

## **Political participation and dual identification among migrants**

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### *Abstract*

This article contributes to understanding how collective identification as well as institutional factors affect migrants' democratic engagement. In particular, it analyses variations in patterns of voting behaviour at local elections among migrants living in two municipalities: Malmö (Sweden) and Ealing (London, UK). Empirically, the article compares the responses of Somalis and Poles (N: 68) with regard to (1) their democratic participation in the society of residence, and (2) their perceived identification with their in-group and with Sweden and the UK respectively. Using narrative analysis to understand the impact of collective identification and of the political context on migrants' voting behaviour, the article will show that favourable institutional and discursive structures of opportunities can formally enable migrants to democratically engage with the society they live in. However, political opportunity structures are not enough to mobilise migrant groups. A dual identification with the recipient society and their in-group promotes a sense of entitlement to political rights and positively affects participation in local elections.

*Keywords: Migrant political participation; dual identification; Sweden; United Kingdom; Somali; Poles*

## **Introduction**

A key concern for policy makers interested in citizen engagement is the need to ensure that settled migrants participate in the civic life of the recipient society, as it is often seen as an expression of successful incorporation of migrants in their society of residence. This article analyses the variations of patterns of voting behaviour at local elections among migrants in two municipalities: Malmö in Sweden and the London borough of Ealing in the UK. The studied groups are Somalis, and Poles who emigrated after the European Union enlargement in 2004. For the argument of this article, I limit my analysis to conventional political participation, i.e. voting. I see political participation as one of the several dimensions of political integration, the others being political trust and adherence to democratic values (Tillie 2004). I appreciate that less conventional forms of political activities as for instance protests, sit-ins, demonstrations, and boycotts are expressions of political participation. However, they fall outside the scope of my data.

Theoretically, the article bridges two bodies of work that analyse migrant political participation. On the one hand, the strand of literature analysing the institutional and discursive structures that influence migrant political participation (Ireland 1994; Koopmans et al. 2005). On the other, the perspectives in social psychology emphasising the role of collective identifications for political mobilisation (Simon et al. 1998; Huddy 2001; ; Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins 2004; ) and in particular the work on dual identification (Gaertner et al. 1993; Dovidio et al. 2007; Gonzales and Brown 2003, 2005) and its significance for political engagement (Simon and Ruhs 2008; Klandermans et al. 2008; Simon and Grabow 2010; Hopkins 2011). I contribute to the literature on migrant political participation and voting behaviour by integrating these two bodies of work, which have historically been treated separately. To analyse not only the formal settings in which migrants operate and how they may favour or constrain migrants' political participation, but also how migrants' identifications and interrelationships with their in-group and the recipient society can influence their political decisions, will lend stronger explanatory power to the analysis of migrant voting behaviour at local elections. The second contribution of the article is empirical, as it presents original cross-national comparative data on Somalis, who are usually perceived as non-integrated (Open society Foundation 2014), and on Poles, who are instead seen as well-integrated in the recipient society (Düvell and Garapich 2011). The data shows that public perceptions of integration of these groups do not necessarily coincide with migrants' identifications and perceptions of

belonging to the society of settlement. In this sense, this research can offer insight into how minority groups may experience their polity membership.

In the following, I develop a theoretical framework to explain variations in political participation amongst migrants by integrating a political opportunity structure approach with the literature on dual identification and collective action. I then present the data and methods used in the analysis. In section three, I discuss the national institutional environments in the UK and Sweden with particular reference to policy approaches to diversity, citizenship and migrants' voting rights. Section four presents the institutional and discursive local contexts at the hearth of this study. This is followed by the analysis of the cross-group and cross-city variations in the voting behaviour of Somalis and Poles in Ealing and Malmö. Section six investigates the participants' sense of dual identification. The aim is to study the extent to which dual identification affects participation and how institutional and discursive settings in the recipient society influence the degree of dual identification experienced by migrants. The final section discusses the findings.

### **Theoretical background**

Migrants in Europe are usually underrepresented in the political process. Especially non-European (non-EU) citizens have limited political rights which constrain their opportunities to influence the policies that affect them daily<sup>1</sup>. Where non-EU migrants can vote either because of the institutional structure of the state in question or because they have naturalised, their turnout tends to be lower than the native population (Messina 2007). European migrants can vote and run for elections at the local level, as well as at EU-elections. Yet, recent research shows that their political participation should not be taken for granted. A survey by IPSOS MORI and the Polish City Club (2014) shows that the large majority of Polish citizens living in the UK had voted in the past in parliamentary or local government elections in Poland, but not in the UK. The literature on migrant political participation offers several explanations for migrant voting behaviour. One strand of research focuses on the political contexts. A second one analyses the significance of collective identifications for political participation generally defined.

Drawing upon a political opportunity structure approach (Tarrow 1994), the first body of research argues that to understand the political participation of groups, we need to account for

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<sup>1</sup> Sweden, Denmark, Norway, and the Netherlands are exceptions in this case as any legally resident migrant can vote at least at local elections.

the opportunities and constraints provided by the institutional and discursive structures within which a group can mobilise (Koopmans et al. 2005). Cross-national comparative research on migrant mobilisation shows that the political space available for migrants to put forward group demands varies among countries. This matters, as “the nationally specific approaches to granting formal citizenship rights matter in giving migrants the confidence to feel sufficiently part of a society to make group-specific demands on it” (Koopmans 2004, 152). Researchers working within this tradition explain cross-group differences in engagement with the political process with reference to contextual factors. Berger, Galonska and Koopmans (2004), in a study testing the social capital hypothesis (Fennema and Tillie 1999) on three migrant groups living in Berlin, confirm the importance of national and local structures of opportunities (e.g. access to nationality) which can lead to cross-group behavioural differences. Whether groups face favourable opportunities, both institutional and in the public discourse, is important to explain their participation in civic and political activities.

Participation in elections is not just a matter of political structures, however. I argue that identification is an important factor that we need to analyse to understand migrant political participation. The literature on political opportunity structures refers to the role of identification for understanding migrant political participation and claims making. However, scholars working in this tradition tend to analyse either ascribed identities, or the forms of identifications that are visible in the public sphere, such as e.g. their ‘racial’ group, their ethnicity, or nationality (see e.g. Koopmans et al. 2005, 114-126). While important, this does not account for how migrants construe their identities in relation to their in-group and the recipient society, so that they can formulate their perceived inclusion in or exclusion from the nation. This is important because, as demonstrated in research in political psychology, identification with a group motivates people’s participation in political action (de Weerd and Klandermans 1999; Huddy 2001). I now turn to political psychology to better understand the role of collective identification as a motive for political participation.

Psychologists have long criticised the rationalistic and individualistic explanations for participation in collective action. A rationalist perspective understands political and social actions as the outcome of rational, individual cost-benefit calculations (Elster 1989). Social psychologists have criticised this perspective for neglecting of the role of collective identification processes in shaping political behaviour (Gamson 1992; Simon et al. 1998). In a critique of rational actor theory, Hopkins and Kahani-Hopkins (2004), show that British Muslims’ political engagement varies depending on the strategic constructions of their

religious identity. Muslims' multiple interpretations of the Prophet's life and teachings lead British Muslims to contrasting constructions of what is considered valuable and of the appropriate degree and type of engagement with the wider polity. Their research shows that it is not the individual instrumental rationality to determine Muslims' political activity, but that the latter is shaped by socially shared and created collective self-definition. This criticism is in line with Social Identity Theory and Self-Categorization Theory (Tajfel & Turner 1979; Turner et al. 1987), which argue for the fundamental role of collective identification processes in group behaviour. Today, there is significant research demonstrating that identification with a group predicts willingness to participate in collective action on behalf of that movement (Simon et al. 1998; De Weerd and Klandermans 1999; Simon and Grabow 2010). Scholars working in this field argue that, in order to understand collective mobilisation, researchers need to understand instrumental factors, such as the costs and benefits of participation, as well as factors related to identification with the movement.

In this article, I see engagement in elections as a form of political mobilisation that requires a degree of identification as citizen of the country in which elections are held. Indeed, voting can be an important measure of inclusion because it taps onto the degree to which individuals feel that they should take part in the decision-making process at a very broad level. This type of identification bears similarities with what is known in the literature as 'dual identity' (Gaertner et al. 1993; Dovidio et al. 2007; Gonzales & Brown 2003, 2006). A dual identification requires that individuals see themselves as members of different groups and at the same time part of the same superordinate entity. For instance, migrants could be considered holding a dual identification if they were able to identify with their national group (e.g. Polish) as well as feeling part of the wider national polity (e.g. Britain). To hold a 'dual identity' does not mean that identities are two-dimensional and mutually exclusive. Psychology has demonstrated that individuals identify with several groups simultaneously. These identifications cannot be separated out into discrete strands. Rather, they are the result of complex intersections of cultural, national, religious, ethnic, gendered, and class-related identifications (Hopkins & Greenwood 2013). These multiple belongings can be experienced in different ways and the ability of a person to perform one's multiple identifications as, for instance, Muslim and Swede, depends on whether the wider society validates this dual identification. Hence, dual identification can only arise as the result of self-identification and of the validation of that (dual or multiple) identification by the wider polity (Hopkins 2011). Validation comes from fellow citizens and from institutions, and derives in part from the national discursive structures of

opportunities that define ‘civic’ or ‘ethnic’ conceptions of belonging (Brubaker 1992). In experimental settings, Wakefield and colleagues (2011) show that these understandings of nationhood can have an effect for how people, who associate themselves with the nation, are treated. A ‘civic’ understanding of the nation tends to predict an inclusive understanding of who is part of the national community. This is in line with the findings of Pehrson et al. (2009) that an ethnic definition of national belonging predicts stronger anti-immigrant prejudice than a civic one.

To identify as part of the country in which one lives and with the minority group one feels a sense of belonging to, feeds positively into a migrant’s perception of satisfaction with her situation, and it is a necessary element to mobilise for political action (Klandermans et al. 2008). Dual identification fosters a perception of entitlement among migrants that may favour participation (Klandermans et al. 2008). Indeed, if members of a minority group perceive themselves to be entitled to the same outcomes as those of the majority society, this is indicative of the former’s sense of identification with the supra-ordinate group (Wenzel 2000). It is therefore likely that the stronger a migrant’s sense of belonging to the recipient country, the more likely she will feel entitled to the same rights and duties of the majority society. This is supported by survey data. In a study on the implications of people’s identification with Britain for their civic attitudes and behaviour, Heath and Roberts (2008) found a strong association between a strong sense of belonging to Britain and turnout in elections.

To conclude, a focus on both the relevant political opportunity structures, and on the role of intersecting identifications, will lend a stronger explanatory power into the research on political participation. The former sets out the criteria which formally shape migrant political participation. The latter tells us if migrants feel part of the recipient society to such an extent that they feel entitled to become politically involved.

## **Data and methods**

In this article I analyse 68 semi-structured interviews conducted between 2011 and 2012 in Malmö and Ealing with Somalis, and Poles who emigrated after the European enlargement in 2004. Table 1 summarises the demographic details of the sample.

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Participants were recruited in language schools, ethnic/national associations, places of faith, and through snowballing. Half of the interviews in Ealing were conducted in English by the

author and half were carried out by research assistants in Somali and Polish. In Malmö, most of the interviews were conducted by trained research assistants. The interviews were set up with identical thematic questions prepared for each group. The themes relevant for this article looked at (1) whether the participants had voted in local election in Malmö/Ealing; (2) if they had voted in her home country (where possible); (3) the reasons for their behaviour; (4) if they had or would consider naturalising and why; (5) if they identified with the city and/or the UK/Sweden. Interviews were also held with local policy-makers to gain a better understanding of the political opportunity structures existing in the two cities. The participants' interviews were analysed according to an interpretative approach (Hammack 2011) of how people see themselves as members of a group and how they view their relation to others and to the political environment in which they live. The cities were selected for their demographic similarities as well as for the similar institutional structures concerning Poles' and Somalis' voting rights. The study is double comparative, so that I can compare patterns of political participation between the selected migrant groups in two municipalities within two countries. This allows me to control for group specific variations when it comes to political participation and collective identification.

The majority of the Polish sample is between 20 and 39 years old, reflecting the demographic profile of the post-accession Polish community in the United Kingdom and Sweden. Most of the participants of Somali background are young (between 20 and 29 years old), possibly a consequence of snowballing. To balance this, and to ensure that the data would include both Somalis who grew up in Somalia and those who spent most of their lives in Europe, I recruited older participants as well. Given the large number of Somalis and Poles resident in the two cities, the sample does not aim to be representative of the two groups. However, their responses are informative in as far as their participation in local elections and their identification are concerned.

### **Local contexts and discursive environments**

Malmö and Ealing are of similar size and characterised by an ethnically diverse population, as shown in Table 2. With a population of 339.300 inhabitants (as of 2011), Ealing is among the largest boroughs of London. It has experienced a large influx of migrants since the 1950s, mainly from the Indian subcontinent, which has resulted in the settlement of significant Indian and Pakistani minorities. Today, 51% of Ealing's residents are non-white, and the Asian/Asian British group is the largest minority (29.6%) (ONS 2011). Following the enlargement of the

EU in 2004, the already established Polish community increased significantly. The 2011 Census shows that there are 21.500 Polish citizens living in Ealing (ONS 2011). Somalis arrived in Ealing in large numbers in the early 1990s following the civil war. According to the 2011 census, 6.468 people resident in Ealing are born in Somalia (ONS 2011). This does not account for those who identify as Somalis but who are born in the UK, or elsewhere in Europe, or in refugee camps. Estimates consider that between 11.000 and 15.000 Somalis live in the borough (Cole and Robinson 2003).

Malmö is the third largest city in Sweden, with a total population of 305.033 (as of 2012). It has been the destination of labour migration until the 1970s. Currently, the city hosts a highly diverse population, with the majority of migrants coming from non-European countries (although four of the five largest national groups are European). Poles constitute a large group in Malmö and migrants who arrived after 2004 joined an already settled Polish community. Although Sweden has in recent years emerged as a major host country for Somali refugees, Somalis only make out for a small percentage of the foreign population in Malmö.<sup>2</sup> Over 60 percent of Somalia-born people arrived in Malmö since 2000 and almost 50 percent since 2006 (Open Society Foundation 2014).

----- TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE -----

Both cities are located in a national context which is recognised within the literature as adopting cultural pluralist or multicultural approaches towards migrant integration, albeit in different ways, with British ‘Race Relations’ and Swedish ‘multiculturalism’ (Castles and Miller 1998; Koopmans et al. 2005). Migrants in Britain have been recognised since the end of the Second World War as ethnic and racial minorities who merit state support and differentiated treatment in order to overcome barriers in their exercise of citizenship (Meer and Modood 2013). This legal framework, which is in line with a ‘civic’ citizenship model, has been paralleled by a pluralist approach to cultural differences which allows different ethnic groups to follow a variety of cultural patterns in the private domain. Sweden is internationally renowned as officially and successfully promoting multiculturalism (Castles and Miller 1998) and for adopting a ‘civic’ model of citizenship (Weldon 2006). Migrants have been able to enjoy the same social and economic rights as natives, and they have been enabled to preserve their culture and language in Sweden. Since the mid-1990s Sweden’s integration policies have moved from an approach that guaranteed group rights, to one that calls for individual integration (see Skr

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<sup>2</sup> Most Somalis in Sweden have settled in Gothenburg, Stockholm and Örebro.



2009/10:233). Today, integration policies stress the importance of employability, entrepreneurship and ethnically run small companies, and see migrants as a flexible resource for regional economic growth (Scuzzarello 2014).

When it comes to political and citizenship rights, in the UK a person can register to vote at local elections if she is British, Commonwealth, or EU citizen. Those who fall outside these categories are not eligible to vote or run for elections at the local level. In Sweden, foreign citizens are, since 1975, granted the right to vote in local elections after three years of residence. This waiting period was removed in 1998 for EU citizens, Norwegians and Icelanders. Nor the UK or Sweden applied transitional rules for migrants coming from the ten new European Union member states in May 2004. This means that the Poles we have interviewed had access to civic-legal, political, and social rights in the same way as any other EU citizen.

The rules for eligibility for citizenship in the UK have changed over time. While until 1983 the country adopted the principle of *jus soli*<sup>3</sup> in full, those born after 1 January 1983 are considered British citizens only if one of their parents is either a UK citizen or a legal resident. Those born abroad can naturalise after five years of legal residence<sup>4</sup>. Since 2005, an applicant also has to meet the knowledge of English and life in the UK requirements. Citizenship in Sweden is based on the *jus sanguinis*<sup>5</sup> principle, but its naturalisation rules are among the most liberal in Europe (Bevelander and Pendakur 2009). Since the 1970s, foreign citizens have been able to naturalise after five years of residence (or four years for refugees)<sup>6</sup> and no tests are required. If the applicant cannot retrieve the necessary legal documents from her home country (because of war, for instance), she can apply for Swedish citizenship only after eight years of continuous residence. This affects Somali refugees, among others. There are normally no restrictions in the United Kingdom and in Sweden for dual nationality.

The representations of Poles and Somalis in the public discourse in the two municipalities are similar. Somalis are often portrayed as a problem community, as the policy-makers I have interviewed suggest.

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<sup>3</sup> *Jus soli* is a principle of nationality law by which citizenship is determined by place of birth.

<sup>4</sup> Time requirement is reduced to three years if the applicant is married to or a civil partner of a British citizen.

<sup>5</sup> *Jus sanguinis* is the principle of nationality law by which citizenship is determined by having one or both parents who are citizens of the state.

<sup>6</sup> Citizens from other Nordic country have a residence requirement of two years.

I think there are some [communities] that slip under the radar. At the moment the Somali community has sort of drifted in the last 5-10 years and the population is steadily growing. (Ealing-POL1)

Somalis, because of a whole range of factors [...] have difficulties to integrate in the society, get a job and be independent. (Malmö-POL1)

High unemployment rate, risk for engaging in criminal activities, and especially radicalization, self-segregation within the urban space, and tribalism, are a few of the reasons mentioned by policy actors which, to them, can explain Somalis' lack of integration. The employment level among Somalis in Sweden and in the UK is about 20%, with higher unemployment rates among women (Abdirahman et al. 2011), and Somali children have been consistently at the bottom of achievement tables, suggesting potential problems of integration in the education system (Sporton and Valentine 2007; Gärdqvist 2010).

Poles instead are perceived as integrated in society.

Generally it [the influx of post-enlargement Poles] has been very good. [...] certainly from an economic perspective: a lot of Polish people coming over and got involved in different trades that have been in the decline for English people. (Ealing-POL1)

They [Poles] are so well integrated that one doesn't really notice them. (Malmö-POL1)

By and large, policy-makers in the two cities are positive about Polish migration. Their contribution seems to be mainly economic, as stressed in the quotes above. Their employment rates in both countries have been very high, they are generally praised for their strong work ethics, and the educational attainment of Polish pupils is as high as the average, if not higher (Sumption et al. 2009; Wadensjö 2012; Geay et al. 2013; Gärdqvist 2010). In the analysis I will discuss if these perceptions of Somalis and Poles respectively are reflected in how the participants construe identification with the recipient society.

### **Political participation – do Somalis and Poles vote?**

In the following three sections, I analyse the interviews we conducted with Poles and Somalis. I first describe the respondents' expressed intentions to participate in local elections. The following section explores participants' constructions of their collective identification. More

specifically, I focus on the diverse accounts of inter-identification synergies, and explore the varying degree of identification with both the minority group and the majority group simultaneously.

Whether migrants are voluntarily involved in broad political activities, such as voting, is a sign of inclusion in the recipient society. Given the policy-makers' understandings of which community is better integrated, we expected that Poles exercise their right to participate in local elections to a larger extent than Somalis, who are considered a marginalised community. My data shows the opposite pattern. When asked if they have voted at local elections, only three Polish participants on a total sample of 30 say they had. The others seem uninterested or unaware of their rights.

No [I never voted at local elections]. Why not? Because I'm not interested in it at all. I don't know who's doing what, I don't know anything about the political life. (Polish woman, 30–39 y.o. Ealing)

I didn't know that I have a right to vote and even if I had known I wouldn't have used this right 'cause I don't feel a citizen of this country. [...] [I vote in Poland] Because is my responsibility towards my country [...] I think that my one vote is very important. 'Cause many say that one vote doesn't change anything, I strongly believe that it changes a lot. (Polish woman, 20-29 y.o. Malmö)

Despite not voting at local elections in Ealing or Malmö, the vast majority of the respondents had voted and still votes in Poland, because, as the woman in Malmö said, it is her responsibility to participate in elections. In Ealing and Malmö, naturalised Somalis seem to be more politically active than those who had not naturalised, and are more inclined to value participation in local elections, as expressed by these women.

Yes I did [vote], because I want to participate in where I live. And be part of it. (Somali woman, 40–49 y.o. Ealing)

When you live in a country, and have the right to vote, there is no reason not to vote. [...] since I lived half of my life here in Sweden, that's why I feel also as part of Sweden, part of the Swedish people (Somali woman, 40-49 y.o. Malmö)

Among the Somali respondents in Malmo, only five voted although nine had naturalised. Some were unaware of their rights, as for instance this woman,

I haven't participated in anything because I'm not a Swedish citizen yet. But probably I will be able to participate in local elections in a few years. (Somali woman, 30-39 y.o. Malmo)

The low degree of participation among the interviewees can be explained in two ways. One has to do with the lack of knowledge of their rights. Several respondents did not know that they have the right to vote in local elections. In fact, any resident can vote at local elections in Sweden, and EU citizens can vote in local elections in both countries. The misinformation regarding migrant voting rights points at a failed dialogue between migrants and the local and national institutions. This contributes to a democratic deficit that sees migrants at the margins of the polity where they live and not fully involved in them. The second explanation could be related to their identification with their mother country and the recipient society respectively, as suggested by the Polish woman quoted above. Somalis often refer to Somalia as their home country, but they are not able to exercise their voting rights there. Naturalisation contributes to enhance their identification as British or Swedish citizens and affects their political behaviour. Poles instead identify strongly with Poland and feel that their civic allegiance is with their homeland. This shapes their political behaviour.

### **Dual identity and participation**

The cross-national, cross-group comparison at the heart of this study shows that, despite similar institutional structures, there are intra-group variations in voting behaviour. Somalis participants in Malmö tend to vote to a lesser degree than those in Ealing, while the Polish interviewees usually do not participate in local elections at all. Partly, many Somalis in Malmö do not know that they can vote at local elections. Another factor which may explain this is the degree to which Somalis identify with their society of residence, i.e. the degree to which they have been able to develop a dual identification. In this section I examine whether the respondents identify with the majority society, as well as their in-group and if this dual identification has an effect on their political behaviour.

In Malmö and Ealing, Poles tend to give similar answers about the perceived valence of naturalizing, exemplified by the quote below.

People have suggested that I should consider [becoming a British citizen]... at this point I can't see why... so much paperwork and it costs as well. I'd rather spend the money on holiday. (Polish woman, 30-39 y.o. Ealing)

As Europeans, Poles benefit from the opportunity to freely travel, live and work in Europe. They do not see any advantage in naturalising and the cost of doing so seems high to many, as the woman above suggests<sup>7</sup>. Generally speaking, Poles declare a strong sense of identification with their hometown or with Poland, and the lowest with their country of residence (Scuzzarello forthcoming). Most participants express an attachment to their national identity, which is a source of pride

I am Polish, one hundred percent Polish. I'm proud to be Polish. (Polish man, 20-29 y.o., Ealing)

When asked if they feel they belong to Ealing or Malmö respectively their responses differ. The respondents in Malmö express a feeling of alienation. For example, one man explained,

No, I don't feel at home here. I feel a stranger all the time. All the time... that's why I told you that I don't feel part of this community now because... and it's not because I don't know the language so well. [...] it's because how people around me behave. (Polish man 40-49 y.o. Malmö)

The interviewee has lived in Malmö for two years with his family, yet he cannot fully feel that he is part of it. He partly blames the Swedes' unwillingness to establish relationships with Poles. In Ealing, the response is different, as the participants express an idea of belonging to the city of residence.

Yeah, I do [belong here]. That's why when someone asks me where I am from, I say I'm Polish living in London, because that's part of my life. (Polish woman, 30-39 y.o. Ealing)

When I went to Poland for three weeks for Christmas I started missing London after two weeks. My life is here at the moment. (Polish woman, 30-39 y.o. Ealing)

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<sup>7</sup> As of 2015, the cost for an adult applying for British citizenship is of £1809.

In elaborating upon such feelings, participants often mentioned London as a stronger reference point for them than Ealing. Its diversity has enabled them to feel at home. For instance, this woman says

This is London, everyone is here and this is normal. I cannot tell if I like it or not, I don't look at it this way. I got used to it. At the beginning I was shocked, but now it's normal. (Polish woman 30-39 y.o. Ealing)

London is quintessentially an immigrant city, very different than other parts of Britain. Migrants have shaped the socio-political, economic and cultural character of the city over the decades. This has created an environment which is possibly more welcoming to immigrants than other cities, which may have experience mass-migration flows more recently. This is challenging to some, as the quote above indicates, but it nevertheless creates a space within which migrants can try their luck and settle.

Somalis perceive and enact their identities differently. In both cities they identify primarily as Muslims.

I'd say I'm Somali second and Muslim first. (Somali man, 40–49 y.o., Ealing)

The bottom line is that I'm Muslim, I feel like a Muslim. It shows in how I dress, with long dresses and the hijab I wear. (Somali woman, 40-49 y.o. Malmo)

The religious basis of Islamic belief makes it a primary form of identification, above national or cultural allegiances (Scuzzarello forthcoming). The interviewees have a different perception of what it means to be a citizen of the UK or Sweden. To Somalis in Sweden, naturalisation is important as it enables them to be more mobile. They could travel freely and they could apply for jobs in other countries,

If I were to become Swedish citizen a lot of things would be easier. There are a lot of places which lock you out if you aren't Swedish. [...] for instance, if I couldn't find a job in Sweden I could look for it elsewhere in Europe (Somali man, 20-29 y.o., Malmö)

To be Swedish seem to primarily fulfil a functional role, rather than being the expression of Somalis' sense of identification. In the perception of one interviewee, naturalisation will also bring inclusion,

[Swedish citizenship] would make things easier, and moreover I'd become a Swedish man [...] I am not a Swedish man yet. When I get Swedish citizenship then I'll be a Swede, and then I'll go after [sic!] my rights and say what's right and wrong. Now they [Swedes] say 'you're not Swedish yet' (Somali man, 40-49 y.o., Malmö)

This participant, as many others, feels excluded by the Swedish society and thinks that nationality acquisition would legitimise his membership in the national ingroup. At the same time, during the interview he is also adamant to point out that he is well integrated and that he belongs to the city. In fact, all the respondent identified as '*Malmöit*'<sup>8</sup>

Contrarily, young Somalis in Ealing express quite clearly that citizenship is something that taps into their sense of self and to be proud of,

To be a UK citizen [means] I don't know... I'm quite proud of being British (Somali man 20-29 y.o. Ealing)

Young Somalis see citizenship as the confirmation of the fact that they are Muslims, Somali, and Brits and that they have the same duty to contribute to society as any other citizen, as this interviewee points out.

What does it mean to be a UK citizen? To contribute to society and to be part of it, really, not just sitting back (Somali woman, 20-29 y.o. Ealing)

This illustrates the intersectional character of young British Somalis' identifications. The quotes above suggest that the respondents feel able to express their multiple national, religious and ethnic identifications in the public sphere, and that these are mutually constitutive. Voting could be their way of performing their national British identity. This is mediated by their identification as refugees, as this woman explains:

I've been exposed to politics and foreign affairs from a very young age. Being a refugee and my family living off the state, the people we vote for are important. So

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<sup>8</sup> *Malmöit* is a term used to describe the people of Malmö.

we've always voted Labour and so my family has always voted. (Somali woman, 20-29 y.o. Ealing)

My data seem to indicate that identification with the recipient society is a significant factor that impacts on migrants' decision on whether to participate in local elections or not. Poles, who do not identify with the recipient society, do not participate in conventional politics there - but feel however it is their right and duty to vote at elections in Poland. Somalis who identify with the country in which they live, tend to participate in local elections because they feel entitled to do so as British citizens. Their identification as refugees seems to have an effect on their political behaviour. As the woman above indicates, being a refugee and losing the right to vote in her home country, has led her and her family to value participation in elections and to become aware that the electoral outcomes will affect them directly. Those who have not naturalised are not interested in participating in conventional politics and tend not to identify as members of the wider society. This could be a reaction of the lack of social recognition of their belonging to the recipient society. In the next section, I show that the socio-political context in which the two migrant groups live is a contributing factor to the development of a sense of dual identification.

### **The importance of opportunity structures for dual identification**

My data shows cross-national variations in Somalis' voting behaviour. The respondents living in Ealing seem to be more likely to participate in local elections than their Swedish counterparts, even if they can benefit from the same opportunities to vote in local elections. One of the reasons for this difference seems to be the degree to which Somalis in the two municipalities have been able to develop a dual identification.

The UK provides an environment where Somalis can preserve their religious and national identifications, while also identifying with the wider British society. Numbers help in creating a sense of belonging to the environment in which the participants live, as this woman says.

No, [I don't feel an outsider]. Because I see a lot of my own people around - Somalis. (Somali woman, 20-29 y.o. Ealing)

British multiculturalism seems to be another important factor. In the UK, Somalis can cultivate their Muslim and Somali identifications as well as their British one, as emphasised by these participants.



There is something called British Muslim [here] and that's normal for [the English]. Muslims having the mosque and halal meat, Eid celebrations and that's a normal thing. [It makes you feel] comfortable and a party of them you are recognised as...and that means you're also going to be part of that [country]. (Somali man, 50-59 y.o. Ealing)

In Ealing culture and religion define what you do, how you do it. I think this has a lot to do with British society allowing multiculturalism. It's not like that in other countries in Europe (Somali woman 20-29 y.o. Ealing)

Both respondents explicitly refer to the British political opportunity structure and to British multiculturalism in particular. They describe it as an important element which enables them to express and live out their religion and at the same time identify with the wider polity. The British 'civic' model of citizenship could be a factor that has helped Somalis' inclusion in the British polity. The dual identity as British and Muslims puts the British Somali respondents in the position of being both citizens and members of a particularistic social group and their multiple identifications are socially validated.. This makes them aware not only of the shared grievances that they may face as Muslims in Britain, but also of their rights to social support for their claims. The fact that Somali participants in Ealing express a sense of belonging to British society leads them to perceive themselves to be entitled to the same outcomes as white Brits, as the quotes below show.

Yes [I have voted at local elections] because I'm British. I don't have the choice to say no. So I like election and be part to [*sic!*] the country. (Somali woman, 40-49 y.o. Ealing)

Yes [I voted at local elections because] I have the [same] rights as anyone who's a citizen of the UK (Somali man, 60-70 y.o. Ealing)

The sense of entitlement to which the last quotation refers, could be a factor which may contribute to a more complete understanding of political participation among migrants.

The analysis of my interviews with Somalis in Malmö leads me to infer that they have not been able to create a superordinate social identity as Swedes while maintaining a distinctive group identity. One respondent, who had lived in Sweden since he was three years old, talks about this lack of recognition and the consequences it has for his sense of self.

When I am [in Kenya] they call me Swede because I haven't lived there for years, but when I am in Sweden I'm an immigrant. [...] I cannot feel wholly Somali or wholly Swedish. (Somali man, 20-29 y.o. Malmö)

Somalis' identification with the superordinate group (i.e. Sweden) has not been socially validated by the majority society. Swedes see them primarily as immigrants, which makes it difficult for Somalis to identify as Swedes or Somali Swedes. The exclusion from the national community is often gendered, as illustrated by this female respondent who wears the hijab

Yes, I feel [integrated], but that's something that doesn't show perhaps. [...] Other people don't see [that I'm integrated]. [...] if I for instance apply for a job, I feel that there is something holding me back. I realise straight away that some people are not happy about how I dress. (Somali woman, 30-39 y.o. Malmö)

Islamic dress code, such as the veil, fundamentally challenges Western norms about women's independence and autonomy. To many Westerners, the veil has come to symbolise patriarchal oppression. In Sweden, strongly defined as a feminist country, this is a particularly sensitive issue.

### **Concluding discussion**

The analysis of the interviews with 68 Somalis and Poles living in Malmö and Ealing lends support to the argument that, while favourable local and national structures of opportunities are necessary to enable migrants to vote, they alone are not enough. The chosen municipalities formally provide favourable opportunities to participate in local election. Yet, the Somali interviewees in Ealing tend to participate in local elections more than the other groups. The data suggests that their sense of identification with the wider polity is an important factor that can explain their mobilisation at local elections. This lends support to the critiques of rationalistic models of political decision making (e.g. Hopkins & Kahani-Hopkins 2004), as it shows that one's identification, and the values attached to it, are significant in shaping an individual's political behaviour. Nevertheless, several participants said that a crucial element in the development of their identification with the wider polity is the fact that it is validated by British institutions. To paraphrase one interviewee, it is normal in Britain to have Mosques and celebrate Eid. Thus, they can be Muslims and Brits at the same time and this duality is formally recognised by the other, more powerful, group in British society. The validation of a group's identification

as part of a minority as well as part of a superordinate entity is crucial for the development of a dual identification (Dovidio et al. 2003; Gonzales and Brown 2003, 2006). Their dual identification grants them a sense of entitlement of their rights and can make them more likely to voice their political opinions than other groups who do not feel equally part of the recipient society. The lack of recognition of people's collective identification can compromise their ability to voice their needs and participate in the public sphere. This finding does not disprove that Muslims in Britain are often denied recognition and validation by members of the public (e.g. Hopkins and Blackwood 2011). As the population endorses both a 'civic' and an 'ethnic' representation of nationhood, there is still evidence of anti-immigrant prejudice among the majority society (Pehrson et al. 2009). In fact, the British Somali respondents' dual identification does not mainly derive from interactions with White Britons, as posited by dual identity theory, with whom they have limited and shallow contact, but rather from the institutional context within which they operate. The research presented here also lends support to the theories that see identities as the result of interrelationships of gender, class, ethnicity, religion (e.g. Hopkins and Greenwood 2013). Somalis' construals of being British illustrate the multiplicity of ways of belonging to a national polity whereby they could be British in a Muslim way. Further research should inquire into the different effects of institutional recognition and of public validation on the development of dual identification.

The analysis indicates that political opportunity structures are important to favour the development of a dual identification. The data suggests that the structures of opportunity available to Somalis in Sweden to develop a dual identity are more limited than in the UK. The British 'civic' citizenship model has created an institutional structure within which minority groups can participate fully. The British model of race relations, focusing on equality, is paralleled by a culturally pluralist conception of citizenship which seeks to retain diversity among minorities living in Britain by allowing its residents to follow a variety of cultural patterns. Religion is relegated to a matter of private individual conscience within public institutions. This could have facilitated the acceptance of Somali migrants as 'British Muslims'. The Swedish approach to diversity is instead built around the category of 'immigrant' rather than the categories of 'ethnic minority' or 'race' used in the UK. Odmalm (2005) suggests two reasons for this. First, there is a pervasive perception of Sweden being mono-ethnic and homogeneous up until the arrival of labour migrants in the 1960s. Thus the Swedish state has therefore sponsored policy categories

such as ‘immigrants’ (*invandrare*) or foreigner (*utländsk/utlänning*). Second, the idea of Swedish multiculturalism is built upon an understanding of mutually exclusive collective identities - Swedish and foreign ones (Scuzzarello 2008). For instance, the freedom of choice goal, key to Swedish integration policies, has given immigrants ample opportunities to retain their native language and culture. Yet, it points to the adoption of one national identity which is mutually exclusive from others. Odmalm (2005) implicitly points at an inherent contradiction in Swedish nationhood constructions. While the country has developed a robust ‘civic’ institutional framework to include non-nationals (e.g. liberal naturalisation procedures, extensive voting rights), its national identification also carries ‘ethnic’ elements (Shall 2012). Its conception of national belonging emphasises ethnic homogeneity that makes it easy to call for ethnic solidarity and separation from out-groups. These institutional and discursive structures of opportunity could have influenced the perceived collective identification of Somalis in Sweden. While they may see themselves as integrated in the society in which they live, they do not express a sense of identification with it. They are positioned as ‘immigrants’ in official discourses and not as Swedes or ‘Swedish Somali’ and, in their everyday interactions, they are not seen as part of society (because e.g. of the way they choose to dress, as one of the participant explains). The lack of institutional recognition of ethnic and religious identifications seems to prevent them from developing a dual identification that allows their inclusion in society without compromising their minority identity, akin the negotiations developed by British Somalis.

This article also shows the importance of considering the ways in which actors themselves construe their membership in a polity, rather than following perceptions of integration expressed at elite level by policy-makers and politicians. The data shows that Poles are considered a well-integrated community in both Ealing and Malmö. However, the Polish participants do not express a clear membership to the cities’ political community. This is more clearly the case for Poles living in Malmö than for the ones living in Ealing. Their lack of identification is expressed through their political disengagement in the recipient society as well as through their feelings of alienation from the majority society. Several Somali interviewees instead positioned themselves as citizens of the country and city they are living in, even when this was not validated by the wider society as in the Swedish case. This finding points to the importance of treating integration and membership in a polity as an empirical question, rather than *a priori* definition. This observation is valid

for researchers and policy-makers alike. The literature on migrant political participation and citizenship would benefit from exploring participants' own constructions of identifications and the effects of these on political behaviour. As this article shows, this research should be paralleled by the study of institutional and discursive structures of opportunities and the ways in which these can shape the space in which identifications are constructed. In the realm of practical politics, policy-makers should engage in a more attentive and responsive dialogue with different groups in society to define 'integration' and 'participation'. To assess migrant minorities' competence and incorporation in society according to pre-defined domains runs the risk of disregarding some groups' needs and feelings of exclusion, as it appears to be the case for several Polish participants.

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