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4 Political participation, mobilisation and representation of immigrants and their offspring in Europe

Marco Martiniello

Introduction

In many EU countries, political mobilisation, participation and representation of immigrants and their offspring were for a long time not considered to be important issues both in academia and in politics. Immigrant workers were not regarded as potential citizens. They were not supposed and expected to be politically active. As guests, they were even asked to observe a kind of 'devoir de réserve'. In other words, they were invited not to interfere with their hosts' political and collective affairs. Migrants had only an economic role in the host society: to work and to produce.

This has changed, at least in those European countries that have already faced several waves of immigration in the past five decades. Here, political mobilisation, participation and representation of ethnic immigrant minorities have become topical issues especially at the local and city levels. The sensitive debates about the integration of immigrants cannot exclude this political dimension.

We now have a reasonably good knowledge of immigrants' political activities but some gaps remain to be filled.

This chapter is not a bibliographical review of the European literature on political participation, mobilisation and representation of immigrants. Its aim is rather to provide a qualitative overview of the state of the art on these issues and also to present some research perspectives to be explored in the future. As a matter of fact, we now have a reasonably good knowledge of immigrants' political activities but some gaps remain to be filled. The chapter is divided into six parts. The first part addresses very briefly conceptual and definition issues. The second part presents and discusses the earliest major hypothesis to be historically found in the literature, namely, the thesis of political quiescence of immigrants. The third part focuses on the explanations of the various forms of immigrant political participation. The fourth part presents a typology of immigrant political participation in the country of settle-

ment. This typology serves to map areas for further research. The fifth part discusses specifically the issue of transnational political participation. The sixth part identifies a few gaps in the literature to which new research perspectives could correspond. Finally, the concluding policy-oriented part will address the issue of how to evaluate and assess political participation of immigrants and their offspring in the country of residence.

Definitions and concepts

As is often the case in social sciences, discussions about concepts and definitions can be endless. The aim here is not to solve the academic disputes but simply to clarify how we will use specific expressions in this report.

Immigrants' political integration involves political participation, mobilisation and representation.

In a broad sense, political integration contains four dimensions. The first dimension refers to the rights granted to immigrants by the host society. One could say that the more political rights they get the better they are integrated. The second dimension is their identification with the host society. The more immigrants identify with the host society the better their political integration. The third dimension refers to the adoption of democratic norms and values by the immigrants, which is often presented as a necessary condition for political integration. Finally, immigrants' political integration involves political participation, mobilisation and representation, which are the core issues discussed in this chapter.

Political participation is understood as the active dimension of citizenship. It refers to the various ways in which individuals take part in the management of collective affairs of a given political community. Political participation cannot be restricted, as much political science research is, to conventional forms such as voting or running for election. It also covers other and less conventional types of political activities such as protests, demonstrations, sit-ins, hunger strikes, boycotts, etc.

Even though the distinction between conventional and less conventional forms of political participation is a matter of discussion among political scientists, we claim that it is useful since the two categories involve different patterns of activities.

Apart from the level of 'conventionality', i.e. the degree to which a form of political participation is conventional, there is another impor-

tant distinction. Less conventional and extra-parliamentary forms of political participation are most often relevant when they are collective. They presuppose in most cases the constitution of a collective actor characterised by a collective identity and some degree of organisation through a *mobilisation* process. **In a narrow sense, *political mobilisation* refers precisely to the process of building collective actors and collective identity.** By contrast, conventional forms of political participation, while not excluding comparable patterns of mobilisation, take place within a previously structured set of political institutions. This allows for individual political participation. Making a demonstration on your own does not generally make much political sense while voting can be interpreted as a very personal contribution to the functioning of a political community. (Every single vote counts!) Voting can, however, also be seen as a collective action when groups of voters organise a bloc voting initiative that needs mobilisation. Conversely, some unconventional forms of political participation, such as hunger strikes, may occasionally also be articulated as individual protest.

In other words, the distinction between conventional and less conventional forms of political participation and the distinction between individual and collective political participation are neither totally sharp nor do they overlap perfectly. Conventional political participation can be both personal and collective while less conventional forms of political participation are in practice mostly collective and therefore the result of a process of mobilisation.

Political representation can be understood in two ways. Firstly, in modern democracies, power is usually exercised by a group of persons whose legitimacy to govern has its source in free elections. Through the vote, the citizens mandate those persons to govern on their behalf. This process of legitimisation of government action is called political representation. But secondly, political representation also refers to the result of the legitimisation process, namely the group of people mandated to govern on behalf of the citizens.

The thesis of political quiescence of immigrants

In European literature on immigration, the thesis of the political quiescence or passivity of immigrants was the first to emerge and it was for a long time dominant. Migrant workers were considered to be apolitical and characterised by political apathy (Martiniello 1997).

This thesis was shared both by Marxist and non-Marxist scholars. The point of departure was correct. **In many countries, migrant workers had virtually no political rights. They could neither vote nor be**

elected. They did not enjoy any form of direct political representation within political institutions.

For a long time, migrant workers were considered to be apolitical and characterised by political apathy.

According to some scholars, this exclusion from the electoral process prevented migrants from playing any relevant political role in the country of residence and explained their political apathy. Apart from being formally disenfranchised, migrants were also seen to be so strongly oriented towards achieving short-term economic goals that they would not be interested in political participation.

Other scholars saw the political passivity of migrants as the result of their lack of political and democratic culture due to the political history of their countries of origin, which were either under an authoritarian regime or had only recently democratised.

The first explanation, which was mainly put forward by Marxists, was partially correct but it was flawed in two ways. First, as mentioned above, relevant political participation cannot be reduced to electoral participation. Other important forms such as trade union politics, associations and community organisation have to be taken into account as well. Many studies show that immigrants have always been active in those less conventional types of participation. Second, the explanation tends to consider the migrant only as a worker, as a factor of production whose life is totally determined by macro-economic and macro-social structures. It therefore leaves no place for agency or autonomy and dehumanises migrant workers in this respect. This is a reason why many Marxist scholars were more interested in emphasising how migrants were used to divide and demobilise the working class struggles than in studying immigrants' political activities.

The second explanation mainly put forward by non-Marxist scholars reflected a culturalist and paternalistic approach. The view was that migrants were less culturally developed than local workers and therefore also less politically active. This interpretation was clearly problematic and refuted by facts. In many cases, migrant workers were actually politicised in their country of origin before their departure and migration was a way to escape dictatorship. Immigrants from Italy during fascism, from Spain during francism and from Greece during the colonels' regime are good illustrations of immigrants arriving with a strong political culture and democratic aspirations.

Furthermore, both explanations seem to confuse quiescence or passivity and apolitical attitudes. Being politically passive is not always an indicator of general disinterest in politics. Passivity can sometimes be a

form of resistance and defence. When political opportunities are very limited and avenues of political participation strictly restricted and controlled, passivity can be a transitional waiting position for better days, for more open opportunities for participation.

Migrants are not more passive than other citizens but their involvement should also not be exaggerated by regarding them as the vanguard of the new global proletariat.

In any case, the two variants of the migrant quiescence thesis have been strongly challenged by facts. Migrants have always been involved in politics either outside or at the margins of the political system of both their country of origin and their country of residence. More recently, migrants and their offspring have become more strongly involved in the mainstream political institutions. This process has been facilitated by an extension of the voting rights to foreigners in several countries and by a liberalisation of nationality laws in others. Migrants are not more passive than other citizens but their involvement should also not be exaggerated by regarding them as 'an emerging political force' (Miller 1981) or as the vanguard of the new global proletariat.

Explaining the various forms of immigrant political participation

Political science and political sociology have tried to explain political participation in many different ways. Theories of political participation abound and each gives its own answer to the question: why do people participate in politics? Traditionally, there was a dispute between rational choice and identity approaches to political participation. More recently, scholars have also tried to explain the decline of political participation and the retreat of many citizens toward their private space in many democracies. These general issues are obviously very complex.

They are just as complex when applied specifically to migrant and migrant origin populations. However if we accept the idea that there is always some degree of political participation amongst immigrant populations, we can concentrate on explaining the various forms this participation takes. This will focus attention on questions such as the following: **How to explain political mobilisation of immigrants outside the mainstream political institutions?** How to explain the variable intensity of immigrants' political participation? How to explain the direction of political participation towards the host society or towards the country of origin or towards a global political space? How to explain strategies of individual migrants who engage in a personal political career in for-

mal political institutions? How to explain the salience or weakness of union politics for migrants? How to explain the success or failure of consultative politics?

The forms of immigrants' political participation largely and firstly depend on the structure of political opportunities present at a given time and in a given society.

In order to answer that type of questions, it is suggested that the forms of immigrants' political participation largely and firstly depend on the structure of political opportunities present at a given time and in a given society, which is the result of inclusion-exclusion mechanisms developed by the states (of residence and of origin) and their political systems (Martiniello 1998).

By granting or denying voting rights to foreigners, by facilitating or impeding access to citizenship and nationality, by granting or constraining freedom of association, by ensuring or blocking the representation of migrants' interests, by establishing or not establishing arenas and institutions for consultative politics, states open or close avenues of political participation for migrants and provide them with more or less opportunities to participate in the management of collective affairs.

Whether immigrants and their offspring will seize these opportunities in this changing institutionally defined framework will depend on several variables such as: their political ideas and values, their previous involvement in politics (including experiences in the country of origin), the degree of 'institutional completeness' of the immigrant ethnic community, the vision they have of their presence in the country of residence as permanent or temporary, their feeling of belonging to the host and/or their society of origin, their knowledge of the political system and institutions, the social capital and density of immigrant associational networks¹, plus all the usual determinants of political behaviour such as level of education, linguistic skills, socio-economic status, gender, age or generational cohort. Migrants can also mobilise to try and open up new avenues of political participation. We then will have to consider how the various theories on collective action apply to their mobilisation.

Recently, academic interest in political participation of migrants has been connected to a renewed interest in citizenship, though the latter is clearly not the same in all EU Member States and in the US.

In France, a lot of work has been done on second-generation immigrants' extra-parliamentary mobilisation in the 1980s. Some studies have been made on the importance of ethnicity in the political system.

Let us mention the work by Sylvie Strudel on Jews in French political life in which she deals with the hypothesis of the existence of a Jewish vote (Strudel 1996). The work of Vincent Geisser (1997) needs also to be mentioned. He is the author of one of the first studies on immigrant local councillors in France. One of the most prolific authors on immigrants and politics in France is Catherine Withol de Wenden (1988). In the 1990s the *sans-papiers* movement was extensively studied (Simeant 1997) and very recently the religious-political mobilisation around the issues of the headscarf, and more generally the evolution of secularism (*laïcité*), has drawn much attention.

In the UK, the issue of electoral power of ethnic minorities as well as the political colour of each ethnic minority is discussed in all elections. Historically, West Indians and Asians were largely pro-Labour but recently their votes have become a little more evenly distributed across parties. The issue of the representation of minorities in elected assemblies has also been studied by scholars such as Geddes (1998) and Saggar (1998).

In the Netherlands and in Scandinavia there have been precise studies on the electoral behavior of immigrants led by Tillie (1998) and Fennema in the Netherlands (also see text box 7 below) and Soininen (1999) in Sweden. In the latter country, studies also tried to explain the decline of immigrant voter turnout in local elections over the past decade. There is very little comparable research of this kind in other EU Member States.

Text Box 7: Anja Van Heelsum, Research on voting behaviour of ethnic groups in the Netherlands

Ethnic minority groups tend to have a lower turnout rate in elections than the Dutch. Tillie (in 1994), Van Heelsum & Tillie (in 1998) and Michon & Tillie (in 2002) held exit polls during the municipal elections. The following table shows the turnout rates:

Turn out rates of five ethnic groups at the local elections of 1994, 1998 and 2002 in per cent of the respective ethnic local population

Background	Amsterdam			Rotterdam		The Hague		Utrecht		Arnhem	
	1994	1998	2002	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998	1994	1998
Turks	67	39	30	28	42	-*	36	55	39	56	50
Moroccans	49	23	22	23	33	-	23	44	26	51	18
Surinamese/ Antilleans	30	21	26	24	25	-	27	-	22	-	20
Cape Verdians	-	-	-	34	33	-	-	-	-	-	-
City turnout	56,8	45,7	47,8	56,9	48,4	57,6	57,6	59,8	56,5	57,2	52,0

* The Hague 1994: no data

Turks show higher turnout than Surinamese and Moroccans, but throughout the years there is a dramatic decline in the number of people from ethnic minority groups. Most of the ethnic minority voting is on the left of the political spectrum. About 50 per cent of the ethnic minorities vote on the socialist party and about 20 per cent vote on the Green Left. This is probably due to a more immigrant friendly attitude of these parties.

A typology of the various forms of immigrant political participation in the country of settlement

This section of the chapter suggests a typology that is limited to all means of legal political participation, excluding the various forms of terrorism and political violence and corruption. However, examples of terrorist actions and political violence are to be found in the history of immigration in Europe. In the Netherlands, in the 1970s a group of Molluccans 'rail-jacked' a train and took the passengers as hostages. In Belgium, the UK and France, riots and urban violence in which migrants or subsequent generations were involved can certainly also be analysed in political terms (e.g. the Brussels riots in 1991, the 2001 riots in Bradford, Oldham and Burnley or the urban unrest in various French banlieues in the 1980s and 1990s). Although the actors on the street in these events may not have been consciously politically motivated, their actions certainly had a strong political impact.

Different types of ethnic politics or immigrant political participation can be distinguished according to the geographic-political level of action and the level of conventionality.

Different types of ethnic politics or immigrant political participation can be distinguished according to the geographic-political level of action and the level of conventionality, i.e. the contrast between state and non-state politics.

The geographic-political level of action

The nation state is certainly an imperfect and vulnerable form of political organisation. It currently faces both internal and external problems. On the one hand, internal regionalisms and sub-nationalisms seem to be rising in several European nation states questioning seriously the sovereignty of the 'centre'. Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, Belgium,

among others, are concerned with this type of difficulties. On the other hand, new supranational forces represent without any doubt a challenge to the nation state in its present form. The emergence of supranational power blocs like the European Union, the rise of transnational corporations, but also of mass telecommunication systems and other new technologies stimulate a debate about the possible demise of the nation state. Still, despite all these problems, the nation state remains a crucial setting and framework for political action. In this respect, immigrant political participation can theoretically be envisaged both in the country of residence and in the country of origin of the migrants.

Apart from at the central level in each European nation state, political action can also take place at different infra-nation state levels, going from the neighbourhood to the region. In this respect each political system has its own specific organisation. Consequently, the expression 'local politics' does not have the same meaning in every country. Still, opportunities of participation and mobilisation exist at all local and regional levels (district, town, municipality, county, land, region, province, canton, department, etc.).

If we turn to the supra-national level, the 1992 Maastricht Treaty has provided a new impetus for the construction of a European Political Union. The problems to be solved are still numerous as shown by the current debate about the EU Constitutional Treaty, and the final geographic shape of this regional power bloc has not yet been fully specified. However migrant political action certainly occurs at the European Union level, too. Furthermore, there is no reason why the EU should constitute the geographic-political limit for such action. It can eventually extend to the world level, as for example in the anti-globalisation movement.

State politics and non-state politics

The distinction between state and non-state politics covers approximately the distinction between conventional and non-conventional politics presented above. The concept of state is used here in a narrow sense to refer to the set of formal political institutions that form the core of executive, legislative and judiciary powers. Beyond the state, the polity is also made up of other political institutions and actors who, at least in a democracy, take part in one way or another in the definition and the management of society's collective affairs.

As far as *state politics* is concerned, three main forms of ethnic participation and mobilisation can be considered, namely electoral politics, parliamentary politics and consultative politics.

Electoral politics

The issue of a black and ethnic vote has been discussed for a long time in the United States. In Europe, one of the first studies on the importance of the 'black vote' was carried out by the Community Relations Commission during the British general elections of 1974 (Solomos & Back 1991). Since then, there has been a growing interest among political parties in gathering support from ethnic and black communities.

It is important to underline that in nearly all European states but also in non-European democracies full electoral rights are reserved for the countries' nationals² even though some of them have enfranchised aliens at the local level (see table 2 in the annex). Therefore, legal obstacles to ethnic electoral participation are essentially determined by rules for access to citizenship through *ius soli* or naturalisation.

There is no convincing general theory that would explain a link between ethnic and racial belonging and political behaviour in general or electoral behaviour in particular.

Recently, the issue of an ethnic vote in different EU countries and in the US has attracted a lot of attention and provoked some sort of panic. The question has been extensively studied by American political scientists since the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which created a new electorate by removing discriminatory laws intended to prevent Black Americans from voting, even though their formal right to vote existed long before that date. However, up to now, there is no convincing general theory that would explain a link between ethnic and racial belonging and political behaviour in general or electoral behaviour in particular. The existence of an ethnically or racially motivated vote remains dubious. Nevertheless, with each election, common sense requires the need for each candidate who enters the race to win the votes of Jews, Blacks, Hispanics and more and more frequently also of sexual minorities.

Consequently, the ethnic vote should always be treated as a contingent phenomenon in need of explanation rather than as a presupposition that relies on the dubious assumption that ethnic groups tend to cast block votes. The research task consists in studying the factors and the circumstances likely to promote and explain the development of an electoral behaviour that is specific to an electorate that supposedly belongs to an ethnic category, in this case the electorate of immigrant origin. There are basically two sets of factors whose interplay will determine the emergence of an ethnic vote: first, residential concentration, density of social networks, shared experiences of discrimination, and the formation of political elites within an immigrant population; and,

second, features of the electoral system such as voter registration rules, majoritarian or proportional representation voting systems, rules for determining electoral districts ('gerrymandering' or affirmative representation of minorities), etc.

Moreover, the ethnic or immigrant vote should be clearly defined. In a first sense, it refers to the individual vote cast by a voter who belongs to an ethnic category for one or several candidates of the same ethnic group, or for a party which regroups candidates of this same group. These candidates or parties are considered by the voter as her automatic representatives because of their shared ethnic belonging. The latter is sufficient to account for the expressed vote whatever the political programme proposed. In a second and broader sense, we can also talk of an ethnic vote when a substantial majority of voters of a same ethnic category support a specific candidate or party and their policy whatever the ethnic origin of the candidate or composition of the party.³ Such collective or block voting may be subjected to some bargaining between the electors and the candidates, the latter promising to give a particular advantage to the group in exchange for their votes. This vote can also result from the subjective awareness of the group that this candidate or this party better understands the concerns of the ethnic category and is likely to defend their interests. This distinction is clearly theoretical. Indeed, it is easy to imagine cases where the vote could simultaneously become ethnic in both meanings described above. It should nevertheless be stressed that a voter with an ethnic background does not necessarily – by nature so to say – cast an 'ethnic vote' in either of the two meanings considered above.

We do not know precisely how immigrant citizens of Muslim origin vote in all the Member States of the EU.

In Europe the issue that has recently been prominent on the political agenda is the potential emergence of an Islamic vote amongst immigrant populations, but we do not know precisely how immigrant citizens of Muslim origin vote in all the Member States of the EU. There are studies on the electoral behaviour of Muslim citizens in some countries, but researchers in others with a strong presence of Muslim migrants have not yet addressed this question or lack an adequate data base for doing so. Furthermore, although there are many Islamic associations, the Islamic parties created in different EU countries have so far not been able to gain seats in parliamentary and local elections with probably a few local exceptions. This tends to show that thus far Muslim citizens have generally voted for traditional mainstream parties.

Parliamentary politics

The representation of ethnic minorities in the central government, parliament and local government is also an increasingly important issue, especially in those countries that have long-established immigrant populations, such as the United Kingdom, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands.

The representation of ethnic minorities in the central government, parliament and local government is an increasingly important issue.

There are different levels and questions of research in this area. Political philosophers and normative theorists consider whether ethnic minorities have claims to special representation in order to offset disadvantages they face as discriminated groups in society or as 'permanent minorities' whose concerns risk being consistently overruled in majoritarian decisions. This type of argument must, however, overcome a well-established critique of 'descriptive representation' models according to which representative assemblies should mirror the composition of the wider society (see, for example, Pitkin (1967) and Phillips (1995)). Political scientists study how ethnic diversity affects the internal working of parliamentary assemblies and parties, e.g. the emergence of ethnic caucuses or cross-party voting on ethnic issues. Sociologists examine the role of immigrant and ethnic minority politicians: to what extent do they differ from mainstream politicians in terms of their agenda and their mode of functioning?

Consultative politics

Electoral politics and parliamentary assemblies are not the only arenas for ethnic political participation. Some states have created consultative institutions at the periphery of the state to deal with ethnic categories and immigration problems. Usually, these bodies have only little power, for example as advisory boards. Among the earliest examples of this were the Belgian 'Conseils Consultatifs Communaux pour les immigrés' that were established in the late sixties in several cities (Martiniello 1992).

Text Box 8: Davide Però, The 'comedy' of participation: immigrant consultation in southern European cities

Can consultation mechanisms substitute for a lack of direct representation of immigrants at the local level? Local voting rights for third country nationals are more common in Western and Northern Europe than in the comparatively new immigration states of the

Mediterranean. Ethnographic research in the cities of Barcelona and Bologna has examined how local officials, NGOs and immigrants perceive opportunities for immigrant political participation and representation.

Some local officials consider 'integration' possible without voting rights, and some even regard such rights as dangerous because they see immigrants as lacking the necessary pre-requisites to be allowed full participation in the democratic process. As one representative from the Catalan nationalist Government put it 'they cannot really understand the history of oppression of the Catalan people', or, as one Left Democrat militant in Bologna said, 'they are not accustomed to democracy'.

In this context, participation in governance for immigrants takes two forms. The first is participation in policy implementation by proxy. In this way, immigrants are represented through the autochthonous 'pro-immigrant' NGOs that the local authorities hire to deliver services to immigrants. The second form is participation in token consultative institutions like the Consell of Barcelona or the Forum of Bologna. These bodies rarely meet their immigrant participants' needs. On their effectiveness there is a striking similarity between the immigrants' views in the two cities. One participant in the Barcelona Consell asked: 'If decisions and interventions are made unilaterally by the City Council that decides what to do all by itself, then what do we have a Consell for? ...If the Consell does not meet when concrete events are occurring then what's the point of having such Consell? ...Then its meetings are a pure comedy, a pure and dramatic comedy'. In Bologna: 'The Council and its officials need interlocutors and legitimisation. They do not really think that the associations [of the Forum] are representative, but these are those who have agreed to play a role in the comedy'.

What all this suggests is that participation and empowerment deriving from these consultative bodies are greater for local governments and the autochthonous NGOs than they are for immigrants. The first gain legitimisation and a politically correct image, the second are being contracted for the delivery of public services, while the third are often politically neutralised and excluded.

Political scientists have generally criticised the idea of special consultative bodies for immigrants for marginalising immigrants further while giving them the illusion of direct political participation. However, recently, a new initiative from the Council of Europe put the issue on the table again (Gsir & Martiniello 2004). There are hundreds of consultative bodies across Europe. The idea of the Council of Europe is to de-

velop a manual of common principles and guidelines in the area of consultation that could be used by the cities interested in creating some form of consultative body for immigrants.

As far as *non-state politics* is concerned, four main avenues of ethnic and immigrant political participation and mobilisation can be singled out: involvement in political parties, in union politics, in other pressure groups, and the direct mobilisation of ethnic communities.

Involvement in political parties

In democratic states, political parties are located at the intersection between civil society and state institutions. Their role is to translate societal interests and ideologies into legislative inputs and to train and select the personnel for political offices. Party politics is therefore an element of conventional politics. However, democratic parties are also voluntary associations rather than state institutions that exercise legitimate political authority. Moreover, not all political parties are represented in legislative assemblies. Some stay at the margin of the political system where they often campaign for more radical political change.

In Europe, the issue of ethnic involvement in political parties emerged first in Britain with the debate about the Black section in the Labour Party in the 1980s. On the continent, the development of the association France Plus gave another dimension to the problem, which could be very sensitive in the future in other countries as well. Its strategy was to encourage immigrants to join all democratic parties and to negotiate their electoral support on the basis of the advantages promised by each of the parties.

Union politics

The presence of immigrants in unions is an older and better known phenomenon. One could say that union politics is the cradle of immigrants' political participation. However, it is important to remark that the various European and American unions responded in different ways to the ethnic issue. Some organised specific institutions for 'migrant workers' within the union while others refused to do so in the name of the unity of the working class. Anyway, the decline of unions all over Europe is a crucial dimension to take into account when studying ethnic participation and mobilisation.

Union politics is the cradle of immigrants' political participation.

Other pressure groups

Immigrants can also get involved, as the other citizens, in all kinds of pressure groups and movements defending a great variety of interests.

Let's mention here the *sans-papiers* movements across the US and Europe in which several unconventional types of action are used, such as hunger strikes or occupation of churches. Immigrants, as any other citizens, can also be involved in environmentalist movements, in animal rights groups or similar initiatives.

Ethnic community mobilisation

In order to promote and defend political interests and to exert some pressure on the political system, immigrant groups can organise as collective actors along ethnic, racial or religious lines. In recent years, the mobilisation of Muslim immigrants around religious concerns has received wide attention even though it is only one amongst many other forms of ethnic political mobilisation.

Combining the three geographic-political levels of action and different avenues of participation and mobilisation in conventional and non-conventional politics generates 21 potential arenas for political action. Obviously, not each of these can or should be studied separately. The goal of this typology is rather to indicate the scope and variety of immigrant participation within destination countries.

Text Box 9: Anja Van Heelsum, Research on civic participation in the Netherlands

Associations of immigrants can play an important role in integration processes. Van Heelsum (2004a, b) and Penninx and Van Heelsum (2004) investigated the number of associations and their functioning within minority communities and in relation to the political opportunity structure. A major reason why community organisations are established is to reach a political, religious, social, sports or any kind of common goal. An association is itself a network of people that can spread information. Immigrant associations also easily become part of a larger network, for instance with the city authorities and welfare institutions. Isolated individuals are reached and activated to join in gatherings and to voice their demands. The Dutch opportunity structure favours religious organisation, as a result of the pillarised structure that already existed. This is why Islamic and Hindu schools and broadcasting organisations have been established. Within the Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese and African communities religious associations outnumber other types of associations. Within the Somali and Moluccan community developmental aid is the most common type. About one third of these associations are financially or other-

wise supported by authorities. The organisational density varies among the different minority communities as the following table shows.

Population, number of associations and organisational density per ethnic group, ordered by organisational density

ethnic group	population in the Netherlands *	number of associations	organisational density (= associations/ inhabitants x 1000)
Afghans	34.000	34	1,0
Vietnamese	17.000	28	1,7
Iraqi	42.000	18	
Iranian	28.000	31	
Kurds	?	98	2,1
Tamils (Sri Lanka)	7.000	17	2,4
Moroccans	295.000	720	2,4
Surinamese	321.000	881	2,7
Turks	341.000	1125	3,3
Bosnians	11.000	44	4,0
Congolese (DR Congo, former Zaire)	7.000	35	5,0
Somalis	28.000	161	5,8
Chinese	39.000	244	6,3
Ethiopians		34	
Eritreans	10.000	42	7,6
Moluccans	40.000	399	9,9

* On 1 January 2003 (CBS 2003: 116) or Van den Tillaart, Olde Monnikhof, van den Berg & Warmerdam (2000: 28).

Transnational political participation

Globalisation, cosmopolitanism, post-nationalism and transnationalism have become key words in social sciences in general and in migration, ethnic and citizenship studies in particular, since the early 1990s. As far as transnationalism is concerned, research projects and programmes like the Transnational Communities Programme at Oxford have developed. Numerous conferences have been organised. New journals, such as *Global Networks*, have been launched. Many scholars have undoubtedly been attracted by the transnationalism discourse but many others have also been very critical about what they see as just another fashion in social sciences.

The concept of 'immigrant transnationalism' was introduced in the literature by a group of female anthropologists in 1992. When Nina

Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blanc-Szanton published their book *Towards a Transnational Perspective on Migration*, they opened the way for the development of new discussions and debates in ethnic and migration studies on transnationalism.

Since then, the number of understandings, concepts and definitions of transnationalism has exploded to the extent that it is not easy to know exactly what scholars talk about when they write about transnationalism.

It has often been argued that globalisation has implied, or indeed created, new patterns of migration (between but also within states) that differ fundamentally from traditional patterns of migrations such as 'guestworkers system' or chain migration. It is also often argued that these new patterns of migration lead to new mechanisms of transmigrant community building, to the emergence of new types of deterritorialised collective identities, to the growth of new forms of belonging that challenge the traditional nation-states belonging. These allegedly new developments are captured by the expressions transnational communities, post-national membership or new cosmopolitanism, to just mention a few.

In what is regarded as traditional migration processes, ethnic migrant communities were either trying to preserve their ethnic identity linked to the sending country or they were assimilating into the new society by abandoning their heritage and by adopting a new national identity. Alternatively, they could prepare their return to the country of origin or stay for good but still cling to a myth of return. All the traditional literature on migration is about these issues and processes. All in all, migrants were supposed to be given a choice between ethnic and national identities but at the end of the day, they were supposed to belong either to the country of origin or to the country of settlement. If they made the former choice, they were supposed to return. If they opted for the latter, they were supposed to change their political affiliation and eventually their citizenship.

In today's transmigrational processes things would be different. New communities of transmigrants in the global era would be closer to the ideal of world citizens. They would have become detached from ethnic and national bonds to embrace post-ethnic and post-national identities because of their transnational practices. They would have become transnational communities characterised by new forms of belonging and identities translating into transnational political practices. This view is not shared by all scholars using the concept of transnationalism but it is well represented in the literature.

Transnational activities and practices can be economic, political and socio-cultural. In the field of economics, transnational entrepreneurs mobilise their contacts across borders in search of goods and suppliers,

Political transnational activities create links between countries of origin and destination and can be directed towards either of the two political systems.

of capital and markets. Economic transnationalism includes also remittances and investments made by migrants in the development of the country of origin. Transmigrants' economic activities can go in both directions between the country of origin and the country of residence. Socio-cultural transnational activities can be numerous and diverse. They include the election of expatriate beauty queens that compete in the home country contest, tours of folk music groups from the country of origin to perform for migrants in their country of residence, etc. Political transnational activities can take different forms, too. Transmigrants can mobilise in the country of residence to produce a political impact in the country of origin. Party leaders from the country of origin can travel to the countries of residence in order to gather electoral support in transmigrant communities. Sending countries can also try to intervene in the host countries by using immigrant communities as a resource to defend their interests.

At a higher level of abstraction, these transnational practices reveal a crucial change that has occurred with the globalisation of the economy, namely the passage for many people from a national to a transnational condition. Until not so long ago migrants were considered to be an anomaly in the nation-state framework. With the acceleration of globalisation, a new phenomenon has occurred, namely the creation of a transnational community linking immigrant groups in the advanced countries with their respective sending nations and hometowns. This defines the new transnational condition 'composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives: speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making a living through continuous regular contacts across national borders' (Portes, Guarnizo & Landolt 1999).

Immigrants' integration or incorporation in the host country and transnational practices can occur simultaneously.

The development of this new condition has been made possible by changes that have taken place within the broader phenomenon of globalisation: the revolution in technologies of communication, the reduction of the costs of travelling and the multiplication of means of travel.

The insights of the transnational approach or perspective are manifold. It acknowledges the fact that immigrants' integration or incor-

poration in the host country and transnational practices can occur simultaneously. However more research is needed both at the theoretical and the empirical level, in particular to make sense of the impact of transnationalism on immigrants' political participation.

Research perspectives

The gender dimension of immigrants' political participation has not sufficiently been explored.

There are several gaps in the literature on political participation of immigrants. Certainly progress in this area has been quite dramatic over the past decade but our knowledge remains fragmented and largely confined to specific national contexts. More specifically, the gender dimension of immigrants' political participation has not sufficiently been explored. Researchers should make an effort to integrate the theoretical framework and also to produce comparative data, quantitative as well as qualitative, both in the more traditional areas of research and in the newer ones.

It would be interesting to design electoral surveys at the EU level to try to better understand how citizens with an immigrant or ethnic minority background vote.

Regarding the former, it would be interesting to design electoral surveys at the EU level to try to better understand how citizens with an immigrant or ethnic minority background vote. Their political attitudes also need to be better examined. A third direction would be to try to find out who votes for ethnic minority candidates in the various Member States of the EU. It would also be very stimulating to systematically analyse the gender dimension of immigrants' political participation by comparing the different immigrant groups in the same country but also by comparing different host societies. Finally, the possible link between access to nationality and political participation also calls for more studies.

Three main perspectives need to be developed:

- a) The implications of transnational political participation of migrants and their offspring in Europe
A theoretical as well as an empirical discussion on the links between transnational political participation of immigrants and citizenship,

both in the country of origin and of residence, is needed. What does it mean for an immigrant who has acquired the nationality of the country of residence to participate politically in the country of origin? How does this affect the common understanding of nationality in the wider society? Can one be an active citizen in more than one polity? What is the impact of such double participation on identity and belonging? The questions have to a certain extent already been raised and researched in some countries for specific groups of immigrants but a lot still needs to be done.

- b) The links between religion and political participation in post-migration situations

In several EU Member States, new Islamic parties have recently appeared. In many cases they are formed by citizens of immigrant origin or by local converts. In most instances, these parties have not so far gained a dramatic electoral success. Nevertheless, in the present context they reveal new developments concerning the links between religion and politics for immigrants and their offspring.

- c) The rise of virtual ethnic and immigrant political communities

Internet opens up new channels of political mobilisation across state boundaries. The new electronic media may be a potent resource for immigrants engaged in transnational political activities across different destination countries or between sending and receiving states. We still don't know very precisely how immigrants use the internet for political purposes. Attention has so far focused on global terrorism, while non-violent ways of using the internet have been neglected.

How to evaluate political participation of immigrants and their offspring in the country of residence?

The task of constructing indicators of political participation of immigrants and their offspring that would allow for comparison, ranking and benchmarking across the EU faces several difficulties. The first difficulty refers to the variety of citizenship (nationality) laws and policies in the Member States of the EU discussed in chapter 2 of this report (see table 1 in the annex). Rules of access and loss of citizenship impact directly on opportunities to participate in formal political life and determine which institutions are open to immigrants and their offspring. **When access to citizenship is easy, immigrants are not excluded from the right to take part in formal political life although many may still choose not to naturalise and will then remain excluded from rights of vote and eligibility.** The more difficult and restricted access to citizenship is, the more immigrants are confined to non-con-

ventional forms of political participation. Apart from rules of admission to citizenship, there is a similar variety with regard to political rights and opportunities for participation for non-citizen residents. As mentioned above, several EU Member States grant local voting rights to all foreigners while others limit them to EU citizens (see table 2 in the annex). These different legal frameworks make it difficult to compare immigrant participation across states.

The second difficulty emerges from the fact that not all EU countries are at the same stage of the migratory process. Some countries are more concerned with immigration as such, i.e. with the recent arrival and settlement of migrants, while other countries have already faced several waves of immigration in the past decades and are therefore simultaneously in a migration situation and a post-migration situation. In the former countries issues linked to political participation of migrants are not yet high on the political and academic agenda. In the latter countries, political mobilisation, participation and representation of ethnic migrant minorities have become topical issues. Nevertheless, some of the new EU Member States in Central and Eastern Europe have already introduced a local franchise for all foreign residents, not so much in response to immigrant mobilisations for political representation but in response to EU accession and the provisions of the Maastricht Treaty. Among the Mediterranean states, the Italian parliament passed a law for local voting rights that was eventually blocked for constitutional reasons, while Spain and Portugal have introduced such rights on a basis of reciprocity (see table 2 in the annex).

A third difficulty refers to the fact that 'immigrants and their offspring' are not a homogeneous group in terms of political attitude and behaviour. Some migrants are highly politicised and were politically active in their country of origin from which they often escaped precisely for political reasons. Others, like many native citizens nowadays, are not interested in politics at all.

To be complete, one should also add a technical difficulty related to the unequal availability of adequate statistical data in the various Member States of the EU. For comprehensive statistical analyses one would need data not only on foreign nationality but also on country of birth, on the year of immigration and on ethnic self-identification. It is very difficult to quantify the political behaviour of immigrants and ethnic minorities in countries where only foreign nationality is recorded in official statistics. In other countries, the statistical apparatus is much more developed and data, for example, on ethnic minorities' voting behaviour are easier to produce.

This said, we can still suggest several indicators of political participation of immigrants and their offspring based on a distinction between conventional and less conventional forms of political participation.

When using these indicators, one has to bear in mind that the forms of immigrants' political participation primarily depend on the structure of political opportunities present at a given time and in a given society, which is the result of inclusion-exclusion mechanisms developed by the states (of residence and of origin) and their political systems.

Text Box 10: Anja Van Heelsum, Research on the civic community perspective in the Netherlands

Putnam's work has stimulated the debate on the positive effect of civic communities on democracy. He took Italy and the United States as examples. A similar mechanism may occur within the Dutch situation: an active civic community seems to have a positive effect on political participation within a multicultural democracy. The relationship between different forms of political activity and civic participation in organisations of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands has been the subject of a large number of publications within IMES (e.g. Fennema & Tillie 2001, Van Heelsum 2002, Tillie 2004). The theoretical notions of civic community theories can be used to explain differences between ethnic groups. Turnout rates at elections and the networks of organisations of ethnic minorities throughout the Netherlands show an interesting relationship. Ethnic groups with a high participation rate in elections – like Turks – also tend to have a densely organised network of associations. While ethnic groups with low turnout rates in elections, tend to have fewer associations and a less dense network between their associations. The relationship seems to be mediated by political trust. A community with many associations develops political trust which in turn increases participation.

Indicators of conventional political participation

In the field of conventional political participation, at least five indicators of political participation of immigrants and their offspring can be suggested:

- a) Where immigrants and their offspring are enfranchised, how to characterise their electoral turnout as compared to non-immigrant citizens? Do they take part in elections as voters more or less than other citizens? A high electoral turnout can be considered as a good indicator of political participation.
- b) Statistical representation of immigrants and their offspring on electoral lists and in elected positions, not to mention in executive branches of government and cabinets in the various assemblies (from the local to the European level) is another indicator of political participation.

- c) The rate of membership in political parties and the activity within those parties should also be taken into account as a possible indicator of political participation.
- d) In some countries and regions, immigrants and their offspring form their own political parties based on religious or ethnic agendas and run for elections. This form of political behaviour should not be excluded in the process of selecting indicators.
- e) Some states, regions or cities have created specific consultative institutions at the margin of the political system to deal specifically with ethnic and immigration issues. There are several hundreds of such consultative bodies across Europe. Participation in these institutions can be seen as an indicator of political participation but it can also be interpreted as a sign of political marginalisation.

Indicators of non-conventional political participation

In the field of non-conventional political participation, we can list at least three indicators of political participation of immigrants and their offspring:

- a) The presence of immigrants in trade unions is an old and well-known phenomenon in European countries of immigration. Being active in a trade union either simply as a supporter and member or also as an activist or executive is a relevant indicator of political participation.
- b) In order to promote and defend political interests and to exert some pressure on the political system, immigrants and their offspring can organise a collective actor along ethnic, racial, national, cultural or religious lines. This refers, for example, to different types of associations. Here again, the existence of claims-making immigrant associations can be considered as an indicator for participation in the larger political community.
- c) Immigrants can also get involved, as any other citizens, in all kinds of pressure groups and movements defending a great variety of interests. Let us mention here humanitarian movements, environmentalist movements, neighbourhood committees, customers' associations, etc. The presence and participation of immigrants in these movements is another indicator of their political participation.

The above list of possible indicators of political participation is far from being exhaustive. It nevertheless points at very relevant forms of political involvement in a democratic society.

A final word of caution: political participation of immigrants and their offspring must always be compared to political participation of non-immigrant citizens prior to pan-European comparison.