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Immigrant Representation in Germany's Regional States: The Puzzle of Uneven Dynamics

Karen Schönwälder

Abstract: Immigrants and their descendants are becoming increasingly visible in Germany's political life. What determines immigrant political incorporation into parliamentary positions over time and in specific contexts? The article focuses on the regional parliaments of Germany's 16 states. A comparative analysis enables us to specify whether, how and under what conditions factors thought to impact levels of immigrant representation are indeed influential and how they interact with local and situational conditions. The article first outlines immigrant representation in Germany's states over time. It then discusses several possible explanations for the striking variation between states. Rather than one key factor, it is found that interactions between demographic, institutional, cultural and political conditions account for different levels of immigrant representation in Germany's state parliaments.

A decade after the reform of the German citizenship law, immigrants and their descendants are becoming increasingly visible in Germany's political life. It is now widely accepted that post-war immigration has permanently transformed the German population. The next logical step, given a transformed population and a

liberalised citizenship act, will be, over the medium and longer term, a transformed electorate. Slowly but surely, all political parties are turning towards immigrant voters and beginning to make efforts to nominate candidates with an immigrant background for parliamentary positions. How far have such efforts gone? Are they merely symbolic, or have they led to substantial levels of immigrant representation? What determines the process of immigrant political incorporation into parliamentary positions over time and in differing political, cultural and demographic contexts?

By analysing the German situation and its development (see also da Fonseca 2011; Schönwälder 2010, 2012; Wüst and Heinz 2009), this article offers empirical evidence and analysis that contributes to a fuller understanding of these processes. The specific focus is the regional level, namely the 16 states of the Federal Republic of Germany.¹ The regional states represent an important sphere of political power as their responsibilities include education, culture, the police and the implementation of all laws. Given the relatively low level of immigrant representation in Germany today, the regional parliaments provide a larger sample, with more variation, than available at the level of the national parliament. The analysis of the different states in a comparative perspective also enables us to specify whether, how and under what conditions factors that are generally thought to affect levels of immigrant representation are influential and how they interact with specific constellations of demography, electoral systems and political culture.

This article first outlines immigrant representation in Germany's state parliaments over time. I document the extent to which the diversity of population

and electorate is already reflected in the composition of Germany's parliaments and identify key developments enabling the emergence of immigrant representation in the 1990s.

The second section then seeks to explain the striking differences between the states. I consider the size and composition of the immigrant population, differences in the electoral systems and the different socio-cultural and political dynamics and contexts that may account for different levels of immigrant representation in city and territorial states.

Based on this analysis, I argue that, while some general preconditions enabled the emergence of immigrant representation on Germany's parliamentary stage, its development across Germany depends on a complex interaction between demographic, institutional, cultural and political conditions. Four conditions are identified as particularly beneficial or detrimental to immigrant representation.

The Emergence and Development of Immigrant Representation in the State Parliaments

Immigrant representation in German parliaments is a relatively recent phenomenon.² Still, the parliamentary presence of the post-war immigrant population preceded the 1999 reform of the citizenship legislation, which opened the door to numerically significant naturalisations. Twenty-five individuals with a migration history³ became members of regional parliaments between 1987 and 1999, two-thirds of them in the second half of the 1990s – a clear indication of change. In 1987, Sevim Celebi became the first regional parliamentarian with a background of guest-worker

migration. She rotated into the Berlin *Abgeordnetenhaus* when the *Alternative Liste* (AL) changed its personnel in the middle of the electoral period. A few years later, it was again the AL, a predecessor of the Green party, which brought Ismail Kosan, another immigrant, into Berlin's parliament. In the first half of the 1990s, a handful of other immigrant parliamentarians joined them. Between 1995 and 2000, the year when the new citizenship law entered into force, the parliamentary presence of the immigrant population slowly grew and spread across Germany. Seven other Green party politicians with an immigrant background won seats in different states. The Social Democrats brought immigrant politicians into the parliaments of Baden- Württemberg, the Saarland, Lower Saxony, Bremen and Bavaria.⁴ Until 1998– 1999, nine of the 16 states, including all but two of the old West German states, had immigrant members. Often, however, they were the only immigrant in a parliament of 80 to 200 members.

As of 2000, a new law liberalised access to German citizenship and thus to voting rights and candidacy in regional and national elections. Consequently, immigrant representation gathered pace. By summer 2009, 39 members of regional parliaments had a migration background – more than twice the number 10 years before. In 2010 and 2011, several immigrant politicians were newly (or re-)elected, so that after the regional elections on 27 March 2011, 54 members of state parliaments had a migration background.⁵

Three Preconditions of Change

The emergence of immigrant representation had three basic preconditions that also explain its timing: first, a numerically significant group of immigrants with German

citizenship had to emerge; second, within the immigrant population, a sufficient degree of political interest and motivation directed at domestic German politics needed to develop, and, third, the political parties had to open their ranks and leading positions to newcomers with non-German backgrounds. A sizeable immigrant electorate began to develop in the 1990s. Before 1990, very few immigrants had become German citizens. A restrictive naturalisation law – only marginally reformed before 1999 – placed high hurdles in the path of those who considered becoming Germans. A residence requirement of 10 years meant that significant numbers of immigrants only became eligible for naturalisation in the 1980s. Among current German citizens – more than 8 million of them with a migration background – microcensus figures list 21,000 former Turks, 11,000 Africans and about 50,000 Asians who were naturalised before 1991. In the course of the 1990s, naturalisation figures picked up (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010: 150–51). Thus, starting in the 1990s, the number of immigrant German citizens became large enough to provide a pool of potential candidates for election and an electorate that was beginning to become relevant to the political parties.⁶ Due to increased naturalisations after the reform of 1999 and major ethnic German immigration, there were approximately 5.6 million eligible voters with a migration background at the time of the federal election in September 2009 (Federal Election Commissioner 2009). This is close to 9 per cent of the 62 million electorate.

The 1990s were also a period when many politically interested immigrants and organisations of Turkish migrants, in particular, became more actively engaged with German politics (Interviews A, B;⁷ Sökefeld 2008).

Prior to the 1990s, the immigrant population in West Germany had not been politically quiescent, even in the early decades of labour migration. Many engaged in a range of political activities, partly in support of democracy in their homelands (Greeks after the 1967 putsch, Spaniards against the Franco dictatorship), but also around immigrant rights and social issues in Germany (see e.g. Bojadzijevev 2008; Miller 1981; Slobodian 2008). Thousands also joined the trade unions (Öztürk 2002). But while immigrants demanded political recognition, they were reluctant to push for inclusion into the German political mainstream, in part because they were repelled by a nationalist political culture and a conception of the German nation as linked by blood, language and history. Spanish and Portuguese immigrants often returned to their newly democratic and economically developing homelands. Among the Turks, the largest national-origin group, political energies focused on Turkey after the 1980 military coup. By the 1990s, however, increasingly sizeable parts of the immigrant population engaged with German political life and its mainstream institutions.

Increasing involvement with German affairs was one precondition for the emergence of immigrant politicians in the leadership of the mainstream political parties. The Social Democrats had already, in the 1970s and 1980s, attracted a small number of immigrant members. In Berlin, membership records for the early 1980s list 386 members without German citizenship (Decker 1982: 99).⁸ 'Yes, we deliberately joined the SPD, we wanted international solidarity, to widen our contacts and other things', an immigrant politician explains. But he also reports that initially: 'We did not have any ambitions' (Interview A). This changed by the 1990s.

The party leadership – reluctantly and only in some regions – also began to open up to immigrants. In 1990, Merih Ünel, of Turkish origin, was elected to the regional leadership body of the Berlin SPD (SPD Berlin 1990). As late as 1999, Turkish-German candidates appeared on the SPD list for the Berlin House of Deputies. In 1996, the Social Democratic faction in the national parliament for the first time organised a meeting with ‘social democratic migrants’ where a motion was passed that demanded promising places for migrants on the party’s candidate lists for elections and representation in the party’s leadership bodies (Fraktion der SPD im Deutschen Bundestag 1997). It took another 15 years until the party elected immigrant members to its national leadership body. In December 2011, the national party congress decided that the party would aim to have leadership bodies on the federal level in which at least 15 per cent of the members have a migration history (SPD 2011). In 2011, the SPD also named its first regional minister with immigrant background, Bilkay Öney, a woman of Turkish background. Recently, the SPD has been making noticeable efforts to include immigrants among its candidates in local and regional elections. In terms of the absolute number of immigrant parliamentarians, the SPD is now on a par with the Green party and has 19 immigrants among its 557 (in western states 445) regional parliamentarians.

The Christian Conservative parties had – under the Kohl government – emphasised the revival of German national identity and an anti-immigration profile. When, in 1990 and in 1993, the Conservative-led federal government accepted cautious liberalisation of the naturalisation law, this signalled the slow move of the political right away from the denial of immigration.

Nevertheless, the Conservative parties still opposed the major reform of the citizenship law, which introduced a *ius soli* principle, instead prioritising a traditional anti-immigrant electorate over an emerging immigrant electorate (Holmes Cooper 2002). However, since the CDU became the leading party in federal governments (in 2005), it has made immigrant integration a political priority and begun to define immigrants as part of its clientele. Before 2005, three regional CDU parliamentarians with an immigration background were elected, including two whose immigrant background was little noticed.⁹ In 2006 and 2008 the first politicians of Turkish origin were elected for the CDU in Hamburg and Berlin. Emine Demirbüken, the Berlin MP, was made a member of the federal party leadership in 2004. In 2010, Aygul Özkan, a parliamentarian in Hamburg, was appointed minister in the CDU-led state government of Niedersachsen. Such appointments reflect the efforts of parts of the CDU to signal openness to the immigrant population. Still, immigrant representation in Conservative factions remains minimal, with four state MPs in all 16 states¹⁰ and not even 30 councillors in Germany's big cities (on local representation see Schönwälder and Kofri 2010; Schönwälder *et al.* 2011). Given that no immigrant MPs were elected for the CDU in either North Rhine-Westphalia or Baden-Württemberg – both big states where elections were held in 2010 and 2011 – and that immigrant representation within the CDU ranks declined in Hamburg in 2011,¹¹ we cannot speak of a trend towards more diversity in the Conservative parties or of a determined effort to achieve it.

As distinct from the traditional *Volksparteien*, the Green party provided career opportunities for immigrant activists from its beginnings. It did so without systematically targeting an immigrant electorate. As one Green politician explained, in the late 1980s, 'We wanted to show that these people belong – without thinking about them in terms of a resource' (Interview C).¹² Founded in 1980, the party was by the 1990s represented in most regional parliaments. The fact that Green factions¹³ in Berlin, Hamburg, Hessen and NRW in the mid-1990s or even earlier had immigrant members illustrates the party's role as a main conduit of immigrant political careers. Cem Özdemir's election as party leader in 2008 further underscores this role. Of the 54 current regional immigrant parliamentarians, 17 (32 per cent) are affiliated with the Green party, a much more sizeable proportion than the Green's share of all available seats (11 per cent). Eight of the party's 11 West German state factions include immigrant politicians.

The Left, a new party that since 2007 unites the East German socialist party and West German supporters, also plays a major role in bringing immigrant Germans into parliaments. Five of its eight West German parliamentary factions have immigrant members, and at 13 elected representatives overall (of 205 regional MPs) their number is relatively high compared with other parties. While the Left party does not have a stated immigrant quota, it is clear that it makes determined efforts to target left-wing immigrant voters.

TABLE 1
REGIONAL PARLIAMENTS – IMMIGRANT PARLIAMENTARIANS AND
SEATS, BY POLITICAL PARTY

Parties	SPD	Green Party	The Left	CDU/ CSU	FDP	all
No. of seats held by individuals with a migration background	18	17	13	4	1	53
No. of seats held overall	557	202	205	685	168	1860
% of party's seats held by MPs with migration background	3.2	8.4	6.3	0.6	0.6	2.8
% of all MPs with migration background	34.0	32.1	24.5	7.5	1.9	100

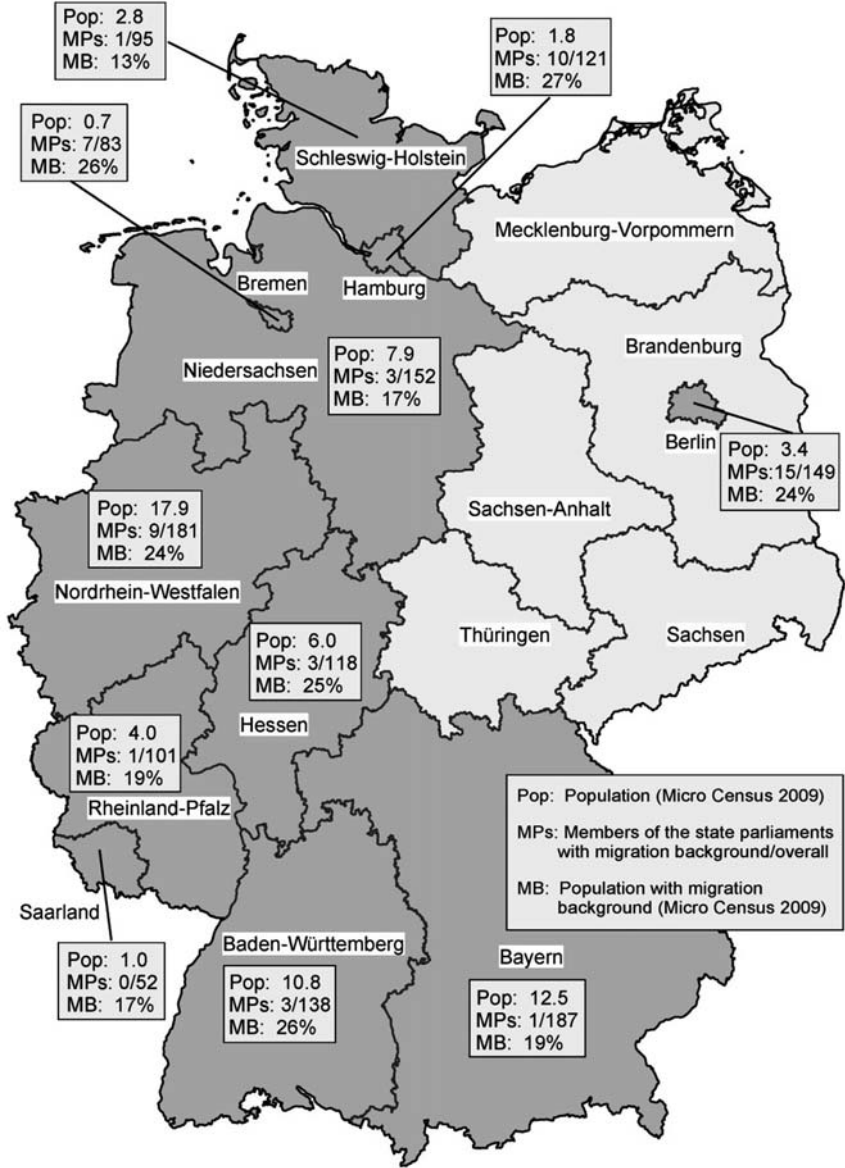
The liberal FDP, in contrast, is almost irrelevant for the development of immigrant representation on the regional level. While a federal government minister of Vietnamese birth belongs to this party, currently only one of its 168 regional MPs has a migration background.¹⁴ Table 1.

Given the poor immigrant representation among the ranks of FDP and CDU/CSU politicians, the trend towards increased immigrant representation is carried by the political left (this is also emphasised by Wüst and Heinz 2009; see also da Fonseca 2011). The entry of The Left party into parliaments of the West German states since 2007 has boosted the presence of immigrants. The Green party continues to offer career opportunities to immigrant Germans, and the SPD is increasingly opening up to them. In terms of future developments, the potential for growth seems bigger in the CDU, FDP and SPD factions than in those of the Left and Green parties. For the latter two, in particular, success in future elections and a growing number of seats may offer chances for higher immigrant representation. Another major potential for growth lies in the spread of immigrant representation across the German states: If only all western states would achieve the Berlin level of 10 per cent immigrant parliamentarians, their numbers would go up from 54 to 151.

As yet, representation is extremely uneven across the states. Imbalances between State Parliaments and Possible Explanations while aggregate immigrant representation has increased in the past two decades, developments across the states are extremely uneven. The three small city states of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen shape the overall picture to a great extent. As of spring 2011, 32 (60 per cent) of the 54 immigrant representatives had been elected in these three states, which account for only 5.8 of Germany's 82 million inhabitants and for 353 (19 per cent) of the 1,860 seats in state parliaments. To a considerable extent, immigrant representation on the state level is city-state representation. If we exclude the three city states, the number of immigrant parliamentarians is reduced to 22 of 1,860 seats in the state parliaments, or 1.4 per cent; with the city states it is 2.85 per cent.

In contrast, the large, populous states of Germany, and those with large numbers of residents with immigrant backgrounds, exhibit limited immigrant representation. North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's largest state and home to a quarter of Germany's immigrant population, did not have any immigrant in its regional parliament in the 2005–2010 electoral period. In May 2010, 1 immigrant-origin representatives were elected, but the state still lags behind Berlin and Hamburg. In Baden-Württemberg, second after North Rhine-Westphalia in terms of immigrant numbers, the first Turkish-German parliamentarian was elected in 2011 as one of three MPs with immigrant origins. Previously, two politicians with Greek and Italian roots, both Social Democrats, had (successively) been the only immigrant among more than 120 state parliamentarians.

FIGURE 1
 REGIONAL STATES, POPULATION AND IMMIGRANT REPRESENTATION IN
 STATE PARLIAMENTS



Source: Statistisches Bundesamt (2011) and author's research.

Hessen, with the heavily immigrant-populated metropolitan region around Frankfurt, and a state where 25 per cent of the population have a migration background, has only three parliamentarians with immigrant backgrounds. In Bremen the number is seven, in Hamburg 10 and in Berlin 15.

This variation demands explanation. The three preconditions for the emergence of immigrant representation listed above cannot explain uneven development within Germany – unless the development of an immigrant electorate, immigrants' political interest in German affairs, and the openness of the political parties differ across German states.

Immigrant Populations and Representation Levels

The size of the immigrant population may affect the motivation of parties to field immigrant candidates, the pool of candidates and the number of voters interested in immigrant representation. An unequal distribution of the immigrant population across states would be an obvious explanation for the striking imbalances between states. If we look at shares of the population with a migration background – regardless of citizenship – the range for the West German states is from 13 to 27 per cent. Hamburg is in the lead with 27 per cent, with Bremen (26 per cent) and Berlin (24 per cent) close behind. But the territorial states of Baden-Württemberg (26 per cent), Hesse (25 per cent) and North Rhine-Westphalia (24 per cent) have a similar proportion of immigrants among their general populations. In the other five western territorial states, including Bavaria with its 12 million inhabitants, the immigrant share of the total population is below 20 per cent.

Considering only German citizens with a migration background, their share of the population ranges

between 10 and 14 per cent in the city states and between 7 and 14 per cent in the territorial states (figures for 2009: Statistisches Bundesamt 2011). In the territorial states of Hesse, North Rhine- Westphalia and Baden-Württemberg, their shares are similar to Bremen and Hamburg (all 13 or 14 per cent) and higher than in Berlin (10 per cent). In Berlin only 8.3 per cent of the electorate has a migration background,¹⁵ while the respective share is 11.7 per cent for North Rhine-Westphalia and 11.9 per cent for Hesse (data for 2008; Arbeitsgruppe 2010). Obviously, neither the share of residents with a migration background nor that of German citizens with a migration background explains differences in the levels of immigrant representation between city and territorial states, although lower immigrant shares in Schleswig-Holstein, Saarland and Rhineland-Palatinate may be one factor explaining a relatively poor immigrant representation in these states. Could the composition of the immigrant population play a part? Length of residence is related to the political incorporation processes. So if the immigrant population of one state was significantly 'more recent' than that of another, this could explain differences in political representation. The share of foreign citizens among the immigrant population is an indicator of a more recent and/or more transitory migration. But in fact, representation levels are relatively high in Berlin and in Hamburg, where a majority of the immigrant population are foreigners. In all other states, and in Germany as a whole, more than half of those with a migration background have German citizenship. High shares of German citizens among the immigrant population are also an indicator for high shares of *Aussiedler*, ethnic German immigrants from Eastern Europe.

Aussiedler are often recent immigrants of the 1990s and little mobilised politically (see Berger *et al.* 2004; Wüst 2002: 131). They tend to see themselves as part of the German mainstream, not the immigrant, population. If we accept microcensus figures as an indicator,¹⁶ we find that the share of *Aussiedler* among primary immigrants with German citizenship is lower in Berlin (45 per cent) and Hamburg (51 per cent) than in the big territorial states (North Rhine-Westphalia 65 per cent, Baden-Württemberg 69 per cent, Hesse 62 per cent) (Statistisches Bundesamt 2010: 120–21). Thus, a high share of ethnic Germans could be a factor that weakens immigrant mobilisation and the pressure for immigrant representation.

As a factor strengthening immigrant representation, the presence and size of highly mobilised and organised national-origin groups could be important. Those of Turkish origin, in particular, not only form a large group, they also have highly developed institutional networks and a tradition of political mobilisation, factors identified as strengthening mainstream political participation (Tillie 2004; Vermeulen and Berger 2008; on Turkish organisations also Yurdakul 2009). Indeed, among state parliamentarians with a migration background, more than half have links with Turkey. Sizeable Turkish populations exist in most big cities and in all western states. Of the territorial states, North Rhine- Westphalia has a slightly higher share of people with Turkish backgrounds¹⁷ in its immigrant population than other states (19 per cent, 3 per cent higher than the national average). With a share of between 13 and 16 per cent, differences between the territorial states are otherwise not very large (in the tiny Saarland it is 11 per cent). However, in Berlin (+6 per cent) and in Bremen (+7 per cent) the share of those with current or former

Turkish citizenship is markedly higher than in Germany altogether, so here their numbers could be a factor contributing to higher representation. And yet the same is not true for Hamburg, the third city state, where the respective share equals the national average.

Apparently, no direct causal link exists between the size of the immigrant population as a whole and the number of immigrant parliamentarians. However, a low share of *Aussiedler* in Berlin and Hamburg and a high share of those of Turkish origin in Berlin and Bremen could be contributing factors.

The Impact of Electoral Systems

The behaviour of the parties and the ability of minorities to 'make numbers count' are affected by institutional features of the electoral system. Referring to women's underrepresentation, Norris and Inglehart (2001) state that it is the 'mainstream perspective among scholars today' that 'the political rules of the game are the primary explanation for systematic differences in women's representation among relatively similar societies, and that changing those rules is the most effective way to promote women's political leadership'.¹⁸ Proportional representation systems, where women stand on a list of candidates, are seen as more conducive to equal representation than majoritarian systems, where women have to secure nomination and election as the single party candidate in a constituency. This is assumed to be the case because in list systems, party leaderships may be interested in compiling a list of candidates that represents the diversity of the population and thus be prepared or even actively motivated to place women – or immigrants – on these lists (Paxton *et al.* 2007: 269).

For local party organisations that must nominate only a single candidate per constituency, there is no strong incentive to contribute to an overall balancing of the party ticket to represent the diversity of the electorate (Norris 2006: 205).¹⁹ Local party organisations want to field candidates who can win the seat. If they assume a negative voter response to a female or immigrant candidate, they may refrain from nominating such candidates.

The electoral systems in Germany's regional states differ (see Georgii 2010; Trefs 2008) but these institutional differences do not vary in a systematic way between city and territorial states. Most states have mixed electoral systems that resemble the one applied in federal elections: personalised proportional representation in which half or more of the parliamentarians are elected in constituencies and half (or less) via state-wide lists; the overall number of seats for a party depends on their share of the party-list votes.²⁰

To the extent that differences exist, two stand out with a potential impact for minority candidates. First, in Baden-Württemberg, there is no state-wide list and seats can only be won through a constituency candidacy. Baden-Württemberg thus resembles a majority system. Majority systems are usually thought of as disadvantageous for minority candidates. If potential candidates compete for a single constituency candidacy, it is harder to win than if they compete for one of a number of places on a list. In the absence of party lists, the nomination of candidates is often entirely in the hands of the constituency parties. Success in the election depends on the candidate's popularity in the population – where, as some migrant politicians assume, a non-German name may be a

disadvantage (Interviews D, E). Indeed, Baden-Württemberg has had few immigrant parliamentarians so far. Their rising number after the 2011 election is due to the very strong showing of the Green party, from 17 seats to 36, including two held by politicians with a migration history.

Second, Hamburg's electoral system is also exceptional. Following a popular campaign and a plebiscite, multi-member districts and personal votes were introduced that give voters a more direct influence on the individual composition of the state parliament (the *Bürgerschaft*).²¹ In 2008, some immigrant candidates used the new system to their advantage. Two candidates of Turkish origin were elected through personal votes, in spite of list places that would not have secured their election.²² Here, concentrated minority settlement could be translated into an electoral advantage.²³ In 2011, personalised votes could also be cast for candidates on the state-wide lists. Six of the 10 elected immigrant parliamentarians were elected on the basis of personal votes, despite low places on the party lists.²⁴ Turkish-German candidates apparently leverage such targeted mobilisation best, thanks to the robust Turkish-language press and well-developed ethnic community structures.

Nevertheless, three of the six immigrants who profited from personal votes are not of Turkish background.²⁵ Thus, as the Hamburg example indicates, multi-member districts and personal votes can favour immigrant candidates. But apparently they do so only under additional conditions. In the state of Bavaria, the existence of personal votes has so far been without influence on immigrant representation. It is plausible that such effects depend on a combination of a particular electoral system and the concentrated settlement and mobilisation of the immigrant population.²⁶

While electoral systems do not systematically differ between city and territorial states, one aspect of the institutional structure is systematically different: It is much easier to become an MP in a city state. This is because the number of voters per seat is much lower. In the last elections, one seat was available per 5,857 members of the electorate in Bremen; in Hamburg the figure was one to 10,369, and in Berlin it was one to 16,278. In the territorial states this ratio is vastly different. In Hesse there was one seat per 37,079 potential voters, in North Rhine-Westphalia it was one to 73,299.²⁷ Assuming a similar motivation to become an MP across Germany, there would be four times as many challengers for one seat in North Rhine-Westphalia than in Berlin.

In principle, this situation affects all potential candidates. However, reduced competition for seats is likely to benefit minorities. Indeed, with 8 per cent in Hamburg and Bremen and 10 per cent in Berlin, the proportion of seats secured by immigrants is clearly higher in the three city states than even in North Rhine-Westphalia where, at 5 per cent, the share of immigrants among the MPs is now relatively high among the territorial states. The unequal ratio of voters and seats appears to be a factor that contributes to different levels of immigrant representation across states.

In summary, institutional structures influence immigrant representation. Still, it is debatable whether this factor, together with the differences in the composition of the immigrant population, can entirely explain the differences in representation between states. More seems to be involved, and the last section of this article considers political and socio-cultural dynamics.

Political and Socio-cultural Dynamics

Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen are not only regional states but also big cities.²⁸ Berlin and Hamburg are Germany's two biggest metropolises. In what ways could the specificities of cities affect immigrant representation?

It is widely accepted that social interactions and social networks impact political beliefs and political participation (see e.g. Gidengil and Stolle 2009). Walter J. Nicholls (2008: 841–42) describes the 'complex social and political relations' found within cities as an important factor in the development of social movements and calls the city a 'relational incubator'. He specifically emphasises 'the formation of diverse groups with strong ties' as this 'diversity of strong-tie groups makes available a wide variety of specialized resources'. Ideally these resources are connected through weak ties between groups, a situation that is more likely in cities because of the availability of brokers. Further, as Jean Tillie and co-authors contend (Fennema and Tillie 2001; Michon and Vermeulen 2013; Tillie 2004), ethnic organisations and the links between them represent ethnic social capital, increasing political trust and participation in the mainstream. With regard to representation, it is plausible that diverse and multiple organisational structures produce a pool of activists who can then be recruited by political parties or who themselves decide to move from one field of activism to another. In city states, members of different elites are more likely to encounter each other than in large territorial states. The leaders of mainstream political parties are also more likely to meet immigrant activists and thus get to know potential recruits for their parties. Further, in cities, the share of highly educated immigrants is also likely to be greater, in particular if the

city has a university, which might further the development of an immigrant political elite.

The process of network formation could be further enhanced by public policies. As Irene Bloemraad (2006) has argued for Canada, multicultural or integration programmes can further the development of immigrant elites and bring immigrants, administrators and politicians in touch with each other. Berlin in particular is often cited as the German example of early state integration policies. As early as 1981, the city appointed a commissioner for foreigners' affairs who sought contact with immigrant organisations and encouraged the development of umbrella structures (Gesemann 2009; Vermeulen 2006; Vermeulen and Berger 2008: 181).

Integration policies might have further effects on participation rates and the pool of activists. In the 1990s, naturalisation rates were higher in Berlin, and in Hamburg, than in Germany overall (Hagedorn 2001: 93–95; Henkes 2008: 122).²⁹ Possibly, a more open naturalisation policy, beyond allowing more naturalisations, sent a positive message to immigrants and affected their attitude toward the state and the German parties.

Clearly, more empirical research is needed to investigate the political implications of ties and networks in different contexts. For the time being, it seems plausible that scale matters: a political unit has to be big enough to have diverse populations and structures and small enough to allow communication and networks between groups and between newcomers and established elites (see Lewis 2011: 107, on the importance of 'the scale of a political unit').

Given the poor record of the small territorial states in immigrant representation,³⁰ being 'small enough' seems to have an effect in combination with density and the dynamics of urban life – but not by itself.

Cities are also often assumed to be marked by higher levels of tolerance. Attitudes to immigrants and ethnic minorities may affect the openness of the political parties for immigrant candidates, the self-confidence of potential candidates and the willingness of voters to support them. Unfortunately, we do not have survey evidence to assess the electorate's response to immigrant politicians in different parts of Germany. Even studies that compare the states with regard to xenophobia or racist attitudes are rare. In the studies we do have, Babka von Gostomski *et al.* (2007) found lower levels of xenophobia in the three city states, but on a scale from one to four, the difference between Hamburg at 2.12 and the western average at 2.26 seems small. Using different data and measures, Decker and Brähler (2008) also found relatively low levels of hostility in Berlin and Hamburg,³¹ but this was also the case in two small territorial states and in Baden-Württemberg. Both Berlin and Hamburg have, or have recently had, gay mayors. Do such symbolic developments increase the general acceptance of diversity? This is difficult to prove, but not unlikely.

We have further evidence illustrating that the population in some regions may be more used to mobility and newcomers than in others. According to one survey, in Berlin and Bremen, and to a lesser extent also in Hamburg, the share of residents born in a different state was well above the national average (Bertelsmann Stiftung 2008: 9). Different degrees of mobility and/or of openness for

newcomers are also reflected in the backgrounds of state parliamentarians. In Baden-Württemberg's 2006 parliament, only 23 of the 139 parliamentarians were not born in the state, while in Hamburg's 2008 *Bürgerschaft* 54 of the 121 parliamentarians had been born outside of Hamburg (own count).

Last but not least, we can ask whether city states are simply more left-wing. As shown above, immigrant representation has been largely advanced by left-wing parties. Indeed, in the last three regional elections the average share of the vote won by the Green party in the three city states (between 11 and 13 per cent) was higher than in most western territorial states, although Hessen at 10 per cent gets close and Baden-Württemberg is in the lead with 15 per cent. But importantly, multiple parties contribute to minority representation in the city states. In each, four parties represented in parliament have immigrant MPs. Further, in all three city states, the Green party, the Left party and the Social Democrats have at least two immigrant MPs each,³² while none of them has immigrant members in all their state parliament factions.

Conclusions

German state parliaments are beginning to reflect the diversity of the population. Over the past two decades, the number of parliamentarians with a migration background has grown steadily. Rising numbers of naturalised immigrants, their increasing engagement with German politics and a (slow and still reluctant) re-orientation of the political parties towards the growing immigrant electorate have paved the way for this development.

These enabling factors did not, however, set off similar dynamics across all regions of Germany. The extent and speed of immigrant incorporation varies considerably between the German states even though major structuring conditions – including citizenship law – are the same across Germany. What explains variation? First, rather than the overall size of the immigrant population, the influence of group consciousness and mobilisation – most evident among those of Turkish origin – is relevant. A high share of ethnic German immigrants, who are neither very group-conscious nor mobilised, seems to work against a high representation of the immigrant population. Further, two institutional features seem important. A system of personal votes allows for targeted group mobilisation and can benefit immigrant representation. Additionally, the availability of a high number of seats in relation to the number of voters, and the resulting reduced competition for seats, contributes to a higher minority representation. Fourth, I suggest that metropolitan cities offer the benefit of greater openness to newcomers, and their more complex and dense network and communication structures promote immigrant representation. Overall, the analysis presented here suggests that, apart from fundamental legal preconditions, the dynamics of immigrant representation reflect the combined effects of socio-demographic and institutional factors as well as socio-cultural and political dynamics.

Notes

1. The analysis will focus on the states of the old Federal Republic of Germany as only 5 per cent of Germany's population with a migration background lives in the

Eastern states and immigration is overall more recent there.

2. However, some politicians with migration histories were among the MPs of earlier decades. Josef Neuberger, for instance, member of the North Rhine-Westphalia parliament from 1959 to 1975 and minister of justice from 1966 to 1972, was born in Antwerp in Belgium of parents who were citizens of the Austro-Hungarian empire and Jewish. In 1914 the family was expelled to Germany (see <http://www.steinheim-institut.de>). The parents of leading Green party politician Joseph (Joschka) Fischer were ethnic Germans who left Hungary in 1946. Fischer was elected to the Hesse state parliament in 1987 after he had become a member of the state government in 1985.
3. Throughout I am interested in first and second generation immigrants, defined as those born without German citizenship and their children. This implies that ethnic German immigrants are included if they were born as e.g. Romanian or Soviet citizens (or are the children of such immigrants). Terms such as 'immigrant parliamentarians' refer to this group. Here I include Bavarian MP Joachim Werner whose father was a citizen of pre-war Yugoslavia. Because of his ethnic German background, he served as a soldier in the German army during the Second World War; his son would thus often not be seen as being of immigrant origin. The leading SPD politician Renate Schmidt, born in Germany in 1943 and member of the Bavarian state parliament from 1994 to 2003, refers to her parents as being from Prague and Siebenbürgen, i.e. Romania. I assume that they immigrated to Germany as foreign

citizens.

4. Throughout this text, I refer to the situation after the March 2011 elections.
5. Microcensus estimates on former foreigners among German citizens were first made available for the year 2005.
6. Interviews by the author with regional politicians with migration backgrounds are anonymised.
7. Membership figures for immigrants are largely unknown because German political parties have either no records or just figures for foreign nationals. The SPD, for instance, in 2004 recorded 2,794 Turkish, 710 Italian and 573 Greek members – in an overall membership of more than 500,000 (see Wiedemann 2006: 278). Surprisingly, a recent, large study of party members in Germany (Spier *et al.* 2011) completely ignores migration background and ethnicity.
8. The latter refers to David McAllister in Niedersachsen and Krystian Szoep in Berlin; in addition Milad El-Khalil was a member of the Saxony-Anhalt parliament.
9. They remain a tiny minority among the 685 (515 in Western states) regional MPs of the CDU/CSU.
10. The only remaining immigrant representative was elected by personal votes, i.e. against the rank order of the candidate list.
11. The Green party and the *Alternative Liste* in Berlin also fielded (ineligible) candidates without German citizenship to protest against their exclusion from electoral rights.
12. In Hamburg the Green formation was called GAL, in Berlin AL.

13. The Liberal party has European and federal MPs with migration backgrounds, but the situation in the big cities where only eight out of 350 Liberal councillors have an immigrant background confirms the extremely limited political inclusion of immigrants.
14. This is the electorate in national and regional elections. In local elections, EU citizens are also entitled to vote. Shares are lower for the electorate than for German citizens as the proportion of immigrants among those under the age of 18 is particularly high.
15. Statistics on *Aussiedler* and their regional distribution are altogether unreliable (Haug and Sauer 2007). Whether someone immigrated as *Aussiedler* is not fully recorded in official statistics. For the comparison of interest here I assume that the margin of error is similar for the regional states.
16. Because more detailed figures are available, I use 'Migrationshintergrund im engeren Sinn' (Mikrozensus 2009, in Statistisches Bundesamt 2010), this figure includes only current and former Turkish nationals, i.e. excludes those born as German citizens. As I am at this point mainly interested in a comparison between the states, I accept this underestimation of the residents with Turkish backgrounds. Overall figures for those with migration background include individuals whose national origin cannot be determined or is mixed.
17. In the general literature, more cautious notes can be found, warning not to overestimate the impact of electoral structures (see e.g. Trefs 2008: 334).
18. However, Trounstine and Valdini (2008: 555) argue that single-member district systems are advantageous for minority representation 'when underrepresented groups are highly concentrated and compose moderate

portions of the population’.

19. The direct mandates are usually won by the two largest parties, i.e. by SPD and CDU (CSU). This means that the ability of the party leadership to put together a diverse faction via the party list can be limited. Sometimes all seats for a particular party are direct mandates. This may affect levels of immigrant representation across parties, but I do not believe that differences between the states are caused by this factor.
20. Voters have several votes that can be cast across candidates and lists. The state of Bremen in 2011 also introduced personal votes.
21. Altogether three of the 121 MPs were elected on the basis of personal votes.
22. Another SPD candidate of Turkish origin was displaced through personal votes for a non- migrant candidate.
23. I refer to candidacies on the party lists as well as those on the constituency lists.
24. The success of a Russian-born CDU candidate, Nikolaus Haufler, was ascribed to support among ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union (<http://www.ornispress.de>). The CDU had nominated him on the last place in their list.
25. Similarly, Trounstine and Valdini (2008: 567) argue that we should be cautious regarding ‘the benefit or detriment of institutional settings’. For Denmark and local elections it has been argued that a system of personal votes favours small groups like ethnic minorities (Togeby 2008: 329).

26. All figures have been calculated for the last election in the respective state. Of the West German territorial states, the Saarland has a similar relationship of voters and seats as Berlin, but in all other territorial states the ratio is more than 30,000 potential voters per seat.
27. Berlin has 3.4 million inhabitants, Hamburg has 1.8 and Bremen 0.7 million.
28. A more comprehensive comparison of state integration policies and their effects remains wanting (see Akgün and Thränhardt 2001; Henkes 2008).
29. I refer to the Saarland (1 million inhabitants), Schleswig-Holstein (2.8 million) and Rhine-land-Palatinate (4 million).
30. For Bremen the sample size was too small.
31. In Bremen, Cakici left the Left party during the electoral period.

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