



Group Membership as Facilitator of Political Integration among Immigrants in Europe

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Outline

- 1. Research Focus and Contributions**
- 2. Theory and Hypotheses**
- 3. Data and Methods**
- 4. Open Questions and Limitations**



1. Research Focus and Contributions

- **Successful integration of *immigrants* into society appears to pose one of the most prominent challenges within today's European democracies.**
 - **Especially with respect to the case of *Political Integration***
 - People with a migration background often remain at the outer edge of society and their political participation is limited
 - Since in many European countries migration has turned into permanent settlement, the political role of migrants can and should no longer be ignored (see Berger et al. 2004: 491)
 - Inclusion into the political process seems democratically necessary
- **of primal importance to understand and identify factors that may facilitate *political integration* and *participation* of immigrants within their host countries.**

1. Research Focus and Contributions

- **Associational life as foundation of democracy**

- In the wake of the seminal works by de Tocqueville ([1835] 2004), Almond & Verba (1963) and Putnam (1993, 2000), the importance of **voluntary associations** in facilitating political interest, democratic skills and participation have received vast attention
 - ➔ **Connection received substantial empirical support** (e.g. Verba et al. 1995; Stolle & Rochon 1998; Seligson 1999; Teorell 2003)
- Natural to imagine that associations contribute to pol. integration of immigrants in Europe (Togeby 2004: 510)
 - ➔ **Aim: Investigating generalizability to case of immigrants in Europe**

Main Research Focus

Relationship between Involvement in Voluntary Organisations and Political Integration among Immigrants in Europe.



1. Research Focus and Contributions

• Main Contributions

- **Cross-national European setting** (building on existing country specific and regionally limited contributions, e.g. Fennema & Tillie 1999, 2001; Berger et al. 2004; Tillie 2004; Togeby 2004)
- **Wider perspective on political integration**
including both *cultural* (i.e. political interest; institutional trust; relative stand compared to society on certain political issues) and *structural* aspects of political integration (i.e. involvement in political organisations; protest participation)
- Research takes into account that the effect of associational membership on political integration may differ depending on the type of organization people are involved in.
- Investigates whether connection between organisational involvement and political integration depends on a person's migration history or the political opportunity structures in the host country



2. Theory and Hypotheses

- **Associational Involvement and Political Integration of Immigrants**
 - Platform for intense and repeated interactions with different people (link to native population) → exposure to political stimuli and debate;
(Verba et al. 1978; Seligson 1999; Rosa 2012; Grieshaber & Seibel 2013)
 - Political awareness & interest, Integration into pol. debate of host society
 - Training ground for the development of civic and political skills
 - associations as ***schools for democracy***
(Tocqueville [1835] 2004; Almond & Verba 1963; Putnam 1993; see Teorell 2003: 50n)
 - Capability to get politically involved
 - Associational networks link people to wider input of requests for participation → members easier targeted, contacted and mobilized
(Rosenstone & Hansen 1993; Verba et al. 1995; Roller & Wessels 1996; Brady et al. 1999; Teorell 2003)
 - Increased supply of participation possibilities



2. Theory and Hypotheses

Hypotheses

Immigrants' involvement in civil voluntary associations is connected to ...

- ***stronger political interest***
- ***stronger political trust in the institutions of the host society***
- ***political attitudes closer to the centre of the host society***
- ***higher likelihood to be politically involved***
- ***stronger diversity regarding the forms of political participation***

2. Theory and Hypotheses

- **Effect of associational involvement may differ due to organisations' characteristics**
 - Important whether organisations *link immigrant members to natives and different sources of input* or just *reproduce existing societal boundaries* instead of bridging them
 - ➔ Membership in exclusive (main focus on self-interests or exclusive group identities) or isolated (low embeddedness in wider society) associations might still raise political interest and participation among immigrants, but compared to more inclusive or connected groups ...
 - ➔ type and extent of participation should differ
 - ➔ political view and attitudes should be further from societal centre
 - ➔ political trust should be lower
 - ➔ Similar effect when there is high likelihood that immigrants remain among themselves within groups

2. Theory and Hypotheses

- **Connection between association membership and political integration may depend on familiarity with host country**
 - More recent migrants (likely less familiar with host country specifics) should benefit most from organisational involvement (in terms of links with the host country)
 - Immigrants that have spent more time in the host country are likely to have alternative sources of political input
 - Effect of membership on political integration should be stronger for more recent migrants
- **Role of associational involvement for immigrants' political integration may further depend on**
 - Region of origin (and institutional differences between home and host country)
 - Political opportunity structure or integration regime in the host country



3. Data and Methods

Data

- European Values Study (EVS) from 2008
- Pooled individual-level data from EU member states (alternatively using a more homogenous sample of Western European countries)
- Data restricted to first and second generation migrants (5,798 in EU27)

Estimation

- Multilevel models or pooled individual-level regressions allowing for country clustered error terms will be estimated to account for the hierarchical structure in the data (depending on final number of countries)
- Dichotomous and ordinal DVs → logistic and ordered logit regressions
- Counts and left-centred DVs → Poisson regressions



3. Data and Methods

Involvement in Voluntary Organisations

- Respondents answer for 15 different types of voluntary associations whether they belong to such group (Q5a in the EVS)
- Only non-political associations are considered:
 - Social Welfare
 - Religious or Church Organisations
 - Education, Art, Music or Cultural Activities
 - Trade Union (?)
 - Professional Associations (?)
 - Youth Work
 - Sports
 - Women's Groups
 - Voluntary Organisations concerned with Health
- Dichotomous and count variable constructed

3. Data and Methods

- **Differences in Organisation Involvement based on the ...**
 - Basic purpose of the organisation (following Zmerli 2003):
 - **Inclusive:** Constitutive purpose that implies an outward orientation and reaches across associational boundaries
 - **Exclusive:** Based mainly on group member interests or exclusive identities
 - Connectedness to other organisation types through overlapping memberships (following Paxton 2002, 2007; Griesshaber & Geys 2012):
 - **Distinction based on average number of association types in which members of an organisation are likewise involved** (corrected for relative size of association type)
 - Likelihood that possible societal isolation of immigrants is reproduced:
 - **Distinguishing associational involvement based on share of immigrant members in each association type**
 - **larger shares should increase probability that immigrants choose individual association in which they remain among themselves**



3. Data and Methods

Structural Integration – Political Participation

- **Formal:** Party membership; Membership in politically oriented organisations (Local community action; human rights; environment; peace movement) (Q5a in the EVS)
- **Informal:** Participation in at least one non-violent protest activity (i.e. petition; boycott; lawful demonstration) (Q55 in the EVS)

Cultural Integration – Political Interest and Attitudes

- **Political Interest:** how important are politics in life; how interested people in politics (4 categories from very to not at all important/interested; Q1 and Q54 in the EVS)
- **Political Trust:** average trust in political institutions (Q63 in the EVS)
- **Political Attitudes:** standardised deviation from societal median/mean on left/right scale as well as regarding certain issues (Q57 and Q58 in the EVS)

3. Data and Methods

• Control Factors

- Gender and Age (square included to control for non-linear effect)
 - Education and Household income
 - Religious affiliation and participation (i.e. church attendance)
 - Urbanisation (size of town respondent is living in)
 - Citizenship
 - Time living in host-country (time since migration/age)
 - Region of origin
 - Prior political socialization (discussing politics with parents at 14)
 - Human Development Index
 - Average Freedom House/Polity measure
 - Pol. Opportunity Structure/Integration Regime (still unclear)
 - Maybe difference in Political System between host and origin country (for 1st generation)
- Individual Level
- Country Level



5. Open Questions and Limitations

Open Questions

- Choice of country sample
- Choice of interactions to consider
- Shifting or extending focus to antecedents of associational involvement among immigrants → Role of cultural origin, social and religious networks

Limitations

- Causality (Teorell 2003 supports suggested causality)
→ Maybe explore possibility of instruments
- Information on associational involvement concerns organisation types instead of individual associations → unclear whether migrants are connected to different people or stay among themselves within groups

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