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(eds) "European Multiculturalisms: Cultural,  
Religious & Ethnic Challenges"  
Edinburgh University Press 2012.

pp. 167-191

## Active Immigrants in Multicultural Contexts: Democratic Challenges in Europe

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### *Introduction*

International migration has reshaped societies and politics around the world in recent decades. European societies in particular have changed deeply and have been diversified further in social, cultural, economic, ethnic, racial and religious terms through various waves of migration in the post-World War II era. Migration intensified again after the end of the Cold War towards both old and newer European receiving societies. Although there are very distinct migration patterns and different migrant populations in every EU member state, all European countries face comparable challenges as multiculturalism is already a reality at the grassroots level. Within this global framework we wish to explore the democratic challenges that are posed in multicultural contexts and how these challenges affect the definition of a multicultural European democracy.

The case has often been argued in most European countries that the governance and societal systems that resulted from the nation-state building process (in the seventeenth–nineteenth centuries) have had difficulties in accommodating and managing the multicultural challenges posed by contemporary migration-related diversity. After decades of migration and the gradual naturalisation of this population, however, the diversity that characterises today's European societies is a reality that should be neither ignored nor bypassed when attempting to conceptualise European multicultural democracy (Zapata-Barrero 2002: 506).

Democracy and multiculturalism have been approached in recent literature in a rather theoretical and normative way. The focus has often been on democratic education, or on the multinational dimensions of states, citizenship and public policies (see notably Morag 2002; Marri 2003; Macedo 2003; Salili and Hoosain 2010; Van Den Bergue 2002). Yet there is still very limited context-based

research that comprehensively tries to identify commonalities and differences among European states, in order to envisage a European multicultural democracy line of research. In this chapter therefore, we propose some of the main factors that are relevant in understanding the sort of multicultural democracy that is being constructed and attempted in a number of European countries.

Democracy is defined with respect to the processes through which it is exercised, its inclusiveness and its representativeness. Democratic governance is based on the principle that all members of a polity are able, directly or indirectly, to participate in the decision-making process by expressing and defending their stake. Robert Dahl (1989) argued that democracy has undergone three fundamental transformations. The first occurred with the Greek *polis* (city-state); the second took place during the construction of the nation-state; and the third, after 1989, involved the construction of a global democracy. Dahl has based his thesis on the territorial criterion: from the city-state to the nation-state, and from there to the world-state, assuming the uncontested homogeneity and constitution of the *demos*. For Dahl, the principle of inclusion is one of the defining variables of a democracy. More specifically, he posits that if an individual is part of a given society and abides by its laws, then he or she ought not to be excluded from the *demos* of this state as this would unavoidably lead to a democratic deficit (Dahl 1989: 147). In effect, democratic societies require that all affected by the decisions of the collective should have influence and opportunities for participation in these decisions. In this light, a democratic challenge is posed if some groups are excluded from, or do not participate in, common binding decisions. A dimension that is missing, however, from Dahl's description of the third transformation is a qualitative one (Zapata-Barrero 2009a: 17). Just as the shift from national to global democracy is a challenging one, so is the shift from a national democracy of a largely monocultural nature to a multicultural democracy. These issues are highly pertinent in the EU with regard to third country nationals (TCNs) legally residing in the member states, estimated at almost 20 million.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, in this chapter we examine this democratic challenge from the perspective of three main dimensions: participation, representation and naturalisation. Our purpose is to explore the extent to which third country nationals are able to participate in the political process in various EU member states, and the criteria according to which they are either granted political rights or are excluded from these.

The reasons for which participation is central to democratic governance are multifold, but for our purposes we can identify two. First, political participation offers individuals the opportunity to influence the outcomes of the decision-making processes and thereby defend their interests as individuals or as members of a specific interest group. Second, participation in commonly binding decisions may have a 'socialisation' function in terms of enriching citizens' feelings of belonging and shared identities (Lindekilde 2009). Both dimensions are crucial to social integration, cohesion and the development of a dynamic democratic polity increasingly characterised by diversity.

Participation and representation require the granting of formal political rights and opportunities for political participation, as well as conditions that encourage active civic engagement. Research on political participation in democratic societies suggests that formal rights and institutional opportunities for political participation are decisive as regards the nature and level of political participation and mobilisation of minorities and ethnic communities in a given context (see, for example, Tilly 1978; Ireland 1994; Layton-Henry 1990; Vogel 2007). In other words, political opportunity structures are able to shape the nature and channel claims of ethnic groups and minorities into the political system (Koopmans and Statham 1999; 2005). Some institutional contexts, for example, may foster more cooperation between ethnic groups, others may lead to more institutionalised forms of participation and others still may encourage ethnic minority participation at particular levels of governance (at the local more than the national level).

EU member states present very different political structures and opportunities, and this is reflected in the very different ways and degrees in which ethnic minorities or newer immigrant populations participate in the respective political systems. Equally important, however, is the fact that for political rights to be actively and effectively exercised and for political opportunities to be able to be translated into actual influence, resources are essential (Verba et al. 1995; see also Lindekilde 2009). Language competence, access to relevant information, social networks, financial means and education are among these key resources. Further, the extent to which these resources exist within a society's different communities may affect the level of their participation and representation. For instance, notable differences may exist among first- and second-generation immigrants, between long-time settlers and newcomers,

between women and men, and between different groups of TCNs.

Finally, access to citizenship is one of the defining dimensions of political participation and representation. The EU member states' naturalisation policies largely affect the participation, inclusion and representation of migration-related minorities (Bauböck 2006). Citizenship policies constitute a core instrument that governments have at their disposal to further democratise their increasingly diverse societies (Zapata-Barrero 2009b). The fact that EU member states have different naturalisation policies (frequently characterised by selective or preferential criteria towards certain ethnic or national groups) affects the quality of democracy that is being exercised at an EU-wide level and the principles upon which European democracy is based.

Drawing from the above, this chapter provides an overview of the democratic challenges posed in seven European countries, namely Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Spain and the UK. In particular, it explores the political engagement of migration-related minorities by examining the remit of political rights and the extent of their political participation.

### 7.1 European countries in perspective: dimensions of democratic challenges

According to Eurostat data (2009), a quick overview of the countries analysed indicates the number and relative percentage of non-EU foreigners, and foreign-born inhabitants, including those EU-citizens born in another EU member state.

We consider two main categories related to political engagement in multicultural contexts, namely voting rights and political mobilisation. Access to full voting rights is associated with citizenship and naturalisation. Naturalisation, in turn, is conditional upon a set of basic criteria including length of residence and degree of integration (Bauböck et al. 2006), as well as certain preferential considerations (such as ethnic or historical ties) as defined by the receiving society.

The formal or informal structures through which receiving societies encourage political inclusion are just as important as migrants' own civic and political capital in determining the extent, intensity and forms of political mobilisation that they choose to undertake. Thus, it is relevant to consider migrants' participation in voluntary and self-organised associations as well as political consultation and

Table 7.1 Number of non-EU foreigners and foreign-born inhabitants in seven European countries and in the EU 27 (2009) (in thousands)

	Citizens 2008	Non-EU Foreigners 2008	%	Foreign-born 2008	%
EU 27	497,431	19,476	3.90	30779	6.20
Belgium	10,667	312	2.90	971	9.10
Denmark	5,476	205	3.70	298	5.50
France	63,753	2,391	3.80	3674	5.80
Germany	82,218	4,740	5.80	7255	8.80
Greece	11,214	748	6.70	906	8.10
Spain	45,283	3,149	7.00	5262	11.60
United Kingdom	61,176	2,406	3.90	4021	6.60

Source: Eurostat. Statistics in focus 94/2009 [http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY\\_OFFPUB/KS-SF-09-094/EN/KS-SF-09-094-EN.PDF](http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_OFFPUB/KS-SF-09-094/EN/KS-SF-09-094-EN.PDF)

representation structures that have been set up as compensatory systems in situations where formal political rights are not granted in order to channel immigrant claims through consultative and advisory bodies. Furthermore, the extent to which representative political bodies reflect the multicultural character of societies is equally important. The cases of Belgium, Germany, the UK and Denmark, for instance, are interesting in this issue both with regard to the composition of their national/municipal/local assemblies, but also in terms of the composition of their political parties.

### 7.2 Voting rights

In most European countries, full political participation requires access to citizenship; over the last decade, however, the most significant change in terms of access to political rights has been the enfranchisement of EU citizens who reside in another EU member states (established in the 1993 Maastricht Treaty). Even though there was a certain reluctance and delay on behalf of some EU member states to widen their electoral bases to include other EU nationals for local/municipal and European Parliamentary elections, the harmonisation of EU nationals' political rights across all EU member states is now an established fact; the *demos* has been widened to include all EU citizens.

There has been no similar harmonisation effort as regards the political rights of TCNs, and this will probably be rather unlikely in

the foreseeable future (for reasons ranging from political constraints to the need for some member states to undergo constitutional changes and also further modify the Lisbon Treaty). Nevertheless, EU citizenship has affected the debate on democratic standards and expectations and the sort of democracy the EU and its member states wish to represent in a noteworthy manner. It has accorded intellectual and political legitimacy to the argument in favour of enfranchising TCNs, particularly in countries with a more recent migration history. In effect, a political consensus is being constructed between centre and left-wing political parties across Europe on the need to concede voting rights at the local level to TCNs. Further, a fair number of EU member states have already granted full or partial voting rights to TCNs: Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Greece (as of March 2010), Ireland, the Netherlands, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK (Triandafyllidou and Gropas 2007).

Against this background, it is interesting to consider the cases of Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, Spain and the UK in terms of whether, in what manner and at which level they enfranchise foreign residents in order to gain an understanding of the differences that are characteristic of the EU. Each of these countries has a very different migration history, experience and population, and it approaches citizenship and TCNs' access to political rights in very different ways.

The Belgian citizenship regime is very open and liberal, offering multiple avenues towards naturalisation. As a result, significant numbers of people of foreign origin have become full citizens with full political rights since 1990. Naturalised citizens represented only one quarter of the migrant and minority population in 1991; two decades later, their share is 44.5 per cent. Moreover, all TCNs who legally reside in the country are enfranchised for local elections (without any eligibility criteria restricting this right). Since the late 1980s there has been very vivid debate on the concept of political citizenship in Belgium. Naturalisation has come to be considered as the mechanism *par excellence* for migrant integration since the early 1980s. In effect, the Belgian Nationality Code is one of the most liberal and flexible in Europe. The linguistic cleavage and conflict between the French-speaking and Flemish communities strongly influenced the debates and policies on migration and diversity-related issues and, to an extent, slowed down the process of enfranchisement resulting from the Maastricht Treaty<sup>2</sup> (Bousetta and Swyngedouw 1999). What is interesting to note here, however, is that while the

issue of political rights for EU and non-EU citizens was framed in terms of threat to the balance of power between the Francophones and the Flemish, this has not been the case for the issue of naturalisation (see Bousetta and Bernes 2009).

In Denmark, two significant developments have gradually come into being since 2002, namely tightened rules of naturalisation on the one hand, and cuts in funding for ethnic minority organisations on the other; both have rendered political participation of ethnic minorities more difficult. Danish citizenship is a prerequisite for participation in national elections and, since access to citizenship by naturalisation has been tightened since 2002, a steadily growing group of permanent residents is excluded from national elections and politics. However, TCNs are entitled to vote and stand as candidates in local elections. Ethnic minority organisations have proven important both for channeling claims into the political system and as a basis for ethnic candidates in local elections. Although ethnic minority members tend to participate less than native Danes in local elections, when compared with other countries that have granted voting rights to non-citizens, Denmark ranks among the countries with the highest rates of participation of non-nationals in office (see Lindekilde 2009).

In France, citizenship and nationality are inseparable, and access to political rights is completely conditional upon the acquisition of French nationality. The case of EU citizenship clearly demonstrates the difficulty in separating nationality from citizenship in the French context. France has been impressively slow in enforcing Article 19 of the Maastricht Treaty regarding EU citizens' right to vote and stand as candidates in local and European elections. The European Commission had to lodge several appeals to France before they eventually adopted Article 19. Article 88-3 was added to the French Constitution in 1998, and European citizens were able to vote in local elections for the first time in 2001. Although access to political rights is restricted to French nationals, obtaining French citizenship is relatively easy compared to other countries in Europe. Foreigners can acquire French citizenship after five years' residence and it is noteworthy that since 2000, the average approval rate of citizenship applications has consistently been above 77 per cent (see Escrafé-Dublet and Simon 2009). In effect, in 2005, 40 per cent of the five million immigrants living in France were French citizens. Naturalisation is granted when applicants fulfil certain basic criteria regarding residence requirements and financial resources in

addition to knowledge of the French language, loyalty and sharing of 'republican values'. A 2003 law reinforced these criteria, adding the requirement of proving sufficient knowledge about the rights and responsibilities of French citizenship, and thereby leaving substantial room for the naturalisation decision to be based on the administration employees' discretion.

In Germany, citizenship is required in order to vote or stand as a candidate in national elections. Thus, full formal political participation is linked to German citizenship that is in turn acquired at the end of a successful integration process. The 2000 Citizenship Law is considered a milestone in German integration policies, symbolising a qualitative step from ignoring to acknowledging the immigration situation by departing from the exclusivity of *ius sanguinis*, applicable since 1913. In their well-known study Koopmans and Statham (2005: 72) also testify that Germany's immigration policies have shifted from the model of ethnic assimilationism towards cultural pluralism and a more civic-territorial conception of citizenship. Nevertheless, the change has not led to a significant increase in naturalisation figures. On the contrary, naturalisation figures have steadily decreased. In 2008, the numbers fell below 95,000, compared to 187,000 in 2000, while migrants from countries with a Muslim majority tend to be less frequently naturalised. *Späte Aussiedler* (returning ethnic Germans) constitute the exception to this trend and have been granted full citizenship rights, while since 1992, all EU citizens have been entitled to participate in elections at the municipal level. All other TCNs – including so-called 'guest workers' and refugees who have been living in Germany for several years – are not allowed to vote in national or local elections. Migrant organisations have been campaigning for decades for the introduction of local franchise as a means of integration. Several initiatives attempting to introduce this right from left-wing parties have failed; notably, in February 1989 two *Länder* amended legislation in order to introduce voting rights at the municipal level. With an appeal initiated by the Conservative Parliamentary Party, in October 1990 the Federal Constitutional Court of Germany judged these amendments to be unconstitutional on the basis of a strict interpretation of the Basic Law as referring to citizens only. More recently, in 2008 the federal government examined the issue of local franchise for TCNs as part of its commitments within the National Integration Plan. The conclusion of the inquiry was that a constitutional amendment would be necessary, which would require a majority of two-thirds of

the members of the national parliament (*Bundestag*) and the Senate (*Bundesrat*) of the Federal Republic of Germany. Given that a wide consensus would be needed across all parties, this initiative was deemed unfeasible and was abandoned (see Miera 2009).

One additional issue that has affected the participation of Germany's predominant Turkish-origin migrant population in particular is the principle of disallowing multiple citizenship.<sup>3</sup> Despite the general refusal of multiple citizenship that characterises Germany's citizenship regime, there are several bilateral agreements or tacit conventions that (reciprocally) allow multiple citizenship. Between 2000 and 2008 about 46.5 per cent of all naturalisations accepted multiple citizenship, particularly for German *Späte Aussiedler* who kept their other citizenship. The main group to which these exceptions do not refer are those of Turkish descent. This became clear in early 2000, when thousands of Turkish migrants applied for reapproval of their Turkish passports after being naturalised. As a consequence, they had their German citizenship withdrawn and also lost their permanent residence status, for which they were forced to reapply. The fact that migrants from Turkey or second-generation migrants had been denied double citizenship and automatic residency permit renewal caused huge discontent among Turkish migrants who felt that the principle of not allowing double citizenship was directly targeted against them (Miera 2009).

In Greece, co-ethnics from the former Soviet Union (Pontic Greeks) were granted preferential access to Greek citizenship upon arrival in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Ethnic Greeks from Albania (*Voreioepirotas*) did not have access to citizenship rights until 2006 but enjoyed a secure residence status and socio-economic rights equal to those of Greek citizens. Since late 2006, however, naturalisation of co-ethnics from Albania have been steadily increasing as they have been fulfilling the legal requirements which include ten years' residence for naturalisation. Greece's naturalisation process was until recently restrictive and lacked transparency, with naturalisations counted in two- to three-digit numbers per year in the period before 2006. In March 2010, however, the situation in Greece changed as the Hellenic parliament voted a new law (Law No. 3838/2010) on citizenship and naturalisation. This law introduced provisions for second-generation migrants, notably children born in Greece of foreign parents or children born abroad of foreign parents but who have completed at least six years of schooling in Greece and who live in Greece. In either case, these children can be naturalised

through a simple parental declaration when they are born or when they complete their sixth year of attending a Greek school. The new law also lowers the requirement for naturalisation from ten to seven years of residence, provided the applicant has already received the EU long-term resident status, which can be acquired after five years of legal residence. The new law also introduces local political rights for foreign residents who have been living in Greece for five years or more. Law 3838/2010 has marked an impressive transformation of the concept of Greek citizenship (until recently based exclusively on *ius sanguinis*) by introducing a substantial element of *ius soli*. The same aforementioned law also grants TCNs voting rights in local elections, thereby substantially extending the *demos* at the local and regional level of governance.

In Spain, the debate on immigrants' voting rights has two dimensions (Zapata-Barrero and Zaragoza 2009). The first concerns the territorial dimension of elections. More specifically, a Spanish citizen has the right to vote in elections at four different levels: the European, the national, the regional and the local. The core debate therefore has revolved around on which level of governance non-EU immigrants should be allowed to vote. The second debate focuses on the legal criteria that should be used for granting voting rights to immigrants, for example, access to citizenship and access to political rights through the principle of reciprocity and/or permanent residence. The Spanish Constitution (Article 13.2) does not grant immigrants the right to vote and stand for election. Sole exceptions are cases where this right is established by treaty or when the law attends to the so-called principle of reciprocity. This exclusion from political participation does not affect residents who are EU citizens, who have been entitled to vote in municipal and European Parliamentary elections since the adoption of the Maastricht Treaty in 1993. The principle of reciprocity is another particularity of the case of Spain: immigrants whose country of origin grants voting rights to Spanish emigrants living in its territory receive equivalent political rights in Spain (for example, Norway and, in principle, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Uruguay and Venezuela). This, however, leads to the differential granting of political rights to immigrants (based on their country of origin) and, therefore, to the undermining of the objective of common and indiscriminate integration. Finally, the Spanish Civil Code (Article 22.1) establishes that in order to naturalise, an immigrant has to prove continued and legal residence in the country for ten years prior to applying. This period decreases to two years for

Latin-Americans and other nationalities historically linked to Spain such as Filipinos. In other words, the Spanish Civil Code establishes a framework of 'institutional discrimination', which impacts directly on the equal access to political rights between TCNs residing in Spain (see also Zapata-Barrero 2010).

In the UK, full political rights encompassing a range of entitlements beyond voting rights are only secured if an immigrant becomes a citizen. This requires a minimum of five years' legal stay, of which at least one year must be classified as 'indefinite leave to enter or remain'. This category denotes the immigration status conferred to a person who does not hold the right of 'permanent abode' but who has been admitted to the UK without any time limit on his or her stay and thus is free to travel to and from the UK and to take up employment or study without restriction. So, while full social and political rights, including access to social welfare, are only secured if an immigrant becomes a UK citizen, people with 'leave to enter' or with 'leave to remain' in Britain are entitled to vote. These permits may cover any length of time between three months to many years, but they exclude persons who have entered the country illegally. However, the formal legal arrangements around the political participation of non-citizens are not necessarily addressed, or are inhibited by convoluted opportunity structures. This is particularly evident in the practical issues surrounding the formal political participation of some ethnic minorities and most starkly illustrated by the experiences of asylum seekers and refugees. EU nationals, irrespective of immigration status, may vote in local elections and in elections for devolved assemblies (Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Mayor of London), but not in national elections. Conversely, British citizens living abroad can register as overseas electors and are eligible to vote in the UK and European Parliamentary elections for up to fifteen years after they have left the country (Meer and Modood 2009).

In short, there exists a patchwork of different regimes regarding access to citizenship and political rights across the EU, rendering any effort to define a European multicultural democracy in formal terms rather challenging. The exercise of democracy and political participation, of course, is far from limited to the formal, institutionalised and procedural dimension of elections. There is a vast range of civic and political participation that essentially underpins the quality, inclusiveness and representativeness of a society's democracy. Therefore, it is interesting to consider also the parallel or informal channels of political participation that have been created either on the initiative

of the receiving society or on behalf of the migrant communities themselves.

### 7.3 *Political mobilisation*

In Belgium there are various ways through which immigrant ethnic minorities can voice their claims. Historically, labour unions were an important platform, but their weight and role within communities of non-EU origin has eroded in more recent decades. Migrants' political participation in civil society and voluntary association is less intensive and less active than the native Belgians', and there is a growing disinterest in institutionalised forms of consultation. These are increasingly viewed as vestiges of previous decades where migration was viewed as a more temporary phenomenon and the objective was to compensate for the absence of political rights. Since individuals of foreign origin have significantly increased their political representation and can now make their voice heard within mainstream institutions, there is less motivation for setting up such consultative bodies. In effect, the electoral breakthrough of people of non-EU origin has been observed steadily in all elections since 1994 and particularly since 2004. Among the more notable examples are the appointment to a ministerial position in the Brussels regional government of a second-generation Turk from the Francophone Socialist Party, and another in the government of the French Community of Belgium of a second-generation Moroccan woman from the Francophone Socialist Party. What is important to stress here is the role institutional factors can play in encouraging and facilitating the representation of migrants and minorities in the political realm. The case of Brussels testifies to this as the notable representation of ethnic minority candidates is not only due to Belgium's liberal naturalisation regime but also the country's electoral system that includes both proportional representation and preferential voting, thereby opening the political system to the city's large migrant population (Bousetta and Bernes 2009).

Denmark was one of the first European countries (after Sweden and Ireland) to grant voting rights to foreign citizens for local elections. Nevertheless, there has been surprisingly little debate about the formal political rights of ethnic minorities in Denmark. Since the early 1990s the public debate regarding ethnic minorities has centred on how much cultural adaptation can be expected from ethnic minorities and to what extent significant value differences can be accepted.

It has also dealt with how ethnic minorities can be better integrated in the job market and the educational system, and how to address the challenges posed by existing residential segregation. Moreover, over the last decade in particular, the debate has focused mainly on Islam and its perceived non-conformity with Danish political culture and democracy. What has been largely missing from these debates is the role of ethnic minorities as political actors and active citizens in Danish society. Denmark's particularity also lies in the fact that the political participation of ethnic minorities in decision making varies significantly between the local and the national level. Ethnic minorities have little influence on nationwide political decisions but a much wider one on local political decisions. At the municipal level, many cities have well-functioning integration councils that give a voice to migrants' claims. In addition, institutional design has facilitated the election of a large number of ethnic minority candidates to local administration. The Danish voting system allows voters to support and cast their preference for specific candidates on the party ballot slip. Thus, immigrant candidates have in many cases gathered large numbers of personalised votes in municipalities with high concentrations of ethnic minorities. Furthermore, collective mobilisation and the pooling of available resources (financial, political capital, social capital) is easier at the local level, thereby resulting in overall higher rates of political participation and representation for ethnic minorities here than at the national level (which obviously requires wider coalitions and networks). An additional dimension that is interesting to note is the fact that participation in local elections varies greatly between ethnic groups. Resources such as skills in organisation building in the Danish context, contacts and language skills all affect the degree of self-organisation of ethnic groups so that groups that have been in the country longer (such as Turks, Pakistanis and Iranians) are typically better organised than the more recent arrivals (such as Somalis and former Yugoslavs).

Informal consultations between ethnic minority representatives and the national political elite take place, though rather selectively, thereby including migrant and ethnic minority claims in the public debate at the national level. Research suggests, however, that overall there exists an ineffective representation of ethnic minorities at the national level because their organisations are fragmented and lack coordination (Mikkelsen 2003; Ziadeh 2003; Mouritsen 2006). It has therefore been argued that for ethnic minorities to be able to channel their claims and influence at the national level of

government, they would need to organise themselves within umbrella organisations as this would lead to the development of a larger pool of representatives. Such organisations would thereby create a sufficient critical mass to be invited to regular meetings with relevant political committees and ministers. The experience of Sweden may be useful here as the provision of financial incentives has encouraged the formation of larger unions of organisations (Lindekilde 2009). Last, the creation of local integration councils has had an important effect on political participation. In fact, 18 per cent of the ethnic minority candidates who stood for election in 2001 were prior members of local integration councils. There is a widespread view that integration councils should be made mandatory and their positions should be elected and not, as is the case in some municipalities, through governmental appointment.

In France, the situation is very different. French republican culture has translated into a solid tradition of 'ethnic blindness' that has essentially shaped the debate over minority participation in politics. Republican discourse rejects the categorisation of minority identities and consequently ethnic preference is considered as an illegitimate basis for political strategy. The risks involved in this approach are the political marginalisation of entire segments of the population and the fact that inequality between individuals of different backgrounds remains in part unaddressed. Mobilisation around foreigners' political rights and minority recognition has been consistent for over almost thirty-five years now, though results are still limited. In this context, two alternative routes of mobilisation have developed. The first involves the practice of 'cooption' through the creation of consultation bodies at different levels of political decision making and the nomination of foreigners in the political process of decision making. 'Coooption' draws from the 1970s tradition of appointing 'community leaders' to 'represent' minorities in the administrative council dealing with migration-related issues and is at present best represented by the *Conseil de la citoyenneté des Parisiens non communautaires* (Council of the Citizenship of Parisian TCNs). There are, however, two shortcomings, namely that consultation bodies do not have substantial leverage on political decisions, and that this process may attribute a disproportionate agency to associational leaders (instead of the actual constituency they are meant to represent). The second route consists of the vibrant mobilisation that has developed on immigration and anti-racism issues, which has been critical in voicing minority demands. This mobilisation

took a stronger dynamic in support of diversity representation in national-level politics after the events that took place in the suburbs of French cities in November 2005, especially by organisations such as *Le Conseil représentatif des associations noires de France* (CRAN) [Representative Council for Black Associations] and the *Association Collectif Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité, Ensemble, Unis* (AC Le Feu) [Collective Association for Freedom, Equality, Fraternity – Together, United].

Germany too presents a very distinct situation regarding migrant mobilisation and participation in the political realm. Recent studies that have examined political interest and voting preferences of migrants and naturalised Germans highlight some interesting findings: migrants without German citizenship show significantly low levels of interest in German politics (Diehl and Urbahn 1998). While political interest is stronger among naturalised Germans, it still remains around 50 per cent lower than among native Germans. When further examining political mobilisation and interest among naturalised citizens, it further emerges that Turkish Germans account for the highest number of politically interested citizens, particularly in comparison with the ethnic Germans (*Späte Aussiedler*) from the CIS, Poland and Romania, who were guaranteed German citizenship upon arrival (Wüst 2003). In terms of actual representation on the political scene, however, with the exception of *Aussiedler*, the parliamentary representation of migrants in Germany is relatively new and still quantitatively low. In 2007, there were eighty deputies of Turkish origin in German parliaments, while overall the number of members of parliament with a migrant background is low, at under 2 per cent. Nevertheless, there are changes underway in the manner and extent to which migrant politicians have become increasingly visible particularly in the SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands) and the Green Party. They are able to represent a diversity of viewpoints and (not only ethnic) identities, indicating that there is a trend within German politics that is taking into consideration and responding to the country's new citizenry (Miera 2009).

With regard to other institutionalised forms of participation and consultation that exist in Germany, Foreign Citizens' Advisory Councils that had been implemented in many German cities since the 1970s further to migrants' claims, constituted for quite some time the only way for non-German immigrants to have any kind of participation in institutionalised or formal politics. However, these have always been contentious since the extent of their power



and influence is limited and over the past decade, there has been a steady decline in interest in these councils. More recent forms of institutionalised involvement of migrants in policy making – primarily concerning integration issues more than political representation – include involvement in round tables, integration councils such as the National Integration Summit (July 2007) and the German Islam Conference (founded in 2006).<sup>4</sup> These provide new forums of communication and consultation between state authorities, migrant organisations and other civic and political agents. Some of these forums have established representative procedures, but generally their composition is set by the state.

In Greece, while the public debates on the social and economic integration of migrants have been ongoing since the turn of the century, the political dimensions of integration (political representation, voting rights and participation) represent a relatively new yet steadily growing trend. Immigrant participation in public life has been hampered and affected by the long-standing undocumented or insecure status of most immigrants due to delayed and incomplete regularisation policies and efforts on the part of the public authorities. Until the early 2000s, the institutional and legal framework of migration in Greece provided immigrants with very limited opportunities to participate in public life and to be civically and politically active. Since then, however, Greece's civil society landscape has changed substantially. Immigrant, cultural and sports associations, women's associations, trade unions and other professional organisations, networks of associations of immigrant and mainstream human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or NGOs active in the protection of refugee and asylum seeker rights, anti-discrimination or the fight against racism and xenophobia have created a rich, active and increasingly vocal civil society. This development has benefited greatly from two separate factors. One is that EU programmes and sources of funding (such as EQUAL and INTERREG) have been fundamental in raising awareness among the public and the media on immigrant integration, multiculturalism and programmes combating discrimination, racism and xenophobia. The other is that left-wing parties in Greece, particularly from the Coalition of the Left (Syriza) and from the more centre-left Socialist party (PASOK), have been instrumental in providing human and financial resources to migrant and other organisations, helping them develop their organisational capabilities and engaging them in the public sphere. In effect, many party members have held a double role, serving on

the boards of NGOs involved in migration and anti-discrimination matters.

To date, migrants' political mobilisation and inclusion in the Greek political sphere has not taken place through formal, institutionalised consultative mechanisms (such as including migrants in local/regional councils or establishing consultation and institutionalised forums of regular dialogue with migrant organisations) as in other EU countries. In the case of Greece, the inclusion of migrants in the country's political life has taken place through links with individual politicians. In effect, over the past decade, a number of parliamentarians have included immigrants in their office team of experts and associates leading to their participation as observers in party conventions and party working groups. Additionally, all main political parties have developed extensive networks and informal links with co-ethnic (mainly) and immigrant associations (increasingly). Such networks conform to the prevailing political culture in Greece of political clientelism and patronage rather than notions of civic citizenship and political inclusion (Gropas and Triandafyllidou 2009).

In Spain, since 1995 immigrant associations have had a consultative body at the national level in which they are represented and are able to claim and demand their interests: *Foro para la Integración de los Inmigrantes* (Forum for the Social Integration of Immigrants). Its composition is divided into three kinds of actors: public administration (comprising the central administration, the autonomous administration and the local administration), social organisations (where the trade unions and employers' organisations are represented) and immigrant associations. The spokespersons who are appointed to represent the associations of immigrants and refugees, and the social support organisations are assigned by the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs. This top-down selection process has contributed to the fact that the role of immigrant associations in this forum has been rather weak. Their participation is determined by a number of factors, including, *inter alia*, their economic dependence on public authorities; the moderation of their discourse (negotiation and reform versus conflict); the extent to which they are included in official channels of dialogue; their access to economic resources (González-Enríquez, 2005: 27); and the type of political culture that develops within these associations (depending on the charismatic leadership of some individuals, the degree of participation of the wider community, representativeness and transparency, and so on) (Veredas 2003: 212). One of the commissions of the forum

concentrates on the debate on the political rights and participation of immigrants in Spain. The conclusions of this commission, summarised in the *Report on the Situation of the Social Integration of Immigrants and Refugees* published in 2007, are the following:

1. The active participation of immigrants in all social spheres and public matters is key to guaranteeing equality in rights and duties with the native population.
2. Immigrant participation cannot depend on nationality but should be promoted in different ways in order to make immigrants feel part of the new urban cultural set-up and also motivate them to contribute and provide possible solutions to the problems that affect current coexistence.
3. It is necessary to establish common criteria in order to overcome the existing disparities in immigrant participation between the different Autonomous Communities.
4. To promote the participation of immigrants it is necessary to encourage a political culture and provide education on the democratic values of the social rule of law, by providing resources that encourage and strengthen associationism.
5. The visibility of migrants in the public function is essential to terminate stereotypes and to carry out political pedagogy. In this sense, access to public posts cannot be limited by nationality and there must be greater visibility of immigrants in public administration such as schools (teachers), security corps (police), hospitals, and so on.
6. The right to vote is considered as an essential right in order to achieve full integration. In order to encourage debate on this important issue, it is necessary to seek solutions to the limits that Article 13.2 of the Spanish Constitution places on granting immigrants participation rights in municipal elections. A reform of this article should take place, independently of the promotion of bilateral agreements of reciprocity.
7. Finally, the forum made a petition to the government to ratify the Convention of the Council of Europe on the participation of foreigners in public life at a local level in order to promote the voting rights of immigrants following the criteria of length of residence (permanent residence).

In the case of the UK, the political representation of migration-related minorities has occupied an important place in the public sphere. The situation is very different from most other EU member

states as the UK has one of the highest levels of ethnic minority citizenship with a right to franchise in Europe (Hansen 2000). Although the proportion of minority representatives holding elected office does not sufficiently reflect Britain's ethnic diversity, ethnic minority voter registration and participation have been steadily increasing in recent years. Mainstream Muslim identity politics, by and large, appears to comprise a significant strand of this engagement and will provide an interesting dimension of the debate in the coming years. The challenge for political parties remains how to appeal to all sections of society including ethnic minorities, but specifically how to ensure the participation of ethnic minorities, and that minority candidates are selected and elected. There is widespread recognition within political parties and among the wider public of the need to address ethnic under-representation in UK politics. However, progress has been slow to the extent that the Labour Party still has only thirteen ethnic minority MPs, despite attracting the majority of the ethnic minority voters (Meer and Modood 2009). Political parties are not covered by the duty to promote equality under Section 71 of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, so it is largely up to the internal political dynamics of the main political parties to decide whether there is a need to further pursue strategies that actively promote equality in order to address ethnic minority under-representation.

### *Conclusion*

Each EU member state has addressed and responded to the democratic challenges that arise from an increasingly multicultural society by adopting very different approaches and policies. There are different approaches to citizenship, political inclusion and representation in each member state. The most significant change in terms of access to political rights has been the enfranchisement of EU citizens living in another EU member state since the Maastricht Treaty. The introduction of voting rights for European citizens in local and European elections widened the democratic polity in an unprecedented manner. Given the current sensitive political climate on migration issues across the EU, marked by a growth in anti-immigration discourse among right-wing political parties, combined with Europe's dire economic situation that is triggering feelings of economic and employment insecurity among EU citizens and translating into immigration-scepticism, it would be difficult to expect a similar development across the EU for TCNs. Nevertheless, this expansion of the

notion of citizenship has encouraged debate on the political rights of non-European resident foreigners, that is, third country nationals. What is important to note is that this has led to a vivid and dynamic discussion in both academic research and, just as decisively, in the public sphere on the traditional linkage between citizenship and nationality. It has triggered the pursuit of a more civic understanding of citizenship.

Over the past fifteen years, advocacy groups, intellectuals and proponents of a multicultural *demos* have been arguing for the need to revisit and redefine sustainable democratic forms of citizenship that are able to integrate and address the needs of minority groups and new collective identities. The redefinition of citizenship has far-reaching democratic implications. It involves expanding access to political rights to new citizens and revisiting the constitutive elements of national identity. This redefinition is being argued for on the basis of the principles of political equality, human rights and respect for diversity.

Furthermore, since the 1990s we have been able to observe a growing inclusion of migrants and minorities in the political systems of the EU member states examined. Unquestionably, there exists a significant degree of national and local variation in how multicultural political debates are structured in each EU country. Some countries have proactively pursued initiatives aimed at the political inclusion of these groups (such as Denmark, the UK and Belgium), while in others, the debate remains essentially focused on the conditions of access to political citizenship and rights (such as Greece and Spain). There has been a wider and more active engagement on behalf of migration-related minorities in older migration countries, in assemblies, across political parties and so on, although different models and levels of political participation and inclusion can be identified. In the UK, France, Denmark and Belgium, for instance, large segments of the permanent migrant population have been enfranchised either through naturalisation or through specific enfranchising legislation. These minority groups have significantly progressed in terms of electoral participation and representation over the last decade in local and national politics and in the European Parliament. In Germany, where TCNs both faced restrictive naturalisation procedures and had no formal political rights, this has not been synonymous with political exclusion from the public space. In fact, forms of consultation with public authorities have been set up (even if in some cases these are still at very elementary stages) thereby allowing these groups to

express their political expectations outside the traditional channel of the vote. In newer migration countries, such as Greece or Spain, the naturalisation processes are, or have been until recently, rather long and restrictive. In most cases there are still rather limited formal consultative institutions or other alternatives to encourage their political participation in the receiving society. Nevertheless, a political consensus has been constructed between centre and left-wing political parties on the need to concede voting rights at the local level to TCNs and engage them more actively in civic and political terms.

There are, of course, a number of continuing challenges. Where data on migrant and minority voters exists, it suggests lower levels of electoral participation among them than among native nationals. Reasons are varied and may range from lack of access to relevant resources such as registration requirements in order to exercise voting rights, to objective obstacles to political participation exemplified as highly restrictive naturalisation legislation, electoral strategies of political parties or even electoral systems.

Where integration policies have attempted to encourage migrant political participation and representation through consultative and advisory institutions at the local and sometimes national levels of governance, responses have been mixed. Councils or advisory committees have been specifically set up in order to include migrants in the following countries: Spain, Germany, France and Denmark. Although this is a proactive initiative aiming at increasing participation of all groups (including disenfranchised residents) and dialogue between all actors, these have frequently faced substantial limitations and criticism in terms of effectively channelling immigrant claims. In some instances, they are reported to actually have provoked adverse effects on multicultural recognition. For instance, the Paris Consultative Council for Foreigners is considered to have marginalised ethnic demands, while in Denmark, there is a concern that the general inefficiency that characterises consultative bodies may lead to demobilisation and disillusionment vis-à-vis the migrant populations.

In short, political opportunity structures are diverse in each European country and there is scope for much to be done in terms of integrating minority communities, new citizens and permanent residents in the democratic polity. Public information campaigns and educational programmes on civic values should target the entire population, while more focused efforts should include migrant and minority populations and in particular women. At the same time, efforts to encourage voter registration across all societal groups

should be intensified. Access to funding and media outlets are important for minority and migrant organisations in order to improve and support their contribution to the national debate and encourage a wider representation. In all these situations, the role of political parties is pivotal. They should be encouraged to consider the degree of their intercultural composition and membership and the levels of ethnic minority participation and representation at local, national and European levels.

As discussed above, representativeness and participation are central to democracy. Where significant portions of the population living within a constituency are excluded from formal means of political expression and representation, this translates into a democratic deficit. Democratic governance in Europe has aimed at ensuring the inclusion of all groups and segments of a polity's population in the democratic process. Moreover, in today's plural societies, strengthening the civic identity of its constitutive members is necessary for multicultural societies that are socially cohesive. Political participation and representation are therefore necessary for residents and citizens to have a stake in the community in which they live. It adds the dimensions of responsibility and obligation to that of rights. This is important for the quality of a society's democracy and development, and for the making of a European multicultural democracy.

### Notes

1. According to the last data available in the EU-27 there are 499,433 million EU citizens, and 19,916 million non-EU citizens, that is 4 per cent of the EU population. Source: Eurostat. <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home> (October 2010).
2. An institutional reform of the Belgian federal state accommodated Flemish concerns that EU citizenship would weaken the institutional representation of the Flemish minority in Brussels and in its periphery.
3. Children of foreigners acquire German citizenship if one parent has been legally living in Germany for at least eight years; these children are then allowed to hold two passports until the age of twenty-three, after which they have to opt for either the German or the other citizenship.
4. The German Islam Conference was the first national reaction, involving federal, regional and local authorities, to the relatively recent presence in historical terms of Muslims as a significant population group in Germany. Its work focuses on Muslims' integration in Germany (including among other issues establishing Islamic theological university institutions, reporting on Islam and Germany's Muslim population in

the media, introducing Islamic religious studies in German state schools, and so on) so as to counteract social polarisation and segregation.

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