The More the Merrier? The Effects of Type of Cultural Diversity on Exclusionary Immigration Attitudes in Switzerland

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We investigate how different types of cultural diversity influence anti-immigration attitudes across Swiss municipalities. While from a threat theory perspective, a high number of immigrants within a region increases (perceived) threat which fosters negative immigration attitudes, intergroup contact theory contends that culturally diverse societal contexts increase opportunities for contacts with immigrants, which give rise to more positive immigration attitudes. Prior research on ethnic hierarchies and host society acculturation attitudes led us to hypothesize that the presence of valued, "culturally similar" immigrants from wealthier countries increases contact and decreases threat, thereby reducing anti-immigrant prejudice. The presence of devalued, "culturally distant" immigrants from poorer countries should increase threat perceptions and dissuade contact thus heightening prejudice. A multilevel study was conducted using the 2002 European Social Survey (*N* = 1472 Swiss citizens, *N* = 185 municipalities). Replicating previous research, contact reduced exclusionary immigration attitudes through reduced threat. On the municipality level, higher proportion of North and West European immigrants increased contact, thus reducing threat. A larger proportion of Muslims was related to an increase in threat, leading to more pronounced exclusionary attitudes, but also to increased contact. Finally, we discuss how the impact of diversity depends on the social construction of immigrant categories, respondents' social position and ideological stances, and the prevailing local ideological climate.

1. Introduction

Switzerland is a multicultural society defined by linguistic diversity (four official languages: German, French, Italian and Romansh) and by a large population of foreign residents (over 20 percent, the highest in Europe after Luxemburg). As in many other European countries, immigration and cultural diversity are highly politicized and frequently under the media spotlight. A recent study shows that many Swiss citizens regard immigration as one of the country's most pressing problems (Nicolet and Sciarini 2006). The rise of right-wing populist parties, especially the Swiss People's Party (SVP), also reveals widespread anti-foreigner sentiment (Kriesi et al. 2005). For example, the SVP ran a widely publicized campaign for an initiative to expel immigrants who commit certain crimes or abuse

the welfare system, regardless of their residency status (www.ausschaffungsinitiative.ch). Despite heavy public criticism from national and international organizations and the media, the campaign quickly collected more than 200,000 signatures and will be voted on by the Swiss public.

While links between cultural diversity in a region and prevailing immigration attitudes are widely reported, less is known about how the *type of cultural diversity* people are confronted with affects their attitudes. We draw on two well-established theoretical frameworks in the social psychology of prejudice – threat theory and intergroup contact theory – to investigate how different types of cultural diversity influence endorsement of expulsion of norm-violating immigrants across Swiss municipalities.

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1.1. Intergroup Contact, Threat, and Exclusionary Immigration Attitudes

Threat theory and intergroup contact theory both provide convincing – though competing – frameworks and empirical evidence concerning the effect of cultural diversity on anti-immigration attitudes. Both allow us to predict the impact of individual and municipal characteristics on support for expelling norm-violating immigrants from Switzerland. Intergroup threat and conflict theorists (Blalock 1967; Blumer 1958; Riek, Mania, and Gaertner 2006; Stephan and Renfro 2003) demonstrate that perceived threat at the individual level underlies hostile attitudes towards immigrants.[1] In Switzerland, as in other countries, immigrants evoke both material and symbolic threat perceptions (e.g., risk of losing economic resources, cultural and value differences of immigrants; Falomir et al. 2004). Intergroup contact theorists (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006), in contrast, show that opportunities for and frequency of contact with immigrants (e.g., friendships) lead to more tolerant attitudes through a reduction of perceived threat.

A rapidly expanding body of research from a range of social science disciplines has expanded the threat and contact approaches to examine whether immigration attitudes are influenced by contextual characteristics, usually investigating the effects of country-level characteristics (e.g., Green 2009; Quillian 1995; Sides and Citrin 2007) and more rarely of regional characteristics within a country (e.g., in Sweden, Hjerm 2009; in Germany, Wagner et al. 2006). The degree of cultural diversity in terms of percentage of immigrants is one of the most studied contextual characteristics.

From the intergroup conflict and threat perspective, a high proportion of immigrants increases perceived threat, which fosters negative attitudes towards immigration (e.g., Blalock 1967; Scheepers, Gisberts, and Coenders 2002; for the changing effect over time see Meuleman, Davidov, and Billiet 2009). A high proportion of immigrants may be seen as detrimental to the economic conditions and welfare of established residents (Quillian 1995), but also as diluting local culture and values and challenging existing social

arrangements. Threat perceptions are likely to be enhanced where media reports target specific immigrant groups and highlight or even exaggerate the negative consequences of their presence using anti-foreigner rhetoric. If politicized and confounded with other societal problems such as crime, the presence of immigrants in one region of a country may foster threat perceptions in other parts with little or no immigrant population.

Intergroup contact theory, on the other hand, contends that culturally diverse societal contexts increase opportunities for and frequency of contacts with immigrants, giving rise to more positive attitudes towards them (Schlüter and Wagner 2008; Wagner et al. 2006). It is suggested that intergroup contact effects leading to a reduction in prejudice occur when individuals are exposed to immigrants at a proximal level (e.g., municipality) where immigrants and members of the national majority can truly interact in their daily activities (Wagner et al. 2006; Schmid et al. 2008).

In the current research, the type of cultural diversity within a region is put forward to clarify mixed findings concerning the effects of immigrant presence.

1.2. Distinguishing Between Different Immigrant Groups

The proportion of immigrants in a country or region is frequently used as a measure of cultural diversity without differentiating between different groups. But some immigrant groups are viewed more positively than others and enjoy a better reputation. In other words, in everyday thinking ethnic and immigrant groups are ranked as more or less attractive social partners and within society there is substantial consensus on this "ethnic hierarchy" (Hagendoorn 1995; see Deschamps et al. 2005 for an examination of traits associated with different immigrant groups in Switzerland). "Culturally distant" immigrant groups, whose members may wear visible signs of cultural or religious affiliation such as headscarves or other attire (and are sometimes also "visible" in terms of skin colour or ethnic features differing from national majority), usually rank low on the ethnic hierarchy.

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1 Though various threat theories (e.g., group position, group threat and integrated threat theories) differ in underlying assumptions and their focus on real or perceived threat, they share the view that competing interests between groups generate conflict.

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These groups engender different reactions (threat perceptions and reduced desire for contact) than "culturally similar" immigrants who rank high on the ethnic hierarchy (see also Osbeck, Moghaddam, and Perreault 1997). We should, however, note that similarity can sometimes evoke threat: for example, where immigrants have the same vocational or professional qualifications as host society members, competition on the job market increases (Thomsen, Green, and Sidanius 2008; Zárate et al. 2004). Nevertheless, European survey research shows that highly qualified citizens express more positive attitudes toward high-status immigrants than less educated and less skilled citizens (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007), indicating that other factors apart from job market competition influence attitude construction.

Acculturation research has demonstrated that the national origin of the immigrant group affects the acculturation attitudes held by dominant host society members (Montreuil and Bourhis 2001). For instance, integration (simultaneous adoption of host culture and maintenance of cultural heritage) may be preferred for "valued" immigrants whose language and culture are similar to the host society, while assimilation (adoption of host culture and eradication of cultural heritage) and segregation (maintenance of cultural heritage, but separate from host population) are preferred for "devalued" immigrant outgroups whose culture and religion are felt to differ considerably. Similarity and value often also coincide with social status. Thus, "culturally distant" and "devalued" immigrants often have low social status and come from poorer countries, whereas "culturally similar" and "valued" immigrants come from wealthier countries. Findings from the ethnic hierarchy and acculturation research traditions suggest that immigration attitudes may also vary as a function of the type of immigrants people are exposed to.

Evidence from survey research supports this contention. For example, Schneider (2008) found that across European countries the proportion of non-Western immigrants increased ethnic threat perceptions whereas the proportion of poorly educated immigrants was unrelated to threat perceptions. Similarly, in a study across European countries, Hjerm and Schnabel (forthcoming) find that the proportion of Muslims in a country is positively related to xenophobia

(although Strabac and Listhaug [2008] find no link between the proportion of Muslims in a country and anti-Muslim prejudice). Quillian (1995) finds that the proportion of immigrants from non-EC countries increases racial prejudice, with a stronger effect under poor economic conditions. This means that the presence of devalued, "culturally different" immigrants in a region would not increase positive contacts, such as friendships (despite the opportunities), but instead increase threat perceptions and heighten anti-immigrant prejudice (see also Brewer 1996). Apart from the proportion of immigrants in general, research to date has mainly examined the impact of presence of devalued, culturally distant immigrants. The arguments outlined above suggest that the presence of valued, "culturally similar" immigrants should increase contact and decrease threat, thereby reducing anti-immigrant attitudes.

1.3. Studying Support for Expulsion in Switzerland

Differentiating between immigrant groups provides a finer-grained analysis of the impact of diversity on attitudes and may allow us to bridge the contrasting predictions of the threat and intergroup contact approaches. Muslims have become the targets of increased suspicion and prejudice (Ozyürek 2005; Strabac and Listhaug 2008; see Schneuwly Purdie, Gianni, and Jenny 2009 for an overview of the situation of Muslims in Switzerland) and are frequently depicted as a threat in terms of political violence and gender inequality (Richardson 2004). As a case in point, the November 2009 referendum against the construction of minarets received an astonishing level of support, 57.5 percent of votes cast. Danaci's analysis of the Swiss data from the World Value survey (2009) shows that Muslims were regarded as the least welcome potential neighbours (see also Helbling 2010).

The 2000 census shows 4.3 percent of the Swiss population to be Muslims, most of whom (88 percent) do not hold a Swiss passport. For political and economic reasons, the number of Muslims in Switzerland increased from some 16,000 in 1970 to over 310,000 in 2000. (CFR 2006). The majority originate from former Yugoslavia, Albania, and Turkey. While some came for work, others fled wars, human rights violations, and dictatorships (CFR 2006). Despite the small number and diverse backgrounds of

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Muslims in Switzerland, they are a salient group due to high – mainly negative – media interest and political debate, and recently also due to efforts by the "Muslim community" to form cross-cultural and linguistic organizational structures representing common interests (e.g., www.religionensch-weiz.ch/islam.html). Muslims are devalued and regarded as a culturally different group at the bottom of the ethnic hierarchy (Stolz 2006; Wimmer 2004). It is important to note that Muslim immigrants in Europe often remain in low-status positions in society, suggesting that majority populations' perceptions of "cultural distance" are connected with institutional discrimination (Ozyürek 2005). In Switzerland, certain asylum-seekers from former Yugoslavia have lived for years with only temporary residence permits, which hampers integration in the labour market. Immigrants from Turkey, former Yugoslavia, and Albania have higher unemployment rates (overall 11.9 percent) than the Swiss (2.0 percent; statistics for 2003, www.admin.ch/bfs), and even among second-generation immigrants the majority have no qualifications beyond compulsory schooling (Piguet 2004).

Increasing demand for highly skilled workers in Switzerland has changed the pattern of immigration. Over the last decade highly skilled workers have arrived from neighbouring countries (Pecoraro 2004), with the German population doubling and the French population increasing by one third (www.admin.ch/bfs). Immigrants from northern and western Europe – Germany (7.75 percent of the overall immigrant population), France (4.25 percent), Austria (2.01 percent), the Benelux countries and Liechtenstein (1.69 percent), the UK and Ireland (1.66 percent), and Scandinavian countries (0.89 percent) – have unemployment rates closer to the local population (5.3 percent vs. 2 percent). Sharing traditions, religion, and often language with the majority population puts them at the top of the ethnic hierarchy where they are likely to be regarded as culturally more close and valued immigrants.

Finally, Swiss immigration policy explicitly adopts a geographical classification of potential immigrants that reflects the distinction between culturally similar and different groups. While citizens of the European Union and other countries deemed culturally close to Switzerland are priori-tized, immigrants from the "rest of the world" are less likely to be granted permits (Piguet 2004). Bilateral agreements with the European Union grant immigrants from EU countries largely the same rights – apart from political participation – as the Swiss have, although immigrants from new EU member states are only gradually gaining access to these rights. The strictness of immigration policy is also reflected in restrictive naturalization. A proposal to simplify the naturalization of young immigrants educated in Switzerland and to automatically naturalize their offspring was rejected for the third time in a referendum in 2004.

We use a multilevel design with the Swiss sample of the European Social Survey (ESS 2002, Round 1 Data) to investigate how the proportion of immigrants from northern and western Europe and the proportion of Muslims in Swiss municipalities affect perceived threat associated with immigrants, friendships with immigrants, and exclusionary immigration attitudes. We use support for expulsion of immigrants who violate social norms of orderly conduct and hard work (i.e., immigrants with a criminal record or unemployed) as the indicator of anti-immigration attitudes because this topic has recently been the subject of political debate in Switzerland. Examining municipality effects is particularly pertinent in Switzerland, as in a decentralised federal state (with over two thousand municipalities and twenty-six cantons) political discussion and deliberation often take place at the local level (Horber-Papazian 2007). Municipalities have substantial power in the domain of immigration policy, for example in naturalization decisions.

The hypotheses of the current study are based on the outlined arguments:

Hypothesis 1: A high proportion of culturally similar, valued immigrants from western or northern European countries in a municipality increases intercultural friendships thereby reducing perceived threat associated with immigration and support for expulsion of norm-violating immigrants.

Hypothesis 2: A high ratio of stigmatized and supposedly culturally different Muslim immigrants in a municipality increases perceived threat and discourages intergroup

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friendships, leading directly or indirectly to more support for expulsion.

Hypothesis 3: The relationship between friendships with immigrants and opposition to expulsion of norm-violating immigrants is mediated by a reduction in perceived threat related to immigration.

The proportions of western/northern European and Muslim immigrants may also have joint effects. Cultural diversity in terms of the number of different cultural groups is particularly high in municipalities with high proportions of both western/northern European and Muslim immigrants. It is plausible that in such a multicultural context individuals will frequently encounter people from many different countries and cultural difference therefore becomes commonplace and accepted. This should enhance intergroup friendships due to the increased opportunities and desire to meet people with different immigrant origins – including Muslim immigrants – and consequently reduce perceived threat and support for expulsion.

2. Method
2.1. Participants
The initial sample consisted of 1,609 Swiss citizens who declared no ethnic minority membership. To ensure a stable sample size for model comparison, missing data was excluded by listwise deletion, reducing the sample to 1,472 individuals from 185 municipalities (on average eight individuals per municipality). The final sample consisted of 725 men and 747 women (mean age 47 years, $SD = 17$). The respondents had on average 10.52 years of full-time education ($SD = 3.09$), positioned themselves midway on the left-right political continuum ($0 = left$ 10 = $right; M = 4.97$, $SD = 1.84$) and reported an average annual net household income between 45,600 CHF and 90,000 CHF (income was assessed with 12 categories from 1 to 12; $M = 8.64$, $SD = 1.96$; the national average income was around 80,000 CHF in 2002; www.admin.ch/bfs). Missing values for political orientation (6.59 percent) and household income (20.70

percent) were imputed using multiple imputations (*uvis* command in Stata, see Royston 2004). These individual-level characteristics were included in the models testing our predictions.

2.2. Individual-Level Measures
Intergroup contact, perceived threat, and support for expulsion are the dependent variables used in this study. As the items making up these constructs were on different scales, they were linearly transformed to a 0 to 100 scale. *Intergroup contact* was assessed using a self-reported measure of friendships with foreigners (recoded from 1 = *none* to 3 = *several*). *Perceived threat* was composed of eight items ranging from material threats related to the economy (e.g., "Average wages and salaries are generally brought down by people coming to live and work here") to symbolic threats related to norms and customs (e.g. "Would you say that Switzerland's cultural life is generally undermined or enriched by people from other countries coming to live here"; $α = .76$). Material and symbolic threat were separated in preliminary analyses, but as the constructs were highly correlated ($φ = .82$, $p < .001$), a combined threat measure was used for the sake of parsimony. Finally, three items assessed *support for expelling immigrants* that violate social norms of orderly conduct and hard work (committing a serious crime, or committing any crime, or long-term unemployment) ($α = .65$). High scores represent higher perceived threat and stronger support for expelling immigrants.

As perceived threat is often considered a component of prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens 1995), **confirmatory factor analyses** were conducted to ensure that perceived threat and support for expulsion were indeed separate concepts (Scheepers et al. 2002). They revealed that a two-factor model distinguishing between expulsion attitudes and perceived threat yielded a better fit (CFI = .90, RMSEA = .07, SRMR = .05) than a **one-factor model combining both concepts** (CFI = .84, RMSEA = .09, SRMR = .06, $Δχ^2 (1) = 197.42$, $p < .001$), although the threat and expulsion constructs were related ($φ = .68$).[2]

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2 Allowing for the residuals of two items of the threat construct ("immigrants harm the economic prospects of the poor" and "im-

migrants bring wages down") to correlate further improved model fit, CFI = .93, RMSEA = .06, SRMR = .04, $Δχ^2 (1) = 119.41$, p < .001.

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2.3. Contextual-Level Measures

The percentage of Muslims and the percentage of immigrants from northern and western Europe in municipalities were employed as indicators of the two different types of cultural diversity. The average percentage of Muslims in a municipality was 3.94 percent (SD = 2.79; range 0 to 13.29 percent) and the average percentage of immigrants from northern and western Europe was 3.26 percent (SD = 2.26; range 0 to 14.52 percent; United Nations classification of geographical sub-regions, http://unstats.un.org). Both sets of data were obtained from the 2000 census data of the Swiss Federal Statistical Office (SFSO). Both measures were log transformed to correct for skewness. The proportion of Muslims and proportion of northern/western European immigrants were unrelated (r = -.08, p = .30).

Much like in other countries, exclusionary immigration attitudes in Switzerland are stronger in rural regions than in urban regions (Armingeon 2000; Trechsel 2007). As urban areas are typically more diverse and progressive, people more readily accept social diversity. Rural areas are less diverse and more traditional, so immigration is more likely to be perceived as a threat. The degree of urbanization of a municipality was thus controlled in the tested models. We constructed a variable based on SFSO coding (1 = *city centre*; 2 = *agglomeration*; 3 = *individual city*; 4 = *rural municipality*) where 1 to 3 were recoded as *urban*, which gave us 116 urban and 69 rural municipalities. Urban municipalities had a larger percentage of northern/western European immigrants (M = 3.83, SD = 2.26) and of Muslims (M = 4.42, SD = 2.55) than rural municipalities (M = 2.31, SD = 1.91 and M = 3.14, SD = 3.01 respectively), t(183)= -4.66, p < .001 and t(183)= -3.08, p = .002.

3. Results

Analyses were performed with Mplus 5.1 software in two steps. First, multilevel regression analyses were carried out, investigating the relationship between individual-level and municipality-level factors and each dependent variable separately (intergroup contact, perceived threat, support for expulsion of norm-violating immigrants). In a second step,

multilevel path analyses were conducted to examine the predicted indirect effects of individual- and municipality-level predictors through contact and threat. All predictors were standardized.

3.1. Multilevel Regression Analyses

The structure of the data is such that individual citizens are nested within municipalities (citizens are level-1 and municipalities are level-2 units in the analysis) and are thus not independent (Hox 2002). Multilevel modelling allows testing of the part of the variation in individual-level dependent variables explained by municipality-level effects (percentage of Muslims, percentage of immigrants from northern and western Europe, urbanization), and the part explained by individual-level effects. Table 1 shows the step-by-step improvement of goodness-of-fit statistics (i.e., model deviance provided by *-2 * log-likelihood*) when additional predictors were added to the model in blocks (separately for each dependent variable). For the three dependent variables, intercept models (i.e., without predictors; Model 0) were tested to estimate variance on both individual and contextual levels. Intra-class correlations revealed that a substantial part of the overall variance was due to the clustering structure (i.e., individuals living in municipalities): contact 8 percent, perceived threat 13 percent, and support for expulsion 13 percent. Table 1 shows that inclusion of individual-level background predictors in Model 1 decreased the log-likelihood (χ^2 distribution) for each dependent variable, indicating that the model fit was improved. In the next step, for support for expulsion and perceived threat, Model 2a revealed that adding intergroup contact to the model significantly improved the model fit. For contact and support for expulsion, the inclusion of perceived threat in Model 2b improved the model fit. Including both perceived threat and contact in Model 2c improved the model fit for support for expulsion. Model 3, adding contextual-level predictors to previous models, improved the model fit of each dependent variable. Finally, inclusion of the interaction between proportion of Muslims and proportion of immigrants from northern and western Europe in Model 4 improved the model fit for perceived threat only.

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Table 1: Change in model fit for multilevel models for contact, threat, and support for expulsion

	Contact		Perceived threat		Expulsion	
	-2*log likelihood	Δ-2*log likelihood	-2*log likelihood	Δ-2*log likelihood	-2*log likelihood	Δ-2*log likelihood
Model 0 (intercept only)	14720.94 (df = 0)		11740.70 (df = 0)		12873.64 (df = 0)	
Model 1 (individual background predictors)	14582.60 (df = 5)	138.34*** (Δdf = 5)	11585.62 (df = 5)	155.08*** (Δdf = 5)	12675.47 (df = 5)	198.17*** (Δdf = 5)
Model 2a (Model 1 + contact)	-	-	11509.59 (df = 6)	76.03*** (Δdf = 1)	12650.96 (df = 6)	24.51*** (Δdf = 1)
Model 2b (Model 1 + threat)	14504.15 (df = 6)	78.45*** (Δdf = 1)	-	-	12377.69 (df = 6)	297.78*** (Δdf = 1)
Model 2c[a] (Model 1 + contact + threat)	-	-	-	-	12375.48 (df = 7)	299.99*** (Δdf = 2)
Model 3 (individual + contextual predictors)	14476.48 (df = 9)	26.67*** (Δdf = 3)	11497.16 (df = 9)	12.43** (Δdf = 3)	12360.79 (df = 10)	14.69** (Δdf = 3)
Model 4 (individual + contextual predictors + interaction)	14475.38 (df = 10)	1.10 (Δdf = 1)	11491.24 (df = 10)	5.92* (Δdf = 1)	12360.42 (df = 11)	0.37 (Δdf = 1)

Note. [a] Comparison with Model 1.
* p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

The upper panel of Table 2 presents the Model 4 results for individual-level predictors of contact, perceived threat, and support for expulsion. Perceived threat was associated with lower levels of contact with immigrants (b = -8.26, p < .001 and b = -2.91, p < .001 with contact and perceived threat respectively as outcome variables), when controlled for individual-level background variables. Although the inclusion of contact in predicting expulsion attitudes significantly reduced deviance in Model 2a, the relationship between contact and support for expulsion was no longer significant in the final Model 4 (b = -0.50, p = .32). This suggests that the effect of contact is mediated by perceived threat (see 3.2). Support for expulsion, in turn, was related to higher perceived threat (b = 8.14, p < .001). In line with previous research, more education and left-wing political orientation were positively related with contact with immigrants and negatively related with perceived threat and support for expulsion. Further, men, younger people, and people with higher household income experienced more frequent contact with immigrants. Women and older people supported expulsion more than men and younger people. Individual-level predictors explained 12.1 percent of individual-

variance in contact, 12.5 percent in perceived threat, and 26.9 percent in support for expulsion.

The results of the municipality-level predictors included in Model 4 are examined next, in the lower panel of Table 2. The main effects found in Model 3 remained almost identical after including the interaction between proportion of Muslims and proportion of immigrants from northern and western Europe. After controlling for the degree of urbanization of municipalities, the proportion of northern/western European immigrants was positively related with contact with immigrants (b = 3.72, p = .001), but negatively related with perceived threat (b = -1.51, p = .001), and negatively related, though only marginally, with support for expulsion of immigrants (b = -1.05, p = .08). These findings are in line with hypothesis 1. A larger proportion of Muslims in municipalities was, in turn, related to an increase in perceived threat (b = .80, p = .04). However, the proportion of Muslims also was positively related with contact (b = 2.47, p = .02). Thus, hypothesis 2 was partially confirmed. Model 4 revealed an interaction between proportion of Muslims and proportion of immigrants from northern and western

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Europe only for perceived threat (b = -1.03, p = .005). Multi-level simple slope tests (Preacher, Curran, and Bauer 2006) showed that proportion of Muslims was related to higher perceived threat only in municipalities characterized by a low proportion of northern/western Europeans immigrants (b = 1.83, p < .001; municipalities with a large proportion of immigrants from northern and western Europe, b = -.02, p = .70). Although threat was not reduced as predicted, living in highly diverse, multicultural municipalities seems to attenuate threat perceptions associated with Muslim immigrants. Finally, support for expulsion was lower in urban than in rural municipalities (b = -3.00, p = .02). Municipality-level factors explained more variance for contact than for perceived threat or support for expulsion, suggesting that high a proportion of immigrants does actually increase opportunities for contact. Indeed, while the model explained 68.8 percent of contextual-level variance in contact, 54.7 percent in perceived threat, and 61.5 percent in expulsion attitudes, it is important to note that a substantial part of the differences between municipalities for all three dependent variables was driven by their different socio-demographic compositions.

Table 2: Individual- and contextual-level predictors of contact, threat and support for expulsion in Model 4 (non-standardized regression coefficients, standard errors in parentheses)

	Contact		Threat		Expulsion	
Intercept	52.93	(3.44)	49.24	(1.18)	62.93	(1.68)
Level 1 (individual)						
Contact			-2.91***	(0.37)	-0.50	(0.50)
Threat	-8.26***	(1.00)			8.14***	(0.53)
Sex (*male* = 0, *female* = 1)	-3.93*	(1.69)	-0.09	(0.67)	2.50**	(0.94)
Education	3.66***	(0.85)	-2.35***	(0.32)	-1.70***	(0.44)
Age	-4.95***	(0.86)	-0.50	(0.37)	0.92#	(0.50)
Right-wing political orientation	-1.96*	(0.89)	2.18***	(0.37)	2.88***	(0.51)
Income	1.78#	(0.97)	-0.57	(0.37)	-0.48	(0.50)
% of explained variance	12.1		12.5		26.9	
Level 2 (municipality)						
Proportion of northern/western Europeans	3.72***	(1.16)	-1.51***	(0.47)	-1.05#	(0.60)
Proportion of Muslims	2.47*	(1.06)	0.80*	(0.40)	-0.01	(0.63)
Urbanization	2.39	(2.46)	0.44	(0.93)	-3.00*	(1.26)
Proportion of Muslims x northern/western Europeans	-1.07	(1.03)	-1.03**	(0.36)	0.34	(0.56)
% of explained variance	68.8		54.7		61.5	
% of explained variance without individual predictors	19.3		11.8		7.8	

Note: # p < .10. * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

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3.2. Multilevel Path Analysis

Next, following the procedure for multilevel mediation analyses proposed by Preacher, Zyphur, and Zhang (2010), we examined whether contact and perceived threat mediated the effects of the proportion of Muslims and northern/western European immigrants on support for expulsion. While contact, perceived threat, and support for expulsion were measured on the individual level, a significant part of their variance is due to their clustering structure. Mplus allows the group averages of these variables to be treated as latent variables (Muthén and Muthén 1998–2007), thus enabling individual- and contextual-level effects to be examined simultaneously.

The multilevel path model is summarized in Figure 1. In order to simplify the presentation, only significant paths are displayed.[3] On the individual level, perceived threat increased support for expulsion, whereas contact lowered threat. The direct effect of contact on support for expulsion on the other hand did not reach significance. Examination of the indirect effects showed, in line with previous research and hypothesis 3, that the impact of contact on lowering support for expulsion was explained by a reduction of perceived threat (indirect effect = -0.04, SE = .01, p < .001). On the municipality level, the mediating effect of threat on the relationship between contact and expulsion attitudes was close to significance (indirect effect = -0.26, SE = .16, p = .11).

On the municipality level, we found no direct effects of percentages of immigrants from northern and western Europe or of Muslims on support for expulsion after controlling for contact and threat. However, different mediating mechanisms were revealed. The percentage of immigrants from northern and western Europe in a municipality increased contact with immigrants thereby reducing perceived threat (indirect effect = -1.32, SE = .62, p = .03). Further, the

proportion of Muslims increased perceived threat which marginally heightened support for expulsion (indirect effect = 1.32, SE = .71, p = .06). No other indirect paths reached significance, although proportion of Muslims also marginally increased contact.[4]

Figure 1: Multilevel path model for contact, threat, and support for expulsion
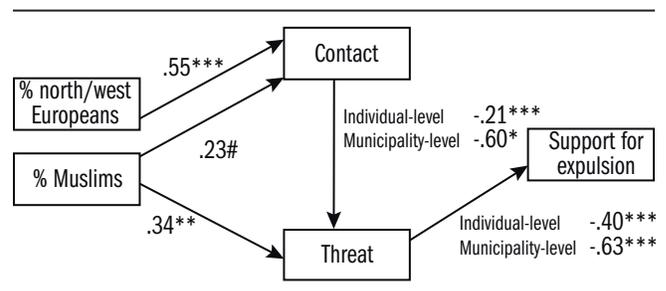
Note: Standardized path coefficients displayed. Controlled for age, sex, political orientation, education, and income on the individual level and urbanization on the municipality level.
p = .05. * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

3.3. Additional Analyses by Linguistic Region

As repeatedly reflected in referendum results on immigration-related topics, stances towards immigrants are stricter in the German- and Italian-speaking regions than in the French-speaking region (see also Armingeon 2000; Cattacin et al. 2006). The multilevel regression analyses were conducted separately for the participants from the German-speaking part (N = 1,107) and from the French-speaking part (N= 321) to improve the validity of our findings. The Italian-speaking part was excluded due to small sample size, N = 44 in 12 municipalities.[5] Although the patterns were similar, some relationships did not reach significance in the French-speaking sample (e.g., proportion of Muslims and perceived threat). This could be due to the small sample size.

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3 According to Preacher and Hayes (2008), in order to avoid spurious inflations of indirect effects, even small values of direct paths should be included in the model. Thus, a saturated model was tested. However, also a model including only significant paths fitted the data well; χ^2 (13) = 27.18, p = 0.01; χ^2/df = 2.09; CFI = .98; TLI = .96; RMSEA = .03 SRMR= .02.

4 As Muslims and their life style have been shown to mainly elicit symbolic threat (Velasco et al. 2008), the analyses were also conducted with a three-item symbolic threat construct. The result pattern was essentially the same.

5 Note that the distribution reflects the proportions of linguistic groups in the overall population: in 2000, 72.4 percent of the population had German, 21 percent French and 4.3 percent Italian as first language (less than 1 percent had Romansh, see SFSO, www.admin.ch/bfs).

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4. Discussion

We find that in Switzerland a higher proportion of northern/western European – valued – immigrants in a municipality increases contact and indirectly decreases threat, thereby leading to opposition to expulsion of norm-violating immigrants. A high proportion of Muslim – devalued – immigrants increases perceived threat which, in turn, leads to support for expulsion (confirmed only for the German-speaking region). The proportion of Muslim immigrants also increases intergroup contact. These findings provide support for both threat and contact theories, suggesting a beneficial impact of immigrant presence on reducing prejudice when immigrants are "culturally similar" and valued, whereas the impact of "culturally different" and devalued immigrants is mixed.

On the individual level, in line with past research, perceived threat mediates the effect of intercultural friendships on exclusionary attitudes. Insofar as the data is correlational, firm causal claims are not warranted. Considering perceived threat as a mediating variable between intergroup contact and prejudice is nevertheless in line with intergroup contact theory and with past research. Alternatively, contact may mediate the relationship between threat and prejudice. In the current study, after perceived threat was included in the model contact was no longer directly related to support for expulsion, so this reverse mediational relationship was not confirmed.

Our findings raise several points. First, immigrant types are more complex and fluid than categorization on a simple "cultural distance – similarity" axis can reveal (Wimmer 2004). This dimension intersects with a number of others, many of which are *constructed* in political discourse and lay discussion. A distinction between "old" and "new" immigrants is one example. The Italians, Spanish, and Portuguese immigrants of the 1970s are now "old" immigrants perceived to be part of the Swiss ingroup, as opposed to "new" immigrants (e.g., from outside Europe). Moreover, some supposedly culturally distant immigrant groups are perceived as willing to adapt to the Swiss lifestyle (e.g., Tamils), whereas others are viewed as incapable or unwilling to adapt (Wimmer 2004). Yet another distinction is made between supposedly legitimate immigrants – those

coming to work – and illegitimate asylum seekers and undocumented immigrants. Indeed, depending on the case, Muslim immigrants can be at either end of the described dichotomies ("new"/"old", "legitimate"/"illegitimate"). Membership of low-status social categories is, however, a shared feature of the heterogeneous category of Muslims (Afonso 2005). Indeed, because "culturally distant" immigrants are often in the lowest social categories and "culturally similar" immigrants often more closely resemble the citizens of the host country, the threats associated with the two groups may also differ. While culturally distant, poor immigrants may be seen as threatening local values and burdening the welfare state, culturally similar, richer immigrants may be felt to threaten access to high-status positions on the job market. Defining finer distinctions between different immigrant groups and cross-cutting memberships will therefore be a fruitful avenue for future research.

Second, one must keep in mind that due to the data at our disposal, we were examining attitudes towards "generic" immigrants rather than attitudes specifically towards Muslims or northern/western Europeans. This shortcoming makes it impossible to know which groups the participants were thinking of when they responded to the questions. It is plausible that the respondents' ideas about "immigrants" are partly built upon their everyday experiences. For people living in municipalities with a visible population of Muslim immigrants, images of Muslims are more likely to come to mind when they read questions about immigrants than for people living in municipalities where Muslim immigrants are just one group among many. This may explain why a high proportion of Muslims was related to higher perceived threat only in municipalities with a low proportion of immigrants from northern and western Europe. Though we cannot know how salient (if at all) the proportion of Muslim or immigrants from northern and western Europe was to the respondents (see Glaser 2003), the findings of the current study are interesting in their own right for both contact theory and threat theory as they reveal that the effect of being exposed to a specific immigrant group extends to relationships with and perceptions of immigrants in general.

Third, in order to understand the two processes related to the proportion of Muslims in a municipality – the increase

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in both intergroup contact and perceived threat – we must remember that contextual effects are not necessarily direct as individuals react differently to contextual cues. We might for instance assume that the presence of "culturally distant" immigrants triggers perceptions of threat in particular among people who rely on contextual cues. Danaci (2009) shows that the proportion of Muslims in a Swiss municipality does not affect intolerance towards Muslims among citizens who are politically clearly conservative or liberal. It does, however, affect middle-of-the-road individuals without a clear political stance: A higher proportion of Muslims in a municipality increased tolerance among moderately conservative individuals, whereas the opposite was true among moderately liberal individuals. Moreover, even when we examine diversity at a proximal level such as within a municipality, some people within the municipality will have more opportunities for contact with immigrants than others, for example due to self-selection or holding similar positions at work, whereas others who lack direct opportunities for contact may perceive enhanced levels of threat. The impact of social position on attitudes towards immigrants has also been amply demonstrated (Ceobanu and Escandell 2010). Host country citizens with low socioeconomic status (education, occupation, and income) are more likely than high-status citizens to compete for the same jobs or housing as immigrants, who generally have lower status. Thus, it is plausible that members of low-status categories will experience immigrants as more threatening (Scheepers et al. 2002). High-status citizens have more positive attitudes toward immigration, regardless of the immigrants' status

(Hainmueller and Hiscox 2007). Accounting for variation in individuals' social position and ideological values when analyzing effects of different types of diversity opens yet another interesting direction for future research.

Finally, studying how the prevailing "ideological climate" (Sarrasin et al. 2010) affects immigration attitudes may help us to understand the simultaneous increase of threat and contact that occurs as the proportion of Muslims in a municipality increases. In municipalities where intolerant dominant worldviews legitimize negative immigration attitudes, the proportion of Muslims may evoke threat, whereas this should not be the case in tolerant municipalities. It is thus necessary to examine whether shared ideological worldviews affect the relationship between proportion of Muslims and immigration attitudes. Indeed Sarrasin and colleagues (2010) find the lowest levels of intergroup contact in conservative municipalities with low proportions of immigrants, whereas in municipalities with a high proportion of immigrants, conservative climate does not affect intergroup contact. Further research should also investigate the interaction between ideological climate and proportion of different types of immigrants in a region.

In sum, this paper underscores some pitfalls of examining the influence of generic diversity on xenophobia. Understanding *how* and *why* exposure to specific immigrant groups has beneficial or detrimental effects on immigration attitudes can help counteract xenophobic tendencies in multicultural societies.

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