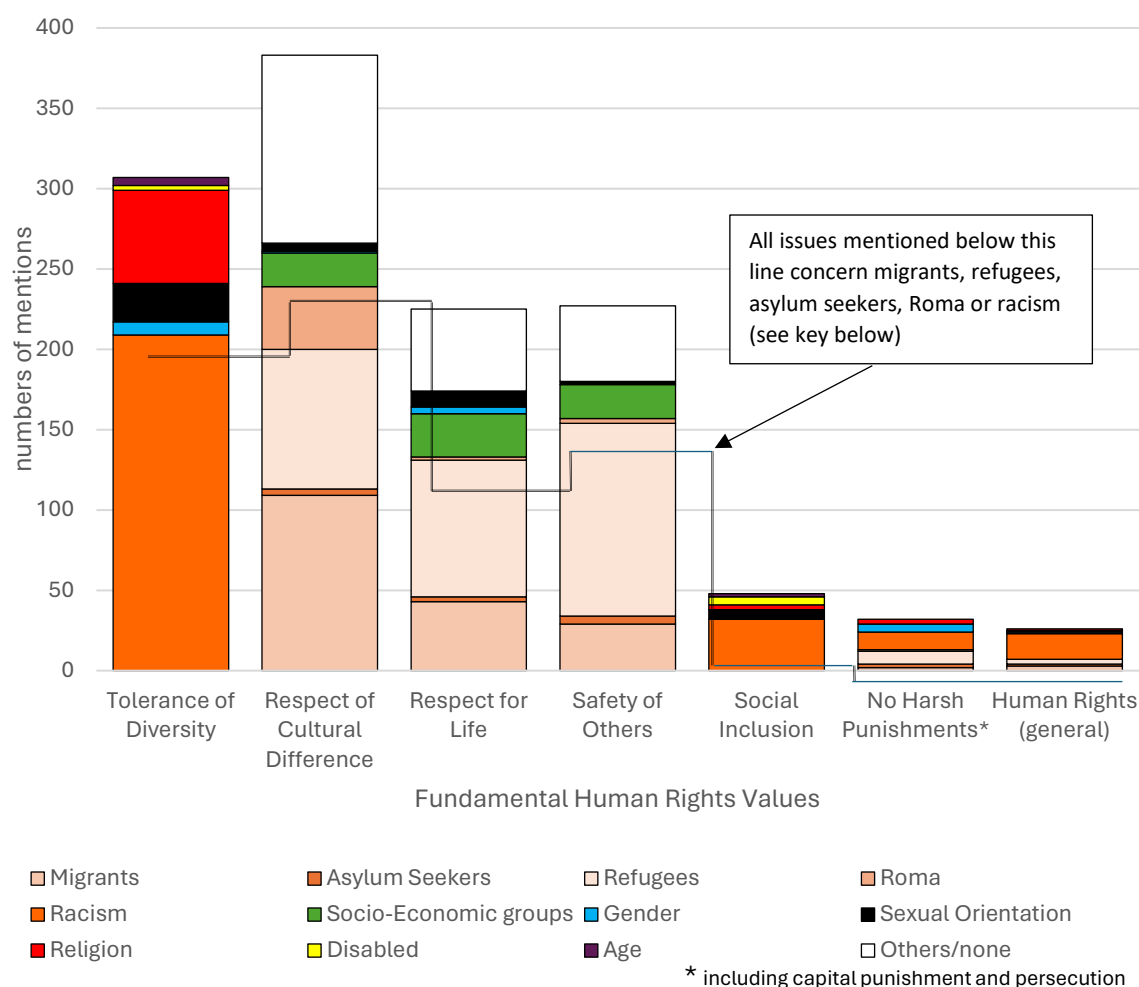
Figure 9.2 shows that two-thirds of all the specific issues raised about fundamental human values related to racism or to particular kinds of minorities (migrants, asylum seekers, refugees and Roma). Of these five groups, refugees were mentioned in 36% of the cases – probably because of the timing of some of the data collection, and 34% of the references were to racism in their societies. The numbers of the other issues raised are also of note – socio-economic distinctions and religious discrimination were almost equally common, followed by sexual orientation; gender, age and disabilities were relatively infrequently mentioned.

The data also shows that comments that used racism/ethnicity, refugees, asylum seekers, migrants and Roma as examples were principally made by young people in Western Europe, Southern Europe and the Nordic countries. Figure 9.4 shows this trend broken down by the major regional groupings used in this study.

Not all these mentions were necessarily positive. Respect for other cultures, for example was 81.0% positive, but there were 11.4% negative comments (the remainder being neutral or ambivalent).

Taking the four values mentioned most often (the first four vertical bars in Figure 9.2, specifically giving the five examples concerning racism, migrants, refugees, Roma and asylum seekers), the positive and negative nature of the references are shown in Figure 9.3, which shows numbers of responses. There we see that while 75% of comments about cultural respect were positive, 15% were ambivalent and 10% negative, whereas Tolerance for Diversity was slightly more positive at 79% (11% negative, 10% ambivalent). Figure 9.3 shows the distribution within each value, as a percentage of responses for that value.

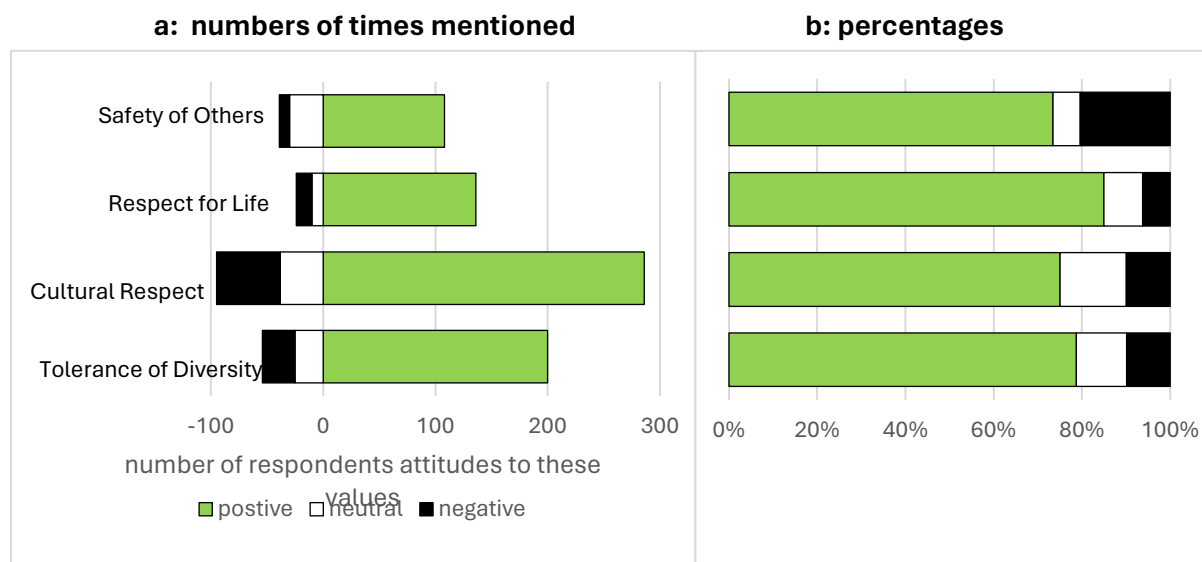
**Figure 9.2 Issues: relationship to values**



There are at least two factors to be considered in this respect. Firstly, many of the young people's discussions took place in the period between April 2015 and January 2016, the period of significant refugee movement (see Figure 9.1). This period is when all the discussions happened with the West European young people, 85% of those in Southern Europe, and 13% of those in the Nordic countries – and none in any other countries. Given the propensity of the discussions to focus on current issues, the lower salience of these issues in these countries at the time they were surveyed may be a contributory factor. Secondly, these regions are predominantly much more diverse than the central and eastern European countries.

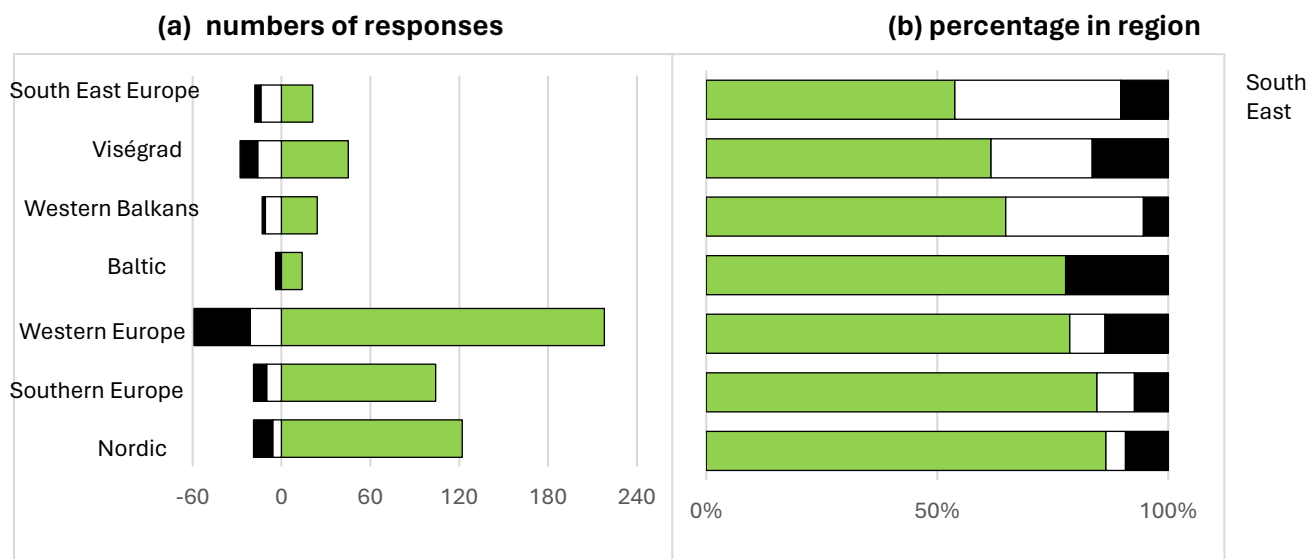
comments that were based on traditional stereotypes of the third world were particularly in evidence in some of the central/eastern European states (Baltic, South East, Western Balkans, Viségrad states) (see Fig 9.4). For example, in Olstyn, Iwonka (F/12) distinguished Europe from Africa by the climate: 'because of climate, people behave differently ... people in Africa undressed than people in Europe – as we live in Poland we therefore wear much more'. In Banská Bystrica (Slovakia), Iven (M/14) distinguished regions of the world by 'different eating habits – American have fast food, African have what they can find, Indians have bamboos and

**Figure 9.3 Attitudes to specific values, with respect towards refugees, racism, migrants, etc**



plant roots to eat, and Europeans have normal food'. In a different school in the same small town, Simka (F/17) generalised that 'Europeans are white' – if she met a black person in Europe, 'I'd say they were African'. Lenka (F/16), a group member, corrected her:

**Figure 9.4 Attitudes towards race/migrants, etc. by region of Europe**



Europe: Bulgaria, Romania;  
 Viségrad: Czechia, Hungary, Slovakia, Poland;  
 Western Balkans: Croatia, N Macedonia, Slovenia;  
 Baltic: Estonia, Latvia; Lithuania;  
 Western Europe: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland;  
 Southern Europe: Cyprus, Italy, Portugal, Spain;  
 Nordic: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden.

Some comments that were based on traditional stereotypes of the third world were particularly in evidence in some of the central/eastern European states (Baltic, South East, Western Balkans, Viségrad states). For example, in Olsztyn, Iwonka (F/12) distinguished Europe from Africa by the climate: ‘because of climate, people behave differently ... people in Africa usually are much more undressed than people in Europe – as we live in Poland we therefore wear much more’. In Banská Bystrica (Slovakia), Iven (M/14) distinguished regions of the world by ‘different eating habits – American have fast food, African have what they can find, Indians have bamboos and plant roots to eat, and Europeans have normal food’. In a different school in the same small town, Simka (F/17) generalised that ‘Europeans are white’ – if she met a black person in Europe, ‘I’d say they were African’. Lenka (F/16), a group member, corrected her:

but there are a lot of migrants nowadays – if you go to Paris, you’ll see a lot more migrants than Europeans. For example, the Roma people aren’t white like other Europeans – but they are European as well. [some laughter] But if I imagine a typical European – they are white, and they look like me.

Such stereotypes were not confined to Eastern Europe; in Enschede (the Netherlands), Aagje (F/16) distinguished Europe as ‘we’ve got freedom. When you look at Africa, really weird things happen there’.

There was also more outright racism; Isaac in Vevey, Switzerland (above), and in Torhout (Belgium, population 20,000), two young men argued that ‘Immigrants come to Belgium with a mindset “Belgium has to change for me,” and that’s not the way it goes’. They gave an example – ‘They want to build *their* church on *our* grounds ... we have a normal Christian church, and they want to build a mosque’. When the researcher pointed out that the Belgians had built churches in their colonies, one said, ‘Belgium occupied the colonies, and had the right to do what they want[ed] ... now they come to our country, but we are still above them, and we have a bit more to say than them’. Others in the group disagreed.

### ***The Community and Family Contexts and Attitudes Towards Diversity***

The size of the community appeared to be significant to some young people who had moved from smaller settlements to larger and more diverse communities. For example, in Haslev (Denmark, population 52,000), Troels (M/18) had arrived in his upper school two years earlier:

I grew up in the countryside, where we didn’t have any immigrants – I’ve never been really prejudiced against immigrants, I’d just never experienced it in the place I grew up – and then I came to the Gymnasium, and suddenly there are lots of them. At the start, I had some prejudices ... because of the way they looked, they matched the way I had seen the ‘immigrant criminal’ shown on the news ... but then, experiencing being with them as ordinary people like me - that gave a lot to me.

In a discussion in Lille, France, Pascaline (F/15) had a similar narrative:

before coming to this high school I used to live in the countryside, there was literally no person of colour in the whole school... they never saw people from the Maghreb or eastern Europe working and being part of society. Lack of communication and just being stuck in your prejudices is really what’s making it so wrong for France.

Blaise (M/15, a group member) added, ‘I was born and raised in the city, so in my school, when I was younger, it was the total opposite – it couldn’t be further than what Pascaline said. There was a minority of people who were not from immigration backgrounds. This concept of having been socialised in a diverse school community, and that their parents and grandparents had very different experiences, was frequently used to explain why young people felt that they had a much greater acceptance of other cultures.

These examples all illustrate Allport’s (1954) contact approach theory, which hypothesises that inter-group prejudice is reduced under optimal conditions ‘when four features of the contact situation are present: equal status between the groups in the situation; common goals; intergroup cooperation; and the support of authorities, law or custom’ (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2006, p. 752). However, contact theory may not always work directly. Our anecdotal evidence suggests that simply discussing these issues with others and recognising that one lives in a diverse society may be sufficient to increase reflection/tolerance/learning. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) undertook a meta-analysis of over 500 studies that showed the association between intergroup contact and reduced prejudice, such effects being generalised beyond the immediate situation towards attitudes toward all outgroups.

Examples drawn from the racism, migrants, refugee, etc. group were slightly more common in the larger settlements (over 100,000) at 38.2% than in smaller settlements (under 100,000) at 32.8% of the respective populations. However, we could find no evidence of different levels of positive and negative attitudes between these two groups.

Parental background also was related to the way these young people constructed diversity. There were a number of cases where negative views towards migrants, and particularly refugees, were expressed by young people who linked their own views to their parents’ and family member’s work in either the police or in the military. For example, in the small German town of Forst (population 21,000), on the Polish border, many of the young people spoke positively in early 2016 about the recent arrival of refugees, but Anatol (M/18) had mixed messages from his family:

my mum and my dad are working for the police – my father is in Leipzig, and he says that many people there look hungry for food – they really want to flee from their country. On the other hand, my mum says she sees refugees coming with iPhones and iPads, that [they] are actually people that probably don’t really need the help.

And in a school in a small town in Hérault in southern France, Mélanie (F/15) in September 2015 said, ‘we have got to be too much open... my uncle is a captain in the Police force in Paris during the Charlie Hebdo shooting ... we feel sorry for the migrants, but there’s also a lot of terrorists in there’.

Those young people whose family histories included migration and refugee experiences often used these to illustrate positive values. This included family migration within Europe, or within countries, to justify and explain why they now welcomed migrants from outside Europe. For example in Bologna, Beniamino (M/14) described how until the 1980s,

all the migrants from the south to the north of Italy were harshly, badly treated, and there were signs saying ‘We don’t rent houses to Southerners’ – they were called *Terroni* [‘of the land’, i.e., peasants]. My history and geography teacher comes from Apulia<sup>4</sup> – she showed us document [that] says that she has ‘emigrated from the south to the north’.

In the town of Ath in Belgium (Wallonia), several young people had a parent or a grandparent who had migrated from Italy in the 1950s. Leila (F/17) described how her Italian grandfather came to Belgium fifty years ago to work in the coalmines:

my grandma told me, ‘One time, I went to the shop, and right on the door “Italian people and dogs are not allowed”’– and it really shocked me ... Italian people came here not to steal the work of the Belgians, but to do the work that the Belgians didn’t want to do. ... when it’s not the Italians, it’s the Moroccans, and in fifty years it’s going to be against someone else. We have to find a way not to make them scapegoats.

Those with more direct and immediate experience of family migrancy sometimes became active in migrant support. For example, in Kolding (Denmark), Mirjeta (F/18, Danish-born of Kosovan-Albanian parents) described herself as not ‘wholly Danish ... I have Albanian family members and an Albanian culture’. She described how her parents had told her of being welcomed as asylum seekers in 1992:

they came to Denmark because they knew the war was coming ... they told me that they were given so much, and they welcomed all of them ... people helped them, they learned Danish in two years – they had taken schooling for free. [But] people are scared of the immigrants who come to Denmark now, because of what’s happening in Syria now. They push people away because they’re scared of other religions ... I know that not all refugees are like that – and when they came to Kolding, and we were down at the station waiting for them with food and so on, then you see another whole different view of the refugees ... I just wanted to give the refugees some peace, because people are becoming more afraid – the most terrorist attacks have been about Islam, and they are afraid of the religion, so that’s why they don’t want to do anything that can help people who believe in Islam. Also, the Muslims don’t like the Christians now, because they can’t ‘communicate’. I remember when I was little at birthdays [in the day centre] – we Muslims couldn’t eat pork – and so they gave us chicken – and it wasn’t a problem – But now it has become like ‘we shouldn’t provide chicken for the Muslim people’

[the day before this discussion, a local town had ordered that pork should be a mandatory item on school and day-care centre menus: a town councillor denied this was anti-Muslim, but necessary so remained ‘a central part of Denmark’s food culture’.(Olsen, 2016)]

Mjerta’s contribution here shows multiple aspects of her identity – as of Albanian ethnicity, Kosovan parentage, migrant descent and Danish birth – all of which contribute to the values she constructs around her response to the Syrian refugees arriving at her local station – and to a local newspaper report the day before. Hers is by no means an atypical work of construction: very few young people in the survey expressed a singular identity, and most were articulate about the contextual complexity of ‘who they were’, and able to describe how their value systems were constructed. Bauman wrote of ‘liquid modernity’: ‘self-construction of the self is, so to speak, a necessity. Self-confirmation of the self is an impossibility’ (Bauman, 2000, p 62).

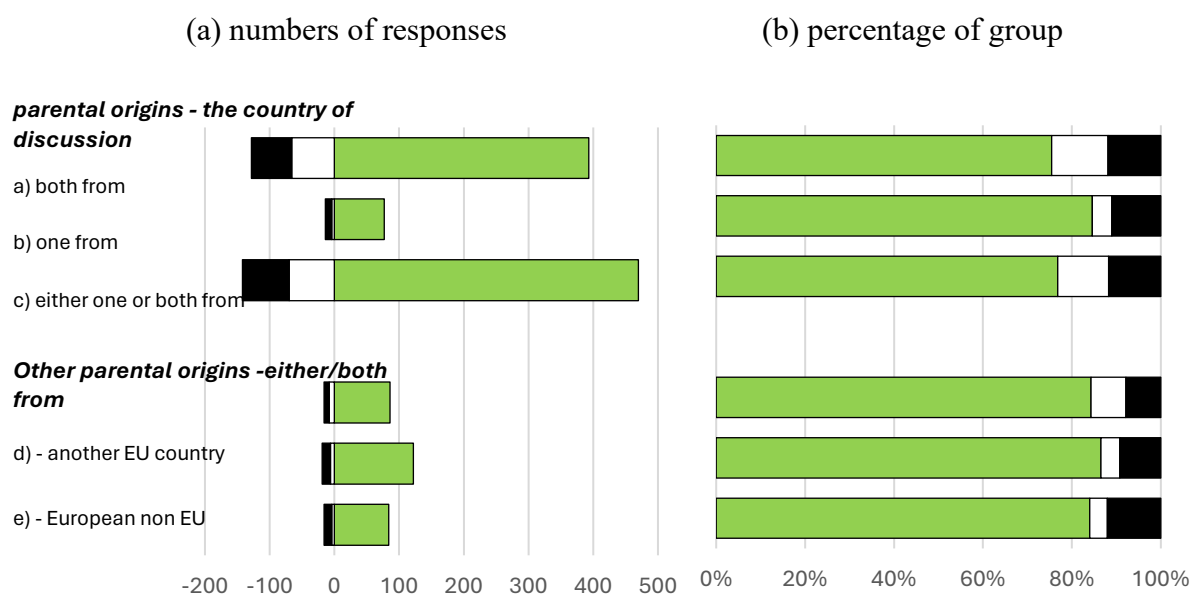
Few of the young people were migrants or refugees themselves (only 6.3% of the total sample were born outside the country in which the discussion took place). However, 23.3% were known to have whole or partial descent from other countries (a very similar proportion to Agafitei and Ivan’s (2016) estimate that a little more than a fifth of EU households included at least one immigrant). About 16% of the sample had origins from outside the EU states. Figure 9.5 depicts the attitudes of young people by their parental origins. The various categories considered here clearly overlap, necessarily because further subdivision leads to numbers too small to analyse.

The first three rows consider the combined attitudes towards race, migrants, refugees, asylum seekers and Roma by those young people who had both and one parent born in the country in which the discussion was held. These are compared to the second group of three, showing those with one or both parents born either in other EU states (second country migrants), in a non-EU state, or Africa, Asia, the Middle East or South America.

Having one or both parents from another country than the ‘local’ country where the discussion was held was associated with more positive remarks about migrants and race than where both parents were local to the country of the discussion. Perhaps unsurprisingly, coming from a diverse background led to greater acceptance of diversity and welcoming of other cultures (Figure 9.5).

The ways in which ‘othered’ groups were used to define or elaborate values was also a relatively common practice. For example, it was often the case that another sector of the population – older people, people living in other parts of the country (in rural areas, for the groups in cities, and sometimes vice versa,

**Figure 9.5 Attitudes towards race/migrants, etc. by parental origins**



or populations in other countries, or media representations) were referred to as racist. The following (shortened) extract from a discussion in a København school shows several of these points:

Nielsine (F/12): It's more the older generations who are racist – I think that it's because today we have much better communications ... we think more about racism today, because we've learned more about it.

Gervaise (F/14): I disagree – I don't think [they're] more racist than us, it's just they show it more than us. We might think this person did this because he's black – but I think the older people just say it – they're more open about it.

Researcher: Why don't young people say it out loud?

Gervaise: It's because we're changing, and trying not to be so racist – we're changing our opinions, but with our parents and the older generation still doing it, we're sometime pushed to think that way.

Contrasts were made by othering (some) older people, and offering explanations for why racist behaviour persists. Gervaise also makes an important observation that older people 'just show [racism] more than us ... we're trying not to be so racist'. The incidence of such self-censorship is impossible to measure accurately in any investigation.

### ***How can Educational Actors Organise Discussions with Young People on Inclusive Policies and Practices?***

This analysis has shown that young European people between 11 and 20 expressed a wide range of attitudes and views about racism, diversity and people of migrant origin. The majority expressed positive views of inclusion towards migrants and refugees, and comments were more frequently spontaneously made when migrants were the subject of popular and media attention. Largely positive references were made to values of diversity, respect for other cultures and the general inclusion and safety of all in society. Many young people sought to distance themselves from what they saw as the more prejudicial (even racist) views of their parents and grandparents. They tended to attribute this to having been schooled as part of a diverse group, which they frequently argued was different from the experiences of earlier generations. This seemed a very different perception than that noted in the EUAFR study (2020) cited above, which suggested that older people were more tolerant than younger people, which may be attributed to our use of deliberative discussions, and as such, different data collection methods.

Work by Kudrnáč (2022), discussed above, was based on questionnaires to young people that asked four questions about attitudes towards immigrants, and a questionnaire to their class civics teachers asking for details of classroom discussions on this topic over the previous year, their frequency, and average length of time. The findings assume that the teachers played a moderating role and do not distinguish between the various possible kinds of discussion (deliberative, debate, etc.), nor the quality of the participation but are nevertheless supportive of our general conclusions. As noted earlier, we suggest it is not necessary to reach a consensus; but our findings certainly concur in suggesting that 'as adolescents discuss politics in class more often and longer time, they may learn more new information and opinions and consequently become less negative toward immigrants' (Kudrnáč, 2022, p. 229).

Also of note were comments about how difficult many (but not all) groups found it to discuss such issues with school staff. In a (very) few schools, they said they discussed the news every day with their class teacher. Much more frequent were references to 'teachers who ... don't allow arguments or opinions that aren't usual', and most said they rarely or never talked about political issues with their teachers. Some commented on this lack; one in Kraków said – with passion – 'if we are to learn here in school, then we should talk about this! I miss it, I miss the opportunity'; another in Segovia said there was no discussion and 'I think we have to change that!' An 11-year-old in a small Czech town said, 'I think in future it will be the most important subject ... These topics are important for life'. (see Ross, 2020). As noted earlier, many teachers avoid controversial issues in the classroom.

The data reviewed here was gathered in a particular manner, deliberative discussion, characterised by very open questions and an encouragement to express and explain differences in views and to modify and develop positions as the context shifted. These were not debates

and should not be confused with deliberative democracy (Backer, 2017; Jerome & Algarra, 2005; Samuelsson, 2016). The stress was on deliberation, rather than coming to either a debating ‘victory’ or a concluding consensus. The methodological research approach described here uncovers both breadth of understanding and a focus on issues of social justice and equality, particularly in the data analysed with reference to racism in society, and the treatment of refugees and migrants. It shows the immediacy and news-led focus of the subjects of discussion while also demonstrating that in many cases, young people can analyse their own and their family’s experiences or will listen to and appreciate the experiences of members of their discussion group and friends who have experiences of racism and discrimination and that many young people – clearly a substantial majority – empathise with them. It was also clear that they do not arrive at a consensus on these issues, and indeed, not being expected to agree or reach a decision can be both liberating and promote the idea that values are not easy to agree on and need to be seen as continuously in need of development and refinement and that open discussion is a necessary part of this.

It is acknowledged that the data we have analysed is specific to the particular periods in which it is collected. Our argument here is that this in itself provides guidance to educators that will be valid at any time or period; it is essential in such open-ended discussions to expect to necessarily focus on contemporary events, if one wishes to utilise the experiences of the young people involved, whether these are direct experiences, or those experienced vicariously through contemporary media. Educators therefore need to be extremely elastic in planning a curriculum that allows itself to be highly responsive to current events. In the case of migrancy or racism, there will probably be relatively frequent opportunities to discuss relevant values within the context of contemporary events; other values (e.g., concerning the Rule of Law) may for much of the time be less evident in current events, and educators may need to use more direct strategies to develop discussions around such values.

It would therefore seem to be a possible pedagogic approach that might be systematically employed in our educational systems. Kudrnáč (2022) examines the significance of the classroom political discussion as a means of moderating anti-immigrant attitudes. He argues that through participating in these classroom political discussions, they can potentially learn new information that can in turn challenge negative information about outgroups. Additionally, participating in these discussions can lead to their cognitive skills improving which can help them circumvent information-processing biases and potentially enhance understanding. This would require political will and leadership by educational authorities, from national to school level, and a willingness to allow the discussion of issues, often seen as controversial by young people, to be organised in a distinctive non-didactic manner. Teachers and other educational professionals would need support – some would require training – to focus on encouraging free expression, on not intervening or ‘teaching’ what are seen as ‘the facts’ and on encouraging young people in listening to each other and challenging each other with a degree of respect and understanding. These are not always easy skills to acquire, demanding great flexibility and constant decision-making.

Helping young people develop further the skills of expressing ideas that challenge others, defending their views, listening to others and modifying their opinions will support them in understanding how to participate – and the importance of the rights that they have to participate. Educators – and others – should provide more opportunities to engage in the cut and thrust of discussion – a healthy part of a democratic society that respects others. Such an approach has emotional and social demands on the members of the group (and of the educator). It allows for differences in experience to be shared and understood, including the experience that some of

their group members may have experienced discrimination and racism. It promotes the significance of lived experience (direct, and of families) and acknowledge this in a forum that is much wider than their own immediate community. Marginalised groups learn to participate in the wider community; the wider community learns to understand and empathise with the marginalised position. It can be argued that young people have a particular facility with understanding the notion of what is fair, and what is unfair. As Charles Dickens put it in describing the feelings of Pip, his young protagonist in *Great Expectations*, ‘in the little world in which children have their existence whosoever brings them up, there is nothing so finely perceived, and so finely felt, as injustice’.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> Phase 1 (2010–13): Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus (north and south), Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Macedonia, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Turkey; Phase 2 (2014–16): Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.
- <sup>2</sup> Members of the group who have contributed to the analysis on which this chapter is based are Andreas Brunold (DE), Zoja Chehlova (LT), Sandra Chistolini (IT), Leanete Thomas Dotta (PT), Michaela Dvořáková (CZ), Thiago Freires (PT), Nanny Hartsmar (SE), Inese Jurgena (LT), Kristi Kõiv (EE), Bodil Lillefors-Persson (SE), Tom Loughran (UK), Juliana Crespo Lopes (CZ), Marina Marčenoka (LT), Nilüfer Pembecioğlu (TR), Fátima Periera (PT), Alistair Ross (UK), and Julia Spinthourakis (GR).
- <sup>3</sup> All names are anonymised. Gender (F/M) is as used by the individual at the date of the discussion.
- <sup>4</sup> Region in south include Bari. The Italian name is Puglia, Apulia is the Latin term to indicate this land.

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