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Immigrant and Ethnic Minority Representation in Europe: Conceptual Challenges and Theoretical Approaches

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This article introduces the symposium on the representation of immigrant-origin and ethnic minorities in Europe. It argues for the importance of research on this topic, noting the large, established populations of immigrant-origin citizens and their descendants across Western European countries and these minorities' underrepresentation in elected bodies. Current research gaps concern both empirical knowledge and the theoretical conceptualisation of immigrant and ethnic minority political involvement. The article argues that existing research on representation needs to be extended to suit the cases of immigrants and ethnic minorities. It ends by providing a brief overview of each contribution to the symposium.

Immigrants and their descendants do not feature prominently among European parliamentarians. Their limited numbers contrast sharply with the large proportion of immigrant-origin citizens in many European states. Immigrants' absence from political institutions does not seem to be a simple reflection of recent arrival or slow acquisition of citizenship. Countries that experienced major immigration in the 1950s and 1960s are still far away from equal representation. The United Kingdom, where many colonial and post-colonial immigrants were treated as citizens upon arrival, had 27 Members of Parliament who were ethnic minorities in 2010. This number represented only about 4 per cent of all parliamentarians, while ethnic minorities accounted for more than 8 per cent of the total population. France did not have any Maghrebians among the elected members of its National Assembly in 2007 even though many of the original North African migrants came as French nationals with prior exposure to French language and culture. In contrast, the Netherlands, another former colonial power, performed relatively well: in 2006 more than 10 per cent of those elected to the national parliament were of 'non-Western' origin. Yet the political representation and success of post-war immigrant populations in the Netherlands is

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unequal across different national origin groups. In Germany, the first Turkish-German members of the federal parliament were only elected in 1994, more than 30 years after the signing of a recruitment treaty that opened the doors to large-scale Turkish immigration. By 2011, about 3 per cent of the members of the German national parliament had a migration background, a low proportion compared to the estimated 20 per cent of the population with migrant origins. Clearly, significant barriers prevent or retard the full political incorporation of immigrants; the dynamics of minority representation also appear to vary across European countries and between immigrant and ethnic minority groups.

The issue of immigrant and ethnic minority political representation is garnering increasing attention among academics (e.g. Alba and Foner 2009; Bird *et al*. 2011b; Givens and Maxwell 2012), and it has become an issue of concern to European political leaders, including Angela Merkel, Nicolas Sarkozy and David Cameron. From a strategic political viewpoint, although anti-immigrant – and especially anti-Muslim – rhetoric and politics continue to be prominent in public debates, political parties are gradually recognising that they need to broaden their appeal to reach out to residents of immigrant origins and to represent this new diversity in their membership and leadership. These residents constitute a growing share of national, and especially certain regional or local, electorates. Selecting minority candidates might increase a party's attraction in the eyes of immigrant and minority voters, or even encourage them to vote for the first time. There is, for example, evidence from the United States supporting an 'empowerment' effect: as the percentage of state legislators with minority backgrounds grew, voting among African Americans and Latinos increased between 10 and 40 per cent (Rocha *et al*. 2010).

Immigrant and minority representation also carries important symbolic and normative implications related to the legitimacy of political parties and, more broadly, the entire political system of a state. As Susan Scarrow and Bursu Gezgor (2010: 827) point out, 'In an era of increasing disaffection with political parties, parties may start to seem even more remote if their membership profiles radically diverge from the image the party hopes to project'. In democratic countries, political institutions face calls to reflect, in an equitable manner, the diversity of their populations. Even if immigrants' interests may be represented by politicians who are not of immigrant origin, the lack of diversity in Europe's legislatures sends a message of exclusion and signals a democratic deficit within domestic politics (on the representation of diversity see Philipps 1995). A lack of descriptive representation could increase political alienation among minorities (Pantoja and Segura 2003), whereas an increase in such representation might lead to substantive changes in policies affecting immigrants and minorities.[1]

Whose Representation?

Above, we refer to 'immigrants', 'ethnic minorities' and people of 'non-Western' origin. These labels reflect differing national conventions as well as differences

between scholars regarding the very definition of the subject of study. Since currently in Western Europe, those addressed as ethnic or non-Western minorities are largely of immigrant origin, the different categories are often treated as comparable. We do not include national minorities and ethno-linguistic minorities, like the Hungarians in Romania, Welsh in the United Kingdom or Catalans in Spain in our discussion. While a distinction between 'national' and 'ethnic' minorities is often a matter of historical legitimacy rather than academic reasoning (e.g. Heckmann 1992; Thornberry 1991), as we argue below, immigration might produce qualitatively different mechanisms of representation compared to traditional national minorities. National minorities are residents of multiple generations and often have claims to territory and particular historical experiences different from immigrants.[2]

In thinking through mechanisms of exclusion or disadvantage, scholars should distinguish between different categorisations. On the one hand, a researcher may be interested in the effects of immigration on political participation and representation. In such a case, the researcher should study those of foreign birth and citizenship. Whether we include the second generation – the native-born children of migrants – depends on whether we assume intergenerational effects of immigration (legally, socially and politically), an argument that seems reasonable for the second generation but less so for the third or further generations.[3]

If, however, we are interested in documenting and understanding the effects of racial discrimination (and of group loyalties and mobilisation related to ethnic or 'racial' ascriptions), it makes sense to focus on ethnic, visible, non-Western or racial minorities. All these categories more or less explicitly refer to group distinctions based on (real or assumed) physical differences. Not everyone of immigrant background commonly counts as 'non-Western' or 'ethnic minority'.[4] Conversely, post-colonial migrants and their descendants usually would be included as ethno-racial minorities, but not necessarily as immigrants. It is also possible that religion, notably being Muslim (or Jewish), is 'racialised', especially for those who manifest visual symbols of their religious affiliation. Given differences in historical experiences and contemporary national cultures that are reflected in group labels, it is difficult to establish a common category suitable for cross-national comparison. This becomes a challenge not only conceptually, but also empirically when researchers must rely on statistical data collected by government or publicly funded agencies, each with their unique categorisations (see Bloemraad 2013).

A Call for Broader Frameworks

Migration researchers and scholars of representation could both benefit from a closer dialogue with each other. While investigations of electoral participation and immigrant representation date back, in some countries, to the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Le Lohe 1975; Rath 1983), research in this area has been sporadic,

at best (but see Hargreaves and Wihtol de Wenden 1993; Migrations Société 2001; with further references: Martiniello 2005; Schönwälder 2009; Rama-krishnan, Karthick and Bloemraad 2008).

Among scholars of migration, immigrant political incorporation has received far less attention than other integration dynamics, such as incorpora-tion into labour markets or educational systems. The nuts and bolts of electoral systems, party nomination practices, the determination of electoral districts or parliamentary institutions remain understudied by migration scholars. Compara-tive studies of immigrant political incorporation are also rare (but see Alba and Foner 2009; Bird 2003; Bird *et al.* 2011a; Garbaye 2005; Givens and Maxwell 2012). We do not as yet have a systematic and comprehensive overview of immigrant and ethnic minority representation in local, regional and national political bodies. Political organisations – beyond parliaments – and informal participation – except migrant organisations – are almost unresearched territory in Europe with regard to immigrant and ethnic minority political involvement.

Apart from a lack of empirical knowledge, general models able to unify research on national or local contexts, or on particular groups, also remain wanting. Why do immigrant-origin minorities do better in getting elected in some countries compared to others? Why are certain minority groups more successful than others? And how much does variation between countries and groups have to do with the 'rules of the game' compared to other explana-tions? Here, migration scholars would do well to learn from existing scholar-ship on representation.

The literature on representation in Western Europe likewise needs to take more seriously the case of immigrant-origin minorities, not only because of their numerical presence, but also because their experiences require amend-ments to existing analytical frameworks. Gender inequalities in political repre-sentation are by now an established theme in scholarship on participation and representation. Immigrant participation and representation in Europe has not yet attracted the same degree of scholarly attention. How can we extend or modify existing models to suit the cases of immigrants and ethnic minorities?

We offer some tentative suggestions on how to do this by building on the distinction suggested by Pippa Norris (2007: 629) between the 'structural resources' and 'cultural attitudes' of individuals, compared to broader 'institu-tional and social contexts'. Like Norris, we adopt a new institutionalism perspective that emphasises the interaction of actors, both individual and collective, and the institutional and cultural context (for a critique of the 'indi-vidualistic bias' of many studies of political participation see e.g. Kriesi 2008). We use the term 'institutional' mainly in the narrower sense of the formal insti-tutions of the electoral and party system. We also refer to the 'cultural context' in the sense of prevailing norms and attitudes, mainly by the majority popula-tion and elites towards the groups concerned, including acceptance of minori-ties' ability and right to participate. Since immigrant incorporation is by definition a historical process, attention to contingency, or situational context, seems particularly appropriate.

The 'structural resources' of individuals include standard variables in studies of political behaviour and representation, such as educational qualifications, income and occupational status. Since the distribution of such resources is usually related to ethnicity and immigrant background (as well as to sex) in systematic ways, inequalities in political participation and representation can be understood as the result of socio-economic inequalities. This extension to minority groups does not require a re-evaluation of representation models.

However, the very act and experience of migration might bring something new to dynamics of political inclusion and representation as it shapes the resources and motivations of the immigrant population. Most importantly, compared to the native-born majority, being an immigrant implies being a newcomer to the political institutions and norms of a particular country. For immigrants, developing the necessary skills to participate in the political system, such as the acquisition of a new language and the necessary political knowledge, takes time. These sorts of migrant handicaps are especially strong in the case of those who wish to run for office: the political careers of would-be politicians are highly dependent on contacts and networks built up over time, and even over generations; parent politicians can pass on networks, resources and name recognition to children seeking office. Furthermore, it usually takes several years until immigrants acquire citizenship and full political rights – if they do so – and in some countries, the legal obstacles to citizenship can be extended to the second generation born in Europe.

Cultural attitudes among immigrants, especially the first generation, might be related to experiences in the home country and affect participation and representation. Socialisation in a non-democratic country might generate attitudes of distance from the state and political organisations, a factor that could help explain lower participation rates among some Asian and East European groups.[5] We have no systematic empirical research on whether prior socialisation in different regimes might make immigrants more or less likely to seek elected office.

Conversely, the motivations and confidence of individuals can be affected by migrants' reception by the mainstream society as well as their legal status (Portes and Rumbaut 2006). As emphasised by Bourdieu (1987: 639–40), political participation – like political interest and knowledge – is dependent on the belief that one may legitimately exercise the 'right to politics'. This belief may be undermined by limited rights and derogatory group images. Thus Lydia Morris (2009: 606–7) has argued that 'rights acknowledge or confer public standing' and their denial may undermine minorities' legitimacy, compromising minority citizens' ability to make full use of political rights. In a system of 'civic stratification' – as David Lockwood (1996) has emphasised – there is not only civic exclusion or inclusion, i.e. the absence or existence of citizenship rights. Rather, the ability to get the most out of citizen rights also depends on 'moral and material resources'. Lockwood (1996) terms a situation in which such resources are weak – as for many immigrants – 'civic deficit'. For women and Blacks in the US, Fox and Lawless (2005: 652) have demonstrated

empirically that a lower 'general sense of efficacy', produced by upbringing and social expectations, partly explains lower political ambitions (with reference to women, see Norris and Inglehart 2001: 131). Racist views may deem particular individuals and groups less qualified for political office; here, ethnic minorities are affected differently than immigrants in general. Conversely, some immigrants may also derive a particular sense of legitimacy from historical links. Thus Caribbean or Indian migration to Britain was 'not pure immigration but entry into a country upon which one had a moral or political claim' (Modood 2005: 471). Such distinctions could provide further purchase on inter-group variation in minority representation. As all these examples illustrate, individual and context characteristics should always be conceived of as closely intertwined.

Among immigrant and ethnic minorities, shared migration experiences, common mother tongues, cultural practices, religious affiliations and other ties can create strong group consciousness and institutional bonds. Aspiring politicians may use ethnic loyalties and organisational structures to their advantage. Group members may also be motivated by a 'common cause'. Voters with an immigrant or ethnic minority background may expect to be represented by politicians of similar backgrounds or they may feel a sense of shared fate that heightens group solidarity, overriding individual-level differences between members of the ethnic community (Dawson 1994). In the United States, building both on the collective mobilisation of African Americans and the traditional ethnic politics of European-origin residents in US cities such as New York and Boston (e.g. Dahl 1961; Jones-Correa 2007), it has often been taken for granted that the political mobilisation and incorporation of immigrants occurs not as individuals but as groups (Portes and Rumbaut 2006: 166–67). Yet at the same time, researchers need to continuously interrogate the conceptual and political construction of groups (Brubaker 2002; Lee 2008). While a Member of Parliament of Tunisian origin can represent the immigrant population in a statistical sense, it is an open question as to how she perceives herself and what interests motivate her political practice.

In Europe, an influential ethnic group approach to political mobilisation and electoral success views ethnic organisations as nodes of social capital that further political engagement (e.g. Tillie 2004). Differences in political incorporation between national-origin groups are explained by different degrees of ethnic associationalism. Rahsaan Maxwell (2012) has documented different levels of representation for groups racially discriminated against in the United Kingdom and France, arguing that those that achieve higher representation profit from stronger group structures. The empirical evidence for a simple conversion between ethnic associationalism and political outcomes is mixed, and the mechanisms are debated (Berger and Koopmans 2004; Jacobs and Tillie 2008; Jacobs *et al.* 2006). There is evidence, however, that organisations can act as important mediating structures between newcomers and the host country's political institutions, if organisational leaders mobilise memberships for political ends and mainstream political actors reach out to such groups (Bloemraad 2006).

More attention needs to be paid to the ways in which group resources interact with the political context. Group dynamics may work in distinct ways for immigrant-origin and ethnic minority populations, that is, as a barrier to inclusion or as a resource, depending on the cultural and situational context. For the Netherlands, recent developments point to negative consequences of the anti-multicultural turn for minority representation: parties may be reluctant to promote individuals who are seen as representatives of a well-organised ethnic minority (Michon and Vermeulen 2013). In France, Geisser and Kelfaoui (1998: 27–28) have argued that the parties in the 1990s applied a dual strategy, striving to attract an 'ethnic electorate' by using representatives of such groups, but purposely selecting assimilated minority representatives unconnected with a mobilised ethnic community.

The importance of group identifications and organisations for political activism is not peculiar to immigrants or ethnic minorities. Whiteley (2011: 27) points out that 'ideological ties between individuals and institutions such as political parties and trade unions can compensate for a lack of individual resources and boost individual participation'. Indeed, immigrant and ethnic minority groups sometimes, in spite of high average disadvantage in terms of socio-economic status and racism, achieve relatively high representation. In a time when group loyalties might be fading among the general population, for example around Protestant or Catholic religious affiliation, or to mass organisations such as trade unions, immigrant and ethnic minority group bonds could represent a special case of the continuing salience of group identity and collective action.

Beyond individuals and social context, scholars must also attend to the institutional context. With regard to women's representation, electoral systems are often seen as the key to explaining differences between states (Lilliefeldt 2012; Norris and Inglehart 2001: 130). Further, in the tradition of Arend Lijphart (1986), scholars have investigated how electoral designs can contribute to accommodating different ethnic or national groups in heterogeneous societies (Moser 2008; Norris 2004: 209–29).[6] Studies in the US have investigated institutional interventions, specifically redistricting, which is used to ensure minority access to representative institutions following the Civil Rights Acts (Forest 2012; Henderson 2007).

The applicability of these findings to immigrant minorities needs to be tested. An electoral system based on proportional representation is generally regarded as promoting higher representation of women. However, as immigrant and ethnic minorities are often residentially concentrated, they may profit from majority systems which allow them to use group mobilisation in particular localities to their advantage. In the United Kingdom, this has partly been the case.[7] At the same time, as Sobolewska (2013) points out, parties may be tempted to restrict minority representation only to areas of concentrated minority settlement, limiting the parliamentary representation of such groups and the career opportunities of individuals belonging to them.

Since most West European countries use some kind of proportional representation system, differential outcomes may depend on the exact rules in place. An important one is ballots with flexible lists and the possibility of personal votes. Women do not generally profit from personal votes (Lilliefeldt 2012: 195, 206), and it is conceivable that negative images of immigrant and ethnic minorities could produce 'down-voting' of minority representatives. However, as distinct from women, minorities can profit from group mobilisation. For immigrants and ethnic minorities in Danish local elections, Togeby (2008) found positive effects of personal votes (see also Schönwälder 2012 on preferential votes in German elections; Teney *et al*. 2010 on Belgian examples). We need, however, additional studies in order to come to more systematic and generalisable conclusions.

District magnitude, or the ratio of voters to seats, is another factor sometimes identified as affecting women's representation through decreased competition in multi-member districts (Norris 2006). There is evidence pointing at similar effects for immigrant representation. Schönwälder (2013) shows that in German regional states, a higher number of seats in relation to the number of voters goes some way towards explaining higher immigrant representation.

Parties and party systems also matter; they can be more or less accommodating of newcomers. In West European states, parties largely control access to elected positions and they are an important arena for political activism. European parties have evolved over long time horizons, presenting immigrants with an institutionalised structure difficult to change. Immigrants who want to become active in an established political party or who envisage a political career consequently have to position themselves in a field of actors that is often marked by historical loyalties specific to the majority population, such as legacies of support by certain Protestants or Catholics for a Christian party, and by longstanding social divisions, such as between language groups. The institutionalisation of these parties and party loyalties make it harder for newcomers to fit into existing parties, or to advance new agendas within historic party structures.

Socialist and social democratic parties have often been more open to immigrants and attracted more support among them (Bird *et al*. 2011a: 66–106; Sobolewska 2013; Tiberj and Michon 2013). This tends to contribute to higher immigrant representation in countries and elections where these parties have a strong showing. Alternatively, smaller parties may be less afraid of racism among majority voters, and minority demands may fit more easily into agendas of parties that pursue a specific, rather than a catch-all, profile. We thus posit that new parties with less established hierarchies and claims to power are likely to be more open to newcomers. This also implies that systems that are more open to change and have a larger number of parties may offer more opportunities than stable two-party systems (Schönwälder 2012). Again, more empirical evidence and systematic comparison would help substantiate such claims further.

Intra-party dynamics and candidate selection procedures are little explored but are probably highly significant for immigrant and minority representation.

It is well-known that 'the recruitment process filters some over others, on a systematic basis' (Norris 1997: 5), producing elites that are more male, more affluent, older and ethnically more homogeneous than the general population (Andrews *et al.* 2008). But we know less about the exact workings of such recruitment processes and their impact for potential minority candidates (Nay 2001; Soininen 2011). Studying city elections, Garbaye (2005: 34–36, 85–89, 142) has suggested that the hierarchical French structures do not restrict or further immigrant and minority representation per se. Rather, they provide mayors and local elites with significant power that they can use to the benefit or detriment of immigrant or minority candidates. The impact of institutional structures thus depends on their interaction with political processes.

Beyond formal institutions, the broader cultural context also affects the political advancement of groups, including women as well as immigrants and ethnic minorities. As emphasised above, attitudes towards groups influence the motivations and confidence of disadvantaged individuals. In addition, they impact on policies and the behaviour of the electorate. Alba and Foner (2009: 289) have pointed out that 'integration models can make elites more or less amenable to minority group mobilization efforts and thus have an effect on immigrant minorities' access to and success at the polls'. Cultural factors and their workings are not the same for all groups. Pippa Norris has argued that 'at least in Britain, women and ethnic-racial minorities face different types of discriminatory attitudes among selectors and electors' (Norris 2004: 212). Immigrants in general and those deemed 'racially' distinct are likely to be differentially affected by negative attitudes.

Compared to individual characteristics and institutional structures, situational contexts have not yet played a major role in the literature on immigrant political incorporation or minority representation. And yet Hargreaves and Wihtol de Wenden already raised the 'situational' dimension and the relevance of 'circumstantial configurations' in 1993. Loury, Modood and Teles (2005: 11) have more recently emphasised the 'institutional effect of timing' and argued that 'the sequencing of ethnic and racial groups into the polity affects their political mobilization and organization'. Murray (2012: 343) points in a similar direction when she argues that French parity legislation for women and 'the recognition of the need to legislate equality' has furthered the 'creep of parity into other areas such as ethnic minority representation'. Dynamics of minority representation might be particularly subject to fortuitous or unfortunate timing given role model effects. The early success, or flamboyant failures, of a particular minority candidate can spur others in the community to run for office (Bloemraad 2006: 228–31), or debacles might be used as cautionary tales against nominating an immigrant-origin candidate. The fortunes of immigrants and ethnic minorities may be more volatile and subject to conjectural effects because individual politicians are perceived as community representatives, even if many minority residents may not see it that way.[8]

Scholarship on minority representation in Europe is in its infancy. Researchers need to tease apart the relative importance of individual or group

resources and cultural factors from the societal cultural norms or institutions that pattern access to and success in elected office. The study of immigrants and ethnic minorities can both build on, but also challenge, long-held notions about what helps increase political representation among marginalised groups, such as women. To push this academic agenda forward, the contributions to this symposium each highlight, from different angles, how specific factors related to minority representation operate and interact, at the national, regional or city level. The concluding article offers a comparative perspective.

Overview of the Symposium

The articles in the symposium span four European countries: the United Kingdom, France, the Netherlands and (West) Germany. All four have long-established democratic systems that grant immigrants basic political rights – if not general voting rights – and for which the non-representation of significant parts of the population represents a challenge. All four countries have major and well-established immigrant populations, significant numbers of which are now citizens. Rather than just outlining the state of immigrant incorporation in the four countries, the articles seek to advance our understanding of the dynamics that shape this process.

In the first contribution, Vincent Tiberj and Laure Michon investigate the political orientations of immigrant populations. Their essay starts from the question of whether the relative paucity of minority-origin representatives in French legislatures matters. For some theorists, and in line with dominant understandings of the French republican tradition, the biography or background of representatives is not relevant. In France, in particular, it is presumed that ethnicity is not important for politics since 'ethnic' interests are really class interests or other interests already part of the political system. This paper challenges such a view by presenting empirical evidence demonstrating that the political attitudes and loyalties of immigrants and ethnic minorities in France are clearly distinct; they cannot be explained only by socio-economic situation, or religious affiliation. Like the United States, the authors argue, France fits a model of 'two-tier pluralism', according to which visible and racially discriminated against minorities fail to follow an assimilationist path of incorporation. Thus, they argue, the representation of immigrants and ethnic minorities – or, more specifically, their lack of representation – remains a political issue.

Laure Michon and Floris Vermeulen then lead us from individuals and their political motivations to the study of ethnic group consciousness and group organisation. Taking Amsterdam with its Turkish and Moroccan populations as a case study, their article outlines two distinct paths to political integration, one of political presence through elected office, but which carries little political power, and another of political weight in the system, but where minority politicians are distanced from their communities. Combining social capital and political opportunity structure approaches, Michon and Vermeulen demonstrate how an interaction between the organisational infrastructure of an immigrant

group and the attitudes of political parties toward ethnic cohesion produces distinct patterns of representation. They also demonstrate how political contingency, in this case the swing from a multicultural to a more assimilationist Dutch public discourse, can affect political recruitment and representation.

The article by Maria Sobolewska continues the emphasis on the role that political parties and party elites play as either gatekeepers or facilitators of immigrants' political participation. As Sobolewska argues, the British literature has rarely considered why and how parties may go about increasing ethnic minority representation. Political parties have different motivations and political calculations when going after the 'ethnic' vote or running a minority candidate for office. They also face distinct choices over the strategies they could pursue to increase the number of black and brown faces in parliament. Using constituency-level demographic data, electoral results from the 2005 and 2010 parliamentary elections and an analysis of newspaper and web-based resources, Sobolewska demonstrates how the choices of the three main political parties, each with different representation strategies, produced a recent rise in ethnic minority representation in Great Britain.

Moving to a yet broader viewpoint, Karen Schönwälder examines the reasons for variation in immigrants' representation among the regional parliaments of Germany's states. In Germany, rising naturalisation and a political re-orientation of the big *Volksparteien* have produced a noticeable increase in the number of immigrant Germans in parliament. Her analysis reveals, however, significant differences between regions, especially between the smaller city-states, such as Berlin and Hamburg, and the larger territorial states of the country. It is thus debatable to what extent the dynamics of immigrant representation should be explained with reference to features of nation-states alone. Schönwälder considers whether variation across German states can be wholly explained by the number or characteristics of immigrants, or the particular electoral systems in the different states. She concludes that attention to single factors is not sufficient and instead advocates for a more dynamic approach that explains levels of immigrant representation as a result of the combined effects of socio-demographic and institutional structures as well as the states' specific socio-cultural context and political dynamics.

In concluding this symposium on minority representation, Irene Bloemraad broadens the analysis further, comparing representational equity across a number of European nations. In doing so, Bloemraad tries, with available evidence, to overcome some of the current data constraints hindering cross-national comparisons. She generates a representation index that calibrates the prevalence of a particular minority group in the national legislature – as defined by researchers in that particular country – to the proportion of the group living in the country. To provide context for this comparison, Bloemraad also brings in data on immigrant-origin minority representation in the traditional immigration countries of Australia, Canada and the United States. This exercise reveals some surprises, notably the limits of any approach focusing solely on the explanatory power of citizenship models or electoral rules. Bloemraad then

offers some tentative hypotheses to guide future research. In particular, she identifies the intersection of electoral institutions, the way political parties' recruitment efforts might be influenced by public diversity policy, and the degree of civic organising among immigrant or ethnic minority-origin residents.

Research on representation by immigrant-origin and ethnic minorities in Europe is at an early stage. We need more wide-ranging and systematic data at different levels of government and in a wider range of countries. We need to find ways to compare like with like when writing about 'immigrants' or minorities that are 'ethnic', 'visible' or 'non-Western'. We will hopefully, on this basis, make further progress in understanding the dynamics driving or hindering equal access to political power. With their differing thematic foci, the contributions to this symposium all highlight the relevance of not only individual but also collective actors, like immigrant organisations and political parties, as well as the institutional structures and cultural frameworks shaping representation. Clearly, one-dimensional approaches will not deliver convincing explanations of immigrant political incorporation.

Acknowledgements

Notes

1. The European literature is too new to provide purchase on the question of whether descriptive minority representation translates into substantive policy outcomes, but work in the United States suggests that this might be the case (e.g. Owens 2005, Preuhs 2007).
2. The case of citizens who previously lived in overseas, colonised territories, such as the Surinamese in the Netherlands or Antilleans in France, are a particular in-between category: they belonged to an empire and have stronger historical claims than other migrants, but they can be seen as immigrants to the core territory and be perceived as 'non-Western'.
3. Often those of mixed parentage are also included. This is open to debate and should in the long run be decided on the basis of empirical evidence on their participation and representation.
4. In principle the term 'ethnic' does not necessarily connote physical difference, but in the British context where the concept is common, the term is mostly used for people of darker complexion – and not for, say, Italian or Polish immigrants – although they may share a strong ethnic consciousness. The Dutch category 'non-Western' is also a covert line of distinction between those of European and non-European backgrounds, or 'White' and other individuals.
5. See also Bilodeau (2008) and Bilodeau, McAllister and Kanji (2010) with mixed evidence: coming from an authoritarian regime represses political protest activities, but has little effect on formal political participation.

6. But here as well Moser (2008: 273) notes that 'surprisingly little empirical evidence' exists that examines the effects of different electoral systems.
7. In the United States, Trounstine and Valdini (2008: 555, 567) argue that 'single-member district elections increase descriptive representation of underrepresented racial and ethnic groups on city councils', but 'only when underrepresented groups are highly concentrated and compose moderate portions of the population'.
8. For example, corruption by a majority male candidate is probably not understood to mean that all native-born males are corrupt; similar corruption by the 'Moroccan' candidate might have a very different effect.

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