Intolerant Attitudes of Romanian Youth

By

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Abstract

In the present thesis I investigate the intolerant attitudes of Romanian youth, expressed as immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobia. Engaging social contact theory and social learning theory, I focus on the relationship between the effect of peer group diversity and intolerant attitudes, using a two-wave panel study on high school students, representative at national level. My findings show an overall limited effect of the hypothesized effects of discussions in the classroom environment, ethnic and racial tension in the school environment, interpersonal trust, academic performance, economic conditions and gender. The peer groups became more homogenous from the ninth to the twelfth grade; the regression analysis results suggest that as one's group of peers is more homogenous, one has higher levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobia. My analysis suggests that religiosity holds strong and positive effects on immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobia, and that males have more homophobic attitudes than females. The panel nature of the data revealed that the levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia assessed in the ninth grade predict the levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobia in the twelfth grade. The results suggest that Romania follows the pattern of Central and Eastern European countries only in some aspects, such as the relationships between age and intolerance, and religiosity and intolerance. I argue that the classification of Western and Central and Eastern Europe does not suffice anymore in anticipating the patterns of predictors of intolerant attitudes, and a more specific classification is necessary.

Keywords: immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance, homophobia, high school students.

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Contents

Abstract ii
Acknowledgmentsiii
Introduction1
Contextualization
Defining political intolerance
Types of political intolerance
Predictors of intolerant attitudes
Working hypotheses
Case selection
Data and methodology
Measuring intolerance
Creating the measure of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the ninth grade 24
Creating the measure of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the twelfth grade 25
Creating the measure of "political intolerance" for the twelfth grade
Creating the measure of "homophobia"
Creating the "diversity of peer group", "school environment" and "religiosity" measures 29
Data Analysis
Testing the predictors of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the ninth and twelfth grade
Testing the predictors of homophobia
Discussion of the results
Conclusions
Appendix
References

List of Tables

Introduction

A 2011 Soros Foundation Report revealed alarming attitudes of Romanian youth¹ towards minorities. The report indicated that two-thirds of youth preferred not to have a homosexual, a Roma, or people with AIDS as neighbors (soros.ro, 2010). This finding is supported by recent scholarly research showing that Romanian youth present low levels of political tolerance (Miller-Viman and Fesnic, 2010) and are particularly highly intolerant towards Roma people (Ives, Obenchain and Oikonomidoy, 2010; Dimitrova, Buzea, Ljujic and Jordanov, 2013). Previous research focusing on Western Europe showed that youth are less intolerant and less prejudiced compared with older people (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Vala and Costa-Lopes, 2010). Even if these findings were confirmed across Western European countries, scholars are skeptical in extrapolating the results to countries outside the Western Europe (Vala and Costa-Lopes, 2010). Romania does not follow the pattern of Western European countries, where youth have low levels of intolerant attitudes. This is confirmed by research on Central and Eastern European countries that found different reasons behind prejudice and intolerance (Coenders and Scheepers, 2003; Kunovich, 2004; Vala and Costa-Lopes, 2010; Wagner and Zick, 1995) and different patterns of racist extremism manifestations (Mudde, 2005). For example, in the CEE countries, the highest levels of prejudice are directed against religious groups and social out-groups, rather than towards ethnic groups, excepting Roma (Mudde, 2005). Furthermore, Romanian youth are more intolerant compared to their older counterparts (Badescu, Comsa, Gheorghita, Stanus, Tufis, 2010). Studies on the relationship between democracy and political tolerance show that the longer a country experiences a democratic regime, the more tolerant its citizens are going to be (Miller-Viman and Fesnic, 2010). The youth that is subject of this study were born and raised

¹ I am referring here to youth as the age category between 14 to 19

in a democratic environment, or more exactly in an environment that was in its transition towards democracy. Accordingly, the expectation is that the generations raised after the fall of the communist regime are more tolerant than the older ones. Therefore, it is puzzling why Romanian youth have rather intolerant attitudes towards minorities. In order to solve this puzzle, I will identify and test the predictors of intolerant attitudes of youth, to see if the hypothesized effects are present in the sampled population.

The paper has the following structure: after introducing the research question, the context is presented, followed by a review of the scholarly literature on intolerance that helps defining the hypotheses. Case selection is followed by presenting the data and the methodology used for testing the hypotheses. The empirical analyses are followed by discussion of results and conclusions.

Contextualization

A 2006 report of the British Council in Romania revealed that urban youth is highly intolerant. The report showed that Hungarians are accepted in the social sphere, but not in the personal one, while Roma are rejected in both. Youth display similar attitudes towards religious minorities; their members are rejected from the personal sphere, but tolerated in the social one. The intolerant attitudes were particularly manifested in Cluj-Napoca, the second largest city in Romania. Probably this is a residue of the ten year rule of Gheorghe Funar, a leader of The Great Romania Party, a nationalist extremist political party.

Part of the blame for the current situation is attributed to the communist past of Romania; but also, often parents are blamed for the attitudes of their offspring, because the children were raised in an environment full of hatred towards people from various minorities. The worrisome results of a Soros study got international attention, where Romanian youth was being presented as highly intolerant towards Roma, gays and people with AIDS, with a large proportion of Romanian teenagers described as racist and anti-Semitic (huffingtonpost.com. 2011. The findings of the same study revealed that while children whose parents are more educated generally present less intolerant attitudes, they are more intolerant towards Roma. Considering the fact that Romania has a Roma population estimated to 1.5 million, these results are bothersome. The official numbers indicate only 500.000 Roma people, but the unofficial numbers are much higher. Most of the Roma people who do not claim their ethnicity based their decision on the fear of being discriminated and rejected by the society. Roma are the most visible, discriminated and stigmatized group in Romania; after the fall of the communist regime, Roma minority was blamed for the economic decline and the setbacks Romania met in the procedures for joining NATO and European Union (Nicolae and Slavik, 2003). The discrimination, hate speeches and accusations towards Roma marked the first years of postcommunist Romania. Corneliu Vadim Tudor, the leader of the extreme nationalist Greater Romania Party, and a candidate for the presidency in 2000, stated repeatedly that the Gypsy criminals should be isolated in special colonies, and that Romania faces the transformation into a Gypsy camp (Thorpe, 2000). This is not a singular case; numerous Romanian politicians were making discriminatory affirmations regarding Roma, in extreme cases suggesting their extermination (Nicolae and Slavik, 2003). More recently, Romania's president, Traian Basescu, was fined by the Romania's anti-discrimination council for making discriminatory remarks against Roma, saying that Roma people avoid working, and instead they made their living by stealing (bbc.com, 2014). These examples offer a clear illustration of the prejudice the Romanian Roma minority faces, at its highest level, among political elites. The final remark, that Roma living in Romania are entangled in a vicious circle of poverty, bolstered by discrimination and

social exclusion (Nita, 2008), will not come as a surprise. When media and political elites are caught in making discriminatory remarks towards Roma, together with discriminatory attitudes transmitted through family socialization, the new generation is constantly exposed to this kind of discriminatory attitudes oriented towards Roma. More concerning is that these attitudes are reinforced in every sphere of life. As shown above, prejudice against Roma is not a unique; alongside with prejudice against Hungarian and Roma minorities, the Romanian society fights with prejudice against sexual minorities.

Despite the fact the homosexuality was decriminalized in 2001, the prejudice remained. Partly responsible for the highly intolerant attitudes towards sexual minorities is the Romanian Orthodox Church, who strongly opposes homosexuality. A series of events oriented against gays took place over the years, with hundreds of protesters that attacked with stones and fireworks an annual gay parade in 2007, that necessitated police intervention (gaysternews.com, 2012), and with attacks on a group of people who attended an academic debate about the history of homosexuality in Romania in 2012 (Littauer, 2012). In February 2013, during the LGBT History Month, students at a Romanian high-school were thought about LGBT issues and gay pride demonstrations and were encouraged to participate in the high-school's extra-curricular activities related to the LGBT History Month. Right-wing NGOs and parents protested for this initiative to stop, and have addressed an open letter to the government and the parliament in this concern. The reasoning behind these complains was based again on religious grounds. In the same LGBT History Month, at the Museum of the Romanian Peasant, a number of 50 extreme right activists interrupted the movie screening of "The Kids Are All Right", before the screening even started. The anti-gay activists sang the Romanian national anthem and Christian Orthodox chants, holding religious symbols, and called the participants to the movie screening "beasts" and

"scums", while chanting "death to homosexuals" (globalpost.com, 2013). More concerning is the fact that the policemen present at the event did not intervened when the anti-gay protesters interrupted the film screening. Representatives of the Accept rights group, who were present at the event, made a public statement in which was emphasized that discrimination against gays is still widespread in Romania, and such an event only enforces the negative stereotypes about Romanians.

By far, the most active opponent of gay rights in Romania is the New Right movement, with nationalist and strong Christian Orthodox religious beliefs. As of April 12, 2014, The New Right mentioned on its official website that it opposes sexual minorities, Roma, territorial autonomy for the Hungarian minority living in Romania, abortion, communism, the European Union and globalization, among others. The New Right manifested violently against Gay Fest pride parade, when police forces had to intervene. Also, the New Right organizes marches against gay rights on the same day as Gay Fest pride parades are held. Alongside with the New Right, there are the Greater Romania Party, the Conservative Party and the Democratic Liberal Party, who protested against gay festivals that took place in Bucharest and Cluj. Even if there is no clear strategy to assess the repercussions of these anti-gay events, the situation is indeed alarming. A decade after the decriminalization of homosexuality in Romania, a report of the National Council for Combating Discrimination revealed that 54% of the respondents stated that they would never have a meal with a homosexual and 48% that they would be very bothered if they found out that a family member is gay (cncd.org, 2012).

Driven by the requirements for joining the European Union, Romania initiated a legislative process that resulted in a new statute of its ethnic minorities, as well as clear commitment on the principles of non-discrimination, equality and multiculturalism. The aim was to provide

5

legislation that would settle punishments for all forms of discrimination, according to the European Union's aquis. While officially Romania is promoting the social inclusion of its minorities, these numbers and those presented above, as results of various studies, are worrisome. Most of the studies of which results I presented above had youngsters as respondents, making their results relevant for the purpose of this study.

Adolescence is a particularly significant period in the formation of political attitudes and behaviors (Jennings and Niemi, 1974; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009), because multiple agents like family, school and peers, that have an important role in the process political socialization are present simultaneously. A tolerant citizenry stays at the heart of democracy; there is a strong correlation between the level of democracy in a country and how tolerant its citizens are (Lipset, 1963). Accordingly, the alarming intolerant attitudes of Romanian youth could pose a real threat for the future of democracy in this country (Gibson, 2006). From here derives the importance of studying the predictors of intolerance. The aim of the present study is to identify the predictors of intolerant attitudes of Romanian youth at individual level and to trace changes in these attitudes in time, from the first to last year of high school education.

Defining political intolerance

Political intolerance, defined by Allport (1954, p.9) as "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization" represents one of the most important problems of our days (Gibson, 2006). As a longstanding subject in the scholarly literature, intolerance received a great deal of attention. Though, there are certain aspects upon which scholars did not manage to find a common understanding (Gibson, 2006). The key determinant of intolerance, threat, is still a poorly understood, unexplained variable. Gibson (2006) also draws attention upon the independence of social and political intolerance, arguing for the necessity of a clear differentiation between the two. The most used meaning of intolerance is as political intolerance, or "democratic political intolerance", rooted in Stouffer's (1955) conceptualization, seen as a willingness to give or extend civil liberties to specific social groups; this exact meaning of political intolerance will be used in this paper.

Generally, intolerance is defined as holding negative attitudes towards the members of a group (Bäckström, Björklund, Hansson, Bern and Westerlundh, 2005). Pettigrew and Meertens (1995) developed two measures of prejudice, namely blatant and subtle prejudice. Blatant prejudice refers to the more traditional form of prejudice, characterized as close, hot and direct, while subtle prejudice is a more modern form, defined as distant, cool and indirect (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995; Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner, 2008). The latter form, subtle prejudice, received a great deal of scholarly attention, being studied in the context of Western Europe. Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner (2008) created the Subtle Prejudice Scale, as an instrument measuring the contemporary form of prejudice. The scale has three components: one on traditional values, the second one on the outgroup seen as extremely culturally different when compared to the ingroup,

and the third focusing on the denial of sympathy and admiration for the outgroup (Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner, 2008).

The competing theories on prejudice include the Ethnic Competition Theory (Coenders and Scheepers, 1998) and the group-threat theory (Kunovich, 2004). The Ethnic Competition theory presumes that social groups are competing for scarce economic resources; therefore is a direct expression of group conflict (Coenders and Scheepers, 1998). Testing group-threat theory, namely that individual's characteristics, also known as social structural variables, have stronger effects in countries with larger immigrant populations and poorer economic conditions revealed that the effect of social structural variables on prejudice, excluding economic conditions, is greater in Western than in Eastern Europe (Kunovich, 2004). Economic conditions represent an important dividing point in the patterns of predictors of prejudice, with stronger effects in Eastern than in Western Europe (Kunovich, 2004; Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner, 2008).

While intolerance is being defined as holding negative attitudes towards the members of a group (Bäckström, Björklund, Hansson, Bern and Westerlundh, 2005), the most efficient approach to reduce prejudice would be to change the frames of thinking about other individuals, from "the good or the bad" or "the weak and the strong" into "shades of gray" (Allport, 1954 in Park and Judd, 2005, p. 122). A longstanding view in the research on prejudice holds general personality traits as influencing prejudice and political predispositions (Miller, Smith and Mackie, 2004). It has been shown that people who register high scores on authoritarian personality's F-scale (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford, 1950), on right-wing authoritarianism's scale (Altemeyer, 1988) or on social dominance orientation scale (Pratto, Sidanius, Stallworth and Malle, 1994) also tend to hold prejudice against certain groups. However, testing one of these scales is beyond the scope of this study. Because the focus of this study is on high school

students, and most of the studies presented until this point focus on adults, I consider necessary to present theories that deal with intolerance among children and adolescents.

Various studies focused on the mechanism and conditions under which the prejudice and stereotypes are activated (Bodenhausen, Todd, and Richeson, 2009; Degner and Ventura, 2010). The activation is realized as a result to exposure to a stimulus in the environment. It is widely assumed that the automatic prejudice has roots the process of political socialization early in the childhood. The mechanism presumes that a wide and frequent use of prejudice, starting with childhood would promote their automatization (Degner and Ventura, 2010). This process of automatic prejudice is characterized as a slow-learning process, in which there is a gradual accumulation of experiences and associations (Rudman, 2004). In a study conducted in Germany and the Netherlands, Degner and Ventura (2010) explored the automatic prejudice activation in children and adolescents, they results revealing that even to the automatization of prejudice is supposed to happen at very early ages, the significant effects of the process are visible only around the age of 12 and 13. These results suggest that the automatization of prejudice may be linked to developmental process than take place in early adolescence.

Devine (1989) developed the dual process theory, arguing that indifferent of age, children are storing parental and societal intergroup attitudes in a passive manner, not being able to examine them. These attitudes that are early acquired are stored in the long term memory and represent the basis on which the personal attitudes are later formed. Given their stable statute in the long term memory they play an important role in determining the attitudes in the long run, influencing the older child's and adult's behaviors oriented towards outgroups.

The early acquisition of societal attitudes starts at the age of 3, when children are able to distinguish and social categories, accompanied by intergroup preferences, which become visible

around the age of 8 (Degner and Ventura, 2010). Later on, when personal attitudes and belief appear as a result of cognitive ability, dissociation occurs between the attitudes that are passively acquired and these new personal attitudes and beliefs (Devine, 1989). This dissociation is the starting point of the development of non-prejudiced and tolerant attitudes. Giving the presence of hate speeches addressed to Roma, gays among other social groups, and the early political socialization process the children are exposed to, the expectation is that these societal attitudes are passively stored and represented in their long term memory, and later on are transposed into prejudices, attitudes and beliefs oriented towards outgroups.

The vast scholarly literature focusing on prejudice acknowledges its importance and the significant social problem it represents (Nesdale, 1999). Although earlier studies suggested that prejudice and intolerance were significantly declining, more recent evidence suggests the opposite, arguing that the prejudice is still presents, but under subtly disguised forms (Pettigrew and Marteens, 1995). Besides acknowledging its presence at the societal level, the scholars raised concerns about widespread levels of intolerance among children (Nesdale, 1999). As mentioned above, the childhood and adolescence represent important periods, during which children develop social attitudes that are persistent during adulthood. Concerns are that in the long run, these types of negative attitudes could lead to psychological and physical harm of the young members of the outgroups (Nesdale, 1999; Durkin, 1995).

Nesdale (1999) elaborates a theory adapted to children's prejudice, with emphasis on the majority group children, under the assumption that this is the group that expresses prejudice against people from outgroups (Verkuyten & Masson, 1995 in Nesdale, 1999). Adapting the Social Identity Theory, the prejudice towards members of outgroups is fueled by the individuals' desire to identify with social group that is considered as superior. By doing so, they pursue to

enhance their self-esteem. Accordingly, members of the dominant social group perceive themselves as superior and similar among the group. The members of outgroups are perceived as different, therefore inferior, making them subject of prejudice.

The social identity theory is a suitable approach for studying prejudice among children, considering that starting with the age of 3, children are capable to distinguish themselves from members of other groups (Nesdale, 1999). Adapting the social identity theory into an approach suitable to explain prejudice in children, Nesdale (2004) developed the Social Identity Development Theory. Nesdale acknowledges that there are changes that appear in children's behavior with the increase in age, that need to be considered. Firstly, the children are not just copying and adopting the behavior of those around him; but as the prejudice is expressed more widely and more often in their social context, the probability that the children will adopt prejudice instead in acceptance of diversity increases. Therefore the more members of the community express prejudice, the probability that the prejudice will spread to the community members is higher. Secondly, as competition, conflicts and tensions between the dominant group and outgroups appear, there is an increase tendency towards adopting negative attitudes towards the members of outgroups (Nesdale, 1999). Although this theory was conceived as an explanation for the ethnic prejudice, I consider that it can be applied to prejudice towards other social outgroups, as religious or sexual ones.

Another theory regarding the development of prejudice among children is rooted in Allport's (1954) groundbreaking work, "The Nature of Prejudice". According to Allport, children learn prejudice by observing their environment and mimicking their parents' behavior. The social learning approach suggests that prejudices increase with age.

Following the social learning theory, children's peers represent another potential source of prejudice. Patchen's (1983) study on 14-year old European American and African American revealed that there is little overlap between the racial attitudes and behaviors of the subjects and their peers. Ritchey and Fishbein's (2001) study on schooled age European American children showed that the children and their peers do not have similar racial attitudes; but surprisingly, the children perceive their peers as having similar attitudes to their own.

With roots in social learning theory, the mere exposure theory suggests that negative attitudes and prejudices appear from the lack of exposure and contact with the members of outgroups. My repeated contact with members of outgroups and repeated observation of their culture, negative biases can be reduced (Graves, 1999). This approach failed in offering satisfying results, as proof the high levels of prejudice that children express nowadays. Similar to the mere exposure theory, the extended contact theory presumes that having a friend who has a friend from an outgroup contributes to reducing prejudice towards that outgroup (Cameron & Rutland, 2008). Also known as "indirect cross friendship hypothesis", this theory found support in applications studying the development from childhood to adulthood (Cameron & Rutland, 2008).

Given the broad scholarly literature on prejudice and the multitude of definitions attributed to intolerance, for the scope of this study I will limit its understanding to Gibson's (2006) understanding of prejudice, as democratic political intolerance, previously defined by Allport as "an antipathy based on a faulty and inflexible generalization" (1954, p.9).

Types of political intolerance

Giving the broad scholarly literature on prejudice, acceptance of diversity, tolerance and intolerance and their widely used manifestations, in what follows I will present and define different types of political intolerance. Next, I will focus on types of political intolerance present

in the Romanian context, as identified by previous research (Ives, Obenchain and Oikonomidoy, 2010; Dimitrova, Buzea, Ljujic and Jordanov, 2013). The typology I will present in this section follows the work of Zick, Küpper and Hövermann (2011).

Anti-Immigrant Attitudes

Anti-immigrant attitudes are oriented towards individuals who are perceived as "foreign" or "immigrants". This "foreign" or "immigrant" status is not a necessary requirement for the prejudice to appear; it is sufficient for an individual to be perceived as such. The status of "immigrant" is attributed to a person that is foreign in a country; even so, not all the immigrants are perceived the same. In the context of Western Europe, for example, negative prejudice is oriented towards people from other cultures, like Muslims, and positive prejudice towards people from the same culture. Therefore, the prejudice is context-dependent, the targets of prejudice varying across time and place. The anti-immigrant attitudes are closely related with other kind of attitudes, like anti-Muslim attitudes in the context of Western Europe or racism.

Racism

Racism is defined as prejudice against groups or individuals based on their biological features, such as their skin color, as white, black, Asian, Latino. These features bring with them certain characteristics and abilities, based on which groups or individuals are being discriminated. Discrimination again can be positive or negative. These characteristics and abilities are creating ethnic markers that are used for categorizing individuals. Moreover, those different characteristics and abilities, based on natural or genetic differences, are not limited to racism; anti-Semitism and sexism are also derived from them. As used nowadays, racism refers to close, hot, and direct, blatant prejudice (Pettigrew and Meertens, 1995).

Anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism defines the negative prejudice against Jews, incorporating their religious customs and cultural characteristics. Encompassing multiple characteristics, anti-Semitism can take different forms, such as political anti-Semitism, racist, religious or secular anti-Semitism. In a nutshell, anti-Semitism is prejudiced against Jews simply because they are Jews.

Anti-Muslim Attitudes

Anti-Muslim attitudes are oriented towards people who are of Muslim faith or generally against Islam as a religion. Similar to anti-Semitism, anti-Muslim attitudes are directed against Muslims simply because of their faith or religion. Anti-Muslim attitudes are also known as Islamophobia.

Sexism

Sexism is based on the idea that biologically, men and women are not equal, having different abilities and preferences. As racism, sexism had evolved; its modern forms are carefully masked under evolutionary explanations for gender differences.

Homophobia

Homophobia defines prejudice towards people who have sexual preferences for people from the same gender. Leaving aside prejudice against transgender people and people with other sexual orientations, homophobia includes attacks under the umbrella of immorality and refusing equal rights, such as the right to get married or adopting children.

Romaphobia

Romaphobia is defined as prejudice against Roma people and is similar with anti-Muslim and anti-Semitic attitudes. These attitudes are created and sustained by negative associations of Roma people with criminals, thieves, deviant, who are not to be trusted. In the last decades, the Romaphobia had spread across Europe, in some cases including repressive measures by states that had to deal with Roma, such as United Kingdom, France, Italy, Bulgaria and Romania (opendemocracy.net, 2013). For the purpose of this study, the analysis concentrates on antiimmigrant attitudes, anti-Muslim attitudes, homophobia and Romaphobia.

Predictors of intolerant attitudes

Working hypotheses

The childhood and adolescence represent important periods in the process of political socialization, during which adolescents develop social attitudes that are persistent during adulthood (Nesdale, 1999; Durkin, 1995). Although earlier studies suggested that prejudice and intolerance were significantly declining, more recent evidence suggests the opposite, arguing that the prejudice is present under subtly disguised forms (Pettigrew and Marteens, 1995). Alport's (1954) lens model of the multiple causes of prejudice mentions historical, socio-cultural, situational and personality attributes (Allport, 1954, in Zick, Pettigrew and Wagner, 2008). Park and Judd (2005) placed temperament, family atmosphere, specific parental teaching, diversified experience, school and community influences among the predictors of prejudice. The influence of peers is a significant component of political socialization (Jennings and Niemi, 1974). The children are not just mimicking the behavior of those around them. According to Allport (1954), children learn prejudice by observing their environment and adopting their parents' behavior. Although, as the prejudice is expressed more widely and more often in their social context, the probability that the children will adopt negative attitudes instead of acceptance of diversity increases. Contact theory presumes that when the nature of the contact between people from different groups is positive, the negative biases, negative stereotypes and discriminatory behaviors can be reduced (Allport, 1954; Roper, 1990). Using European survey data, Pettigrew (1997) revealed that having friends from a different cultural group contributes to reducing prejudice in the dominant group. This effect surpasses the effect of the bias induced by the fact that prejudiced people avoid to make friends outside their group (Pettigrew, 1998). Also, it has been shown that the contact reduces prejudice (Miller, Smith and Mackie, 2004; Pettigrew,

2008), not that the less prejudiced people are more likely to engage in intergroup contact (Pettigrew, 1997; Miller, Smith and Mackie, 2004). More than that, indirect contact seems to have a similar effect as direct contact in reducing prejudice (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher, 2007; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, Christ, 2011), namely having a friend who has a friend from an outgroup leads to reduced prejudiced. The policy implications of this line of studies suggests that contact can lead to reduced prejudice, and one of the situations on which this can prove to be a valuable effect is the school environment (Park and Judd, 2005), as well as the classroom environment (Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher, 2007). Therefore, the expectation is that *individuals with a more diverse group of peers (H1), and who experience a more open school environment are less likely to have immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes (H2).*

According to the Social Identity Development Theory, the changes that appear in children's behavior become more visible as the age of the children increases (Nesdale, 2004). Considering the important role played by the classroom and school environment (Park and Judd, 2005; Pettigrew, Christ, Wagner and Stellmacher, 2007), the incidents that might appear in these environments have effects on individuals' attitudes. As competition, conflicts and tensions between the dominant group and outgroups appear, there is an increased tendency towards adopting negative attitudes towards the members of outgroups (Nesdale, 1999). Therefore, the expectation is that individuals who experience *ethnic tensions and conflicts in the school environment have higher levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes (H3).*

Interpersonal trust has a role in encouraging tolerance towards diversity, as well as cooperation between people belonging to different groups (Putnam, 2000). Accordingly, the lack of trust can

constitute a predictor of intolerance (Vala and Costa Lopes, 2010). Also, greater trust is associated with reducing prejudice (Pettigrew, 1998; Pettigrew, Tropp, Wagner, Christ, 2011). *Thus, individuals with higher levels of interpersonal trust will be less likely to have immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes (H4).*

Scholarly research shows education is positively correlated with political tolerance (Lipset, 1963) and that people with more education are less prejudiced against ethnic groups than people with lower education (Wagner and Zick, 1995), therefore more likely to be accepting diversity. Wagner and Zick's study (1995) reinforced previous findings that have suggested that lower education is associated with a wide range of intolerant attitudes and prejudices against certain social groups, as homosexuals, people with different religious beliefs or people from different ethnic groups (Sullivan, Shamir, Walsh, and Roberts, 1985). Because the subjects of the present study are high schools students, they have the same level of education; therefore their level of education cannot be used as a valid predictor. Instead, I will use their reported grades. The grades express students' academic performance. The expectation is that *females have lower levels of inmigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes than males (H5)*.

Among social structural variables, that are personal characteristics of individuals, alongside with market position and education, income represents a key predictor of prejudice (Kunovich, 2004). The rationale of the relationship between income and prejudice is the following: people with higher income feel more secure about their social position, compared with people who are in competition for income with people from outgroups. Therefore, people with higher levels of income are expected to hold less prejudice, or to have less intolerant attitudes (Kunovich, 2004). Economic conditions, when poorer, have great impact on intolerance (Zick, Pettigrew and

Wagner, 2008). Similarly, economic threat is known as enhancing anti-minority views. That is why youth coming from families with that are better off are less likely to have immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes (H6).

Alongside with education, modernization is another known predictor of intolerance, with significant differences rural and urban areas across Western European countries (Dalton, 2002). Even if research on Eastern European countries show that the differences between the rural and urban areas are barely noticeable (Todosijevic and Enyedi 2008), Fesnic's study (2008) revealed that for the case of Romania, urbanization works as a significant predictor of political intolerance. Due to data limitation, modernization cannot be used as a predictor of intolerant attitudes for the scope of this study. Religiosity is another predictor of political intolerance that proved to hold no significant effects in the Eastern European context, but a strong and negative effect in Western European countries (Todosijevic and Enyedi, 2008). Miller-Viman and Fesnic's study (2010) revealed that in Romania the effect of religiosity on tolerance follow the pattern of Western Europe. Accordingly, I will test the effect of religiosity on intolerant attitudes based on its effect across Western European countries. Therefore, I hypothesize that *individuals with strong religious beliefs are more likely to have immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes (H7).*

Gender differences can be observed in relation to intolerance, with males being more prone to express intolerance than females (Akrami, Ekehammar and Araya, 2000). Similar findings were revealed by other scholars, with males being predisposed to homophobia (Bernat, Calhoun, Adams and Zeichner 2001), while women seem to have overall more tolerant attitudes. Though, these results seem to be characteristic only to American context; research focusing on Western and Eastern European countries revealed that women present more authoritarian attitudes than men (Todosijevic and Enyedi, 2008). In the Romanian context, the relationship between gender and tolerance is ambiguous. While Cernea's study (2001) revealed that males hold more negative evaluations and more negative stereotypes towards Hungarians compared with females, Miller-Viman and Fesnic (2010) argues that females have more intolerant attitudes compared to men. I claim that gender differences in immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and homophobic attitudes exist, and more male have these attitudes compared with females (H8).

Case selection

The state of knowledge on intolerance placed Romania, one of the Central and Eastern European countries, outside the pattern of Western democracies. However, Romania does not fit entirely the pattern of Eastern European countries. Previous research revealed that the relationships between political intolerance and socio-economic status characteristics, such as income, and personal characteristics, such as gender, offer mixed results. For this reason, Romania represents a worthwhile case study. From a cross-national perspective, Romania appears as a fairly intolerant country (Miller-Viman and Fesnic, 2010, p. 108). An analysis of the EVS and WVS data shows that in Romania, similar to the Czech Republic, Lithuania or Latvia, the levels of political tolerance decreased from 33% in 1993, to 21% in 1999, to 17% in 2005 (Suciu, 2010, p. 25).

Romanian youth present high levels of political intolerance, raising concerns about the future of democracy in this country. Research on Romanian youth's attitudes revealed that they attribute emphasis on order and on respect of norms, rather than on individual freedom. Limiting the sphere of individual freedom, these reactions are associated to an authoritarian type of personality (Petre, 2003). In her effort to construct a socio-moral portrait of Romanian youth

using a representative sample of youngsters, Petre (2003) identifies intolerance as a common characteristic of Romanian youth. Also, that the youth are primarily concerned with the decrease of the importance of national culture, followed by concerns related to inter-group and interethnic problems (Petre, 2003, p.78). Alongside with the intolerance towards alcoholics, drug addicts, individuals with a criminal record, intolerance towards homosexuals is a general attribute of the Romanian youngster.

Single-case studies, compared to multi-case studies, offer a fine-grained analysis of a phenomenon, intolerance in this case. Often viewed as a tool for exploratory research, case studies are well suited for research areas in which the existing theory seems to be inadequate (Eisenhardt, 1989). The study concentrates on Romanian youth, where youth is being defined by the age category between 14 and 19. The timeframe of the analysis is set between 2006 and 2009. Because Romanian youth present alarming high levels of intolerance towards gays, Roma, people with AIDS, Muslims, Hungarians and Jews, the purpose of this study is to shed light upon the determinants of this type of attitudes. Furthermore, changes in the intolerant attitudes in time can be traced, and their predictors can be identified.

Data and methodology

Data used for testing the aforementioned hypotheses belong to a panel study on high school students from Romania. The study has two waves, one made in 2006 on pupils from 9th grade (on 436 respondents), and the second one made in 2009 on 12 grade pupils (on 432 respondents). Data were collected by the researchers at the Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD), Department of Political Science, at "Babeş-Bolyai" University, Cluj Napoca. The first wave of study was collected as part of the "Democratic citizenship. A longitudinal and comparative research on the relationship between school, social participation and civic culture" project, while the second wave was part of the "Education, internet and democratic values; A longitudinal and comparative study of the effects of youth involvement in real and virtual groups of socialization on civic culture" project. 400 pupils participated in both waves of the study, which allows tracing changes in their attitudes in time. Both surveys contained various questions on notions of citizenship, tolerance and other related political attitudes. Data was collected in the classroom environment, at the beginning of the ninth, then twelfth grade. The sampling was realized using a random sampling method. Data are representative at national level. 56% of the respondents are females, and 90.5% are Romanians, 8.1% are Hungarians and 1.4% other nationalities, and 78.8 have the orthodox religious denomination. The percent of Hungarian respondents is low (8.1%), therefore not representing a bias factor. More than that allows testing the hypotheses in culturally diverse environment.

In order to test the hypotheses mentioned above, I will use Latent Variable Modeling and Item Response Theory analysis, Principal Component Analysis, Factor Analysis and Linear Regression Modelling. In order to construct the measure of intolerance, Latent Variable Modeling and Item Response Theory analysis will be used. For creating the measures of "diversity of peer group", "discussions had in the classroom envionment" and "trust", Factor Analysis, respectively Principal Component Analysis will be used. Principal Component Analysis is also used to create the measures of "religiosity" and "parents' level of education attainment". Multivariate regression analysis will be used, with the measures of intolerance and homophobia as dependent variables, and peer group diversity, school's environment effects, ethnic and racial conflicts in school environment, academic performance, religiosity, financial status, interpersonal trust and gender as independent variables. The panel nature of the data allows creating similar measures of intolerance for the ninth and for the twelfth grade. Additionally, I will create an alternative measure of intolerance for the second wave of the study, using different variables, under the assumption that both measures represent a similar, underlying dimension, which is intolerance. In the first step of the analysis, I will use information from both waves of the study to make a portrait of the Romanian youth and their attitudes. The analysis then proceeds with testing the predictor of the same measure of intolerance for the ninth and twelfth grade, for the alternative measure of intolerance for the twelfth grade and then for the measure of homophobia, assessed in the second wave of the study.

Measuring intolerance

The substantial area of research on intolerance, prejudice and acceptance of diversity produced a wide range of measurement strategies. Stouffer (1955) path-breaking research brought into scholarly attention a measurement strategy that is still widely used nowadays. His measurement strategy was based on asking respondents whether they would tolerate different activities realized by members of different groups previously identified by the researcher, that were relatively unpopular groups. The General Social Survey tool was initially used for this purpose, starting with questions about communists, socialists, atheist, and including later questions

regarding homosexuals, and different religious groups; the questions were then used in constructing a 15-item index assessing tolerance (Gibson, 1992). Stouffer approach suffered of extreme criticism, based on having a left-wing bias (Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus, 1982). A different approach was undertaken by the work of Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus (1979), which assessed intolerance, rather than tolerance. They define intolerance as antipathy towards a certain group, and tolerance as a willingness to accept the expression of ideas or interests that oppose respondents' views. Assessing intolerance rather than tolerance is known as the "least-liked" approach (Gibson, 1992). Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus's work (1979) launched the use of a six-item scale, measuring attitudes towards the most disliked group the respondent names. For the purpose of this study, I will use the term "intolerance" with the meaning of "democratic political intolerance", seen as a willingness to extend the civil liberties to outgroups, with emphasis on the civil liberties of sexual minorities. The conceptualization I will use here is in line with recent studies, their authors claiming that the rejection of homosexuality can be used as a good and sensible measure of political intolerance (Inglehart, 1997). Following and adapting Sullivan, Piereson and Marcus's work (1979), I will measure immigration skepticism and xenophobia as an expression of intolerance, through attitudes regarding customs and traditions of groups, perceiving immigrants as a threat, and focus on the need of one's own group, for both waves of the study and political intolerance as attitudes regarding the civil rights of the most disliked groups, namely gays, Roma, Muslims, atheists and extreme-right supporters, only for the second wave of the study.

Creating the measure of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the ninth grade

For the first wave of the study, immigration skepticism and xenophobia are assessed through the following questions: "It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs",

"The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life" and "One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group", measured on a 4-point scale (1 – disagree strongly, 2 – disagree somewhat, 3 – agree somewhat, 4 – agree strongly). Using Principal Component Analysis as a method of factor reduction, I created a measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia with 58 values. The variable is normally distributed, skewness is between -1 and 1, and kurtosis between -7 and 7 (see Table 1, Appendix). The measure explains 49% of the variance, the first factor, "It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs" has a loading equal to 0.73, the loading of the second factor "The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life" equals to 0.76, and the loading of the third factor "One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group" equals to 0.60 (see Table 2, Appendix).

Creating the measure of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the twelfth grade

Using Principal Component Analysis, I created a measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia with 50 values. The variable is normally distributed, skewness is between -1 and 1, and kurtosis between -7 and 7 (see Table 4, Appendix). The measure explains 52% of the variance, the first factor, "It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs" has a loading equal to 0.79, the loading of the second factor "The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life" equals to 0.82, and the loading of the third factor "One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group" equals to 0.50 (see Table 3, Appendix).

Creating the measure of "political intolerance" for the twelfth grade

In the second wave of the study, intolerance is assessed through the following questions, related to granting civil liberties to specific social groups: "Do you consider that the following group should have the right to organize a demonstration in the city where you live?...groups that militate for the rights of Roma people?/ atheist?/ Muslims?/ groups that militate for the rights of sexual minorities?". The questions are measured on a two-point scale, with 0 - no, 1 - yes).

In what follows, I will create the measure of political intolerance, making use of the questions assessing the attitudes towards grating civil liberties to certain social groups, measured in the twelfth grade. Because the variables are binary, with "yes" and "no" answer option, Principal Component Analysis (hereafter PCA) is not a viable tool; PCA can only be applied to continuous variables. I will use instead Item Response Theory (hereafter IRT), also known as latent trait theory. IRT is an approach used as a measurement instrument in modern education and psychology (Yu, Jannasch-Pennell and DiGangi, 2008). Making use of sophisticated statistical methods, IRT is a tool used in dealing with measuring abilities or attitudes (personality-project.org). More precisely, IRT assesses the quality of individual answers, examining how well they measure an ability trait. The ability trait is not directly observable, therefore it requires an indirect measurement. The underlying, or the latent trait, has an Item Response Function (hereafter IRF), that is a mathematical function that relates the latent trait to the probability of endorsing an item. In other words, IRT establishes the position of individuals among a latent trait (Yu, 2013).

I will create the measure of intolerance using Latent Variable Modeling and Item Response Theory analysis, making use of the statistical software R, and the package "Itm". The R package "Itm" makes use of the Marginal Maximum Likelihood Estimation (hereafter MMLE) method (Rizopoulos, 2006). Parameter estimation realized through MMLE works under the assumption that the respondents are a random sample from a population, and they are distributed according to a distribution function. The model parameters are then estimated by maximizing the observed data log-likelihood obtained by integrating the latent variables (Rizopoulos, 2006, p. 4).

The analysis requires creating a new data frame with a numeric matrix of manifest variables. Initially, I fit the original form of the Rasch model that assumes that the discrimination parameter is fixed at 1, therefore imposing the constraint at α =1. The model summary reveals a log likelihood value=-1246.91, AIC=2503.819 and BIC=2524.196 (see Table 5, Appendix). The parameter estimates (see Table 5, Appendix) are transformed into probability estimates (see Table 6, Appendix). In order to check the fit of the model to the data, I will perform, using the GoF.rasch() function in R, a parametric Bootstrap goodness of fit test, with Pearson's χ^2 statistic. The null hypothesis for this model states that the data have been generated under the Rasch model with parameter values estimated by the maximum likelihood method (Rizopoulos, 2006, p. 7). In order to test the null hypothesis, I will generate 200 samples, under the Rasch model. The non-significant p-value (see Table 7, Appendix) indicates an acceptable fit of the model, based on the 200 samples generated.

The next step consists in fitting the unconstrained Rasch model. Its results (see Table 8, Appendix) indicate that the discrimination parameter it is different from 1; therefore, I will test this difference using a likelihood ratio test. The likelihood ratio test (see Table 9, Appendix), suggests that the unconstrained version of the Rasch model is more suitable for this data, because according to the definitions used by the summary() and anova() functions of ltm package, considers AIC and BIC's values as "smaller, the better" (Rizopoulos, 2006, p. 11). Next, I will develop further the extensions of the unconstrained Rasch model, using a two-parameter logistic

model, which uses as different discrimination parameter per item. This test is realized using the function ltm() of the same package. Its results are then compared with the unconstrained Rasch model, using a likelihood ratio test (Table 10, Appendix). The second option is to test another extension of the unconstrained Rasch model, by incorporating a guessing parameter to the unconstrained Rasch model, to see if the fit improves this way. This is done using the tpm() function of the same package. Based on the results of the likelihood ratio test (see Table 11, Appendix), I will adopt the last model created, the unconstrained Rasch model, with a guessing parameter.

After I chose the best fitting model, I use the factor.scores() function, that produces ability estimates for observed response patterns. The function produces a latent structure that will be used further in the analysis. I create a new variable, which is the measure of intolerance. The variable created has 36 values, the minimal value is -0.53 and the maximum value is 1.42. Also, the variable is normally distributed, skewness is between -1 and 1, and kurtosis between -7 and 7 (see Table 12, Appendix). All this considered, the new measure of intolerance will be used further in the analysis as a dependent variable in a linear regression model, treated as a continuous variable.

Creating the measure of "homophobia"

I used the Principal Component Analysis to create the measure of "homophobia", using the answers to the following questions "For me is indifferent if my friends are homosexuals of heterosexuals", "Associations that militate for the rights of sexual minorities are indispensable" on a 5-point Likert type scale, (1 - disagree completely, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree or disagree, 4 – agree, 5 – agree completely). The answers to the second and forth questions were recoded, because the "disagree completely" answer option was equivalent to the "agree

completely" answer option of the first and the third question. After the recoding process, I proceeded with the Principal Component Analysis, and I extracted one factor, expressing homophobia. The new measure created has 0.56% of variance explained (see Table 13, Appendix). The first factor, "I believe you cannot trust homosexuals" has a loading equal to 0.76, the second one "For me is indifferent if my friends are homosexuals of heterosexuals" a loading of 0.75, the third factor "I believe that homosexuals should not be allowed to get married" a loading equal to 0.67, and the last factor "Associations that militate for the rights of sexual minorities are indispensable" has a loading equal to 0.71 (see Table 13, Appendix). The new measure of homophobia has 176 values and it is normally distributed (see Table 14, Appendix). The variable is treated as continuous, and it is used as a dependent variable in the next step of the analysis.

Creating the "diversity of peer group", "school environment" and "religiosity" measures

The "diversity of peer group" variable is assessed through the following questions: "At school, how many of the people you talk to besides your close friends: speak a different mother tongue than yours?/are from a family that has much more or less money than yours?/have a different religion than yours?/often disagree with you on public issues and politics?/are Roma/gypsies?" ?"), measured in a seven-point scale (1 - none, 2 - almost none, 3 - a few, 4 - about half, 5 – many, 6 – almost all, 7 - all). Using Principal Component Analysis, I created the measure of "diversity of peer group" for both waves of the study. The measure of "diversity of peer group" for the ninth grade has 193 values, and normally distributed (see Table 16, Appendix). The measure has the following loading factors: 0.68, 0.64, 0.72, 0.53 and 0.54 (see Table 15, Appendix). The measure of "diversity of peer group" for the twelfth grade has the following loading factors: 0.69, 0.61, 0.71, 0.44 and 0.47 (see Table 17, Appendix). The new variable has

226 values, and normally distributed (see Table 18, Appendix). Both measures are treated as continuous variables further in the analysis.

School environment is assessed through the following questions: "Last school year, how often did you talk about the following topics in your classes: current political events?/ religions other than Christianity?/ other countries and cultures outside of North America and Europe?" measured on a 4-point scale (1 – never, 2 – once or twice, 3 – several times, 4 – many times). Using Principal Component Analysis, I created two measures on "school environment", one for each wave of the study. The measure for the first wave of the study explains 57% of variance, with the first factor "current political events" loading equal to 0.63, the second factor "religions other than Christianity" loading equal to 0.70 and the third factor "other countries and cultures outside of North America and Europe" loading equal to 0.78 (see Table 23, Appendix). The new variable has 52 values, and is normally distributed (see Table 24, Appendix). The measure of "school environment" for the second wave of the study explains 57% of variance, with the first factor "current political events" loading equal to 0.70, the second factor "religions other than Christianity" loading equal to 0.86 and the third factor "other countries and cultures outside of North America and Europe" loading equal to 0.87 (see Table 25, Appendix). The new variable has 50 values, and is normally distributed (see Table 26, Appendix).

Interpersonal trust is assessed through the following questions: "How much trust do you have in people from another religion than yours?" "How much trust do you have in people you met for the first time?" and "How much do you trust people with another ethnicity than yours/Romanians/Hungarians/Roma?" on a 4-point scale (1 - not at all, 2 - a little bit, 3 - somewhat, 4 - a lot). Using Principal Component Analysis, I created two measures of interpersonal trust, one for each wave of the study.

30

The "religiosity" measure is assessed through the following questions: "In the past 12 months, about how often did you attend religious services?" and "About how often do you pray?" measured on 5-point scale (1 – never, 2 – once a month, 3 – once a week, 4 – several times a week, 5 - everyday). Based on the assumption of an underlying dimension, I created two measures of religiosity, one for each wave of the study, using Principal Component Analysis. The measure of religiosity for the first wave of the study explains 69% of variance, each factor loading is 0.83 (see Table 18, Appendix). The measure has 21 values, normally distributed (see Table 19, Appendix). The measure of religiosity for the second wave of the study explains 66% of variance, each factor loading is 0.81 (see Table 20, Appendix). The measure has 21 values, normally distributed (see Table 21, Appendix). Gender is also included as a control variable, with "female" as a reference category.

Racial and ethnic conflicts in the school environment are assessed through the following question "Do you agree or not that there are racial and ethnic tensions in your school" on a 4-poin scale (1 - disagree strongly, 2 - disagree somewhat, 3 - agree somewhat, 4 - agree strongly).

In order to assess the socio structural variables, economic conditions and academic performance are used. Respondents' level of education is not a reliable measure for education here, because the respondents are high-school students; therefore they have the same level of education for each of the time point in the study. The grades the respondents reported will be used to assess their academic performance. Respondents were asked the following question "At school, what grades do you usually get?", with answer options on a 6-point scale (1 - 9 or 10, 2 - 8 or 9, 3 - 7 or 8, 4 - 6 or 7, 5 - 5 or 6, 6 - lower than 5). Income is assessed as respondents' perceptions regarding the financial wellbeing of the family, compared to other families. The question
measuring income is "Do you think your family is better or worse off than other families in Romania?" on a 3-point scale (1 - better off, 2 - doing about the same as other families, 3 - worse off).

Data Analysis

This initial section deals with preliminary data analysis, used to illustrate the characteristics of the high school students that were subject of the present study. Also, it offers some first insights into our interest variables, attitudes that express intolerance towards specific groups. I begin by illustrating the distribution of answers on questions that assess immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes, measured first in the ninth grade and then in the twelfth grade. For illustration purposes, I added the response category "disagree strongly" with "disagree somewhat" and the category "agree somewhat" with "agree strongly".

Table	1.	The	distribution	of	variables	assessing	immigration	skepticism	and	xenophobia
measu	red	in nir	th grade (per	rcen	tages)					

	Disagree	Agree
It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs	32.6	67.4
The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life	52.5	47.5
One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own	60.8	38.2
ethnic/religious group		

N = 400

As the distribution of answers shows, a large majority of the respondents consider that is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs (67.4%). Similarly, almost half of the respondents consider that the presence of too many immigrants is a threat to their way of life (47.5%). A close percentage represents the respondents who consider that one should first pay attention the need of the members of her own ethnic or religious group (38.2%). Following Stouffer's (1955) original assumption, that political tolerance is good and any deviance from its absolute standard is undesirable and can threaten democracy, the results presented above show support for the negative statements towards immigrants or people with different culture and customs. The results help portraying Romanian youth as presenting rather intolerant attitudes. In a study on 16 years old Belgian high school students, Quintelier and Dejaeghere (2008) used a similar measures to assess intolerance.

Table 2. The distribution of variables assessing immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in twelfth grade (percentages)

	Disagree	Agree
It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs	31.2	68.8
The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life	49.4	50.6
One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group	74.9	25.1
N = 400		

The distribution of responses regarding immigration skepticism and xenophobia assessed in the twelfth (Table 2, above) grade is roughly similar to the one from the ninth grade (Table 1, above). An overall picture shows that that are noticeable differences regarding the statement "One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group"; from the ninth to twelfth grade, the respondents seem to reduce their opinion on whether "one should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own ethnic/religious group", 39.2% in the ninth grade to 25.1% in the twelfth grade. Previous analysis suggested that the levels of intolerance towards immigrants decreased in Romania over the last 20 years (Suciu, 2010).

In assessing the measure of political intolerance for the second wave of the study, I will use the questions related to grating civil liberties, namely the right to organize demonstrations, to certain social groups, like groups that militate for the rights of Roma people, extreme right groups, atheists, Muslims, and groups that militate for the rights of sexual minorities. Table 3 presents the distribution of answers to these questions, measured in the twelfth grade.

Table 3. The distribution of variables assessing political intolerance measured in twelfth grade, as response to the question "Do you consider that the following group should have the right to organize a demonstration in the city where you live?" (percentages)

	No	Yes
groups that militate for the rights of Roma people	43.5	56.5
extreme-right groups	52.2	47.8
Muslims	61.7	38.3
atheists	72.2	27.8
groups that militate for the rights of sexual minorities	72.4	27.6
N = 400		

The political intolerance measure assessed whether the respondents are willing to extend the civil right to organize a demonstration to certain groups, as a minimal requirement for democracy. Because the right to rally represents a minimal, but fundamental requirement of a liberal democracy (Dahl, 1991), the denial of this right leads to consider the respondent that opposes a basic democratic freedom to a disliked group as an intolerant citizen (Peffley and Rohrschneider, 2003, p. 11). As the distribution of answers to the questions assessing the rights of a number of social groups or social minorities to organize demonstrations shows (see Table 3, above), the surveyed Romanian youth present political intolerance, rather than political tolerance. Contrary to the results of other studies on Romanian youth that revealed high levels of intolerance towards Roma (Ives, Obenchain and Oikonomidoy, 2010; Dimitrova, Buzea, Ljujic and Jordanov, 2013),

here the attitudes towards Roma are not extremely intolerant, with 56.5% of respondents granting the civil right to organize a demonstration in the city where they live to an organization that militates for the rights of Roma people. Regarding the extreme right groups, 52.3% of respondents deny their civil right to organize a demonstration. When it comes to religious minorities, the level of intolerance increases; 61.7% of respondents deny the civil right to organize a demonstration of Muslims. In the least-liked group category enter both atheists and groups that militate for the rights of sexual minorities. 72.2% of respondents reported that they do not agree with their right of atheists to organize a demonstration, and 72.4% of respondents deny the right of organizing a demonstration of a group that militates for the rights of sexual minorities. These results portray a Romanian society with high levels of intolerance towards specific social groups, as extreme right groups, Muslims, atheists and sexual minorities, among its youth. Accordingly, it is noteworthy to deepen the understanding regarding the attitudes against the least-liked groups, atheist and sexual minorities. Due to data limitations, this is possible only for the latter group, sexual minorities.

Table 4. The	distribution	of variables	assessing	attitudes	towards	gays,	measured	in the	twelfth
grade (percen	tages)								

	disagree	disagree	agree	agree
	completely			completely
I believe you cannot trust homosexuals	33.2	28	14.6	24.2
For me is indifferent if my friends are homosexuals of heterosexuals	45.4	26.3	16.1	12.2
I believe that homosexuals should not be allowed to get married	22.2	13.6	21.9	42.2
Associations that militate for the rights of sexual minorities are indispensable	46.4	25.2	20.6	7.9

N = 400

As mentioned above, sexual minorities proved to be one of the least-liked groups among the surveyed Romanian youth. Therefore, it is important to gain better insights into attitudes towards this particular social group. For a better illustration of the answers, I eliminated from the analysis the middle category of answers, "neither agree nor disagree". As the distribution of answers from Table 4 (see above) reveals, 40% of respondents reported that they believe that homosexuals cannot be trusted; it represents a significant and worrisome percent. The majority of respondents are against the same sex marriages, with 21.9% agreeing, and 42.2% agreeing completely.

In accord with the answer to the previous question, whether groups that militate for the rights of sexual minorities should be allowed to organize demonstrations (see Table 2, above), a large proportion of the respondents reported that they disagree with the idea that associations that militate for the right of sexual minorities are indispensable (46.4% disagree completely and 25.2% disagree). Questioned whether it is indifferent for them if their friends are homosexuals or heterosexuals, only 12.2% answered that they agree completely, and 16.1% that they agree with the statement. The worrisome percent of 71.7 that disagree and disagree strongly with the statement are pointing towards a significant majority of youth that is highly intolerant towards sexual minorities. These results gain even more weight if homophobia is recognized as a good and sensible measure of political intolerance (Inglehart, 1997).

Another variable of interest for this study is represented by the diversity of the peer group one is part of. Considered one of the most important predictors in the process of political socialization, through which behaviors and attitudes are shaped, the diversity of peer group will be tested further in the analysis as a predictor of intolerance. For this initial step of the analysis, I will check how the answers to the questions that assess the diversity of peer group are distributed. Furthermore, I will check if there are some noticeable differences between the two time points of the study.

Table 5. The distribution of variables assessing "the diversity of peer group" measured in the ninth and twelfth grade, measured through the question "How many of your close friends…"

	none	almost	a few	about	many	almost	all
		none		half		all	
speak a different mother tongue							
than yours?							
IX	53.1	24	15.9	0.9	1.6	2.8	1.6
XII	37.5	26.3	30.6	2.8	1.2	0.7	0.9
are from a family that has much							
more or less money than yours?							
IX	7.7	18.1	57.4	9.5	6	0.9	0.2
XII	6.7	16.4	53.7	10.6	7.4	3.7	1.4
have a different religion than your	s?						
IX	18.5	25.7	44.2	2.8	3.7	2.5	2.5
XII	26	27.6	35.2	3.2	5.5	1.6	0.7
often disagree with you on public							
issues and politics?							
IX	26.4	39.3	25.5	4.2	3	0.9	0.7
XII	23.9	36.4	29.3	4.7	1.9	1.2	2.4
are Roma/gypsies?							
IX	74.4	17.8	6.9	0.2	0.2	0	0.5
XII	71.9	14.5	12.4	0.9	0	0	0

N = 400

We can observe that the respondents' perceptions about their family's economic situation, compared to the one of their peers, had changed from the ninth to twelfth grade. The perceived income inequalities increased in time. This may due to the fact that when they were questioned in the beginning of the ninth grade, the respondent's group of peers was formed of colleagues from elementary school, which composition tends to be more homogenous. This assumption is based on the fact that elementary schools in Romania are evenly distributed across the city, whereas the high schools are situated mainly in the city center. Therefore, the social composition

of an elementary school is more homogenous compared with the social composition of a high school. When surveyed in the twelfth grade, the respondents' group of peers may have modified, including high school colleagues. The later ones come from a more heterogonous environment, therefore including income inequalities. Regarding the question assessing how many peers that speak a different mother tongue the respondent has, we can observe an interesting trend. From the ninth to the twelfth grade, the percent of respondents who said that they have "almost none" and "a few" friends that speak a different mother tongue increased, in some cases even doubled.

The trend towards a more homogenous group of peers is even more visible if we look at the question assessing the religious denomination of peers. While in the ninth grade, 18% of respondents reported that don't have any peer with a different religious denomination, the percent increases for the twelfth grade, reaching 26%. Religiosity is also treated as a predictor of political intolerance. When questioning the respondent if she has Roma people in her group of peers, one can observe that the answers follow the general trend. From ninth to twelfth grade, the percent of Roma peers decreases. The percent of peers with different views on social and political matters decreases from the ninth to the twelfth grade, pointing towards groups of peers that become more homogenous over time.

After the analysis of the distributions, one can notice that a trend is present throughout the answers. The questions assessing peers' influence point to a shift towards more homogenous groups, which could be treated as a sign of increased intolerance, and avoiding or rejecting cultural diversity. The preliminary analyses reported here give important insights on changes that occurred in time and were captured through the survey questions. For clearer links between the composition of the groups of peers and intolerant attitudes, more sophisticated statistical analysis has to be conducted.

	Immigration	Immigration	Political	Homophobia 12	
	skepticism and	skepticism and	intolerance 12	grade	
	xenophobia 9 grade	xenophobia 12 grade	grade		
Discussion in	-0.05 (0.25)	0.01 (0.79)	-0.13** (0.007)	-0.07 (0.18)	
the classroom					
Peer group	-0.08 (0.07)	-0.11** (0.01)	-0.13** (0.004)	-0.08 (0.08)	
diversity					
Ethnic/racial	0.15*** (0.001)	0.07 (0.17)	0.04 (0.36)	0.04 (0.40)	
tensions					
Religiosity	0.13** (0.009)	0.11** (0.01)	0.16*** (0.000)	0.25*** (0.000)	
Grades	0.08 (0.11)	-0.01 (0.79)	-0.05 (0.24)	0.01 (0.75)	
Trust	-0.09 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.31)	-0.19*** (0.000	-0.01 (0.84)	
Income	-0.01 (0.79)	0.006 (0.90)	0.03 (0.53)	-0.03 (0.48)	
Gender	0.04 (0.37)	-0.002 (0.96)	-0.03 (0.5)	-0.27***(0.000)	
Significance lave	l_{0} , n_{1} volue $< 0.001 * * *$	$n_{\rm reluc} < 0.01 * * n_{\rm rel}$	$a_{110} < 0.05*$		

Table 6. Bivariate Analysis of Immigration skepticism and xenophobia ninth and twelfth grade, political intolerance, homophobia, Discussion in the classroom environment, peer group diversity, ethnic and racial tensions in school environment, grades, trust, income and gender

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05

The bivariate analyses presented above (Table 6) show that ethnic and racial tensions $(r=0.15^{***})$ and religiosity $(r=0.13^{**})$ are positively correlated with immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in the ninth grade, meaning that as immigration skepticism increases, ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment and religiosity increase as well. Diversity of peer group is negatively $(r=-0.11^{**})$ correlated with immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in the twelfth grade, while religiosity $(r=0.11^{**})$ is keeping its week, but positive relationship. Discussion in the classroom environment $(r=-0.13^{**})$, the diversity of peer group $(r=-0.13^{**})$ and trust $(r=-0.19^{***})$ decrease as the level of political intolerance increases, while religiosity $(r=-0.16^{***})$ is positively correlated. Gender is negatively correlated with homophobia $(r=-0.27^{***})$, indicating that girls have lower levels of homophobia compared to boys.

Religiosity is positively correlated with homophobia ($r=0.25^{***}$), suggesting that as one is more religious, has higher levels of homophobia. The bivariate also indicated the absence of a relationship between income and grades and the variables that express intolerance.

intorerance and Achophool	intolerance and Nenophobia				
	Immigration	Immigration	Political	Homophobia	
	skepticism and xenophobia 9	skepticism and xenophobia 12	intolerance 12	12	
Immigration skepticism and xenophobia 9	-				
Immigration skepticism and xenophobia 12	0.25*** (0.000)	-			
Political intolerance	0.20*** (0.000)	0.20*** (0.000)	-		
Homophobia	0.16*** 0.001)	0.20*** (0.000)	0.35*** (0.000)	-	

Table 7. Bivariate analysis on Immigration skepticism ninth and twelfth grade, political intolerance and xenophobia

N = 400

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05*

The bivariate analysis between the measures of intolerance used in the regression models above indicate that as there is a positive relationship between the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in the ninth grade and the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in the twelfth grade (r= 0.25^{***}), political intolerance (r= 0.20^{***}), and homophobia (r= 0.16^{***}). The same weak, but positive relationship exists between the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia measured in the twelfth grade (r= 0.20^{***}). The same weak, but positive relationship exists between the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia (r= 0.20^{***}), and homophobia (r= 0.20^{***}), and homophobia (r= 0.20^{***}), and homophobia (r= 0.35^{***}), suggests that as political intolerance increases, so does homophobia. All the coefficients are statistically significant, indicating that even weak, the relationships are not present by chance. The results suggest that having high levels of

immigration skepticism in ninth grade is positively associated with having high levels of immigration skepticism, political intolerance and homophobia in the twelfth grade.

Testing the predictors of "immigration skepticism and xenophobia" for the ninth and twelfth grade

The regression analysis technique is used in determining the predictors of intolerant attitudes of Romanian youth, using the sample of high school students, questioned in the ninth and then in the twelfth grade. The models use the measures of intolerance as a dependent variable, and the diversity of peer group, the effects of the school's environment, ethnic or racial tensions in the school environment, academic performance, religiosity, generalized trust, economic situation and gender as independent variables.

Table 8. Regression model testing the predictors of immigration skepticism and xenophobia in the ninth grade

	Estimate
Discussions had in the class environment	-0.01 (0.05)
There are racial and ethnic tensions at my school	0.20*** (0.06)
Diversity of peer group	-0.08 (0.05)
Religiosity	0.14** (0.05)
Grades	0.07 (0.05)
Trust	-0.07 (0.05)
Income	-0.04 (0.09)
Gender	0.05 (0.010)
Adj. R squared	0.05
F-statistic: 3.634 on 8 and 377 DF, p-value < 0.00)1

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05*

Checking the assumptions of linear regression, there are no influential outliers that surpass the Cook's distance threshold of 0.1. The residuals are normally distributed (see Figure 1, Appendix). The error variance is roughly constant; therefore the homoscedasticity assumption is met. Autocorrelation is a problem for panel data; even if this study has two waves, there is four years distance between them, so the reason to believe that the observations are not independent one from another is not so strong. The model explains only 5% of the variation in the dependent variable, suggesting that none of the explanatory variables were captured in this model. The model may suffer from omitted variable bias, because modernization, or the rural or urban residence, which is a known predictor of intolerance that proved to be significant for Romania's case (Miller-Viman and Fesnic, 2010) was not included in the model, due to data limitation.

The hypothesized relationship between the presence of ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment and immigration skepticism and xenophobia attitudes is confirmed, results showing that individuals that go to a school where there are ethnic and racial tensions have more intolerant attitudes (β =0.20***), while controlling for the diversity of peer group, the effect of school, religiosity, trust, academic performance, economic conditions and gender. The hypothesis regarding the effect of discussion during classes is not confirmed. The effect "peer group diversity" goes in the hypothesized direction, even if it does not reach the threshold for statistical significance. Religiosity holds positive effects, confirming the hypothesis that individuals with strong religious beliefs are holding more immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes (β =0.14**). In the case of academic performance, gender, trust and income, the null hypotheses could not been rejected, therefore there is no effect of these variables on immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes, measured in the ninth grade. In the next step

of the analysis, I will use a similar measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, this time assessed in the second wave of the study. The results allow seeing if there are significant differences between the predictors of immigration skepticism and xenophobia in the ninth and twelfth grade.

	Model 1	Model 2
Discussions in the class	0.04 (0.05)	0.06 (0.06)
environment		
There are racial and ethnic	0.10 (0.07)	0.10 (0.07)
tensions at my school		
Diversity of peer group	-0.61** (0.21)	-0.55* (0.22)
Religiosity	0.13* (0.05)	0.09. (0.05)
Grades	0.01 (0.05)	0.04 (0.05)
Trust	0.02 (0.06)	0.03 (0.06)
Income	-0.08 (0.10)	-0.12 (0.10)
Gender	-0.09 (0.11)	0.39 (0.05)
Immigration skepticism and		0.21*** (0.05)
xenophobia in the ninth grade		
Adj. R squared	0.03	0.07
	F-statistic: 2.31 on 8 and	F-statistic: 3.641 on 10 and
	355 DF, p-value: 0.068	399 DF, p-value < 0.001
N - 400		

Table 9. Regression model testing the predictors of immigration skepticism and xenophobia in the twelfth grade

= 400

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05*

Checking the assumptions of linear regression, the models are fully specified, there are no influential outliers that surpass the Cook's distance threshold of 0.1. The residuals are normally distributed (see Figure 2, Appendix). The error variance is roughly constant; therefore the homoscedasticity assumption is met. The Adj. R² coefficient of Model 1 indicates that the model does not capture any of the predictors of intolerance. Still, the religiosity has a similar and positive effect (β =0.13*) indicating that people with strong religious belief have higher levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia. While the hypothesis regarding the presence of ethnic and racial conflicts in the school environment was not confirmed, there is a significant effect of "peer group diversity" (β =-0.61**). This relationship indicates that as one has a more homogenous group of peers, it has higher levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia. The "diversity of peer group", which approached the level of statistical significance in the previous model, has a stronger effect in this model (β =-0.33*), and statistically significant one. The hypothesis is confirmed, showing that as one is part of peer groups that is more homogenous, one has higher levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes. The effect of the presence of ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment is not confirmed, together with the effect of academic performance, economic conditions, level of generalized trust or gender.

The Model 2 included as independent variable the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, assessed in the ninth grade. Once this variable introduced, the effect of diversity of peer group (β =-0.55*) and of religiosity (β =-0.09.) decrease. The effect of the newly introduced variable (β =0.21***) indicating that the high levels of homophobia are influenced by the immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes one had in the ninth grade.

In the two models presented above, I tested the effect of diversity of peer group, the effect of discussion hold in the classroom environment, the presence of ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment, religiosity, trust, academic performance, economic conditions and gender on immigration skepticism and xenophobia. The measures of immigration skepticism and xenophobia were created using the same questions, measured in the ninth and twelfth grade. The

results show that the effect of religiosity increases in time, and that diversity of the peer group gains statistical significance from the first to the second wave of the study. Even so, the effects are very modest and the models fail to capture and explain the variation in the dependent variable. In the next part of the analysis, I will test the effect of discussion hold in the classroom environment, the presence of ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment, religiosity, trust, academic performance, economic conditions and gender on political intolerance, measured in the twelfth grade.

Table 10. Regression model testing the predictors of political intolerance in the twelfth grade					
	Model 1	Model 2			
Discussions had in the	-0.09* (0.16)	-0.07. (0.04)			
classroom environment					
There are racial and ethnic	0.04 (0.04)	0.04 (0.04)			
tensions at my school					
Diversity of peer group	-0.30*(0.14)	-0.27.(0.14)			
Religiosity	0.13***(0.03)	0.12**(0.03)			
Grades	-0.06 (0.03)	-0.05 (0.04)			
Trust	-0.13***(0.04)	-0.12**(0.04)			
Income	-0.06 (0.06)	-0.08 (0.06)			
Gender	-0.03 (0.07)	0.31 (0.23)			
Immigration skepticism and		0.09 ** (0.03)			
xenophobia ninth grade					
Adj. R squared	0.10	0.12			
	F-statistic 5.91 on 8 and 360	F-statistic 5.467 on 8 and 344			
	DF, p-value < 0.001	DF, p-value < 0.001			

Table 10. Regression model testing the predictors of political intolerance in the twelfth grade

N=400

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05*

Checking the assumptions of linear regression, the Model 1 is fully specified, there are no influential outliers that surpass the Cook's distance threshold of 0.1. The residuals are normally distributed (see Figure 3, Appendix). The error variance is roughly constant; therefore the homoscedasticity assumption is met. Even if with very modest results, this model confirms the effects captured by the previous two models. The hypothesis testing the effect of the "peer group diversity" is confirmed, showing that as one is part of peer groups that is more homogenous, one has lower levels of political intolerance (β =-0.30*). Religiosity has a positive effect (β =0.13***) confirming the hypothesis that people with stronger religious beliefs have more political intolerant attitudes. As different from the previous model, the hypothesis testing the effect of the open discussions held in the classes is confirmed (β =-0.09*), indicating that is one assists to discussions in class about current political events, different religious denominations or other countries outside the EU and North America, one has lower levels of political intolerance. Similar to the previous regression model, the null hypotheses testing the effect of academic performance, economic conditions, level of generalized trust or gender could not been rejected. In Model 2, as the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia assessed in the ninth grade is introduced, the effect of discussions had in the classroom environment and of peer group diversity decreases, not reaching the threshold of statistical significance, and the effect of religiosity and trust also decrease slightly. Immigration skepticism and xenophobia has a positive, but week effect ($\beta=0.09^{**}$).

Testing the predictors of homophobia

Preliminary analysis revealed that the Romanian youngsters that were subject of this study are highly intolerant towards sexual minorities. The gays are the least-liked group, with 72.4% of respondents denying the right of a group that militates for the rights of sexual minorities to

organize a demonstration (see Table 2, above), and with strong attitudes opposing same sex marriages (see Table 3, above). Considering the worrisome attitudes against gay people, in the next step of the analysis I test the predictors of intolerant attitudes against attitudes towards gays.

Table 11. Regression model testing the predictors of "homophobia" in the twelfth grade				
	Model 1	Model 2		
Discussions held in the	-0.01 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.06)		
classroom environment				
There are racial and ethnic	0.05 (0.06)	0.06 (0.06)		
tensions at my school				
Diversity of peer group	-0.33* (0.15)	-0.38. (0.20)		
Religiosity	0.24*** (0.05)	0.22*** (0.05)		
Grades	-0.04 (0.05)	-0.02 (0.05)		
Trust	-0.02 (0.05)	-0.01 (0.05)		
Income	-0.06 (0.08)	-0.10 (0.09)		
Gender	-0.66*** (0.10)	-0.27 (0.05)		
Immigration skepticism and		0.11* (0.05)		
xenophobia ninth grade				
Adj. R squared	0.15	0.16		
	F-statistic 8.883 on 8 and	F-statistic 7.555 on 10 and		
	357 DF, p-value < 0.001	341 DF, p-value < 0.001		

able 11. Regression model t	esting the predictors	of "homophobia"	in the twelfth gra

N = 400

Significance levels: p-value < 0.001***, p-value < 0.01**, p-value < 0.05*

Checking the assumptions of linear regression, the model 1 is fully specified, there are no influential outliers that surpass the Cook's distance threshold of 0.1. The residuals are normally distributed (see Figure 4, Appendix). The homoscedasticity assumption is met, the error variance being roughly constant. The model explains 15% of variation in the dependent variable, homophobia. Looking at the model fit and then at the effect of the predictors, we can observe that homophobia is better captured and explained through these predictors than the measures of immigrations skepticism and xenophobia and political intolerance. This may indicate that the homophobia is a more acute attitude of Romanian youth. The diversity of peer group has the hypothesized effect, while controlling for religiosity, the presence of ethnic and racial tensions in the school environment, the effect of the discussions hold during the classes regarding diversity, academic performance, economic conditions, trust and gender. The relationship suggests that as one is part of peer groups that is more homogenous, one has higher levels of homophobic attitudes (β =-0.33*). The hypothesized relationship between homophobia and religiosity is confirmed, the results showing that people with strong religious beliefs have greater levels of homophobia. The "religiosity" variable is among the best predictors of homophobia in this model $(\beta=0.24^{***})$. The null hypotheses for the relationships between homophobia and discussion had in the classroom environment, academic performance, interpersonal trust and economic could not been rejected. The hypothesis testing the effect of gender on homophobia is confirmed, indicating that boys have greater levels of homophobia (β =-0.66***). Gender's effects are statistically significant only in predicting homophobia.

In Model 2, by introducing the measure of immigration skepticism and xenophobia assessed in the ninth grade, the effect of religiosity decreases slightly (β =0.22***), while the effect of gender loses its statistical significance. Immigration skepticism and xenophobia has a positive, effect (β =0.11*), indicating that the high levels of homophobia are influenced by the immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes one had in the ninth grade.

Discussion of the results

As the results of previous studies pointed out, Romanian youth holds fairly intolerant attitudes towards minorities, such as Roma, gays and religious groups (Miller-Viman and Fesnic, 2010; Ives, Obenchain and Oikonomidoy, 2010; Dimitrova, Buzea, Ljujic and Jordanov, 2013). Because the generation that is the subject of the present study was born and raised in a democratic environment, the expectation is that they present political tolerance rather than political intolerance. The purpose of this study was to identify the predictors of the intolerant attitudes of Romanian youth, expressed as immigration skepticism and xenophobia and political intolerance, for two different time points, in the ninth and twelfth grade. Also, data allow testing for the predictors of attitudes against gay people, which proved to be the least-liked group. The panel nature of the study allows testing for the effect of immigration skepticism and xenophobia in the ninth grade on the levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political tolerance and homophobia assessed in the twelfth grade The particularity of this study lays in the age category that addresses, which is represented by high school students, unlike most of the studies that focus on college students. Adolescence is a significant period in the formation of political attitudes (Jennings and Niemi, 1974; Jennings, Stoker and Bowers, 2009); therefore it is important to identify the predictors of political intolerance that are at work in this age period. The study concentrates on predictors of intolerant attitudes at individual level.

The results of the analyses revealed that Romanian youth that were subject of this study are rather intolerant against gays, Muslims, Atheist, Roma and extreme-right groups. The levels of intolerance vary between the discriminated groups, with atheists and gays being the least-liked group. In testing the predictors of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, and political intolerance, only the hypotheses regarding the diversity of peer groups, the presence of ethnic and racial conflicts in the school environment and religiosity were confirmed. When testing the predictors of homophobic attitudes, alongside with the hypotheses testing the effect of peers' influence and religiosity, the hypothesis regarding gender was also confirmed.

Peer influence, disguised as diversity of peer group for the purpose of this study, is a component of the political socialization process, which proved to have significant effects in relationship with intolerance. Peer influence is the most effective during adolescence, the exact same period captured through the data used in this study. For this reason, its relevance and significance are increased. The results revealed that people with less a diverse group of peers have greater levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobia, political intolerance and greater levels of homophobia. Even if statistically small, the effect of peer group's diversity has substantive significance. It stands as a proof that peers' role in adolescence is significant. The process of peer influence is not one in which youth just absorb and copy other's behavior. Instead, youth tend to befriend people with whom they already have things in common, like similar views on social and political issues, in this case.

As competition, conflicts and tensions between the dominant group and outgroups appear, there is an increase tendency in adopting negative attitudes towards the members of outgroups (Nesdale, 1999). Therefore, the expectation is that in schools where there ethnic and racial tensions, this will have a negative impact of students' attitudes. The variable "there are ethnic and racial tensions at my school" proved to have significant results only in the model testing the predictors of intolerance for the ninth grade. Maybe due to the fact that the first wave of the study was conducted in the beginning of the twelfth grade, these actions might seem striking to the new high school students. The effect disappears in time, possibly because from the ninth to twelfth grade, the students' perception about the presence of ethnic and racial conflicts in the school's environment decreases.

The effect of school, summarizing the discussions had during classes about current political events, other religious denominations than Christianity or about other countries, besides EU members or North America, has statistically significance only in the model testing the predictors of the alternative measure of intolerance, measured in the twelfth grade. Together with the influence exerted by the peer group's diversity, the school environment is an important element of the process of political socialization, in which attitudes and behaviors are shaped (Park and Judd, 2005). As the school environment becomes more open in discussion regarding diversity, the expectation is that it will foster tolerant attitudes. Therefore, if high school students are exposed to an open environment, they might learn to accept diversity and be less intolerant.

Religiosity proved to have positive and statistically significant effects, suggesting that people with strong religious beliefs hold high levels of political intolerance, and even higher levels of homophobia. The results confirm the results of previous studies on Romania (Viman-Miller and Fesnic, 2010). The strong effect of religiosity should not be surprising; the Romanian society is highly religious, even among its youth. Elimination of the subject "Religion" from the list of mandatory subjects in the academic curricula stirred intense debate. Among the surveyed youth, a vast majority believe that the subject "Religion" should be learned in school. Additionally, almost three quarters of the respondents pray every day or several times a week. This indicates that the Romanian youth that is subject of this study have strong religious beliefs and are strong supporters of teaching religion in schools, as a mandatory subject. Such strong religious beliefs have attached a series of social and ethical norms that have to be abided. The Christian-Orthodox tradition highly criticizes and opposes homosexuality and every expression of it. Therefore,

giving the strong religious belief the respondents share, their highly intolerant attitudes towards gays are not unexpected. However, the results are worrisome if youth are considered to be more open-minded, compared to their elder counterparts. If youth have these severe intolerant attitudes against gays, what happens with these attitudes in time? The expectation is that these attitudes would increase in time, altogether with the religious beliefs, which grow stronger over the years.

The academic performance and income did not prove to have any statistically significant effects on intolerant attitudes or on homophobia, as hypothesized (Kunovich, 2004). The lack of statistically significant effect of income might due to the fact that money is not considered an important issue in youth's perspective. More exactly, the effect of income may be observed when people are competing for economic resources. Because high school students are financially supported by their parents, the effect on economic conditions is not crystalized.

Generalized trust as an expression of acceptance of diversity has an important role in encouraging tolerance and cooperation between people from different groups. Based on its association with reducing prejudice, the expectation was that people with higher levels of generalized trust will have lower levels of political intolerance. A similar hypothesis was formulated in relationship with homophobic attitudes. Generalized trust has the hypothesized effect in both cases, but the effect is not statistically significant. Even if the effect of trust is small in both cases, its direction is not a surprising one; 60% of respondents reported that they have little or none at all trust in Romanians, as well as in people with a different religious denomination. Even more worrisome are the reported levels of trust towards Hungarians or Roma, 81% (have little or none at all trust), respectively 93%. These high figures help in portraying the Romanian youth as fairly intolerant.

Conclusions

This study builds on the present state of knowledge on political intolerance, with emphasis on immigration skepticism, xenophobia and homophobic attitudes. Confronted with high levels of racism and xenophobia among its youth, the future of democracy in this country is challenged. The results of the present study contribute to a better understanding of the predictors of intolerance in a less studied area, namely a CEE country.

The scholarly literature identified peer influence as one of the main predictors of intolerance and a significant component of political socialization process (Jennings and Niemi, 1974). Contact theory presumes that when the nature of the contact between individuals from different groups is positive, the negative biases and prejudices can be reduced (Allport, 1954; Roper, 1990). The results of the present study indicate that having a less diverse group of peers is associated with high levels of intolerance towards people from outgroups. The effect of peer group diversity proved to have stronger effects in the second wave of the study. The effect is also supported by the preliminary analysis that showed that peer groups become more homogenous in time. The contact theory as expressed above does not have a comprehensible role in the context of this study. Given the fact that the groups of peers became more homogenous over time, the following assumption can be made: because they hold high levels of prejudice, individuals avoid interacting with people from outgroups. This assumption is supported by Pettigrew's results (1998, p. 80), suggesting that the deeply prejudiced avoid intergroup contact and in the same time, resist positive effects from it.

The preliminary analyses indicated that from the ninth to twelfth grade, the immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes of the respondents decreased, suggesting that they became

more tolerant, even if the differences are rather small and vary among its dimensions. The relationship between age and intolerance is not a linear one; Zick, Küpper and Hövermann's European Report (2011) on intolerance, prejudice and discrimination revealed that the youngest age category of respondents, between 16 and 21, reported higher levels than the next-oldest age group. These differences are notable in the case of Germany, Italy, France and Hungary (Zick, Küpper and Hövermann, 2011). Given the rather high levels of immigration skepticism and xenophobic attitudes reported in the ninth grade that decreased slightly in the twelfth grade it might suggest that Romania follows the same pattern. Therefore, it would be noteworthy to look at the relationship between age and political intolerance among Romanians, capturing larger age differences.

Even if the age category captured in this study comprises high school years, I argue that the time points used do not belong to the same age category. The first wave of the study was conducted at the beginning of ninth grade, when the respondents began their high school studies, in a new environment. The second wave of the study was conducted in the beginning of twelfth grade. The peers' influence was assessed through questions regarding peers from school environment. The decision was made under the assumption that during both elementary and high school years, the group of peers is mostly formed with classmates. Therefore, the group of peers would change its composition from the first wave of the study to the second one. I make this assumption based on the fact that because the first wave of the study was made at the beginning of the ninth grade, the respondents did not had enough time to adjust to the new environment, for example making new friends among the classmates. This assumption is supported by the results of preliminary analysis that indicate that the groups of peers became more homogenous in time. This

homogeneity characteristic can be attributed to a new composition of the peer group, rather than to a peer pressure effect that would made the group members to share similar views.

The preliminary analysis revealed that Romanian youth have fairly intolerant attitudes against Atheists and against Muslims, confirming previous research results on CEE countries (Mudde, 2005). Unlike in Western Europe, in CEE countries the highest levels of prejudice are oriented towards religious groups, as Jehovah's Witnesses or Muslims (Mudde, 2005, p. 182). The attitudes against Muslims can be attributed to the influence exerted by the strong religious beliefs Romanian youth shares, which proved to be a significant predictor of intolerance. The strong attitudes against Atheists, that placed them among the least-liked social group, together with gays, are more difficult to explain. One may argues that this attitudes are attributed to the same strong religious beliefs that fuel attitudes against people with a different religious denomination. Religiosity is another predictor of intolerance that represents a dividing point in the patterns of intolerance across Europe. Todosijevici and Enyedi's study (2008) revealed that in Eastern European countries, religiosity holds no significant effects on political intolerance, while in Western Europe its effects are strong and positive. In Romania, religiosity proved to have statistically significant positive effects on intolerance and homophobia. As it was emphasized by Sandor and Popescu (2008), religiosity is not fostering the desired social values, as tolerance and acceptance of diversity. These results may not be surprising, given the high and strong levels of religious beliefs Romanian youth share and the important role played by the Christian Orthodox Church that opposes strongly homophobia. Even so, the results suggest that on religiosity and income, two significant predictors of intolerance, Romania is an outlier, deviating from the pattern followed by Eastern European countries.

The scholarly literature presents longstanding results on the relationship between gender and intolerance, with noticeable gender differences. Males are more prone to express prejudice than females (Akrami, Ekehammar and Araya, 2000) as well as to express higher levels of homophobia (Bernat, Calhoun, Adams and Zeichner, 2001). This pattern is not met across European countries, where Todosijevici and Enyedi (2008) found that women have less tolerant attitudes than males. In Romanian context, this relationship is ambiguous. While Miller-Viman and Fesnic (2010) argue that females are more intolerant than males, Cernea (2001) states that males present more negative attitudes than females. Even if the studies mentioned above used different samples, their results refer to the same population. The results of this study revealed that males higher levels of intolerance, expressed as homophobia, than females. Again, the gender differences in relationship with intolerance and homophobia do not follow the predicted pattern of Eastern European countries.

The scholarly literature divided Europe in Western and Eastern, sometimes in Western, and Central and Eastern on the other side. Each side has its attributes and some patterns that are supposed to be followed. The present analysis shows that the surveyed Romanian youth do not fit entirely the attributes of Eastern European countries. Therefore, a more precise classification would be necessary. Even the classification of Western Europe on one side and Central and European countries on the other side is not appropriate anymore. Some of the countries geographically situated in the center of Europe are different from some Eastern countries and placing them together may lead to mixed and biased expectations.

Because the study contained two waves, it was possible to observe effects and differences that occurred in time. The results of the study revealed that levels of intolerance from the ninth grade, expressed as immigration skepticism and xenophobia, have a positive effect on intolerant attitudes, expressed as immigration skepticism, political tolerance and homophobia, assessed in the twelfth grade. The nature of the analysis does not have the explanatory power for identifying the causal mechanism between intolerance and peers' influence, but it offers significant insights on how attitudes evolve in time, alongside with their predictors. Further analysis, with data on more time points would be necessary in order to gain a better understanding of the nature of the relationship between intolerance and influence exerted through peer group diversity.

Appendix

Table	Table 1. Descriptive statistics for the measure of intolerance, ninth grade							
Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kuı	tosis
0.06	1.00	400	0.12	-2.30	2.17	-0.11	-0.0)6
Table 2. Principal Component Analysis for the measure of "Intolerance", ninth grade								
						PC1	h2	u2
It is be	tter for a country	if almost every	yone shares	the same cus	toms	0.73	0.53	0.47
The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life					0.76	0.57	0.43	
One sh	nould first pay at	tention to the	needs of th	ne members o	of his/her own	0.60	0.37	0.63
ethnic/	ethnic/religious group							
SS loa	dings					1.47		
Propor	tion Var					0.49		
$\mathbf{W}=0.$	9794, p-value < 0	0.001						

Table 3. Principal Component Analysis for the measure of "Intolerance", twelfth grade					
	PC1	h2	u2		
It is better for a country if almost everyone shares the same customs	0.79	0.63	0.37		
The presence of too many immigrants is a threat to our way of life	0.82	0.68	0.32		
One should first pay attention to the needs of the members of his/her own	0.50	0.25	0.5		
ethnic/religious group					
SS loadings	1.56				
Proportion Var	0.56				
W = 0.9794, p-value < 0.001					

Table 4. Descriptive statistics for the measure of intolerance, ninth grade							
Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
0.12	1.00	400	0.17	-2.34	2.78	-0.57	-2.09

Model Summary:			
	log.Lik	AIC	BIC
	-978.0919	1964.184	1980.457
Coefficients:			
	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.d\$qv38_1	-0.3376	0.1195	-2.8260
Dffclt.d\$qv38_3	1.1811	0.1296	9.1160
Dffclt.d\$qv38_4	0.5712	0.1215	4.7012
Dffclt.d\$qv38_5	1.1770	0.1296	9.0787
Dscrmn	1.0000	NA	NA

Table 5. Latent Variable Modelling for the measure of "Intolerance", constrained Rasch model

Integration: method: Gauss-Hermite. quadrature points: 21

Optimization: Convergence: 0 max(|grad|): 0.00029 quasi-Newton: BFGS

Table 6. Probability estimates from the Latent Variable Modelling for the measure of "Political Intolerance"

	Difficult	Discriminant	P(x=1 z=0)
Item 1	-0.3344218	1	0.5828349
Item 2	0.1128788	1	0.4718102
Item 3	0.5826383	1	0.3583258
Item 4	1.1863550	1	0.2339115

Collection	
eTD	
CEU	

p-value:

Table 7. M	odel fit for	the null	hypothesis	test
Tobs:	818.08			
Data-sets:	200			

0.645

Table 8. Latent Variable Modelling for the measure of "Intolerance", unconstrained Rasch model

Model Summary:			
	log.Lik	AIC	BIC
	-1213.241	2438.482	2462.934
Coefficients:			
	value	std.err	z.vals
Dffclt.d\$qv38_1	-0.2253	0.0832	-2.7092
Dffclt.d\$qv38_3	0.8063	0.0944	8.5385
Dffclt.d\$qv38_4	0.3961	0.0852	4.6489
Dffclt.d\$qv38_5	0.8035	0.0944	8.5084
Dscrmn	1.8479	0.1286	14.3704
Integration: method	d: Gauss-Hei	rmite.	
quadrature points:	21		
Optimization:			

Convergence: 0 max(|grad|): 0.0027 quasi-Newton: BFGS

Table 9. Likelihood Ratio test for the constrained and unconstrained Rasch model

	AIC	BIC	log.Lik	LRT	df	p.value
Fit 1	2503.82	2524.20	-1246.91			
Fit 2	2438.48	2462.93	-1213.24	67.34	1	< 0.001

 Table 10. Likelihood Ratio test for the unconstrained Rasch model and the two-parameter

 logistic model

0						
	AIC	BIC	log.Lik	LRT	df	p.value
Fit 2	2438.48	2462.93	-1213.24			
Fit 3	2401.49	2442.25	-1190.75	44.99	4	< 0.001

Table 11. Likelihood Ratio test for unconstrained Rasch model with a guessing parameter and the two-parameter logistic model

	AIC	BIC	log.Lik	LRT	df	p.value
Fit 2	2438.48	2462.93	-1213.24			
Fit 4	2422.32	2467.15	-1200.16	26.16	5	< 0.001

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
0.162	0.649	435	-0.092	-0.530	1.417	0.57	094

Table 12. Descriptive statistics of the "Intolerance" variable

Table 13. Principal	Component Anal	lysis for the mea	asures of "Homophobia"
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	ML1	h2	u2
I believe you cannot trust homosexuals	0.76	0.57	0.43
For me is indifferent if my friends are homosexuals of heterosexuals	0.75	0.57	0.43
I believe that homosexuals should not be allowed to get married	0.67	0.46	0.54
Associations that militate for the rights of sexual minorities are	0.71	0.50	0.50
indispensable			
SS loadings	2.10		
Proportion Explained	0.52		
W = 0.9678, p-value < 0.001			

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
-0.01	0.96	400	-0.11	-2.37	1.59	-0.16	-0.55

Table 15. Principal Component Analysis for the "diversity of peer group", ninth grade, assessed through the question "How many of your close friends…?"

	PC1	h2	u2
speak a different mother tongue than yours?	0.68	0.46	0.54
are from a family that has much more or less money than yours?	0.64	0.41	0.59
have a different religion than yours?	0.72	0.51	0.49
often disagree with you on public issues and politics?/	0.53	0.28	0.72
are Roma/gypsies?	0.54	0.29	0.71
SS loadings	1.96		
Proportion Explained	0.39		
W = 0.9211, p-value < 0.001			

Table 16. Descriptive statistics	of the	"diversity of	peer group"	' measure, ni	nth grade
1					<u> </u>

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
0.02	1.00	400	-0.10	-1.88	3.03	0.47	-0.22

Table	17.	Principal	Component	: Analysis	for the	"diversity	of peer	group",	twelfth	grade,	,
assesse	ed th	rough the	question "H	low many	of your	close friend	s…?"				

	PC1	h2	u2
speak a different mother tongue than yours?	0.69	0.48	0.52
are from a family that has much more or less money than yours?	0.61	0.37	0.63
have a different religion than yours?	0.71	0.51	0.49
often disagree with you on public issues and politics?/	0.44	0.20	0.80
are Roma/gypsies?	0.47	0.22	0.78
SS loadings	1.78		
Proportion Explained	0.36		
W = 0.9385, p-value < 0.001			

Table 18. Descriptive statistics of the "diversity of peer group" measure, ninth grade

	1		5			0	
Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
-0.02	0.99	400	-0.08	-1.54	3.16	0.66	0.23

Table 19. Principal Component Analysis for "Religiosity", ninth grade

	PC1	h2	u2
Church attendance	0.83	0.69	0.31
How often do you pray	0.83	0.69	0.31
SS loadings	1.37		
Proportion var	0.69		
W = 0.9533, p-value <0.	.001		

Table 20. Descriptive statistics for "Religiosity", ninth grade

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
-0.02	0.99	400	-0.08	-1.54	3.16	0.66	0.23

Table 21. Principal Component Analysis for "Religiosity", twelfth grade

	PC1	h2	u2
Church attendance	0.81	0.66	0.34
How often do you pray	0.81	0.66	0.34

_

SS loadings	1.32
Proportion var	0.66
W = 0.9311, p-valu	ue <0.001

Table 22. Descriptive statistics for "Religiosity", twelfth grade

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
-0.06	0.99	400	0.14	-2.19	1.78	-0.19	-0.34

Table 23. Principal component analysis for the "school environment" measure, ninth grade, as response to the question "Last school year, how often did you talk about the following topics in your classes...?"

	PC1	h2	u2
current political events	0.63	0.40	0.60
religions other than Christianity	0.84	0.70	0.30
other countries and cultures outside of North America and Europe	0.78	0.61	0.39
SS loadings	1.71		
Proportion var	0.57		
W = 0.9099, p-value = 0.01			

Table 24. Descriptive statistics for the "school environment" measure, ninth grade

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
-2.43	1.00	400	2.04	-2.34	1.79	-0.19	-0.34

Table 25. Principal component analysis for the "school environment" measure, twelfth grade, as response to the question "Last school year, how often did you talk about the following topics in your classes...?"

	PC1	h2	u2
current political events	0.70	0.49	0.51
religions other than Christianity	0.87	0.76	0.24
?/ other countries and cultures outside of North America and Europe	0.86	0.75	0.25
SS loadings	2.0		
Proportion var	0.67		
W = 0.9863, p-value = 0.01			

Table 26. Descriptive statistics for the "school environment" measure, twelfth grade

Mean	St. Deviation	Valid N	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Skew	Kurtosis
0.06	0.99	400	0.22	-1.87	1.97	-0.22	-0.59

Figure 1. Distribution of Residuals for the linear regression model on intolerance, ninth grade



Figure 2. Distribution of Residuals for the linear regression model on intolerance, ninth grade



Figure 3. Distribution of Residuals for the linear regression model on the alternative measure intolerance, twelfth grade



Figure 4. Distribution of Residuals for the linear regression model on homophobia, twelfth grade



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