



POLITIS

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1 Objectives

Populations of immigrant origin are growing and changing in Europe. POLITIS explored the potential of immigrants for the development of a civically active European society, starting with country reports in 25 EU countries, continuing with foreign students' perceptions of Europe and focusing on sustained social and political activities of immigrants. It sought to improve our understanding of different factors that promote or inhibit active civic participation in the 25 states that were member states of the European Union in 2004.

POLITIS answered to the concern for the decline of civic activism in advanced post-industrial societies in Europe. This issue has been one of the core concerns of the European Commission and European Parliament in recent years as it is believed that reduced civic and political participation undermine the overall legitimacy of the EU and the quality of its democratic system. Within a general trend towards civic apathy and societal fragmentation, migration is perceived as posing an additional challenge. It brings in further cultural and religious diversity; it challenges ideas of ethnic or racial purity; it defies the national order of fixed territorial-cum-cultural borders. Native citizens often perceive immigrants as a major threat to the already dubious cohesion of their society. The newcomers and their alien customs, traditions and beliefs are blamed for the collapse of community feelings and practices.

In this project, we started off with an opposing starting point: We hypothesised that naturalized citizens as well as recent immigrant arrivals form an important resource for the revival of civic participation. Contemporary migration takes place increasingly through transnational migration networks built on kinship and ethnic bonds (Pries 1999). This type of networks involves also civic engagement, more often than not of an exclusive 'bonding' type (Putnam 2000). We were interested how immigrants started civic participation in the receiving countries and assumed that it would probably start with ethnic migration networks and expand to more co-ethnics, other minorities and natives that are of a more open 'bridging' character. Could the experiences in the networks in the migration process even form a favourable background for the evolution of civic activism? Would legal or political restrictions in the receiving societies prevent this resource from becoming fully activated? How did different factors of an objective character (e.g. income, security of residence status, length of stay, education level, or opportunity structures for participating) or of a subjective nature (e.g. motivations, prior civic activism experiences, need to act collectively, personal and societal values) combine in different patterns of immigrant civic activism?

Demographic projections for Europe indicate that immigration will play an increasing role for Europe, as shrinking and aging societies are likely to profit economically from new immigration. We expect that this trend will continue in the next decades, in spite of current efforts to contain immigration in the face of security threats and unemployment. Therefore, we considered *first generation* immigrant participation from non EU-countries a particularly interesting case for studying the potential of civic participation in post-industrial and internally diverse societies. First generation – in our definition – means people born abroad who moved to a new country as youth or adults. Our study excludes the offspring of immigrants (second generation) but includes co-ethnic immigrants and naturalized citizens. Indeed immigrants who naturalise become statistically virtually invisible in countries that

only count ‘foreign nationals’ and not ‘foreign born’ in their population statistics.¹ While seeking to identify mechanisms of general validity, we aimed at paying attention to the different migrations situations and policies, particularly distinguishing between ‘old’ immigration countries situated largely in the northern and western part of the European Union, ‘new’ hosts in the South, and former Communist countries with their particular blend of in- and out-migration and processes of democratic consolidation.

In addition to the potential contribution of immigrants to European societies, we also aimed at exploring their potential for the development of an integrated *European* society (instead of a set of European societies). What are immigrants’ representations of Europe?

Addressing these questions, the project was structured in three parts:

- Part I: A literature review on migration and immigrant civic participation in 25 member states, including native language sources, to compare migration and participation conditions;²
- Part II: An analysis of foreign students’ and immigrants’ perceptions of Europe, to explore their ideas of Europe and how they are linked to active participation and influenced by their national background.³
- Part III: An analysis of qualitative interviews with civic activists of immigrant origin in 25 states, focusing on the more or less favourable conditions for active participation;

In addition to the research objectives, the project aimed to contribute to the integration of researchers from all over the European Union, including immigrant researchers and graduate students from non EU countries. The project also aimed at a high level of interaction with civil society, disseminating findings not only to academic audiences, but also to civil society organisations in 25 EU states.

2 Consortium and research design, data and methods (Dita Vogel, Ankica Kosic and Carol Brown)

In this section we shall present the consortium design and explain how the three different parts of the project are linked together.

2.1 Consortium

Regarding the research team, POLITIS applied a consistent approach to guarantee a high involvement of 25 EU-countries, civil society organisations and international migrants from the beginning to the end of the research. The core consortium consisted of three research partners and one European NGO and was linked to a high number of partners. The partners were:

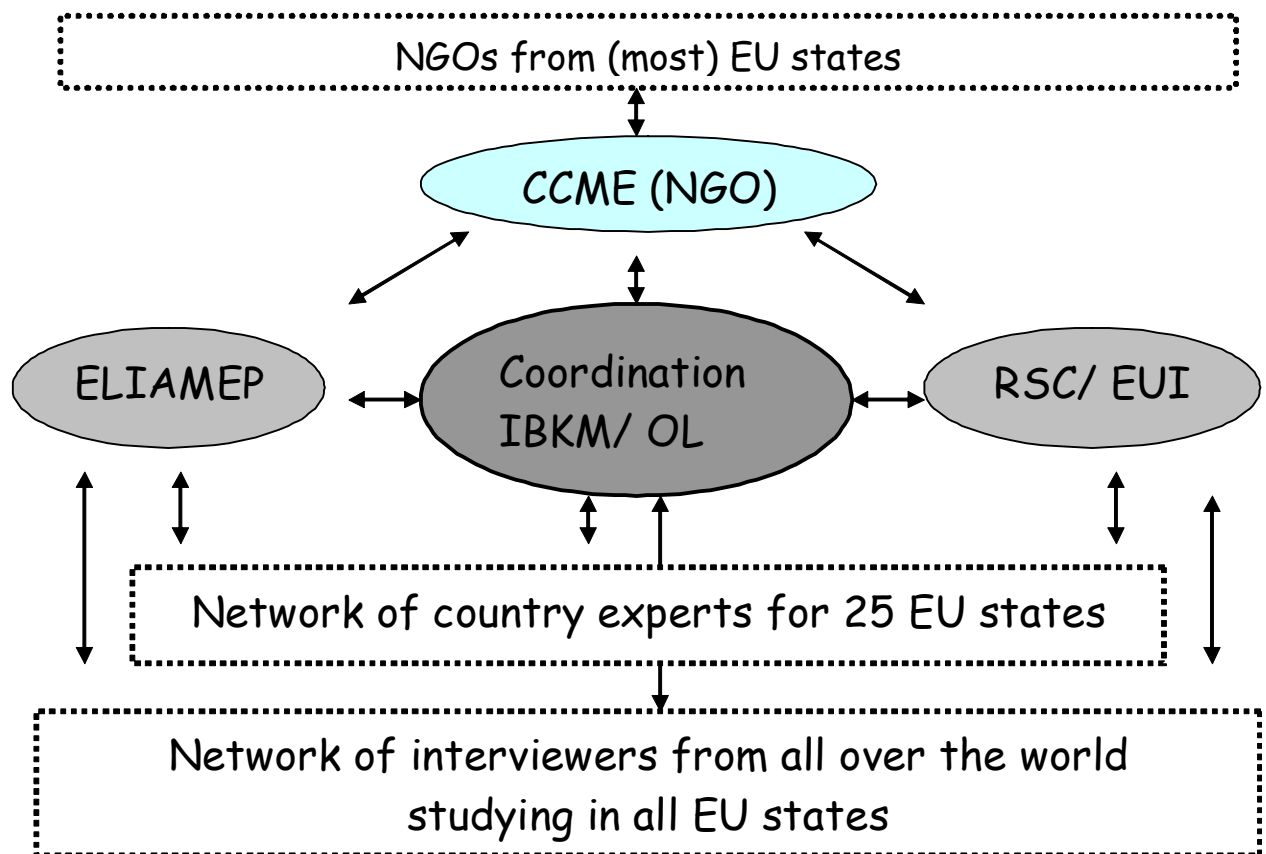
¹ Including Bulgaria and Romania that only became member states towards the end of the project duration.

² Originally, the objective included only the literature survey on civic participation conditions. We adjusted the aim to include migration developments and policies as no up-to-date review was available for all 25 EU countries.

³ Originally, we aimed at analysing only students’ perceptions on the basis of focus group discussions, but it turned out that a application essays of participating students and active immigrants’ references to Europe offered fruitful material on the topic so that the scope was broadened.

- Coordinator and research partner: University of Oldenburg, Interdisciplinary Centre for Education and Communication in Migratory Processes in Oldenburg (IBKM)
- Research partner: Hellenic Foundation for Foreign and European Policy in Athens (ELIAMEP)
- Research partner: Robert Schuman Centre at the European University Institute in Florence (EUI)
- NGO: Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe in Brussels (CCME)

Figure 1: POLITIS project structure



Partners selected 35 country experts in the then 25 EU member states who wrote country reports and formed a network of support for later stages of the project. Furthermore, 75 students and PhD-researchers, born outside the EU25, who were studying in one of these EU Member States, were recruited as interviewers and discussants. Research partners incorporated material produced in this project in their university teaching, especially in Oldenburg where students were encouraged to learn qualitative methods by participating actively in ongoing research. The project consortium sought to be truly European, interactive and society-oriented. The structure of the consortium is presented graphically in Figure 1.

The POLITIS project produced three databases: the 25 country reports, a database of 243 essays and 8 focus group discussions on the meaning of Europe, and a database of 176 qualitative interviews with highly active immigrants from all over Europe. In the following paragraphs, the research design is described in more detail, with a special focus on the three different parts of the project and the three corresponding databases.

2.2 Part I: Selection of country experts and country reports

The national experts that worked for the POLITIS project were recruited through an open call for applications in summer 2004. They were asked to write a report on state of art of immigration and immigrant civic participation in their country of residence. Reports were reviewed, and completed in the early summer of 2005. The structure of the reports was predetermined by the research consortium. Reports were organised in three parts. Part I presented an overview of immigration stocks and flows and of the main migration policies developed in each country in the last two decades. Part II described and assessed the conditions (encouraging or discouraging) that affected immigrant civic participation in each country. The relevant literature was reviewed in this section. Where literature on the matter was very scarce, experts used other sources of information (e.g. grey literature, policy documents, media discourses) and if necessary interviews with key actors. Part III concentrated on a set of qualitative questions prepared by the consortium that each expert had to address briefly. In addition, each national report included a list of relevant research institutes and researchers working on immigration and civic participation (Annex). These reports served several functions. First, they were an important basis for the next research steps in the project POLITIS – interviewing immigrant activists in all EU states. Second, they were made publicly available for the European research community providing for an up to date overview on the topic. Thirdly, a comparative book project on European immigration has emerged out of these reports (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007).⁴

Country experts were encouraged to concentrate on Third country immigrants, to summarize studies that are only available in their country and in the language of their country, in order to increase the value of their reports for the European research community, to look for specific articles and books on the topic, but to pay also some attention to the treatment of immigrants in more general studies on civic participation. In some countries, third country immigration is only a recent phenomenon. There are hardly any studies on immigration, let alone on the subject of immigrant civic participation in the receiving society. In situations with little research to summarize, experts made use of grey literature and media reports and conducted some interviews with practitioners in the field. Thus, reports differ in character. While some are structured literature reviews, others contain also some original explorative investigation into the topic. Last but not least, the reports provide answers to questions such as the main fields of immigrants activities, the ethnic composition of active immigrants, and the level of activities.

2.3 Part II: Selection of ‘student partners’ and perceptions of Europe

In an effort to find interviewers for Part III of the study and discussants for Parts II and III, POLITIS recruited international students and PhD-researchers who were called ‘student partners’. In a first call that was advertised in the second half of 2004 on-line and throughout

⁴ This comparative book project substituted for a comparative article that was originally planned.

other means, only students from non-EU countries studying in EU countries were invited to apply for participation in the project. The applicants were asked to submit a letter of motivation, their CV and an essay on the meaning of Europe. A second call was open for only those EU-countries in which the first call did not deliver a sufficient number of good applications and was opened also to EU students with some expertise on issues of immigration and civic participation.

In total, after two calls, the team received 254 valid and about 30 invalid applications mainly from post-graduate students from outside the EU countries. Each individual application was assessed on the basis of the letter, the CV and the essay. The team looked for promising academic skills, thoughtful essays in acceptable English, and a credible interest in the project. During the second project meeting, the research team made an effort to find a balanced composition that included all EU countries of study and a wide variety of countries of origin. The selection of interviewers was largely determined by the expectation to get *good* interviews, to achieve a wide *variation of context conditions* and to allow for *clusters of countries and regions of origin*. The ‘student partners’ originated from 40 different countries in Africa, Asia, America and Europe and lived (most of them temporarily) in 25 states of the European Union. Fifty researchers were female. While most participants were in their twenties, some older doctoral researchers of immigrant background also took part.

At a summer school in Greece in July 2005, 71 student partners took part in eight focus group discussions about the meaning of Europe. The application essays and the focus group discussions about perceptions of Europe were analysed in the framework of a research-teaching project at the University of Oldenburg. Oldenburg students made topical protocols of all discussions and marked and transcribed particularly controversial or emotional exchanges. Unfortunately, the students could not perform detailed analysis on the discussions –because many participants were rather reluctant on the issue, and because some recordings were difficult to understand due to unexpected noise pollution during the recording.⁵ However, the essays proved to offer a rich variation of views so that they were chosen for closer analysis. They had been announced as follows:

A short essay (800 to 1200 words) on the question: What does Europe mean to you personally? We are just interested in collecting personal opinions of students from all over the world. Equally, we are looking for candidates who are able to communicate their ideas in English. So don't be afraid to write down your thoughts, you are not selected on the scientific quality of your essay.

243 essays were inserted in a software programme for qualitative data analysis.⁶ A limited number of characteristics of the authors were kept with essays: country of origin, country of study, gender, length of stay in the European Union (born in the EU, in the EU since 2004, in the EU before 2004). Three out of five essays were written by women. The analysis of essays was complemented by the analysis of perceptions of Europe by immigrant activists in the framework of Part III.

⁵ When the recording situation was tested at lunchtime, quality was perfect. When the recording were made later in the afternoon, crickets spoiled some of the recordings.

⁶ In total, the project received more than 280 applications. Some applications did not contain essays, others were from people who lived and studied outside the EU, for a few, we could not make out the country of origin or study. The software programme is MAX.QDA2 - see their website for the special features of the programme <http://www.maxqda.de/>

2.4 Part III: Highly Active immigrants in Europe - training of interviewers, interview process and database

Two summer schools formed an integral part of the research design. During the first summer school in Greece in 2005, student partners were introduced to the topic and trained as interviewers, and during the second summer school in Germany in 2006 they participated in analysis and planning.

In the first summer school, the research consortium provided interviewers with an introduction to civic participation of immigrants, and to qualitative research methodology, as well as with a training how to conduct interviews for POLITIS. When back to the country of study, the 'student partners' had to select three suitable candidates for conducting the interviews, as a rule from their country or region of origin. The selection strategy was summarised in the interviewer manual produced by the consortium before the summer school. The team highlighted that it was particularly interested in forms of participation that require a continuous commitment and a considerable amount of time and energy. These highly active persons or 'immigrant activists' were identified as people who:

- *give a voice to societal concerns*, e.g. by engaging in political parties, local committees, parent associations or migrant lobby organisations.
- *organise solidarity and self-help*, e.g. by taking leadership functions in religious organisations, ethnic associations or informal self-help networks.

It was further specified that for the first interview, interviewers should look for a person active in politics; for the second interview, a person active in an ethnic or immigrant association; the third interview should diversify the previous choices with respect to gender, age, and citizenship status. Seeking variation in the immigrants' citizenship status was the more difficult task because it was often not known prior to the interviews. However, it was considered an important variable because citizenship status indicates the most influential and universal differentiation in rights which influence also civic participation. Interviewers were in e-mail contact with supervising researchers who were flexible in following the selection procedure. It was clear that it would not always work out as, for example, with local political activists, some interviewers would not be able to conduct such an interview because there was no one of their nationality in their city.

This selection strategy is inspired by the 'most different cases' (Sartori, 1991) or 'contrast of context' (Skocpol and Somers, 1980) analysis in political science, which usually compare national settings that vary in many aspects, while showing similar features with regard to the chosen topic. In qualitative interviewing, a research strategy with a similar logic is sometimes called 'dissimilarity sampling' (Rubin and Rubin, 1995). Nevertheless, dissimilarity sampling aims more generally at comparing individual cases, and not national cases.

You interview people with background characteristics different from those of your original interviewees, or you interview people in varying settings or who work in places other than the one you researched. You want to see whether the themes you have discovered hold in these different situations. When people with diverse backgrounds or in different situations behave the same way or express the same values as your original interviewees, you gain confidence that what you have learned holds more broadly. (Rubin and Rubin, 1995: 74)

These strategies allow researchers to create a generalising argument in spite of a low number of cases. The generalisation's validity and persuasiveness depend on the specific questions, the richness of the material and the logic of the argument. The POLITIS study sought to create a large qualitative interview database that allows for focused sub-sampling for a variety of specific research questions within the general topic of active civic participation of immigrants. Thus, the database was to offer the opportunity for what the team coined as '*horizontal dissimilarity sampling*' – the opportunity to look for and select subsets of cases for a specific question horizontally in the database, without returning to the field to look for new interviewees representing contrastive cases. Some concrete questions for analysis were foreseen already in the planning of the study, other questions evolved during the research in response to issues raised in the interviews. Thus, the study can be seen in the tradition of dynamic qualitative research strategies which have first been systematically described by Glaser and Strauss in the 1960s (Glaser and Strauss, 2006).

Before January 2006, 63 researchers conducted transcribed, translated and summarised interviews with 176 highly active immigrants. The following tables provide an overview of the socio-demographic characteristics of the interviewees in the database and comment on the selection.⁷

Table 1. Breakdown of immigrant activists interviewed for the POLITIS project by geographical region of origin

| <i>Geographic region of origin</i> | <i>Number of interviewees</i> |
|---|-------------------------------|
| Non-EU European countries ^{a)} | 83 |
| Africa ^{b)} | 39 |
| Asia and Middle East ^{c)} | 30 |
| Latin America & Caribbean ^{d)} | 19 |
| USA | 4 |
| EU member state | 1 |
| Total | 176 |

Source: POLITIS Interview Database

a) Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey, Ukraine. b) Algeria, Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Ethiopia, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Morocco, Mozambique, Nigeria, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa Tunisia. c) Afghanistan, Bangladesh, China, Hong-Kong, Iran, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Syria, Thailand, Vietnam d) Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Mexico, Peru, Suriname.

A second summer school with 56 participants in July 2006 involved interviewers in discussions about data quality and analysis as well as in dissemination planning. They

⁷ For more information, see also (Brown et al. 2007).

received a modest compensation for their work, depending on the number of interviews conducted, the length of each transcription and translation into English (where applicable). Considering the age, the amount of work and international mobility of the interviewers, the dropout rate was very low.

As Table 1 indicates, many of the interviewees come from European countries that did not belong to the European Union in 2005. This includes the current EU member states Romania and Bulgaria, and also Turkey (for which it is discussed whether it belongs to Europe at all). There are also larger groups from Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East. In total, the 176 immigrant activists originate from 54 different countries. Naturally, one could argue about the grouping into regions, and for some immigrants one could also argue about their attribution to a region, as they changed their place of residence more than once, but this overview provides a perspective on the variety of countries of origin.

About 60 per cent of the immigrant activists interviewed were male and about 40 per cent were female. The majority of the activists interviewed belong to the over-40 age group irrespective of gender. The age distribution is not unexpected in view of general studies of civic activism. With regards to gender, the sample distribution does not mirror the interviewers' gender distribution – the opposite is the case. While only one-third of the interviewers were male, nearly two-thirds of the interviewees were male. The interviewers were asked at the second summer school, if it was more difficult to find female than male immigrant activists. The answers to this question revealed that this differs considerably between different immigrant nationalities and countries of origin and residence. While some interviewers easily found two male activists and found it difficult to find a female activist, others were confronted with the reverse situation, finding two female activists easily and a male activist with difficulties. Therefore, the gender distribution may partly reflect the nearly universal phenomenon that men are generally overrepresented in responsible positions of any organisations, but it is also linked to the nationality distribution. A different nationality distribution with a higher focus on national groups in which women dominate migration would have helped to have a relatively high percentage of women included in the database.

To identify entry points important for civically active immigrants, respondents were asked for their original reason to migrate to the receiving country. People frequently decide to immigrate for many interacting and interdependent reasons. Therefore, the reported motives for migration do not always fully represent the individual migrant's complete set of reasons to move. Some interviewees migrated initially to study but then stayed to work and settled down in the country of residence, either due to employment opportunities or for personal reasons such as marriage. Keeping this in mind, the interviewees stated their principal reasons for migrating to their current country of residence as study (32 per cent), work or economic reasons (26 per cent), or marriage, a relationship or family reunification (24 per cent). Although the POLITIS research did not specifically target asylum seekers, they were included in the population to be potentially interviewed, and the fourth most common reason for migration was seeking refugee status or asylum (15 per cent). A much smaller proportion migrated for repatriation (2 per cent) or 'other' reasons (1 per cent). The most interesting observation is the high proportion of former students in the sample. This does not reflect a propensity of the student interviewers to interview other students – only ten interviewees were students at the time of the interview. The research suggests that students who settled in the receiving country are important for civic participation in immigrant communities.

The most prominent socio-demographic characteristic is that the overwhelming majority of the interviewees (79 per cent) have a high education level, i.e. completed tertiary (university or college) education. This is not unexpected since education level has also been identified as positively correlated with natives who are civic activists. Only three interviewees had a low level of formal education, neither completing high school nor receiving formal occupational training. Some interviewees admitted that their own university background influenced their choice of an interviewee with a university education. More interviewees declared that all, or most, civically active immigrants that they could have interviewed had a relatively high educational background. Thus, the sampling procedure induced a certain bias towards highly educated immigrant activists. Considering the strength of the phenomenon and the small number of interviewees that indicated a bias towards university-educated interviewees, sampling experiences suggest that education is even more important for immigrants than for natives.

The vast majority of respondents were employed or self-employed (81 per cent), with a smaller number of students (7 per cent), unemployed (5 per cent) and retired persons (5 per cent). However, this does not necessarily reflect their educational and employment status at the time of immigration. As already noted, some of them changed immigration status and others improved their educational attainment in the receiving country.

About half of the interviewees are naturalised, and another quarter live with a secure residence status in the receiving country. The majority of the respondents (64 per cent) lived ten years or longer in the country of residence. Significantly, most interviewees belong to the relatively settled part of the immigrant population. However, immigrants with a short length of stay (32 persons under five years) and insecure status (29) are also present in sufficient numbers to include their perspectives in the analysis.

There are many different typologies of qualitative interviews. The interviews with active immigrants were modelled on the problem-centred interview as described by Witzel (2000). The interview focuses on a particular problem or topic. While the interviewer sets the frame, defines the topic and follows up on relevant questions, the respondent largely structures the interview. Interview methods followed the guidelines laid out in Rubin and Rubin (2005) and summarised for project-interviewer training (Cyrus and Vogel 2007a). The one-page interview guide contained main questions on the types of activity, the civic activation biography and the assessment of encouraging and discouraging conditions, with suggestions on how to formulate concrete questions and probes (for details see Brown a.o. 2007). Interviewees were trained how to find a balance in being responsive to interviewees without losing the research's main questions. Interviewees were encouraged to elicit first-hand experiences and concrete examples rather than general political statements common with publicly active persons. In the transcription of interviews, interviewees were encouraged to extensively use explanatory footnotes (e.g. explaining abbreviations and functions of organisations) and fill out a table with socio-demographic features of the interviewee, summarising the interviewee's participation biography and describing the interview situation.⁸

In order to encourage open and elaborate narrations, the research team required that interviews be done in the mother tongue of the interviewee unless the interviewee felt more familiar with another shared language, which in some cases was the language of the receiving

⁸ As there had been some empty fields and some misunderstandings about the table, all interviewees were asked to complement and confirm the socio-demographic data by e-mail in June 2006.

country; only in exceptional cases, English was the common language of interviewer and interviewee. Interviews were conducted in 33 different languages.⁹ Therefore, the last operational methodological step for most interviews was the translation into English of the transcribed interviews. It was asked from interviewers to make the transcriptions and translations themselves. The advantage was that they were familiar with the context of the statement, but their English proficiency differed. The translation quality was generally quite good, and researchers made sure that they only used material that they were confident to understand. There were additional precautions for assuring the authenticity and reliability of the data (for details see Brown et al. 2007).

Overall, the interviewees were very vocal and generous in sharing their personal experiences and trajectories. The overwhelming majority of the activists interviewed felt competent and comfortable with this kind of semi-public speaking; in some cases, because of their profession (e.g. religious leader, former diplomat, business-person, nurse, doctor); in others, because of experience as organisational leaders. In fact, many of the interviewees were either the founders of associations or well-known figures within civic organisations. Their roles and their positions provided experience at talking to people about their activities in order to encourage participation or fund-raising, or to lobby for specific issues (e.g. the organisation of events, funding and other types of support).

The 176 interview translations were inserted in a database using the MAXqda qualitative data analysis software package. The interview database includes about 1.2 million words. Obviously, this is an enormous amount of material to be organised for analysis. An interview coding structure was jointly developed by all members of the core POLITIS research team. One team member was then responsible for manually coding the interviews using the MAXqda qualitative data analysis software. The common database facilitated the process of data analysis for the six researchers working in different geographic locations. The single raw coding scheme provided transparency, consistency and overview in spite of large amounts of text data, and facilitated the selection of interviews for in-depth analysis that was conducted with different types of qualitative contents analysis.

3 Results Part I: Migration and Civic participation in Europe - Comparison of 25 country reports on migration and civic participation (Ruby Gropas and Anna Triandafyllidou)

3.1 Introduction

The 25 country reports on migration and civic participation served as a reference and handbook throughout the project conduction, enabling researchers to better understand the background of immigrants' accounts of their participation experiences in Part III of the

⁹ Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cape Verdean Creole, Cebuano, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, English, Estonian, Filipino, French, German, Greek, Italian, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi, Latvian, Lithuanian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sinhalese, Slovak, Slovene, Spanish, Thai, Turkish and Ukrainian.

POLITIS study. In Part I, researchers analysed reports comparatively in search of patterns and trends, trying to complement and amend existing typologies and highlight new features.¹⁰

Here, we present a tentative typology of migration countries in Europe, being aware that the quantitative comparison is rather difficult as in spite of EU efforts to achieve some harmonisation in migration statistics, the reports revealed that this aim is far from being achieved (Triandafyllidou, Gropas and Vogel 2007).

Secondly, we present a typology of migration pathways. We use here the term ‘migration pathways’ borrowed from the work of Psimmenos and Kassimati (2003). The term ‘pathways’ suggests sets of relationships, policies and opportunities that come together to form a specific pathway, a channel through which information and people flow between the sending and receiving country. Specific combinations of migration pathways are characteristic for specific types of migration countries, but the country reports revealed that with regard to pathways, there are sometimes similarities and differences that contrast with the more general country framework. Therefore, the typology of pathways may inspire further research on more rare combinations of countries and migration streams.

Thirdly, the comparison of the framing conditions for civic participation of immigrants turned out to be the most difficult part of the study. General studies on civic participation (e.g. political participation and participation in the voluntary sector) rarely made specific reference to immigrated minorities; in some countries, there were hardly any studies on immigrants’ civic participation; issues studied vary greatly in accordance with national policy agenda, often focusing on the role of immigrant organisations only or on low level political participation such as voting behaviour. Therefore, we present only two relatively widely and well documented aspects framing the civic participation conditions for immigrants that are related to the integration regimes: naturalisation and voting rights, indicating the degree of legal openness to immigrant participation. However, we are aware that legal conditions vary largely in specific fields, for example in participation opportunities in labour market institutions. In addition, there are indications that the general reliance on voluntary participation in a society influences the participation of immigrants (Aleksynska 2008; Vogel 2008b).

3.2 A typology of countries

Much of the research on immigration patterns in the EU focuses on its structural phases, its chronology and geographic configurations. These tend to highlight the differences between *northern* and *southern* European countries or single out individual member states as best practices (Süssmuth and Weidenfeld, 2005; Papademetriou, 2006). EU member states are also categorized on the basis of their chronological experience of migration. Three categories are thus discerned (Boswell, 2005: 2). The first category consists of *more established host countries* since the 1960s and includes France, Germany, the UK, the Benelux, Austria, Sweden and Denmark. The second regards countries that became *net receiving countries* since the 1980s and incorporates Ireland, Spain, Portugal, Greece and Finland. The third includes the countries of central and eastern Europe and Cyprus that, since the late 1990s, have become important transit and increasingly net migration countries. Finally, EU member states are

¹⁰ For an overview and a more detailed comparative analysis, see Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2007 – Sourcebook 27.

singled out as those with highest and lowest net migration rates in the new millennium. Cyprus with 27.3 per cent, Spain with 15 per cent and Ireland with 11.4 per cent have the highest net migration rates; Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Poland and the Netherlands have the lowest net migration rates (European Commission, 2006:3). Most scholarly literature concentrates on the specificities of Belgium, Denmark, Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. Very limited research focuses on the newer member states and the gradual migration trends they are experiencing. In POLITIS, researchers build on existing typologies and presented a revised grouping scheme, putting more emphasis on the experiences of the countries that have been less frequently studied.

Without over-simplifying the distinctive features particular to each country, the 25 Member States are grouped in five subsets based on their experiences of migration: a) old host countries; b) recent host countries, c) countries in transition, d) small island countries and e) non-immigration countries.

The first group refers to Northern and Western EU Member States, or what is also referred to as the traditional 'host' migration countries. Their migration history is very different and the migrant population much more varied. France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands and the UK have a long migration history principally because of their colonial history, and this is similar in Denmark and Sweden, which have a longer experience with immigrants. These countries are generally faced with the challenge of combating the social exclusion and marginalization of second- or third-generation immigrants. Associated with this is the fact that economic crises and social frustration are exacerbating xenophobic reactions of the majority populations, while the religious factor is becoming increasingly visible and present within the immigrant population. Nevertheless, these countries have the most far-reaching multi-cultural policies and, in many cases, immigrant populations have been granted the right to vote in local elections, thereby enhancing their political participation in the receiving country. In these countries the focus of attention has shifted from issues of regularization to issues of participation and integration.

The second subset includes the Southern European countries (that is, Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal) that in the course of less than two decades have become migrant receiving countries. Their emigration patterns of the past have been reversed in spite of high rates of unemployment among native workers. This shift in European migration patterns partly reflects a gradual improvement in the economic situation and the living conditions in Europe's southern countries, but in part it is also an unintended side effect of the restrictive measures taken by the UK, France, Germany, and Switzerland. The immigration experience in these countries has been characterized by the absence of a consistent migration policy with a long-term approach on issues of regularization and integration. This has led to an increase of illegal immigration and of migrants remaining in these countries unofficially, with their papers not always in order. This irregular or illegal status has implications not only for their employment security, but also for the extent of their integration into the host society. The large inflow of undocumented immigrants that has been common to these Member States has led to repeated regularization programmes. For example, the country chapters look into the five such programmes that have taken place in Italy since 1986, involving more than two million immigrants; the two such programmes in Greece, with the third currently under way; the four regularization initiatives in Portugal since 1992; and the three such programmes undertaken by Spain, with its third and most far-reaching regularization scheme in 2005. These regularization programmes confirm that such strategies do not solve in the long term

the challenge of dealing with undocumented migration, if they are not part of a wider scheme of immigration management and integration policies.

The third subset is made up of the Central and Eastern European countries (CEE). Along with the political, social and economic transition which occurred in this region after the 'Autumn of Nations' in 1989, the mechanisms and patterns of migration have changed with regard to these countries as well. Central European countries appear to be in the preliminary stage of an immigrant flow not only from the former Soviet Union countries, or from neighbouring nations with which there was a formal relation (for example Czechoslovakia and former Yugoslavia) but also from the Far East and from the West. During more recent years, CEE countries have become an attractive destination for entrepreneurs from Western Europe and the USA. They mostly carry out economic activities in the tertiary and quaternary sectors as highly-skilled managers, experts, consultants, scientists and so on. Immigrants from Asian countries mostly use CEE countries for temporary stay in transit towards Western Europe. The most visible group among these have been the Vietnamese in the Czech Republic, Poland and Slovakia, and the Chinese in Hungary and Slovenia. There have existed so-called 'international co-operation schemes' in educational and employment sectors between some of these countries, but since 1989 other forms of inflow have developed, from illegal entry, to temporary stay and arranged marriages through to the setting-up of business and permanent settlement through formal means.

Cyprus and Malta form a different category combining a small population, a growing influx of immigration over the past decade and continued emigration. Being at the geographic periphery of the EU they are also called to manage increasing numbers of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers.

The Baltic states, Slovenia and Slovakia are identified as non-immigration countries, given that the former steady migration flows from the former Soviet Union or Yugoslavia have, overall, ceased since the 1990s and 2000s. At the same time, the emigration flows that were characteristic of the first years after their independence also appear to be levelling out. The issue of stateless persons is of particular interest in this set of EU Member States.

3.3 A typology of immigration pathways

Based on this understanding and following from a comparative reading of the 25 country overviews, we have identified eight main migration pathways that are analysed in turn below: the pathway of co-ethnics and returnees, the colonial and post-colonial pathway, the pre-1989 internal migration pathway, the labour migration pathway, the asylum-seeking pathway, the pathway of temporary and seasonal migration, the 'gold-collar' pathway and the pathway of irregular migration.

The pathway of co-ethnics and returnees

Favourable admission patterns for co-ethnics, returnees and their descendants are widespread across many Member States. In each case, preferential reception schemes are justified on the basis of unique historical circumstances and are excluded from general, restrictive immigration policies.

Two types of migrants can be distinguished within this pathway of migration: returnees and co-ethnics. Returnees are individuals born in the EU country, who have emigrated and have

subsequently returned after a long absence abroad. Co-ethnics are descendants of emigrants or members of co-ethnic communities abroad who result from past migration movements. Co-ethnics may also be populations which are ethnically and culturally akin to the receiving country but which have never, in this or previous generations, lived in that country. In practice, the two categories are often merged, while the logic that regulates policies towards them is the same: they are of the same ethnic origin as the citizens of the receiving country.

While some EU Member States have a larger presence of returnees, other Member States have a higher proportion of co-ethnics. Poland is one country that clarifies this distinction; persons who emigrated from Poland as adults and returned to the country after the system transition (mainly from the USA) are considered returnees (also referred to as expatriates) whereas co-ethnics are the descendants of settlers and deportees, mainly from Kazakhstan. In the case of Germany, immigrating co-ethnics (*Spätaussiedler*) come mainly from Kazakhstan, whereas in Finland co-ethnics come from Estonia. Greece has received co-ethnics (Pontic Greeks) from the former Soviet Republics of Georgia, Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia, and a large number of ethnic Greeks from Albania. Portugal's *retornados* are the descendants of former Portuguese settlers and come mainly from Angola and Mozambique. Swedish Finns and mainly Ingrian Finns are currently regarded as return migrants with special status in Finland. Hungary is also a country with a high number of immigrants of Hungarian ethnic origin. Indeed, since 1989, immigrants and temporary workers are mostly from ethnic Hungarian communities beyond the borders of contemporary Hungary (for example Romania, Ukraine and former Yugoslavia). Another country that has experienced co-ethnic migration, albeit in small numbers, is Italy. Here, immigrants (mostly from Argentina) who can identify Italian parenthood up to three generations prior, are still considered co-ethnics and have a preferential channel to naturalization. Finally, there has been an inflow of returnees towards the Baltic countries in recent years. This migration predominantly consists of a high percentage of repatriated citizens (returnees) who returned to Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia when independence was restored.

In all cases, the reception of co-ethnics and returnees is better than that of 'other' immigrants. They usually enjoy the right to naturalize through preferential channels and, even if they do not have the right to naturalization upon arrival, they enjoy privileged conditions compared to other migrants as regards the financial and institutional support provided to them by the state with a view to helping them settle down and integrate into society as smoothly as possible.

The colonial and post-colonial pathway

This pattern mainly pertains to Member States with a colonial past, and seems to have worked as a de facto substitute for the recruitment of workers. This is particularly the case for the UK, France, the Netherlands and, to a certain extent, Belgium, Spain and Portugal. In these countries, immigrants were granted access to the territory as citizens of the former colonies, with certain sets of rights associated with their status. The United Kingdom has received several immigrant groups from Commonwealth states of the West Indies, Asia and Africa, while France has received immigrants mainly from former African colonies (for example West Africa and the Maghreb). The Netherlands has welcomed former colonial subjects from Indonesia and Suriname, and Belgium has received migrants from its former African colonies such as the Congo (former Zaire), Rwanda and Burundi. Spain has large immigrant communities from Ecuador, Argentina and Peru, and the main countries of origin of immigrants in Portugal are Portuguese-speaking African countries (for example Angola, Cape

Verde, Guinea Bissau, Mozambique), and Brazil. Initially, immigration from Africa and Asia mainly took place within the framework of post-colonial migration, but the receiving countries gradually put legal obstacles in place so as to curb post-colonial immigration.

In terms of immigrant integration, the colonial relationship has offered some advantages to the migrants in that they were usually familiar with the language, the culture, and even the institutions and political system of the colonial 'mother' country. It also brought with it important disadvantages such as prejudice, discrimination and racism that were built into the social and political system of the country of settlement and that were widespread among its population. Moreover, some colonial populations had had particularly traumatic and divisive experiences in their relationship with the mother country (for example Algerians in France) that could not be easily forgotten or settled (emotionally and politically) even if they lived in the mother country for decades.

Pre-1989 internal migration pathway

This pathway has mainly affected countries located in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic region. During Soviet rule, large population movements took place and, as a consequence, large numbers of Soviet citizens (mainly but not always of Russian nationality) settled in areas that became independent states after 1989. In these countries, internal migration movements were typical of the Communist era.

Communist countries in Europe had no migration relations with countries outside the Warsaw Pact. The governing regime tightly controlled emigration, and political reasons for emigration were often intertwined with economic motives. The Czech Republic (then part of Czechoslovakia) experienced immigration within the framework of 'international aid cooperation' schemes and the consequent intergovernmental agreements drafted between Czechoslovakia and other socialist countries including Poland, Yugoslavia, Hungary, Cuba, Mongolia, Angola and North Korea. In contrast, it is worth noting that there was hardly any immigration to Hungary between 1949 and 1989, with the exception of two politically motivated movements when Greek and Chilean communists were granted asylum protection in the early 1950s and 1970s.

Throughout the large-scale industrialization of the 1960s and 1970s, significant numbers of people from different parts of the Soviet Union (mostly from Ukraine, Byelorussia and Russia) settled in the three Baltic States. Because of nation state (re-)building, most of the settlers are now identified as foreign nationals. However, these populations are not the outcome of international migration but, rather, of formerly internal migration and the reshuffling of states and their borders.

What is common among these movements is that they all happened within the context of a centrally governed economy and an authoritarian society. They all resembled internal movements within some sort of 'empire' which was the communist part of the world. In some cases, populations that used this pathway to migrate were offered the opportunity to naturalize and to become fully integrated into their societies of settlement while, in other cases, naturalization has been very difficult and these groups remain labelled as foreign immigrants despite their long-term settlement in the receiving countries.

The labour migration pathway

This pathway includes two main patterns of movement that have historically been inter-related: initial labour migration that came as a response to labour recruitment by the receiving countries and, later, family reunification or family formation migration. This latter had to do with the settlement of the workers in their receiving country and their wish to bring their family over or to form a family with a person from the same country of origin.

The labour migration pathway is probably the numerically most important one in Europe today. It has been the dominant form of migration in Western and Southern Europe from the 1950s up to the present day. Recruitment programmes were implemented in the older host countries of Northern and Western Europe from the late 1950s until the early 1970s. These programmes, also known as guest-worker recruitment programmes, were established through bilateral governmental agreements mainly with Southern European and Mediterranean countries (such as Morocco and Turkey).¹¹ The recruitment was initially intended to be strictly temporary and recruited workers were expected to return to their country of origin. However, the return aspect of the agreements was not implemented in a strict and consistent manner. Instead, policies allowing for the repeated renewal of residence rights were commonplace. Recruitment policies allowed for large scale labour mobility mostly of temporary character, but also to settlement. After new recruitment was virtually terminated in the early 1970s, settlement and subsequent family reunification migration became the dominant consequence in the labour migration pathway. This has been the case for immigrants from Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal, Yugoslavia, Turkey, Morocco and Tunisia who have settled predominantly in Germany, Sweden, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria and Luxembourg. Although Italy, Greece, Spain and Portugal are EU Member States today and immigrants in these countries enjoy free mobility within the Union, immigration from the former Yugoslav states, Turkey and North Africa is still of third-country status. Today, family formation (marrying a partner from the parents' country of origin) is an important source of new immigration linked to this historical recruitment pattern.

The asylum seeking pathway

Since the mid-1970s, Western European countries have received three major migration flows from other parts of Europe that were initiated by political persecution and war. The first wave was from the socialist countries of Central and Eastern Europe. These migrants were perceived as legitimate refugees escaping communist suppression and received preferential reception until the end of the 1980s. Due to restrictive passport regulations in most socialist countries, the largest refugee migration came from the least restrictive Polish People's Republic. These migrants went primarily to Germany and secondarily to Italy, France and Greece when martial law was imposed in Poland in 1981.

The second most important refugee migration wave came from Turkey in the 1980s when members of the Kurdish minority and the religious minority of Alevites sought refuge predominantly in Germany, but also in Greece.

The third wave of asylum-seeking migration was a result of the civil war in former Yugoslavia. Between 1991 and 1995, hundreds of thousands of refugees arrived in Germany,

¹¹ There were also some bilateral schemes with more geographically distant countries, such as the scheme linking Germany and South Korea.

the UK, France, Austria, Italy, Ireland, Sweden and Slovenia. These refugees only received temporary protection as civil war refugees and the majority have returned to their home country. However, a considerable proportion has remained in the receiving countries, among them Roma people who in particular have experienced problems of discrimination and intolerance in the countries of settlement.

From the mid-1970s until the early 1990s, the number of non-European persons applying for asylum increased drastically throughout all EU12 and EU15 (at the time) Member States. The majority of asylum seekers came from countries affected by political intolerance, ethnic conflicts and civil or international wars. Accordingly, the main regions of origin were Latin America (Chile, Columbia, Ecuador), Africa (Ghana, the Republic of the Congo, Nigeria, Somalia), the wider Middle East (Palestine, Iraq, Iran, Algeria, Morocco) and Asia (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan).

As a response to the constant rise in the number of asylum applications, by the mid-1990s some European countries had made the relevant regulatory frameworks and assessment criteria more restrictive. Germany, for example, has changed the respective article in its Constitution with a view to reducing the numbers of asylum seekers that selected Germany as their destination-country. This change has made provisions for asylum seekers who are legally identified as being from 'safe countries' to be returned to their country of origin. Changes in asylum-seeker reception policies in some countries have also resulted in the partial shift of asylum applications to other destinations. Thus, there is currently an increasing trend for asylum applications in Poland and other Central and Eastern European countries from Chechen refugees, for instance.

The pathway of temporary and seasonal migration

Temporary migration programmes have also been a permanent feature of migration regimes. The recruitment programmes of the 1960s were planned and propagated as temporary programmes, although not administered accordingly, and resulted in the settlement of recruited workers. After the recruitment stopped in the early 1970s, temporary programmes were used with greater reluctance in many countries. However, with the implosion of the communist regimes in 1989 in Central and Eastern Europe and the liberalization of population flows that resulted, older programmes increased in scope or new temporary programmes were introduced in order to find a legal way to respond to the pressure of migration.

Temporary immigrants from non-EU countries have responded to the structural imbalance of developed economies in Europe. They have occupied specific niches in the secondary labour market becoming cleaners, home carers, construction workers and generally filling jobs in the lower-skilled, more labour-intensive and volatile sectors of the economy. Seasonal migrants have been a similar case, accepted mainly for jobs in agriculture and tourism or catering services. Temporary and seasonal recruitment programmes have been adopted by several EU countries (including for instance Austria, France, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Germany and the UK). The aim was to provide a legal path for migrants to enter these countries and fill positions that were not taken by natives because they were low-pay, low-prestige jobs with difficult working conditions. Whether these temporary and seasonal labourers have remained temporary sojourners or have legally or illegally converted into long-term migrants is a question only half explored.

The 'gold collar' pathway

During the last 15 years there has also been increasing temporary and permanent immigration of highly qualified professionals such as managers, investors and business persons, researchers in academia and industry, engineers in multinational companies, sport professionals and people in the arts in the western and southern EU countries. This migration occurs to a lesser extent in the new Member States in the east. Immigration law often provides for preferential treatment for highly qualified people and even when there are no such provisions in the law, implementation practices tend to be different when it comes to multinational company employees or highly qualified professionals. This group is also referred to as 'knowledge migrants' in the Netherlands.

Although some highly qualified migrants have received particular media attention and have used their position to defend the cause of other immigrants, the majority of these migrants seem to be largely invisible and are not considered part of the immigration issue. In recent years, the discourse in many countries has had a tendency to actively address the issue of attracting this 'gold-collar' immigrant labour force. It is perceived to be a major challenge for developed economies (especially of the larger EU Member States such as Germany, France and the UK) to attract and keep a part of this highly qualified, multilingual, internationally mobile cosmopolitan elite, in order to enhance the knowledge-based competitiveness of their economy. The UK for example has created the Innovators immigration category since 2000 to encourage the immigration of innovative entrepreneurs, and the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme since 2002 to supplement its labour market needs (European Commission, 2006, pp. 17–18). Numerically speaking, this pathway involves a rather limited number of immigrants in Europe today. However, it was noteworthy that in some of country reports US citizens ranged among the most relevant categories of foreign nationals, a group that is hardly ever discussed in the context of migration to Europe.

The pathway of irregular migration

A large percentage of new immigrants in EU countries are undocumented. Owing to either the gradual establishment of restrictions on migration or the absence of an appropriate migration policy, a proportion of the immigrant population currently has or has had an irregular or illegal status. Some have entered receiving countries illegally; others have entered with a valid visa or residence permit and have overstayed or abused their visa. Depending on the control regime of the receiving country, some undocumented migrants may only work in unregistered jobs in the shadow economy, whilst others may work in registered jobs. While old host countries generally reject regularization campaigns as an option and react with further internal controls to curb irregular migration, recent receiving countries have made regularization or the so-called 'amnesty' programmes their main axis of immigration policy. Gaps in the regularization laws, inefficient public bureaucracies, and the lack of incentives for employers to ensure or facilitate the legal status of many migrants have complicated the situation. This has led to the perpetual revitalization of this pathway, which is constantly refuelled by new irregular immigration or where migrants live in limbo, shifting frequently between legal and illegal status. In effect, a common story of many third-country nationals falling into this category involves illegal entry, later regularization of their status but, often, the inability to retain official status when their permit is due for renewal, for a variety of reasons ranging from lack of a proper work contract (that is full, formal employment with social security benefits, and so on) to not satisfying other requirements (for example, they risk

bringing their family to the host country even if their family reunification application is rejected because their taxed income is not sufficient). This contributes to the marginalization and exploitation of a significant part of the immigrant labour force.

Comparing naturalisation and voting rights as factors for civic participation of immigrants

As indicated above, it was not possible to compare all relevant conditions that frame civic participation of immigrants in the reviewed 25 receiving countries. Immigrants encounter very different integration prospects and opportunities depending on the country in which they live, on the rights that may be linked to their specific country of origin and to their individual status, as well as to the implementation of rights at the local level. While we review the existing studies on factors impacting civic participation in the context of the study on highly active immigrants (Vogel 2008b), the comparison of country reports was used to shed more light on two topics that, we believe, are of crucial importance for immigrant integration and that may also be considered as emblematic of the ‘integration philosophies’ (Favell, 1998) currently present within the Union. Thus, we discuss the naturalization options and the different types of migrant status available to third-country nationals in the EU-25 and the question of local voting rights.

All 25 EU Member States have participation regimes that distinguish between their own nationals, EU citizens and third-country nationals. As a rule, only own-country citizens enjoy full political and civic rights, while third-country nationals (non-citizens) are subject to different kinds of restrictions. Within the immigrant population, however, there are also numerous distinctions, depending on the status of the individual and the specific national group to which s/he belongs.

Most states have designed a variety of migration status levels for specific groups – temporary workers, asylum seekers, family members of settled immigrants, immigrants with renewable residence permits and permanent residents. Each type of permit may encompass a specific set of rights which more or less deviates from citizens’ rights, and which changes from country to country, in spite of EU efforts (that is, the European Commission mainly) to define minimum conditions. While legal permanent residents sometimes enjoy full equality except for enfranchisement at the national level, undocumented workers may be de facto excluded from all rights or may only be allowed to access specific services such as emergency health care. Asylum seekers may be restricted in their mobility in various ways ranging from detention and an obligation to live in specified places, to being forbidden to leave a municipality or region.

Full political and civic rights and obligations may be acquired by immigrants from third countries through the naturalization process. Most EU states primarily base citizenship on ancestry (*jus sanguinis*) rather than on place of birth (*jus soli*), although most citizenship laws contain elements of both. Member States also differ in their acceptance of dual citizenship and, hence, their requirement for the migrant to abandon her/his citizenship of origin if s/he is to naturalize.

The naturalization process is long and complicated in almost all countries, requiring a very long list of documents that should accompany the application. Naturalization rules often also include vague conditions that are open to different interpretations during their day-to-day implementation by administrative personnel.

Eligibility for naturalization is basically defined on the basis of the length of stay. Other core determining factors include language proficiency, good character, sound mind and no criminal record. Acquisition of citizenship via marriage with a national of an EU Member State is subject to specific conditions, as are the procedures for refugees and asylum holders.

In practical terms this means that first-generation immigrants can request citizenship on the basis of length of residence in a country of the EU. Residence requirements vary between countries, but also in relation to country of origin and residence status (for example, EU citizens, adopted foreigners, refugees, stateless persons, non-EU citizens, and so on). Children born to immigrants in the EU are usually considered to be 'foreigners', even though many EU Member States have decreased residency and other naturalization requirements for 'second-generation' immigrants and have extended automatic citizenship for the 'third generation'. In most EU countries, refugees and foreigners with regular residence permits may request citizenship if they have permanently resided in the territory of the country for periods of between five and ten years.

Ireland is exceptional, as it granted unconditional citizenship to all children born in Ireland until 2004. Since 2005, automatic rights to children of immigrants have been abolished unless one of the parents or grandparents has Irish citizenship or if the parent had been living in Ireland for three of the four years preceding the birth of the child. On the contrary, Greece holds one of the longest residence requirements in Europe. According to a policy which is currently under revision, immigrants are required to reside in the country for ten out of the past twelve years in order to be eligible for Greek citizenship.

In the CEE countries, the number of naturalizations was relatively high in the first half of the 1990s, reflecting mainly returning emigrants who had lost their citizenship while abroad. Since 2000, this number has been much lower. A specific situation was created in the newly formed Baltic States and Slovenia, where immigrants from other regions of the former larger unit were not granted citizenship. While there is some preferential treatment for gaining citizenship in the Baltic States, in the case of Slovenia, no special provisions have been made to recognize the sizeable community of citizens from other former Yugoslavian republics and war refugees who have resided in the country for many years. Between 18,000 and 40,000 people were 'erased' from the citizenship registers in the period immediately following national independence.

In Latvia and Estonia (but not in Lithuania) after the Restoration of Independence, all those who were not citizens of the country in the pre-1938 period were declared aliens and had to apply for naturalization. Requirements for the naturalization procedure included five years of residence, a legal source of income, and a thorough knowledge of both the constitution and the state language. Indeed, language became the main obstacle (and contested issue) for naturalization as these 'internal migrants' from other parts of the Soviet Union were Russian speakers and had not needed, nor had they been required during Soviet times, to learn the language of the country in which they settled. While alienating some of their residents, the Baltic countries welcomed emigrants who wished to return and who could prove their link to the country through their own or their parents' citizenship of the pre-1938 states.

Most of the immigrants who arrived in Latvia and Lithuania during the Soviet period have now been naturalized, but the situation is more difficult in Estonia. The annual number of naturalizations has grown smaller, and the majority of the people who have received citizenship in recent years have been children.

In fact, for many countries of Central and Eastern Europe, naturalization policies appear to be more strongly shaped by concerns about expatriates, diasporas and ethnic kin minorities in neighbouring countries than by immigration. It should be noted, however, that a number of older EU Member States, have also long pursued policies of preferential access to citizenship for persons who are considered ethnic or linguistic relatives. This is the case for Germany, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Greece. Germany awards German citizenship immediately to ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union who have been accepted as co-ethnics in the application procedure, as does Greece with Pontic Greeks from the former Soviet Republics. Spain reduces the ten- year legal residence requirement for naturalization to two years for persons from countries that hold special cultural and historic bonds with Spain such as Andorra, the Philippines, Equatorial Guinea and most Latin American countries. Portugal also has a preferential regime for Portuguese-speaking countries, since PALOP nationals require a minimum of a six-year residence permit to be eligible, whereas a minimum of ten years is required for other third-country nationals.

The different migrant status and naturalization regimes of each country result in different distributions between nationals and non-nationals in each country. In other words, in some countries a large part of the migrant population has naturalized and disappeared from the migration registers. Sweden is illustrative of this, where approximately half of all foreign-born persons residing in the country for five years or more become Swedish citizens. In other countries, even second- or third-generation migrants remain aliens. Some countries continue to keep a record of their naturalized foreigners and/or generally of their population that has some foreign ancestry (for example France and the Netherlands) while other countries do not (for example Germany and the UK).

Local voting rights here chosen as these are the most advanced political right conceded to non-nationals in some countries. While voting in national elections remains the privilege of citizens¹², some countries have offered to third-country nationals the possibility to vote and also stand for office in local elections. More specifically, there are three variations of this policy: the denial of voting rights at the local level; the granting of the right to vote but not to stand as a candidate in local elections; and the granting of full political rights, active and passive (see table below).

¹² With some small but notable exceptions related to each country's history (for example citizens of Commonwealth countries in Britain).

Table 3 Voting rights for third-country nationals in EU Member States

| Political rights | EU Member States |
|---|---|
| No local voting rights | Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Poland |
| Local voting rights but not the right to stand as a candidate | Belgium, Estonia |
| Full local voting rights conditional upon the fulfilment of some requirements | Denmark, Finland, Ireland, the Netherlands, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK |

Nearly half of the EU Member States belong to the first group of countries, those that do not grant voting rights at the local level to their resident foreign population. Altogether 12 countries strictly deny local enfranchisement. But the fact that these countries deny immigrant voting rights at the local level does not mean that the issue is not part of the political debate. In those western countries with a higher percentage of immigrant population, such as Luxembourg, Italy, Germany or Austria, the introduction of voting rights for immigrants was at one moment or another a significant issue on the political agenda. While the Government of Luxembourg did not even consider the matter, legislators in some of the other countries took the proposal to enfranchise foreign residents more seriously, though ultimately did not adopt relevant legislation. The case of Germany, with its federal constitution, is illuminating. Here, some of the federal states had passed a law that foresaw the voting right for resident non-EU nationals. However, the project was cancelled after a court ruling by the Federal Constitutional Court in 1994, which underlined the fact that the right to vote at every level of political decision-making is perceived to be the exclusive privilege of citizens. The only way to acquire political voting rights is through the acquisition of citizenship.

Two countries, Belgium and Estonia, have introduced a reduced voting right at the local level that gives resident non-EU citizens the right to vote but not to stand for elections. In the case of Belgium, where voting is compulsory for citizens, the enfranchisement of foreign nationals at the local level was due to come into force for the first time in 2006. The main requirement is to maintain a legal residence for at least five years. The regulation is a response to the claims of immigrant associations and their supporters for local voting rights. In the case of Estonia, foreign citizens and stateless persons – here the relatively large group of former Soviet citizens who lost their citizenship with the formation of the Estonian nation-state – are entitled to vote in local council elections if they hold a permanent residence permit and have resided legally on the territory of the corresponding municipality for at least five years by January 1st of the election year. However, the right to stand as a candidate is reserved to Estonian citizens.

In 2006, at least 11 EU Member States have enfranchised the resident foreign population at the local level. Local voting rights were introduced in some countries several decades ago (for example, Sweden, 1976; Denmark, 1981), while in other countries, foreign nationals will enjoy local voting rights for the first time in forthcoming elections. All countries require the

observance of particular conditions that define the eligibility of non-EU citizens to participate in local elections as voters or candidates. The most general requirements are legal status of a minimum duration (usually 5 years) and that individuals have to register in order to vote. In some countries enfranchisement is restricted to immigrants who hold the citizenship of specific countries. A notable exception to these obligations is Ireland where, since 2004, third-country nationals who are 'ordinary residents' have enjoyed full local voting rights from the first day of their registration in the local register.

Three EU Member States have only enfranchised individuals from particular countries. In the UK, citizens of Commonwealth countries qualify to vote for local elections. In Spain and Portugal only those citizens of countries which have signed a mutual agreement to grant local voting rights can participate in local elections. In 1996, for example, Portugal introduced the immigrants' right to vote and stand for election at the local level. However, only citizens from some countries are entitled to this political participation (namely Argentina, Brazil, Cape Verde, Chile, Israel, Norway, Venezuela, Uruguay and Peru) because enfranchisement is based on the principle of reciprocity between states.

The granting of voting rights does not appear to be influenced by the size of the immigrant population, nor by its composition. It is not subject to how mature the migration history of the Member State is, although long experience with migration seems to encourage local enfranchisement. Local voting rights are partly related to post-colonial ties. Also, states with a strong ethnic or national element tend to be in the group that denies local voting rights, even though there is a certain trend towards local enfranchisement of immigrants in the European Union.

4 Results Part II: Europe as the Positive Other for Immigrants? (Dita Vogel and Rudolf Leiprecht)

So far, there are many studies analysing theoretically and empirically what immigration means for Europe, but there is little research on the question what Europe means to immigrants. In this part of the study, we set out to explore the meaning of Europe for Third country students and active immigrants, following the idea that they may have a clearer and more positive conception of Europe than people who are native European citizens.

For this summary, we draw on work in the framework of a research-teaching project in the University of Oldenburg¹³, on essay analysis by Dita Vogel (Vogel 2006b) and the analysis of interviews with active immigrants by Anna Triandafyllidou (Triandafyllidou 2008a). We firstly present some theoretical considerations, secondly some results concerning perceptions of Europe by Third country students and finish with perceptions of Europe by highly active immigrants.

¹³ Conducted by Rudolf Leiprecht and Dita Vogel; Title of course: Ausländische Studierende in Europa über Europa: Forschungsinhalte und Forschungsmethoden des Forschungsprojektes POLITIS (Foreign students in Europe about Europe: Contents and Methods of the research project POLITIS). Two students developed diploma theses which are summarized under the appropriate topics and five students wrote research papers on the following questions: What is the role of historical relations in the construction of Europe? The example of Latin American essays (Heike Frese); Do only historical experiences matter? Comparing Austrian and Estonian constructions (Robin Block); Constructing Europe in essays of Africans, USA-Americans and Chinese – central differences (Heike Jacob); Does Turkey belong to Europe? (Berit Rinke) Christian Europe – islamic Other? (Kathrin Eiben)

4.1 Theoretical considerations

Theoretically, we start from social cognition theory. Individuals construct realities in their minds, using simplifying, discontinuous schemata. These mental structures are developed in communicative interaction with other individuals and in relation to general communication sources like the media so that construction is a social process. The mental structures are used to organize their knowledge about the social world around themes or subjects. Schemata influence the information people notice, think about, and remember, help to reduce ambiguity and to decide (Aronson, Wilson et al., 2004). Schemata of *social groups* are particularly important for individuals, as the perceived belonging to social groups forms part of their self-concept – their social identity. In social categorisation, value-free characteristics are often associated with values (Mummendey, 1985). One dimension of social identity may relate to a group defined in relation to a locality or region, a nation-state or a supranational entity like Europe. Which importance this regional-political dimensions occupies in comparison to other dimensions of group identity may differ from person to person, and for the same person it depends on the situational context. How people define Europe (social categorisation) has an impact on the perceived possibilities to identify as European (social identification).

It can be frequently observed that specific positive and negative images of countries and stereotypes of their citizens are used and reproduced in public and political discourses in order to defend the viewpoints and positions of actors in the public arena. 'Foreign countries as arguments' are than instrumentalised for a specific (local or national) purpose (Leiprecht, 1995: 101). Negative stereotypes of others can serve at redefining social problems (Leiprecht, 2008). Often, the construction of the 'Other' serves at developing and strengthening group identities. Triandafyllidou (2001) argued that Othering the immigrant is functional to the development of national identity, and to achieving or enhancing national cohesion. So far, the function has not been observed with regard to European identity (Riketta and Wagenhut 2002:54). On the contrary, one could argue that Europe has been used as scapegoat and Negative Other in national policy discourses in a similar way than immigrants.

Empirical research on perceptions of Europe usually deals with European self-perceptions and self-identification of Europeans¹⁴. Social scientists seek to analyse the development and content of this construction by analysing particularly media discourses, group discussions and answers to survey questions (e.g. Bruter 2005) Although most citizens of Europe feel somehow European, they are at the same time increasingly Euro-sceptical. Bruter (2004: 27-28) quotes from a group discussion:

One cannot think about Europe without thinking of slightly stupid, heavy mechanisms, bogus laws on the size of apples and salmon and so on!

Like in this quote, Europe is often associated and used as synonym for the European Union, and the European Union is implicitly constructed in contrast to the nation state.

Little attention has been paid to the function of positive Others in discourses. The Netherlands often functions as a positive Other in German public discourse, for example about immigration. Scandinavian countries are also often quoted in public discourse as positive role models, for example concerning school policies. We would argue that this does not only serve practical functions – highlighting problems in the national arena and arguing for change.

¹⁴ See the summary of empirical research of the 1990s by Riketta and Wagenhut (2002).

Reference to positive Others may also serve an identity function, indicating that the authors is seeing him or herself as part of the modern, progressive part of the own society.

Looking at Europe from the outside, it may serve as a negative or positive Other to develop and strengthen extra-European identities. So far, there are not many studies with the exception of a US point of view, as there is a tradition of studying the European 'Other' to highlight developments in the US society (see for example: Rifkin 2004).

Attention to Europe's image in the world is rising, also in response to the European Union's interest. Lucarelli (2007a-PISA paper) notes that there is astonishingly little research on EU foreign policy and external images in the context of the literature on European identity. A recently published e-book from the GARNET network of excellence deals with Europe's image in the world under a foreign policy perspective (Lucarelli 2007b-ebook). In country reports about Canada, Brazil, Australia, China, India, Japan, Egypt and South Africa, researchers summarized elite, media and civil society perceptions. Comparing the studies, Lucarelli summarizes that the EU is not a widely known and debated actor for public opinion and the media outside Europe, that most people would not make a qualitative difference between the EU as a political actor and a more vague 'Europe' as a geographical area, and that the perceptions of Europe are influenced by the historical relations with Europe (e.g. colonial past) (Lucarelli 2007b). For some countries like China it is visible, that Europe is constructed in the triangle China-USA-Europe and often seen as a potential ally of China in this triangle.

Third country immigrants are in a specific situation in relation to Europe, being first outside and later inside. They transport ideas about Europe with them from their countries of origin, but are also confronted with experiences inside Europe. As Strath (2002) argues, immigration is a situation in which geographical identities are questioned. While for example unemployed persons or people who change their profession are likely to reflect about their professional identity, immigrants are asked where they come from and where they feel at home. As they have changed geographical location, everyday interaction forces them to define themselves in relation of geographical locations. In coming to terms with their new situations, they are likely to construct their new identity by comparing and relating their old and their new residence, and it is an open question whether they rather compare local communities, nation-states or larger geographical units. The probability to focus on the European level could be a function of the distance between the original place of stay and the new European destination – in a larger distance, larger features are better visible than details. While the history of past conflicts between nation-states and the economic and social imbalances of the presence play a role from an internal perspective (Meinhof 2003) and citizens of Europe are exposed to media coverage of European bureaucratic failures (Bruter 2004:27), these aspects are less important from an extra-European perspective.

While this 'external-viewpoint-argument' claims a comparative advantage of non-Europeans to see common features of Europe, it does not necessarily mean that the constructed Europe is associated with positive values and characteristics. However, Europe as a whole is wealthy, secure and stable, in comparison to many places in the world. This could lead non-Europeans from poorer and less stable regions to see Europe in a positive light.

A second argument why Europe could be of relevance for immigrants inside Europe could be called the 'diversity argument'. To support the unification process, EU institutions have propagated the slogan 'unity in diversity' since the 1970s as a principle of integration in the

European Union (Wintle, 1996b). If we assume that actors try to achieve a certain degree of internal consistency of their arguments, European level actors are likely to appreciate diversity also in other contexts, namely the integration of immigrants. At the same time, immigrants could find the appreciation of diversity attractive. Immigrants may identify more easily with a geographical-political unit that propagates diversity than with a specific nation, because nation states often include ethnic features that immigrants cannot fully acquire. Thus, there is a logical reason that immigrants' appreciation of diversity in their own interest may also contribute to their appreciation of the European Union. Presenting immigrants as the threatening Other which is functional for the national level leads to inconsistencies at the European level. Some recent research about young people with migration background in Vienna indicate that second generation immigrants are attracted by Europe. In her summary of the survey, Hintermann (2007:141) emphasizes as most consistent result of their study that 'Europe matters' much more for young people with migration background than for autochthon Austrians.

4.2 Constructions of Europe by Third country students

On the background of such theoretical considerations, the database of application essays was explored. Applicants had to answer an open question about the meaning of Europe, and they were encouraged to share their personal thoughts on the topic, so they had to decide which ideas they wanted to share, and how they wanted to convey their ideas. As these essays were part of an application process for a European research project, a bias towards positive descriptions and the display of academic knowledge was expected. Therefore, we were more interested how Europe was defined, constructed and what positive and negative characteristics were associated with Europe.

To achieve this, all essays were coded according to the topics that appeared in them, and in a second step codes were compared and emerging patterns described.

We find frequent references to geographical *definitions* of Europe, but these are rarely left uncontested. Many students use Europe implicitly as a synonymous with the European Union, but there are also many essays that make the difference explicit, especially when the writers originate in the periphery of the geographical Europe. A broad cultural definition of Europe as the West is found in some essays, while others try to make a distinct cultural definition, referring to European commonalities and shared heritage. This distinct cultural definition sometimes includes the appreciation of diversity as specifically European.

Non-EU essay writers indeed make ample reference to positive features of Europe. Particularly the respect for human rights, the rule of law, and an effort to enhance the quality of life for individuals, enabling them to gain education, wealth, information, participation, and live in a protected environment are highlighted in numerous essays as characteristics of Europe. While many of these aspects could also apply to some single European countries, the *appreciation of diversity* is clearly associated with the European level. This attitude is recognised and cherished in many different ways in numerous essays. If the heart of European culture would have to be defined from the essays, the appreciation of diversity had to be named as its core element. Most authors seem to be in general aware of the deficiencies of the European institutions, but derive at their positive evaluations from their comparative reflection.

While many essays displayed features of academic discussions and borrowed from websites, there were also a lot of essays that used *personal experiences inside and outside the continent* in their constructions of Europe.

Bruter assumes that experiences like family origins in another country, speaking foreign languages, travelling or living in another European country, no passports and border control in Schengen area, or the common currency may impact on EU citizens' European identification (Bruter 2005:32). EU-citizens in the sample also refer to some of these experiences. Some of them highlight in addition their experiences outside Europe: When travelling in other parts of the world, some of them related to themselves as European for the first time, either because their experiences with Africa, America or Asia seemed to be more different than their experiences in other European countries, or simply because nobody would know their country of origin so that they found it convenient to be recognised as European, as one Estonian emphasized.

Non-Europeans referred to the following experiences *outside Europe*:

- Meeting Europeans abroad – whether tourists, missionaries, or teachers - is described as contributing to the idea of Europe in some essays ('Europe as a continent has always fascinated me since my school days when I had teachers who were European in origin' 106Papua New Guinea_Great Britain¹⁵).
- The influence of return migrants from Europe is referred to ('the stories of our friends who had travelled abroad; stories about clean streets and well-organised life but also about hard labour and fighting with the unwelcoming system as an immigrant' 36Bulgaria_Czech Republic)
- Media coverage that is associated with Europe is mentioned in many essays ('media portrayals of Europe through visuals in TV and magazines' 2Nigeria_Ireland),
- Applicants from former colonies frequently but not always mention the current influence of former colonising countries ('In Cameroon for example, there are two official languages (French and English) inherited from the colonisation (France and England)' 20Cameroon_Germany);
- The perception of European arts, music and literature in the own country is noted as important in some essays ('In the biggest city Shanghai, where I'm from, symphonies by Beethoven and Bach are played all year round at concert halls; people are so familiar with the themes that even a housewife can hymn some of the most famous master pieces.' 86 China_Great Britain)
- In a few cases, Europe is associated with the visible influence of EU development aid or EU projects in their country or city ('The EU now is 'the main contributor to the state building process in the Palestine that started after the signature of the Oslo Accords between PLO and Israeli in 1993' 112Palestine_Italy).

In many cases, students distance themselves from experiences and perceptions of Europe in their country of origin and contrast it with their *own personal experiences* which they have made since they are *inside Europe*. They refer to their travel experiences, their experiences as students, and to immigration experiences in Europe – no matter whether they are permanent immigrants themselves or because of their connections to immigrants from their country or region of origin.

More often than not, this contrasting is portrayed as *disillusionment*, especially by African students. An idealised image of Europe is corrected with experiences of European reality.

¹⁵ Essay excerpt of Essay no. 106, written by a Papua-New Guniean in Great Britain

However, some negative issues that feature high in studies about EU citizens are virtually absent in the essays of non-EU students. Bureaucracy is mentioned only in a few essays, and then it is partly framed as an unavoidable by-product of democratisation or only mentioned in relation to visa regulations. But students point to the fact that the wealth as shown in TV-programmes is not evenly distributed, that the ideals of democracy and rule of law are not lived quite as well as propagated, or that although Europe brought Christianity to other parts of the world, Christianity does not seem to play an important role in the everyday life of people in Europe. In addition, discrimination is mentioned frequently.

Silvia Kulisch has analysed aspects of equality and discrimination in more detail in her diploma thesis.¹⁶ Given the open question of the essays, it is noteworthy that such aspects are mentioned in 103 of 243 Essays, and that 68 essays include aspects of discrimination, with 21 of them describing own experiences of discrimination and racism. A closer analysis of the 103 essays reveals that EU efforts to promote human rights and equality of treatment are often mentioned. At the same time, discrimination experiences are used to characterise Europe in other essays. A number of essays portray vividly situations in the context of entrance and immigration to Europe – fields that are explicitly excluded from EU anti-discrimination legislation, for example in embassies, airports and foreigners' authorities. Negative attitudes towards immigrants in the population and racist behaviour towards immigrants are also cited to characterise the meaning of Europe for the applicants. Such statements are as well found with African students as with students from the new member states in Eastern Europe.

In this context, the essay of a recently arrived student from Armenia can be characterised as Utopian. However, it is quoted here in order to inspire ideas of a policy that *would be* attractive for future immigrants. The quotation displays well what non-EU immigrants might have to offer to the Union: advance praise, enthusiasm for the European project, eagerness to receive education and training, willingness to work and to contribute to the society, gratitude for being accepted as equal.

Europe is a state with very rich historical values and it makes the newcomers able to share that historical values. ... Europeans have some peculiar cultural traits, but they are deeply proud of having built a society that promotes equality between the sexes, tolerance and inclusiveness. ... A generous refugee policy in some countries has turned United Europe into a medley of different cultures, a process that has enriched its own culture along the way. All world religions are represented in Europe. ... A number of special programs have been created in order to actively oppose unfair or offensive treatment on the grounds of race, skin colour, national or ethnic origin or religious faith. ... In conclusion, my decision to migrate to Europe is mainly conditioned by the fact that a stable convergence to the unification and integration Europe is experiencing now provides potential economical, social and cultural benefits to immigrants. ... After graduating from the university and starting working in Europe I am looking forward to get an opportunity to contribute to the social and political life of EU in comparable level to the one provided by the EU natives. (47Armenia_Czech Republic)

16 Silvia Kulisch. Equality and Discrimination: „What does Europe mean to you personally?“ Eine qualitative Auswertung von Europabildern internationaler Studierender im Kontext eines europäischen Forschungsprojektes, delivered as diploma thesis at the University of Oldenburg in Intercultural Education, July 2007

4.3 Constructions of Europe by highly active immigrants

The analysis of interviews with highly active immigrants revealed a similar connection between equality and discrimination and Europe. Triandafyllidou (2008a) quotes a young Ethiopian man who has come to the Netherlands ten years ago as asylum seeker. He notes that naturalised citizens that look foreign (e.g. who are of sub-Saharan African origin) are not accepted on an equal footing as Europeans and demands societal change.

Before that, let me qualify what I meant that we need a new societal structure. At this time, beyond a notion of Holland, there is an increasingly growing notion of European citizenship. Identifying oneself as a Dutch citizen may be irrelevant after 20 years because what is important by then is being a European. *Being a European has to include me as well who is a naturalized African.* (125/65, emphasis added)

Anna Triandafyllidou (2008a) explores whether and how issues of Europe and the European Union are raised in the accounts of civic activism in the POLITIS interview database of highly active immigrants. She identified and retrieved all paragraphs (together with the preceding and following paragraph) where the words Europe, European, Europeans or EU were mentioned. This automatic retrieval procedure has produced more than 90 interviews with references to Europe, offering the opportunity to see how highly active immigrants relate to Europe. The frequency of occurrences can not be meaningfully interpreted as highly active immigrants were interviewed in a European research project so that this topic was implicitly relevant, even though interviewees were only asked about their participation history, but the types of references to Europe can be analysed with qualitative analysis.

Triandafyllidou's analysis has highlighted two dominant thematic clusters around which reference to Europe and the European Union by immigrant activists can be organised. More often than not, informants do not distinguish between the Europe and the EU. The first cluster emphasises the cultural and political dimension of the EU. Immigrant activists outline a distinctive European political culture that is different from that of their continents (not countries) of origin and note cultural diversity as a special positive feature of Europe and the EU. The second thematic cluster concentrates on institutional aspects of the European Union rather than Europe, referring to the EU as source of funding and political arena.

Europe and the European Union are mostly not directly relevant for the informants' civic activism but they are important reference points as to what is a desirable state of affairs, what is the best way to achieve harmonious and mutually enriching co-existence of different cultures and nations¹⁷. The informants refer both to the actual reality of the EU (youth exchange programmes for the British youth and the recent accession of Latvia to the Union) but also to an idealised view of a Europe *united in diversity* as the European Commission's slogan proposes.

The results for highly active immigrants reveal thus partly comparable patterns that the analysis of essays already indicated. However, some highly active immigrants are also aware of the EU as a policy arena for their issues and funding body for their organisations, referring to experiences in their fields of activities. Immigrant activists note the EU role as a source of funding to support their activities, where the country of settlement and the country of origin

¹⁷ This is also a core idea that resulted from the analysis of essays of international students that was conducted in another part of the POLITIS study (Vogel, 2006).

show little interest to their needs and to the work they produce. They also note EU institutions as a new arena in which to raise claims, make one's voice heard and create transnational platforms for mobilisation. It is worth noting that studies of migrant transnationalism have up to now concentrated on migrant activities that link the country of origin and the country of settlement. Very few studies have addressed the question of transnational activism within a European arena (Kastoryano 2002; Imig and Tarrow, 2001; Tarrow, 2005).

4.4 Final remark

As an exploratory work, the results of this part are systematically asking new questions and aim at indicating the need for more research in this field. There is no claim that the used databases are in any sense representative for European immigrants, or that we have been able to identify all relevant patterns of immigrants' perceptions of Europe, although we have looked into the ideas of a wide variety of students and activists so that we are confident that our results are telling for the way that highly qualified Third country nationals construct Europe.

We argue that the topic is important. Immigration is usually seen as an additional challenge to already complicated European integration process of now 27 countries, as immigration adds to the already existing cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. Higher degrees of diversity – as a recent study of US-American cities shows (Putnam 2007) shows – are correlated with less social trust and more social isolation. Here we indicate that although immigrants undoubtedly add to diversity in Europe, they may still simultaneously add to European cohesion. The appreciation of diversity is propagated by the European Union level institutions and by European governments in an effort to proceed on the way of integrating diverse European *countries*. However, our analysis confirms that there is also a potential to apply the slogan of 'unity in diversity' to immigrant integration. The slogan clearly appeals to highly qualified and highly mobile students, researchers and immigrant activists. Some of them are immigrants, and others are likely to become immigrants in the future. Identifying as European might be easier for high potentials than identifying nationally or locally. Putnam (2007:161) suggests that the "challenge of diversity is best met not by making 'them' like 'us', but rather by creating a new, more capacious sense of 'we', a reconstruction of diversity that does not bleach out ethnic specificities, but creates overarching identities that ensure that those specificities do not trigger the allergic, 'hunker down' reaction." He suggests that America has done well in the long run, partly because welcoming strangers is part of American identity. Could Europe offer a capacious, overarching 'we' to immigrants and native of different countries because the appreciation of diversity is at the heart of European identity? This is an issue that deserves further research efforts in the future. Identifying as European is currently rather discouraged than encouraged by local and national integration policies. If Europe was offered and propagated as an identity option for future immigrants, this could both foster their integration into the places where they live, and European integration.

5 Part III: Civic participation of immigrants – favourable and unfavourable conditions (Dita Vogel and Norbert Cyrus)

The POLITIS study focussed on the examination of high intensity participation of immigrants in receiving societies. For that purpose, problem-centred narrative interviews were conducted with highly active immigrants that raised their voices and organised solidarity and self-help in a large number of fields, including ethnic or multi-ethnic immigrant organisations, churches, parents' associations, welfare organisations, trade unions, and political parties. Using a rich European database of immigrant interviews (see section 2), researchers mainly focussed on inclusive processes and the perception of favourable and unfavourable conditions for participation in the receiving countries in their analysis.

For analysing high intensity participation of immigrants in receiving societies, POLITIS mainly built on the theoretical models and empirical results of studies conducted on political participation and voluntary sector engagement (e.g. Putnam 2000, 2001; Verba *et al.* 1995, Dekker and Halman, 2003). Particularly, studies on voluntary work emphasized the role of recruitment:

Voluntary work is often not so much a consequence of conscious search for involvement in a specific activity, but more a question of 'being asked'. They have been 'drawn in' via their family, friends or neighbors who were already participating in voluntary work or who were in some way involved with an organization that needed volunteers. ... 'Being asked', the main reason why people get involved as volunteers according to surveys, diverts attention away from general motivations to social networks. People volunteer because they are asked to, and the chance of being asked is greater if they are involved in active social networks. (Dekker and Halman, 2003: 5)

Because migration and, particularly, international migration is often organised in family or occupational networks, but rarely in networks of civic activities, the latter networks are cut off by migration. The very migration process interrupts *activation chains* that draw activists from one type of activity to the next, while it may lead to new activation chains in ethnic contexts of migration networks. Therefore, the POLITIS study sought to gain a deeper understanding of the activation process with qualitative means, learning from the accounts of 176 active immigrants all over Europe. With this focus, it complements studies that focus on more general structures framing participation processes that are often called 'opportunity structures'¹⁸ which have subject to an increasing amount of research in recent years. Participation in immigrant organisations and in the political arena has received by far the most attention. Methodologically, most research uses multicultural cities as case studies, comparing cities or immigrant groups within cities, and we have built heavily on the insights gained from this research.

We start from a summarising conclusion in the final chapter of an influential edited volume (Penninx and Martiniello, 2004:142) that reflects on the results of local case studies to show how our study complemented such studies and made an input beyond the state of art:

¹⁸ According to Koopmans (2004: 451), the political opportunity structure includes both an institutional (political system, distribution of party power) and a discursive element (established notions of who and what is considered reasonable and legitimate)

Who are the *actors* involved? There are two main parties in integration processes: the *immigrants themselves*, with their varying characteristics, efforts and degrees of adaptation; and *the receiving society*, with its characteristics and its reactions to newcomers. It is largely the interaction between the two that determines *the direction and the temporal outcomes of the integration process*. As was persistently evident in our research, however, these two ‘partners’ are *fundamentally unequal* in terms of power and resources. The receiving society, its institutional structure and its reactions to newcomers are consequently far *more decisive for the outcome* of the process than the immigrants themselves. [emphasis added]

Two issues are identified in this quotation: Firstly, participation of immigrants is clearly placed in the integration discourse. Secondly, immigrants themselves and the receiving society are named as actors in this process, and the receiving society is judged to be the more influential actor.

Most studies on political and social participation of immigrants are clearly placed in integration discourses and seek to inform integration policies. Integration is defined – for example – as the immigrants’ process of becoming accepted in the receiving country’s legal, socio-economic, and cultural and religious structures (Penninx and Martiniello, 2004:141). We also started from this perspective. Integration in local and national societies is an important task for both immigrants and native members of receiving societies. However, working on this study helped us realise that focusing on integration may be too narrow for developing a good understanding of the issues involved in immigrants’ *participation*. The integration discourse usually presupposes a *direction*, for example from homeland to receiving country orientation or from immigrant organisations to political parties. When starting from and adhering to an integration perspective, opposite trajectories as well as transnational phenomena may escape the attention.

Putnam’s seminal study on the decline of civil society (Putnam, 2000) has been noted by researchers on immigrant participation. Putnam argues that the decline of civic activities results in a loss of social capital – of social networks that have value and affect the productivity of individuals and groups. Although Putnam did not pay much explicit attention to immigration in this early study, his ideas about bonding and bridging social capital have inspired many researchers of integration processes. The uni-directionality makes them highly suitable for integration debates: Migration chains are built on *bonding* (ethnic) networks, but these may lead to more *bridging* networks with higher profit for community building in the receiving society. Tilly and Fennema have tested in various studies a more operational form of this idea: Increased participation in ethnic social life and a denser network of associations results in immigrants having more political trust and more political participation (special issue of the *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Jacobs and Tillie, 2004, Jacobs and Tillie 2008). While this line of study produces very interesting results, our research indicates that the uni-directional approach favoured by the integration discourse does not capture the full picture. Cyrus (2008) notes that a line of activation also runs from political parties to activism on immigrant issues and in immigrant organisations; our interviews allow for an explanation of this line of activation that is consistent with the political processes. Combinations of political and migration-specific commitments are the rule for political activists in the sample. Participation in mainstream political parties may be a continuation of migration-specific participation as it is functional to achieve migration-specific aims. On the other hand, there are also examples of immigrants who joined parties for other reasons and were drawn into

migration-specific participation later as functional reaction to expectations of the party and immigrant communities so that there is not only an impact of immigrant associational activities on political participation, but also the other way around. If the political context suppresses these functionalities, they appear – as the French case clearly shows - in a hidden way. One can conclude that participation in politics tends to encourage immigrants to maintain double loyalties and identities.

Framing immigrants' participation in the context of integration discourses also makes it more difficult to become aware of transnational activities, identities and cultures. Triandafyllidou (2008b) argues that immigrant civic activism which may at first glance seem to focus on diasporic ties and ethnic community building, becomes often a lever for transcultural capital and transcultural community building. She explores new repertoires and forms of transnationalism among sub Saharan African immigrant activists in Europe. The findings suggest that immigrant civic activism even if limited in size proposes new types of transcultural societal networks and new forms of transcultural expression.

One reason for disregarding immigrants' participation may be that definitions of civic participation are often quite narrow. Quantitative studies further narrow this definition, as quantitative studies are often better suited to measure conventional forms of participation (e.g. voting behaviour or formal membership in civic associations). Our broad definition of civic participation turned out to be an asset for the study, not because the importance of immigrant associations as a field of activity was confirmed, but also because we were able to capture more unusual forms of participation characterised by the same expressive or service functions as conventional civic activities, e.g. creating foreign-language websites for information and opinion exchange, organising an informal library with mother-tongue books, promoting abstinence from alcohol and drugs or fund-raising for poor children in the country of origin.

Integration debates are still predominantly national debates. Immigrant integration is seen as an issue that deals with the incorporation or assimilation of immigrants in local, regional and national structures, but not in European structures and global networks (Vogel, 2006b: 5). Although integration is discussed and investigated at the European level, it is done mainly as a comparison of national data and configurations and disregards the question whether immigrants could contribute to the integration in *Europe* or in even larger transnational structures. European mobilisation on immigrant issues depends on national support and is directed towards national arenas (Kastoryano, 2002). In such a perspective, transnational ties can only be analysed as being functional or dysfunctional to integration into *national* structures, and they are thus potentially suspicious. By focussing on Europe in the accounts of active immigrants, Triandafyllidou (2008a) raises the question that if we disregard transnational perspectives then we may overlook important resources.¹⁹

The quotation above also claimed that the receiving society is far more influential than immigrants themselves. The statement can be deconstructed into two different elements: 1) The macro (and meso level) is more important than the micro level; 2) Receiving country factors are more important than country of origin factors.

¹⁹ In addition, not only the results but also the process of the POLITIS project draws attention to the issue of neglecting transnational competences of immigrants. The project interviewers were selected from a pool of applicants with many positive ideas about Europe (Vogel, 2006b). They included highly competent and motivated academics with experiences in more than one European country and a large number of transnational ties.

Obviously, individual immigrants and the receiving society's institutions and reactions are quite different types of 'actors' – as Penninx and Martiniello (2004:142) emphasize in their essay on research and policy, they are 'fundamentally unequal in terms of power and resources'. But calling 'a society' an actor is misleading. A society consists of a large number of individual and collective actors who set the frame for immigrant participation. Individual native actors, as well as individual immigrant actors, generally cannot have a short-term influence on the receiving society's institutions, norms and discourses. These are structures for them. Receiving society actors *plus* the structural results of their actions are, of course, much more powerful than the individual immigrant. Another reading would be that macro-structural factors are more decisive than micro-factors, as Koopmans also argues when he defends the concept of political opportunity structure for explaining variations in level and forms of collective actions (Koopmans, 1999:100). Boussetta has already pointed to the importance of factors below the macro-structural level, to 'infra-politics' of individuals and groups within the immigrant minority communities, aiming at control of the agenda (Boussetta, 2000).

With our qualitative study, we can confirm that *all* three levels are important for immigrant activism. Factors impacting on the continued and substantial civic participation were integrated into an actor-centered model of civic participation of immigrants (Vogel 2008a).

Immigrants relate their civic participation experience to a number of *individual factors*: They command over *resources* such as time and skills from experience or education. Factors relating to personal characteristics, general attitudes and their self-concept are summarized as *personality* features. Lastly, immigrants relate to their embeddedness in *networks*, which they may activate consciously to achieve something (social capital).

For first generation immigrants, individual factors are highly dependent on their experiences in their country of origin. They are part of the baggage that they bring with them to a new country and that is more or less useful in the new environment. Education in the receiving country is an important resource for active immigrants. While the formal acceptance of their educational attainment is often quoted as a problem, this is not a problem in informal and voluntary contexts. Highly qualified immigrants are demanded by other immigrants because of their abilities, and their past success in education contributes to their self-confidence and enables them to use their skills in a new environment (Kosic 2008). Many immigrants have been activists already in their countries of origin, and have incorporated this fact into their self-concept and describe activism as linked to their personality. At the same time, the needs and problems of immigrants of their origin group and the perception of this group in the receiving society are often a motivation to become active on behalf of the group (Kosic 2008, Kosic 2007).

Competences in the receiving country language are often cited as important resources. Many active immigrants facilitated communication between immigrants from their country of origin and actors the receiving society using their multiple language competences, whether receiving country language competences were acquired in the country of origin or in the receiving country. However, a recent diploma thesis based on the analysis of 10 interviewees in Germany indicates that language competences may be overemphasized in the public

discourse²⁰. Activists start activities well before they feel competent in the new language, and a number of non-language communication barriers can be identified in their accounts, among them discrimination due to a foreign accent.

We emphasise that all three levels of analysis are important in explaining participation of immigrants. It depends on the research interest and target group to decide which factors are perceived to be most important. If we seek to explain cross-country variation in participation patterns or structural change, then the statement that macro-structural factors are most important seems to be well founded. If we are puzzled why organisations find it difficult to attract immigrants as active members, then we deny that macro-structural factors are most important but suggest that the meso-level is more important. If we are interested in the question of why some immigrants are more active than others, micro- and meso-factors seem to be most important.

Besides asking ‘important for what’ we can also ask ‘important for whom’. Structures – by definition – provide and restrict the opportunity space for the individual and cannot be changed in the short run by an individual actor. Therefore, structures are often much less important for informing individual action than, for example, concrete mobilisation efforts and recruitment strategies. Thus, if a study seeks to inform individual immigrants and personal actors in organisations, then research should also focus on factors *they* can influence in the short run. These influenceable factors can be found on a micro- or meso-level. Whiteley and Seyd report that individual persons clearly make a difference in small groups of highly active persons, but often overestimate their individual contribution to achievements so that subjectively felt efficacy is higher than objective efficacy (Whiteley and Seyd, 2002:46,55). Active immigrants may take pride in their successes and emphasize their own individual contribution. This can be a conscious strategy for self-motivation in favour of long-term aims, as Mutwarasibo and Vogel (2008) emphasize in their reflections for active immigrants.

The second reading of the quotation from Penninx and Martiniello is that receiving country factors are more important than country of origin factors. From our study, we can surely confirm a strong influence of receiving country factors. Structural constraints and incentives in the receiving country as well as the behaviour of individual receiving country actors are important from the very beginning. They define the opportunities for formal immigrant organisations; the openness of mainstream organisations such as trade unions or many churches influences whether immigrants find a place in these organisations.

The receiving society involves more less obvious and accessible options for participating. The individual is faced with this *societal opportunity structure*. How does the societal opportunity structure frame concrete opportunities for individual immigrants? We assume that concrete opportunities appear in the interaction between people. The *behaviour of individuals* encountered as representatives of associations has a major impact on immigrants’ awareness and perception of opportunities in the receiving societies. From the perspective of potentially active immigrants, they translate abstract options into concrete opportunities and thus can be said to constitute the opportunity structure. Established activists (of native and immigrant origin) function as *gatekeepers and place-finders* for new immigrant activism.

²⁰ Berit Rinke. Überbewertung von der Bedeutung von Sprache im Integrationsdiskurs? Eine empirische Analyse von Einschätzungen engagierter Eingewanderter, diploma thesis, University of Oldenburg August 2007

Vogel (2008d) has analysed the process of starting civic activities in the receiving country in more detail. The analysis of first activities points to the importance of founding activities and to the behaviour of actors in organisations (Vogel 2008d). Particularly people that have been active in their countries of origin before immigration become founders of new (immigrant) organisations in the receiving country. While they have lost their networks of civic activities, they have not lost their network creating competences.

Some stories indicate that the activation in mainstream organisations is blocked by discrimination, but there are also numerous stories of contact initiation in public events, during business hours etc. Organisational actors may easily overlook the interest, if it is offered in a shy and reluctant way or in the form of critique. General organisational policies of welcoming newcomers also attract immigrants, for example, if they provide initial tasks and the opportunity to learn. This could also be an explanation why societies with a generally high level of volunteering are also drawing more immigrants into activities.

Gropas (2008) has analysed one particularly aspect of the receiving country's societal opportunity structure. She asks whether naturalisation matters for civic activism of immigrants. On the whole, naturalised civic activists discussed similar issues that have been found relevant in other studies, particularly the relation of naturalisation to gaining more rights and more secure rights and the relation between naturalisation and national identity. Naturalisation was not discussed as a prerequisite for civic participation, as most immigrants were active before naturalisation and found participation opportunities that did not require naturalisation. However, naturalisation seemed to have added legitimacy to civic participation in the receiving society, particularly to those immigrants that saw themselves as links and mediators between immigrant communities and the majority society.

The analysis of immigrants' claim-raising confirmed that macro-structural conditions are important from the point of view of active immigrants Carol Brown (2008). At the end of the POLITIS-interviews, immigrants were asked for their policy proposals. Policy proposals were often highly country specific, addressing different fields such as immigration policy, education, social, labour market and public support for immigrant organisations. Two fields of proposal were identified throughout a wide range of countries: Questions of representation and consultation were raised. Generally, consultative bodies and processes were appreciated, unless interviewees felt that they were not being taken seriously. Voting rights for foreign nationals were an issue in many countries. The second field is discrimination: Immigrants highlight unjustified differentiations between groups, slow and inefficient bureaucratic procedures especially in immigration authorities, and other practices that are seen as disrespectful towards immigrants. They ask for support, not only in the sense of legal remedies but also in the media and political discourse.

Especially when immigrants have not been active in the country of origin, the circumstances of compatriots in the receiving country often trigger activism (Kosic 2008). However, for other immigrants, receiving country factors seem to have no influence on *whether or not* they become active, but rather on the choice of fields of activities.

In this study, we have not fully explored the influence of country of origin related factors, but there is strong evidence that they are surely present. Country of origin factors may become influential in two ways: firstly, they concern direct interventions of actors from the country of origin (e.g. support by embassies) or direct links between organisations (e.g. Kurdish organisations with transnational links) and direct influences of developments in the country of

origin (e.g. organising catastrophic relief). Secondly, the country of origin influences the culture of immigrant groups and the expectations of individual immigrants with regard to civic activism.

The way that people become active can also be influenced by the participation cultures and gender roles in their country of origin. Aleksynska's (2008) quantitative exploration of the European Social Survey indicates that there are country of origin as well as receiving country factors that impact on levels of participation. When participation cultures differ for men and women, this happens in a gendered way. Taking the example of Chinese immigrant activists, Wu and Wang (2007) looked more closely at the impact of gender differences. They argue on the basis of a detailed analysis of 10 interviews with Chinese activists that among the first generation of immigrants, Chinese men and women's activation is still closely linked to their traditional Chinese cultural roles. By taking the opportunity of civic participation in their receiving countries, Chinese men and women transcend their traditional roles in their ethnic community. However, they still prefer to present their civic activities as a service to the Chinese community. This representation could be interpreted as an effort to defend their legitimacy within their own ethnic group and the broad European society. Chinese men and women activists have different trajectories of civic participation. While women start with activities that are related to their roles as mothers, they come into contact with the mainstream society and take up a public role that is unusual for Chinese women. They present themselves as intermediaries between Chinese immigrants and the surroundings. They have developed strategies to deal with the discrepancies between the traditional role expectations for Chinese women and their more visible roles in the public. Male interviewees demonstrate more willingness to take up a role in the official public sphere. However, there are also differences among Chinese men in terms of their political ambition in their receiving countries. Some interviewees mainly fulfil their social roles in the ethnic community, while other interviewees are more willing to identify themselves mainly as part of the receiving society; and both tend to see themselves as *bridges* between the Chinese community and the European society

The *motivation* to become active evolves in the interaction of individual factors with the societal opportunity structure. Comparing literature on motivation with accounts of immigrant activists, Kosic (2008) finds that immigrant activists are not so different from native activists in many respects. However, their individual migration situation and the situation of immigrants from their country or region of origin have a major impact on the form of their activities. Many raised the issue of the perception of their group in the receiving country as a motivating issue. Immigrants participate in civic organisations to express their social identity (e.g., to teach mainstream group about their culture and traditions as a means for promoting mutual acceptance and respect, and combat negative stereotypes and xenophobia, to provide language lessons to their children in order to preserve their ethnic/national identities, etc.). Once immigrants activate themselves in the receiving country, network effects reinforce and lead them to new activities. Perceived experiences of success are seen as encouragement to proceed (Mutwarasibo and Vogel 2008).

From our study, we confirm that receiving society factors are most influential in shaping immigrant activism, but that there is more to learn in relation to country of origin factors. Future studies on the influence of country of origin perspective should avoid the integration discourse framework, because in this perspective all factors relating to countries of origin are in danger of being interpreted with a negative bias – homeland orientation as an indicator of backwardness and receiving country orientation as an indicator of integration. We would like

to pose the general question whether immigrants' participation should be more firmly placed in participation discourses than in integration discourses. We argue that immigrants should be studied in all kinds of participation research, just as age and gender differences are included in these studies. The focus should be on participation processes and not integration discourses.

6 Discussion of dissemination and policy implications (Doris Peschke and Dita Vogel)

In a highly interactive dissemination phase, research design and results were discussed with academics and civil society actors. Addressing their concerns, we discuss policy implications in three fields: Research policies, policies of immigrants' and mainstream organisations and politics and policies on local, national and EU level. The main messages can be summarised as follows:

- Researchers and funding institutions should be encouraged to use truly transnational and interactive research, not only about but also with immigrants.
- Organisations should screen their recruitment and training policies. Sensitive, open, diversity-aware welcoming and participating conditions do matter and favour the inclusion of immigrants.
- A respectful public discourse on migration and integration issues is favourable for encouraging immigrants' engagement in the receiving societies in all fields. Immigrants – also those without a long-term staying perspective – should be seriously invited to take part and to contribute to policy developments on all levels.

6.1 A highly interactive dissemination phase

Dissemination of project activities and results followed a policy to contribute a high number of publications online on the POLITIS website (www.uni-oldenburg.de/politis-europe)²¹. This included

- general project information,
- a short film on the project,
- 25 country reports on migration and civic participation
- and a working paper series with 12 working papers by Oct. 2007.

Two books and several articles were prepared in the course of the project. A newsletter was instituted for persons interested in project developments (more than 300 subscribers). Two books on projects results are expected to be on the market by the end of 2007:

- Anna Triandafyllidou and Ruby Gropas (ed.) *European Immigration. A Sourcebook* Ashgate, December 2007.
- Dita Vogel (ed.) *Highly Active Immigrants - A resource for European civil societies*. Peter Lang, in press, 2008.

²¹ Counters were only installed late and on some subpages. Between Aug. 2006 and Oct. 2007, there were 4257 clicks on the start page.

In the last project year, the NGO partner Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) took the responsibility to organise and coordinate dissemination events in as many member states as possible. In addition to the other project networks, they used their networks of churches and related organisations and their cooperation with other NGOs to find occasions that involve the civil society. They started with a demand-driven strategy, giving our interviewers, our country experts and the member organisations of CCME the chance to take the initiative to organise an event. A standard format was proposed (a general presentation of project results on active civic participation of immigrants, showing the short film, a country specific presentation by the country expert or interviewer, and a panel discussion involving locally or nationally active immigrants) and openness to local demands suggested. It turned out to be a challenging situation to finalise research and planning and simultaneously organise events with civil society. While there were many occasions to be invited to events that were taking place anyway offering opportunities for presentations, it was more difficult to organise own events with external partners and partners from the network, as the planning had to start before we were able to indicate final results to the cooperation partners.

With 80 dissemination events the POLITIS project reached approximately 3 000 people directly in the three project years, most of them during the last six month. As many events targeted multipliers, further discussion of the research results can be assumed at various levels, promoting the dissemination aim of raising awareness for issues of immigrant participation. At a considerable number of events, representatives of authorities and policy makers were present, thus the discourse reached beyond civil society in many countries. The involvement of the international students as interviewers, researchers and presenters was an asset in this strategy. They were not only vital for the project to gain insights to immigrants' communities. More generally, they often served as bridge builders between migrants' communities and mainstream society. The event in Ireland can be quoted as one excellent example of cooperation among all POLITIS actors, involving members of the core research team, the country expert, several interviewers and interviewees. The one-day conference on African Immigrants in the 21st century gathered 100 participants including academics, post-graduated students, representatives of Churches, African immigrants, ethnic organisations, NGOs and local government representatives. The POLITIS "State of the Art Report" was launched by the Head of the Reception and Integration Committee, Department of Justice in Ireland.

The agenda-setting and awareness raising character of dissemination was also fostered by articles published or interviews broadcasted at local and national levels, usually in relation to events. Other examples of excellent agenda-setting events were the conferences in Greece, Cyprus and Poland, while events in Portugal, Ireland and Denmark were good examples for raising awareness.

The potential role of immigrants in enhancing civic activism in *Europe* has been highlighted during the various presentations of project results and was also included in the policy recommendations presented to the Brussels Conferences in May 2007, which were widely distributed. The dissemination events with a European profile raised awareness of the active civic participation of migrants and provided recommendations for Members of the European Parliament, EU institutions, NGOs and civil society at large on how to improve possibilities and offer opportunities for migrants to become and be civically active at political, social, welfare or cultural level. Apart from the two conferences organised by POLITIS in the European Commission and the European Parliament in May 2007, the participation in the

Conference and Exhibition on “Intercultural dialogue – Best practices at Community Level” organized by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission, 22-24 November 2006 (Brussels) is particularly worth mentioning. For this occasion the POLITIS project had been chosen out of 200 projects as one of the 29 Best Practice Projects of Intercultural Dialogue at community level. The POLITIS team contributed a stand at the exhibition, presented in a workshop during the three-day conference and was presented in the conference brochure.

It is inherent to projects that they have a limited lifetime. However, in the POLITIS project, there are some efforts to aim at a long-term impact. Some networks created in the POLITIS framework are still functioning. Two initiatives are particularly worth mentioning: First, CCME as NGO partner has initiated discussion among churches to apply POLITIS methodology to learn more about the role of immigrant participation in churches. Second, the University of Oldenburg has successfully applied for a grant to develop a Grundtvig-Training course on the basis of POLITIS results. The project “Winning immigrants as active members for political parties and trade unions” (WinAct) currently develops training courses for professionals in adult education in Europe, enabling them to conduct workshops with the aim to attract immigrants to trade unions and political parties.

6.2 Research priorities in migration studies

In this study, we have chosen an innovative approach. The research was designed to be truly European – involving experts for 25 EU countries, joint recruitment and training of an international interviewer team, decentralised interviewing with coordinated monitoring, the creation of European qualitative databases and analysis by individual researchers in different countries with partially harmonised approaches.

Most of us had previously participated in more conventional international studies that rely on the comparison of country cases or city cases within countries. By asking for the inclusion of research partners from different countries, international research funding organisations like the European Union favour this conventional type of research. The easiest way to include research partners from different countries is to let them make national or local case studies. Even if national researchers choose to partially deviate from a jointly agreed process, there is usually enough data to generate some interesting comparative observations and conclusions.

From our experience, organising a truly transnational study such as the POLITIS project with research partners from different countries is more demanding and involves more risk than a comparison between country or city cases. It requires more intensive discussions, more frequent communication between meetings, and generally more time and energy for promoting understanding and avoiding misunderstanding. We hope to have demonstrated that such an approach is feasible, leads to more intense integration of research, and yields results that usefully complement more conventional types of comparisons. We would encourage researchers to experiment in this direction and consider our experiences, which we have documented transparently and in detail, including technical aspects and problems that may attract critical attention to our work (Cyrus and Vogel, 2007b; Vogel, 2006a; Vogel, 2007), and we would encourage the European Commission and other research funding institutions to support such experiments.

The POLITIS findings underline the need to look more closely into the civic activity in EU member states, and therefore we wish to recommend more research, qualitative as well as quantitative, into the role and factors of civic activity of migrants, certainly also beyond first generation immigrants. For such research, we recommend wider use of a participation perspective, favouring the participation of all including immigrants. Using the integration frame only – inquiring into conditions of a successful integration of immigrants in receiving societies – implies the danger to overlook or discredit multiple and transnational relations and trajectories, as for example individual participation trajectories from mainstream to ethnic contexts.

6.3 Recommendations for immigrant and mainstream organisations

This project's explorative and horizontal sampling approaches on the basis of a multipurpose European database of qualitative interviews is particularly helpful in discovering new facets of established topics and exploring and developing the idea of universal processes that underlie individual and national differences. Here, the importance of recruitment chains and the probability that they were interrupted had lead us to the hypothesis of such general aspects to immigrants' activism. Knowing that recruitment processes are very important for the initiation and continuation of civic activities, we had examined the processes of initiating civic activity, when the migration to a new country had interrupted recruitment chains. The POLITIS study reveals that such an interruption does not play a large role for some immigrants, either because they belong to transnational organisations that make it easy to resume activities with new networks, or because they belong to migration networks with civic links, or because they have incorporated activism so firmly into their self-concepts that they actively search for opportunities and ways to become involved in civic activities, even, if necessary, by founding their own organisations. Others were 'activists in waiting', only reluctantly or critically indicating a willingness to contribute, and for those people, the interruption of activation chains really mattered.

Immigrant organisations are often – but by far not always – an entry gate to civic activism in the receiving societies. Leading immigrant activists should be aware that they become the gatekeepers for new activism of people from their country or region of origin. If they find productive ways to face the challenges involved in their activities, as Mutwarasibo and Vogel (2008-chp.12) suggest, they are more likely to pave the path for more participation of people from a similar background. Particularly, they have to clarify their skills and qualifications in an environment that is likely to overlook them, without overemphasising them; and they have to find a way to act as a spokesperson on behalf of immigrants of their background, without claiming to be the equivalent of a democratic representative. In addition, what is laid out below referring to mainstream organisations also applies to immigrant organisations.

Cyrus and Peschke (2008) reflect on the implications of POLITIS research for actors in organisations that are dominated by the majority population of the receiving societies. Some organisations such as trade unions, political parties, churches and voluntary agencies, such as fire-brigades would be interested in attracting more immigrants as active members. Officials and leaders in these organisations ask themselves what they can do to achieve this goal. We argue that the incorporation of immigrants in mainstream associations is a social process that entails a sequence of steps towards active membership – involving the image of the organisation, which should communicate a clear message, a welcoming sensitive first contact

for immigrants including reactions to unusual, unexpected or even critical forms of expressing interest, and fair treatment in their ‘career’ in the organisation, neither expecting too much nor too little and appreciating prior experiences and country of origin qualifications of the immigrant. Training and awareness-raising particularly for members who may be the first contacts for immigrants, as well as for leadership of mainstream organisations will be helpful not to miss the chance to broaden the basis in European societies. The study of immigrant activists is also instructive for the inclusion of native population groups underrepresented in specific organisations, e.g. people with working class background. An organisational approach designed to improve the inclusion of immigrants will definitely raise the general capacity of civic associations to win new members and thus be useful for all residents.

6.4 Recommendations for politics and policies at the local, national and EU level

One thing is fairly clear from the analysis of the interviews. For active immigrants, not only the contents of European, national and local migration and integration policies do matter, but also the discourse about them. In other words, it is not only important *what* policies are made but *how* they are made. A respectful discourse in which immigrants are invited to take part is favourable for encouraging their engagement in the receiving societies in all fields.

Immigrants should not only be consulted when integration policies are concerned, but also with regard to efforts to enforce migration restrictions, prevent illegal entrance and ensure the return of foreign nationals without valid documents. Within a general trend towards more restrictive migration policies and more consistent enforcement, there is the danger that a public discourse featuring immigrants as threats leads to unnecessary restrictions in laws, discriminatory control-minded implementation practices of authorities and attitudes of native populations that exclude immigrants. Such tendencies are deeply deplored by active immigrants.

The inclusion of immigrants can be promoted by the elimination of unnecessary restrictions for foreign nationals, by transparent and short naturalisation procedures and consultative structures that are adjusted to country-specific conditions. Consultation processes are no substitute for political rights, but political rights neither exclude the need for specific consultation processes. Active immigrants’ proposals in these processes will be as varied as that of members of the majority society. When comparing interviews, the most common denominator seems to be the demand for fair treatment and transparent, respectful bureaucratic procedures. Promoting such policies facilitates immigrant participation at local, national and EU-level. In a considerable number of EU member states, third country nationals have voting rights at local level, which is much appreciated and highly regarded by active immigrants.

Generally, the discourse on integration focuses on the long-term integration of immigrants. However, as Carol Brown and Dita Vogel point out (2008), many immigrants do not originally foresee to stay for a longer period. Thus, if one looks at possibilities to engage immigrants into decision making procedures or social activities, one may have to acknowledge this fact. While naturalisation and citizenship remain important for the integration of migrants (Gropas 2008), citizenship ought not to be an inhibiting factor for becoming active: founding an association or becoming a member of an association, the eligibility to become an – accountable – board member of an organisation should not depend on the decision to become a citizen of the country of residence. EU member states could have

a close look at stipulations in their country whether there are inhibiting factors, such as limitations to opening bank accounts or joining necessary insurance schemes for migrants.

In spite of restrictive migration control policies, Europe is perceived by a considerable number of immigrants as a symbol or model for diversity, recognising various identities and developing cooperation. At the same time, the interviews raise issues of exclusion, violence, unfair treatment, and ignorance. The interviews underline the role of policies developed at EU level, like the anti-discrimination legislation. However, it is also observed by immigrants that equal treatment rules do not sufficiently cover the treatment of third country nationals. It may be of importance, if the European Commission and European Parliament supported or launched initiatives which look at possibilities for the inclusion of third country nationals in policies against discrimination but also at policies which underline the equality before the law.

7 Annex

7.1 References

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7.2 Lists of Participants

Main Project Partners

| Name and function in project | Institution |
|---|---|
| Rudolf Leiprecht (advisory function, teaching relations) | University of Oldenburg, Interdisciplinary Centre for Education and Communication in Migration Processes (IBKM) |
| Dita Vogel (international project coordination, researcher) | |
| Norbert Cyrus (researcher) | |
| Ana Castaneda and Friedrike Walther (student assistants) | |
| Anna Triandafyllidou (team leader and researcher EUI and ELIAMEP) | Hellenic Institute for Foreign and International Policies (ELIAMEP) |
| Ruby Gropas (researcher) | |
| Bo Strath (advisory function) | European University Institute, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies (EUI) |
| Ankica Kosic (researcher) | |
| Carol Brown (researcher) | |
| Doris Peschke (team leader CCME) | Churches' Commission for Migrants in Europe (CCME) |
| Alessia Passarelli (dissemination organisation and coordination) | |

Country experts

| Name | Country Report |
|--------------------------|-----------------------|
| Rosana Albuquerque | Portugal |
| Katia Amore | Malta |
| Svetlozar Andreev | Slovenia |
| Miguel Benito | Sweden |
| Hassan Bousetta | Belgium |
| Jan Černík | Czech Republic |
| Norbert Cyrus | Germany |
| Boris Divinsky | Slovakia |
| Franck Düvell | UK |
| Carmen Gonzalez-Enriquez | Spain |
| Marco Goli | Denmark |
| Ruby Gropas | Greece |
| Sonia Gsir | Belgium |
| Krystyna Iglicka | Poland |
| Dirk Jacobs | Belgium |
| Serge Kollwetter | Luxembourg |
| Ankica Kosic | Italy |
| Albert Kraler | Austria |
| Mikko Lagerspetz | Estonia |
| Shahamak Rezaei | Denmark |
| Silvain Sagne | Finland |
| Sanna Saksela | Finland |
| Ulrike Schuerkens | France |
| Endre Sik | Hungary |
| Karin Sohler | Austria |
| Inese Supule | Latvia |
| Jessika ter Wal | Netherlands |
| Ana Texeira | Portugal |
| Anna Triandafyllidou | Italy – Greece |
| Nicos Trimikliniotis | Cyprus |
| Abel Ugba | Ireland |
| Niklas Wilhelmson | Finland |
| Ilidikó Zakariás | Hungary |
| Rita Zukauskienė | Lithuania |

Interviewers

| Name | Country of Residence of Interviewer & Interviewee | Country of Origin of Interviewee |
|------------------------------|--|---|
| Ako Tanga, Steve-Bonaventure | Germany | Cameroon |
| Alchoufi, Rania | Sweden | Syrian Arab Republic |
| Aleksynska, Mariya | Italy | Ukraine |
| Antusova, Aneta | Slovakia | Slovakia |
| Aria, Kristi | Estonia | Estonia |
| Baldoumas, Abigael | United Kingdom | United States of America |
| Banze, Irene | Portugal | Mozambique |
| Bofulin, Martina | Slovenia | Slovenia |
| Bozkurt, Esin | Germany | Turkey |
| Brincat, Caroline | Malta | Malta |
| Carvalho, Francisco | Portugal | Republic of Cape Verde |
| Contreras-Betancourt, Dorys | Italy | Venezuela |
| Craciun, Camelia | Hungary | Romania |
| Csedő, Krisztina | United Kingdom | Romania |
| Dilli, Sirin | France | Turkey |
| Esclamada, Eulamie | Austria | Philippines |
| Garapich, Michal | Italy | Poland |
| Gavrylov, Bogdan | Estonia | Ukraine |
| Gemi, Eda | Greece | Albania |
| Ghirma, Mohammed | Netherlands | Ethiopia |
| Guukah Nwana, Brenda | Sweden | Cameroon |
| Ikeotuonye, Festus | Ireland | Nigeria |
| Iroh, Anaele Diala | Ireland | Nigeria |
| Iwanska, Urszula | Poland | Poland |
| Jamel, Nefzi | Belgium | Tunisia |
| Jano, Dorian | Italy | Albania |
| Kanavalava, Yulia | Sweden | Russian Federation |
| Keryk, Myroslava | Poland | Ukraine |
| Kingumets, Jaanika | Finland | Estonia |
| Kirsanova, Galina | Cyprus | Russian Federation |
| Koskela, Kaisu | Malta | Finland |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Krastina; Liga | Latvia | Latvia |
| Kurdova, Dilyana | Greece | Bulgaria |
| Kureta, Vanina | Austria | Albania |
| Larralde, Bruno | Spain | Mexico |
| Leontiyeva, Yana | Czech Republic | Ukraine |
| Lozeva, Silvia | Czech Republic | Bulgaria |
| Maranlou, Sahar | Hungary | Islamic Republic of Iran |
| Macewen, Leonora | France | United States of America |
| Milandru, Andreea | France | Romania |
| Mutwarasibo, Fidele | Ireland | Rwanda |
| Nektarijevic, Bosco | Belgium | Serbia and Montenegro |
| Oney, Sezin | Hungary | Turkey |
| Otto, Harold | Austria | United States of America |
| Panichpapiboon, Sopark | United Kingdom | Thailand |
| Paškova, Natalija | Lithuania | Lithuania |
| Paura, Sintija | Latvia | Latvia |
| Pavlyuchenko, Anna | Hungary | Ukraine |
| Samokhvalov, Vsevolod | Greece | Ukraine |
| Sardinha, Joao Manuel Silva | Portugal | Portugal |
| Simonsen, Tinne | Denmark | Sweden |
| Sinisterra, Jorge | Finland | Colombia |
| Svetlova, Kira | Belgium | Belarus |
| Tonogbanua, Marva Ana | Spain | Philippines |
| Torres, Leonora | Spain | Chile |
| Van Londen, Marieke | Netherlands | Netherlands |
| Walgama, Ayoma | Finland | Sri Lanka |
| Wang, Xinyue | Belgium | China |
| Wu, Yan | United Kingdom | China |
| Xhani, Angela | Italy | Romania |
| Yakova, Iglia | France | Bulgaria |
| Ye, Xuan | Italy | China |
| Zambrano, Hector-Xavier | Belgium | Ecuador |
| Zvyagintseva, Ekaterina | United Kingdom | Russian Federation |