

Pipeline or Prejudice? Getting at the Sources of Immigrants' Political Underrepresentation

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Abstract Immigrants remain severely underrepresented in most national and subnational parliaments across Europe. While previous research has begun to examine the sources of this underrepresentation, it has mainly focused on the importance of political opportunity structures. Yet, a more complete account of the representation gap must consider the possibility that the representation gap is driven by immigrants' interests and motivations. To test this potential explanation, we carried out an innovative case-control study in which we surveyed a large sample of Swedish candidates for local office as well as a large sample of Swedish residents who did not run ($n=6386$). We find that differences in political ambition, interest, and socialization do not help explain the representation gap. Rather, the major hurdles for immigrants lie in transitioning from being a party activist to becoming a party representative. Our results thus further buttress the notion that immigrant underrepresentation is in large part due to party gatekeepers.

Introduction

Across advanced democracies, immigrant populations have been steadily growing over the past few decades. Within the European Union, more than one in ten residents live in a country other than the one in which they were born. In Sweden, this number reaches one in six, or close to 18 percent of the population.¹ The rise of immigrants in the population has, however, not been matched by this group's representation in electoral politics. In most European countries, immigrants remain significantly underrepresented in parliaments. This underrepresentation persists even though many migrants have become citizens. Moreover, in many countries, including in Sweden, even non-citizen migrants can vote and run in local elections (Bird et al. 2011; Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013; Ruedin 2013, Vernby 2013). The continued underrepresentation of immigrants undermines the legitimacy of political systems. It also marginalizes the views of groups who, on many salient policy issues, have been shown to hold systematically different positions than do natives (Dancygier 2017; Mansbridge 1999).

Social scientists have begun to examine the sources of this underrepresentation. Existing research has argued that political opportunity structures matter: Citizenship regimes, electoral rules, or the competitiveness of elections can influence immigrant-native representation gaps (Bird et al. 2011; Hochschild and Mollenkopf 2009). Additionally, discriminatory behavior by party elites has been singled out. Whether due to their own prejudice or feared adverse reactions of the native electorate, these gatekeepers often do not place immigrants in competitive seats or on winnable list positions (Dancygier et al. 2015; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; van der Zwan et al. 2018). Finally, voters may simply prefer to cast ballots for natives (Fisher et al. 2015; Street 2014; Portman and Stojanović 2018).

Though these sets of explanations have considerably expanded our understanding of immigrant underrepresentation, one crucial piece of the puzzle remains missing: The motivations and background characteristics of immigrants themselves. Much of the existing work examines aggregate statistics of legislatures or candidate pools. This literature (reviewed below) importantly establishes the degree of underrepresentation and its connection to structural features and party gatekeepers, but it can't speak to the individual-level characteristics that lead immigrants to enter the political fray in the first place. Studies investigating native voters help us understand how natives evaluate immigrant candidates, but it likewise does not address whether and when immigrant candidates actually emerge.

¹ Data based on Eurostat; see <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/tgm/refreshTableAction.do?pcode=tps00178&language=en>

Yet, a more complete account of underrepresentation must take immigrants' interests and motivations into account, for winning office is only the final step in a process that begins with individuals considering to put themselves forward (Lawless and Fox 2010). If systematic biases are at play in this first step, existing conclusions about the causes of underrepresentation lying at the nomination or election stage may very well be flawed. One can imagine, for instance, that migrants who are settling in a new country and who have to navigate unfamiliar environments and institutions simply show less interest in becoming politically active and holding elected office. Party gatekeepers would therefore confront a relatively smaller immigrant pool when making selection decisions, but scholars investigating immigrants' representation – and minority representation more generally – have largely been unable to account for this potential problem of variable candidate supply across groups.

Furthermore, to more fully explain the causes of underrepresentation, an assessment of candidate supply needs to be embedded in a study that traces the multiple steps that ultimately lead to election, beginning with an individual's predisposition to even consider running for office, to their decision to join and be active in a party, to their likelihood of being nominated and, finally, elected. Studying this process is challenging, in part because it requires surveying a very large number of individuals. After all, only a minority ever thinks of running for office and an even smaller number is nominated and wins.

This study aims to overcome these challenges by conducting a unique survey of over 6,300 individuals in Sweden. Our survey advances existing research in two critical ways: First, it measures individual-level factors that have been cited as important determinants of participation in electoral politics – including, motivation, political socialization and political interest – but that typically remain unobserved. Second, because we can link individual respondents to richly-detailed population-wide registry data, we are able to employ a case-control design that stratifies our sample such that it contains both a large number of candidates who have been nominated for and elected to municipal office and a sizable number of immigrants (3455 candidates and 2280 immigrants). This design permits us to draw novel and more robust inferences about the stage in the winnowing process at which immigrants begin to disappear.

Our main findings are as follows. First, differences in political ambition, interest, or socialization cannot explain the immigrant-native representation gap. Our survey demonstrates that immigrants are no less interested, and frequently show more interest, in political matters than do natives, and they are more likely to grow up in environments in which politics is discussed. Further, despite greater expectations of discrimination by the political establishment, immigrants are as likely as native Swedes to have considered running for office and show no difference in their likelihood of becoming active in a party.

At what stage of the process, then, do immigrants get stuck? Our second key finding is that the major hurdles for immigrants lie in (i) transitioning from being a party activist to becoming nominated and (ii) in transitioning from being nominated to being placed on an electable position. On the whole, these findings lend more convincing support to the notion that it is party elites who undermine immigrants' chances to hold elected office and not immigrants reduced willingness to enter electoral politics. Immigrants do want to enter electoral politics, but are thwarted by party elites.

This study advances existing literature in several ways. First, to the best of our knowledge it is the first survey that systematically probes whether and how a wide range of behavioral and attitudinal characteristics are associated with immigrants' underrepresentation in politics. In addition to political activity and ambition, our survey measures variables such as political interest, socialization, efficacy, networks, perceived discrimination, and encouragement to run for office, allowing us to draw a richer and more nuanced picture than has been feasible to date. Second, our study builds on the work of Lawless and Fox (2010) who surveyed thousands of individuals in professions that are overrepresented in politics to establish the roots of the gender gap in office-holding in the US. Going beyond this pioneering work, our case-control design permits us to better assess whether candidates and elected politicians differ in significant ways from individuals who never ran for office, and whether these differences vary across immigrants and natives. Finally, this design also permits us to examine how individual-level features matter in the candidate emergence and election process while our access to registry-data allows us to consider how structural factors (e.g., related to parties and elections) intervene in this process.

To situate our study, section two provides a brief review of existing work. Section three presents details about the research design and case. In section four, we present our main results and section five concludes with a discussion of this study's implications.

Existing Approaches

Broadly speaking, research on the political representation of immigrants highlights three sets of factors: (1) the context or political opportunity structure; (2) the preferences of native voters and party gatekeepers for immigrant candidates; (3) and the political behavior of immigrants themselves. Existing research has examined whether contextual factors influence the electoral advancements of immigrants and minority groups more generally. This line of work typically relies on data such as the composition of legislatures or candidate pools and tests whether these measures correlate with certain institutional and contextual variables. For instance, variation in the permissiveness of national citizenship and integration regimes has been shown to affect immigrant-native representation gaps (e.g., Bird et al. 2011; Dancygier 2017; Garbaye 2005). Within

countries, electoral rules can also be consequential. District-level (vs. at large) elections can boost the electoral power and descriptive representation of spatially concentrated groups (Bird 2005; Trounstine and Valdini 2008). Similarly, preference vote systems that allow voters to cast ballots for specific candidates within parties have been shown to raise immigrant representation when immigrant electorates are large and mobilized, but these systems can also permit natives to vote against immigrants, thereby reducing immigrants' electoral chances (Dancygier 2017; Portman and Stojanović 2018). Additionally, studies suggest that increases in legislative size raise minority representation (Dancygier et al. 2015; Marschall et al. 2010), perhaps by allowing party leaders more flexibility in balancing the slate.

This balancing mechanism suggests that party leaders with influence over the nomination process can be critical actors, and research indeed documents that party gatekeepers may place immigrants on less competitive slots or not place them at all (e.g., Dancygier et al. 2015; Norris and Lovenduski 1995; Soininen 2011; van der Zwan et al. 2018). In some cases, this discriminatory behavior could be a function of anticipated voter prejudice: Several studies have found that segments of the native electorate prefer native candidates over those with foreign roots.² In other cases, accounts have stressed that party leaders harbor reservations against the inclusion of immigrant candidates that cannot be explained by voter prejudice alone.³ On the flipside, party gatekeepers have also actively supported the recruitment of immigrant candidates, in particular when they view immigrant electorates as key to their party's success at the polls. Studies of immigrants' political organization, especially at the local level, frequently make this case, but also note party elites' tokenistic approach to immigrant candidates.⁴

Taken together, these varied approaches support the notion that party leaders do not treat prospective immigrant and native candidates equally, but we do not have a full understanding of the nature of this inequality. In particular, research has not been able to rule out that immigrants are simply less interested in throwing their hat in the ring. They also do not trace the multiple stages of the candidate emergence process, making it difficult to assess at what juncture immigrants drop out. For instance, though studies that examine whole slates of nominated candidates (vs. the composition of legislatures) are useful in establishing inequalities at the nomination stage, they do not consider the pool of potential candidates from which party gatekeepers were able to draw from. This omission is potentially critical, for party elites have made claims that minority candidates,

² See, for instance, Fisher et al. (2015); Portman and Stojanović (2018); and Street (2014). On similar findings in the U.S. racial minority context, see, e.g., Terkildsen (1993). But see Bueno and Dunning (2017) who do not find ethnic or racial biases among voters in Brazil and instead draw attention to white candidates' superior access to financial resources to explain minority underrepresentation.

³ For a more nuanced approach on the treatment of immigrant-origin candidates by elites see, for example, Brouard and Tiberj (2011); Eelbode et al. (2013); and van der Zwan et al. (2018).

⁴ See, for example, Dancygier (2010); Eelbode et al. (2013); Garbaye (2005); Maxwell (2012); Michon and Vermeulen (2013); Sobolewska (2013); and Teney et al. (2010).

including those of immigrant background, are simply less likely to put themselves forward.⁵ By implication, to make the case that elite (or voter) discrimination leads to representation gaps scholars implicitly assume that immigrant and native candidates are more or less equal, save for their country of birth. Yet, elites who confront greater difficulties in recruiting immigrant than native candidates might end up nominating immigrant candidates who have less political experience or motivation to run for office. In short, even though the election of immigrant candidates is a multi-stage process, scholars have thus far mostly neglected the key first stage of candidate supply.

To what extent, then, is immigrant underrepresentation a pipeline problem? To answer this question we first have to address whether immigrants and natives differ in their ability and propensity to run for office. With respect to ability, a recent study suggests that differences in human capital and other socio-demographic variables cannot explain immigrant-native representation gaps. Drawing on the entire adult population in Sweden, Dancygier et al. (2015) examine whether individual-level resources – such as education or income – are associated with running for and winning municipal office.⁶ Though the study convincingly demonstrates that these observable individual resources do not drive representational inequalities, it cannot rule out possibly significant unmeasured factors, such as political socialization, knowledge, interest or ambition and ultimately leaves unanswered the important question of whether immigrants are as likely as natives to have considered running for office or whether they differ in other, heretofore unobserved factors, that make them less viable candidates.

Research on the underrepresentation of women in turn suggests that differences in political interest and ambition are quite consequential. In their innovative survey and interviews of eligible candidates in the US, Lawless and Fox (2010, 13) find that women are considerably less likely than men to express a desire to run for office and that it is this difference in ambition – more so than elite or voter prejudice – that is crucial. Deep-seated patterns of “traditional gender socialization,” they further conclude, “serve as the major source of the substantial gender gap in eligible candidates’ political ambition.”⁷

Do analogous forces stunt immigrants’ electoral representation? Like women, immigrants often live in societies in which members of their group are not well represented in leadership positions and where stereotypes about appropriate professional and public roles are widespread (Maxwell 2017; Reitz and Sklar 2007). Moreover, immigrants face additional challenges in that they have to navigate a new country, including an unfamiliar

⁵ See, e.g., Norris and Lovenduski (1995). Note also Shah (2014) on the importance of candidate supply in the case of African Americans.

⁶ The study mainly presents data on winning office, but notes that results are very similar when examining the nomination stage.

⁷ Hayes and Lawless (2016) further find that American media and voters do not treat women candidates differently than they do male candidates.

political system. The twin pressures of societal expectations and of integrating into a new environment could substantially reduce immigrants' interest in running for office.

Evaluating whether immigrants' interest in politics or desire to run for office is more important in producing representational inequalities than are steps that emerge later in the election process is fundamental to establishing the sources of underrepresentation, but it is also quite difficult empirically. We next discuss how our study overcomes these challenges.

Case and Methodology

The Case-Control Design

As we have showed in the previous section, existing research on Sweden and other countries suggests that political opportunity structures do have part in explaining immigrant underrepresentation. Moreover, some headway into studying the effects of the kind of individual-level variables that are available in some government registries has been made. For this important research agenda to make progress, however, we need to hear from immigrants themselves. Specifically, we have to find out why immigrants who have the time and resources to stand for election do not end up running. Is it because they simply less interested in joining parties and running for office? Do they feel they are less qualified to run for office than are comparable native Swedes? Or do immigrants lack the informal networks or professional links that are conducive to being recruited? Finally, these previously unmeasured experiences and perceptions need to be compared to those of natives with similar background characteristics.

Answering these questions proves methodologically difficult. This is because fielding a nationally representative survey would yield too few individuals that have been nominated for local office. To address this challenge, we draw on work in the field of epidemiology and conduct a so-called case control study (see, e.g., King and Zeng 2001 and Keogh and Cox 2014).⁸ Case control studies are useful when the outcome of interest (in our case, running for or winning local office) is rare in the population of interest.⁹ If the researcher has reliable information on the outcome for all units in the population, this information can be used to take a random sample from the population where the outcome of interest is observed (the "cases") and a random sample from the population where the outcome is

⁸ For a rare example of a case-control study in political science, see Rosenfeld (2017) on pro-democratic demonstrations in Russia.

⁹ During the last two decades, and for any given election, around 2 per mille of the eligible population, has been elected for municipal office. The corresponding figure for being nominated is between 7 and 8 per mille (Dancygier et al. 2015).

not observed (the “controls”). In the study of representation, those individuals running for office are the “cases” and those not running are the “controls.” One can then go on to collect data on the characteristics of the “cases” and “controls” that one does not have prior information about and, after having made appropriate adjustments, analyze their correlation with the outcome of interest.

We believe that the case control approach holds promise for students of political representation as it provides a more efficient way to collect detailed information on the potential drivers of the rare events (standing for election and becoming elected) that are the outcomes of interest. However, this strategy relies on having access to reliable population-wide data on who has and who has not been nominated/elected, something which is difficult to come by even in many advanced democracies.¹⁰ Fortunately, such information is available in Swedish government registers, and we can make use of this to sample a large number of “cases” as well as “controls.” To both these groups, we distribute surveys, containing questions that are not available in government registers: namely the attitudes and perceptions of the respective groups. For instance, are immigrants and natives equally interested in politics? Do immigrants have less of the informal networks or professional links that are conducive to being recruited? Do they feel they are less qualified to run for office than are comparable native Swedes? Or are immigrants receive less encouragement to run for office? The case control study helps us pinpoint which attitudes, experiences and perceptions are relevant for being nominated for office.

Another important challenge in the context of research on minority representation is obtaining a large enough number of individuals belonging to the group of interest. If care is not taken so as to sample a sufficient number of the minority of interest, estimates of differences between them and the majority group will suffer from low statistical power. Again, we use Swedish population-wide registry data to stratify both the sample of “cases” and “controls”, such that the sample contains a significant number of immigrants. This is crucial given our goal of examining whether there are any differences across these groups with respect to the attitudes, experiences and perceptions that we have concluded are relevant for being nominated for office.¹¹

¹⁰ Because of the completeness of our registry data, we can avoid the situation where we do not know whether the selected controls had been nominated/elected. The latter are referred to as “contaminated” controls in the methodological literature (Lancaster and Imbens 1996) and would require us to employ alternative estimation techniques whose properties are less well known than standard methods.

¹¹ When combining a case-control study with stratified sampling, certain adjustments in the statistical analyses will have to be made. The fact that we know the exact distribution of “cases” and “controls” as well as immigrants and natives in the population enables us to weight each observation by the inverse of its sampling probability (so called design weights). To reduce bias from non-response, Statistics Sweden has provided us with weights that have been recalibrated to minimize the difference between the (weighted) responders and the entire population in the same stratum with respect to relevant registry data. The variables used for the calibration were age and sex (five age groups per sex), time in Sweden (four

The sampling was conducted using six strata in a 2x3 design, where each stratum is defined by being nominated in 2014 (yes or no) and background or country of birth (immigrant, Swedish-born with at least one foreign-born parent and Swedish-born with both parents born in Sweden). In this paper we will merge the two groups of Swedish-born into one and focus our analysis on the difference between immigrants and “natives”. The survey was sent to a simple random sample of each stratum. In total, we sent out 16 000 surveys and received answers from 6 386 individuals, corresponding to an unweighted response rate of 40 percent (weighted by design weights the response rate was 36 percent).

Surveys and Registry Data

The surveys have four parts, each containing a number of items. In the first we ask respondents about their political interest and networks. The second part is about political participation. The third part asks a number of questions related to political attitudes. The fourth part asks about some background information. Data on the socio-economic status (income, education, employment), demographics (date of birth, residential location, sex, country of birth, parents’ countries of birth, time in Sweden) and family situation (number of children) of respondents will be taken from government registers (see below). The surveys enable us to answer questions of the type: Are immigrants and natives with similar characteristics, attitudes and experiences as likely to have ever considered joining a political party or running for political office? Are they equally likely to have received suggestions or encouragement to join a political party or run for political office? The individual survey results will be coupled with variables from the following government registers at *Statistics Sweden* (SCB) on socio-economic variables (e.g. income, education, employment) and demographic variables (e.g. year of birth, biological sex, residence, country of birth, number of children). We also have information on which areas individuals lived, which allows us to control for the local political opportunity structures facing a respondents.

Based on the survey items, we have constructed five indices measuring individual characteristics that are frequently connected with political participation. These are *political efficacy*, *interest*, *networks*, *encouragement* and *socialization*. The indices and their component measures are described in more detail in the Appendix.

Political efficacy. Political efficacy refers to the individuals’ beliefs in their ability to influence the political system. Traditionally one conceptually distinguishes internal from external

categories), a binary indicator of Swedish citizenship, country of birth (three categories), size of municipality (three categories), education (three categories), a binary indicator for being employed, income (three categories) and seats per voter in home municipality (quartiles). Unless otherwise stated, all our analyses are conducted using the calibration weights.

efficacy (Craig and Magiotto 1982, Pollock 1983, see also Fox and Lawless 2005, 2010 on “self-perceived qualifications”). The former refers to the individuals’ beliefs in their own competence whereas the latter refers to their beliefs in the responsiveness of the political system. While conceptually distinct, operationalizations of internal and external efficacy tend to be correlated (in our case, strongly so, see more below) and both tend to be strongly related to measures of political participation (Abramson 1983, Verba et al. 1995). In our case, we use nine indicators tapping both internal and external efficacy to construct the political efficacy-index.

Political interest. Citizens who are interested in politics participate more than those who are not (Verba et al. 1995). We construct an index that combines items that measure interest in politics at various levels (from the local to the global) as well as a measure of general political interest.

Political networks. Networks facilitate the flow of political information (Huckfeldt and Sprague 1987) as well as the recruitment of political activists (Knoke 1994, Verba et al. 1995). Our index of individuals’ political networks include six measures intended to capture the size of their political discussion networks as well as three measures capturing whether individuals know political activists, party members and elected officials.

Political encouragement. Relatedly to political networks, we also include an index measuring the extent to which individuals’ have been encouraged to join a party or become a candidate. This type of encouragement or being recruited has shown to be an important predictor of becoming politically active as well as becoming a candidate (Verba et al. 1995, Fox and Lawless 2005, 2010). We include encouragement/recruitment attempts from friends, family, colleagues, political activists as well as elected politicians in our index.

Political socialization. The final index captures pre-adult socialization by measuring the extent to which an individual has had a politicized upbringing. In particular, we include three items capturing political discussion with and encouragement from parents and at school when growing up. As Fox and Lawless (2005, 2010) show, these types of factors can be important predictors of becoming a politician.

All indices are unweighted averages of a set of survey items and rescaled so that they range from 0 to 1. To evaluate the reliability of the indices, we calculated Cronbach’s alpha for the set of survey items used. The alpha was satisfactory for the first four indices, ranging from 0.82 to 0.91, whereas it is slightly lower, 0.68, for the socialization index. See the appendix for the complete list of survey items used for each index.¹²

¹² To create indices from the different sets of indicators, “Don’t know / No opinion”-answers were replaced with the weighted mean of all other answers on the same question, and missing values were imputed by regressing each indicator on the other indicators in the same index and simply saving the predicted values (as long as there was only one or two indicators missing, otherwise we left them all as

The Swedish Case

While our primary reason for studying Sweden is methodological, in that population-wide Swedish government registers allows us to implement the case-control design described above to study the underrepresentation of immigrants, Sweden is also a case that in many ways typifies the European immigration experience. While one should always be careful when attempting to generalize, our choice of case arguably increases the likelihood that our findings travel to other European countries.

When placed in a comparative European context, it is clear that Swedish immigration history is fairly typical, both when considering at the total stock of immigrants, as well as the composition with respect to regions of origin. Moreover, just as in many other European countries, the composition has shifted, with migrants coming from poorer and more conflict-ridden parts of the world outside of Western European or OECD countries comprising a growing share of recent migrants (Dancygier et al. 2015, Messina 2007, 39–46).

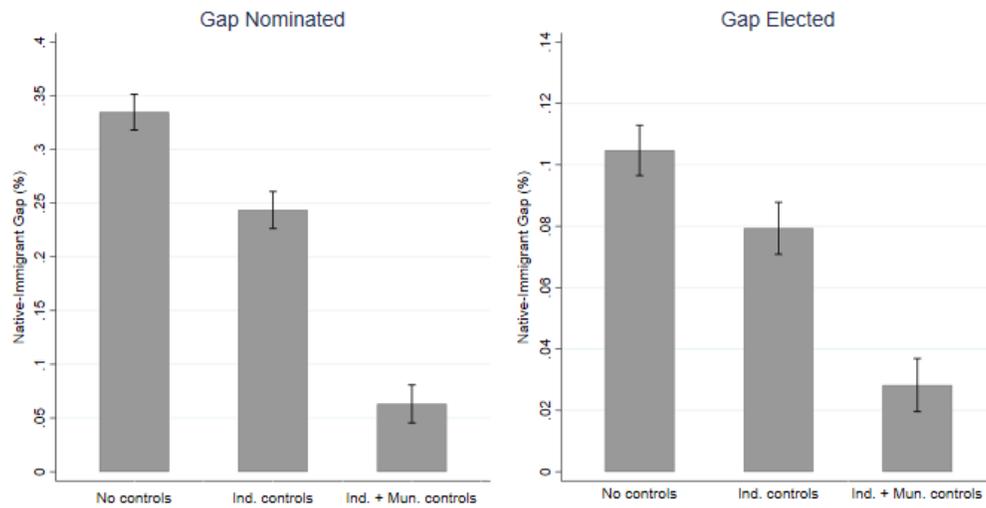
Turning to political inclusion, residents who lacked Swedish citizenship (regardless of country of birth) but who had lived in Sweden for three or more years have the right to vote and run in local elections since the Voting Rights Reform of 1975 (Vernby 2013). Sweden thus has parallels to countries such as Denmark, Finland, Ireland, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Slovenia, and Slovakia in terms of inclusiveness (Geyer 2007). In municipal councils, which are the foci of the present study, councilors are elected using a party-list proportional system in multimember districts.¹³ The local electoral system is therefore similar to that in most West European countries.

Municipal councils play a crucial part in functioning of the Swedish welfare state. They have independent taxation rights (the average municipal income tax rate in 2014 was 21 percent). They are important public service providers, and therefore also employ a large part of the Swedish labor force (18 percent in 2016).

missing). The indicators were then rescaled to a 0–1 scale, some of them were reverse coded, and the indices were defined as the average value of the included indicators. Consequently, each index follows a 0–1 scale, where 0 (1) correspond to scoring the lowest (highest) possible on every indicator.

¹³ However, larger districts (>24,000 voters) must have a least two districts.

Figure 1: The native-immigrant gaps in 2014



Note: The graphs show the results from a linear probability model with nomination (left) and election (right) as the dependent variables and immigrant status as the main independent variable. The individual level controls include gender, number of children aged 0-10, education, family income, employment status, age, and age squared. All variables are measured in 2014 and the error bars represent 95 percent confidence intervals.

Like in many other advanced democracies (Bloemraad 2013), in Sweden immigrants are underrepresented in politics. Using registry-based micro-data covering the entire Swedish adult population between 1991 and 2010, Dancygier et al. (2015) show that while underrepresentation has steadily declined during the period of study (irrespective of whether you focus on running or becoming elected), but also that a sizeable gap remains in 2010.¹⁴ Unlike most previous research on immigrant underrepresentation, they have access to some individual-level variables that are available in government registers, notably data on socio-economic resources and demographics. What Dancygier et al. (2015) find, however, is that even after controlling for these individual-level variables as well as some political opportunity structure variables, a sizeable representation gap remains.

The results displayed in Figure 1 indicate that the situation was similar in the election we study in this paper, the one held in 2014. The analysis, which is based on government registry data on 7,400,000 adults, shows the unadjusted and adjusted differences in natives' and immigrants' likelihood of being nominated (the leftmost graph) and elected (the rightmost graph) to political office.

¹⁴ Take the example of becoming elected, in 2010 approximately two per mille of native adults were elected to local council, whereas the corresponding figure for immigrants was one per mille, implying a gap of one per mille.

As can be seen, the gap between immigrants and natives with respect to becoming elected is about one per mille points, whereas the corresponding figure when looking at becoming nominated is over three per mille points. Given that the overall probabilities of nomination and election in the electorate are only seven and two per mille, these are sizeable differences. When adjusting for individual level characteristics such as age, gender, income, education, and family- and labor market status these differences decrease by 20–30 percent (see the middle bars). When adding fixed effects for each of the 290 Swedish municipalities to the model these gaps decrease even further (the bars to the right), suggesting that local political opportunity structures of some form may be important. Yet, 20–25 percent of the original gaps remain unaccounted for by the individual level characteristics and the municipality fixed effects.

Summing up, existing research on Sweden and other countries suggests that political opportunity structures do have part in explaining immigrant underrepresentation. Moreover, some headway into studying the effects of the kind of individual-level variables that are available in some government registries has been made.

Results

For political efficacy, interest, networks, encouragement or socialization to explain the immigrant-native representation gap two conditions, at a minimum, need to be fulfilled. First, these factors must be strong predictors of running for office. Second, these factors must also differ systematically across immigrants and natives. As a first cut at exploring whether political efficacy, interest or any other of our measured characteristics can explain the immigrant-native representation gap, therefore, we begin by asking whether candidates and non-candidates, as well as native Swedes and immigrants, differ with respect to these characteristics. The results of these comparisons are shown in Tables 1 and 2.

Beginning with Table 1, it is clear that the differences between candidates and non-candidates with respect to the five indices are sizeable. In substantive terms, candidates score about one standard deviation ($sd=0.23$) higher on the index of political interest. For efficacy ($sd=0.23$) and networks ($sd=0.21$), the differences are bigger than one standard deviation and for encouragement ($sd=0.19$) it is about two standard deviations. These large differences are perhaps not so surprising as they are, at least in part, likely to be due to endogeneity. In particular, it is likely that political efficacy, interest and so on not only impacts on becoming a candidate, but also that campaigning will stimulate political interest, efficacy and networks. In the regression analysis below, where the focus is on explaining the representation gap, this potential endogeneity will be less problematic.

Table 1: How do candidates differ from non-candidates?

	Natives	Immigrants	Difference
<i>Indices (0–1)</i>			
Political interest	0.50	0.76	0.25***
Efficacy	0.45	0.74	0.29***
Network	0.35	0.69	0.34***
Encouragement	0.10	0.52	0.42***
Socialization	0.24	0.33	0.09***
<i>Ambition (0 or 1)</i>			
Could consider to join party	0.41	-	-
Could consider public office	0.37	-	-
<i>Outcomes</i>			
Current party member	0.05	-	-
Ever party member	0.13	-	-
Nominated 2014 (percent)	-	-	-
Elected 2014 (percent)	-	-	-

Note: The table shows the means for candidates and non-candidates (running for municipal office in 2014) as well as the difference between the two. The first panel consists of our five indices, coded between 0 (theoretical minimum) and 1 (theoretical maximum). The second panel shows the answers to two binary survey questions about a person's political engagement or willingness to engage in politics. The last panel consists of two intermediary outcomes – currently or ever being a party member – and our two outcomes of interest: being nominated and elected in the 2014 municipal election.

Turning to the immigrant-native comparison in Table 2, it is immediately apparent that the two groups have more in common than what separates them. Immigrants are, on average, somewhat more interested in politics, and also score somewhat higher on our socialization index. Natives, on the other hand, show somewhat higher levels of political efficacy and they have slightly more friends who are engaged in politics and therefore score somewhat lower on our index of political networks. Finally, immigrants do not appear to have received less encouragement than natives to join political parties or run for office.

With regard to political ambition, the largest difference between immigrants and natives is that fewer immigrants have considered joining a political party. Nevertheless, there are no differences with respect to party membership. Finally, at least as many immigrants as natives appear to have considered running for public office. Interestingly, this is true despite greater expectations of discrimination by the political establishment.

Table 2: How do natives differ from immigrants?

	Natives	Immigrants	Difference
<i>Indices (0–1)</i>			
Political interest	0.50	0.52	0.02**
Efficacy	0.45	0.43	-0.02*
Network	0.36	0.32	-0.04***
Encouragement	0.10	0.11	0.01
Socialization	0.23	0.27	0.04***
<i>Ambition (0 or 1)</i>			
Could consider to join party	0.42	0.38	-0.04***
Could consider public office	0.37	0.39	0.02
<i>Outcomes</i>			
Current party member	0.06	0.05	-0.01
Ever party member	0.14	0.12	-0.02
Nominated 2014 (percent)	0.70	0.33	-0.36***
Elected 2014 (percent)	0.16	0.05	-0.10***

Note: The table shows the means for natives and immigrants as well as the difference between the two. The first panel consists of our five indices, coded between 0 (theoretical minimum) and 1 (theoretical maximum). The second panel shows the answers to two binary survey questions about a person's political engagement or willingness to engage in politics. The last panel consists of two intermediary outcomes – currently or ever being a party member – and our two outcomes of interest: being nominated and elected in the 2014 municipal election. Because the two latter outcomes are rare, the numbers are displayed in percent.

Given that natives are considerably more likely to run for office and be elected, it is unlikely that the small and inconsistent differences between immigrants and natives with respect to factors that allegedly drive political activity can explain the representation gap. Immigrants are no less interested in entering electoral politics, and they resemble natives with respect to characteristics often associated with high levels of political participation.

Another way of approaching the question of why so few immigrants serve as elected politicians is to decompose the share of politicians into different steps in the process to becoming elected. At what stage do immigrants get stuck? The first row of Table 3 sheds light on this. Beginning with the constant, it shows the share of natives that are willing to run for office (conditioned on being eligible), that become party members (conditioned on willing to run for office), that were nominated in the 2014 election (conditioned on being a party member) and, eventually, that were elected to political office (conditioned on being nominated). Because the steps are defined to be cumulative (i.e., everyone that

Table 3: The mediation analysis

Outcome Sample	Willing Population	Party members Willing	Nominated Party members	Elected Nominated
<i>Regression coefficient for migrant indicator</i>				
Bivariate	-0.0112	-0.0141	-0.0542***	-0.0627***
Constant in bivariate model (Coef+cons.)/cons.	0.4522 98%	0.1256 89%	0.1237 56%	0.2243 72%
<i>Regression coefficient for migrant indicator when model also includes</i>				
Muni fixed effects (MFE)	-0.0374	-0.0032	-0.0930***	-0.0629***
Socioeconomic status (SES)	-0.0290	-0.0122	-0.0687***	-0.0562***
All indices	-0.0121	-0.0085	-0.0864***	-0.0397**
<i>Regression coefficient for migrant indicator when model includes MFE, SES and one index</i>				
Efficacy	-0.0381	0.0007	-0.0887***	-0.0474***
Political interest	-0.0848***	-0.0182	-0.0892***	-0.0737***
Network	-0.0215	0.0143	-0.0921***	-0.0512***
Encouragement	-0.0745***	-0.0156	-0.1099***	-0.0644***
Socialization	-0.0827***	-0.0020	-0.0733***	-0.0575***
<i>Regression coefficient for indices when model includes MFE, SES and one index</i>				
Efficacy	0.8002***	0.2239***	0.4885***	0.5145***
Political interest	0.6787***	0.2857***	0.3104***	0.4144***
Network	0.7975***	0.3887***	0.3821***	0.5928***
Encouragement	0.8596***	0.4195***	0.3238***	0.1204***
Socialization	0.6082***	0.0952*	0.0788*	0.0137
<i>Regression coefficient for migrant indicator when model includes MFE, SES and all indices</i>				
MF, SES and indices	-0.0617*	-0.0141	-0.0955**	-0.0476**
<i>Regression coefficient for indices when model includes MFE, SES and all indices</i>				
Efficacy	0.3586***	-0.0267	0.3348***	0.2990***
Political interest	0.1985***	0.1305	0.0667	0.0587
Network	0.3085***	0.2276***	0.0777	0.4611***
Encouragement	0.4193***	0.3352***	0.2057***	-0.0124
Socialization	0.1442**	-0.1145*	-0.0474	-0.1273***

Note: The upmost part of the table shows the results from regressing transitioning on an immigrant dummy, expressed as the absolute difference in transition probability (the coefficient of the immigrant indicator), the natives' transition probability (the constant) and the relative transition probability. The second part shows the coefficient of the immigrant indicator when the model also include municipal fixed effects, a set of socioeconomic indicators or our five indices. The third part shows the regression coefficient for the immigrant indicator when the model includes municipality fixed effects, a set of socioeconomic variables and one of our indices. The fourth part shows the regression coefficient of the index in the same model as was presented in the third part. The last two parts show the regression coefficient for the migrant indicator and the index in a model which includes municipal fixed effects, a set of socioeconomic variables and all the five indices.

was nominated is also coded as being willing as well as a party member), the share of the population that is elected is equal to the product of the four transition probabilities.

The regression coefficient shows the difference between the transition probabilities of immigrants and natives. By comparing the relative differences in transition probabilities, we see that immigrants are almost as likely as natives to express a willingness to become party members. Moreover, the difference in party membership is also very small. However, among all party members, immigrants are close to half as likely to run for office and more than 30 percent as likely to become elected. In other words, it appears as if immigrants are under-represented among the elected mostly because they are less likely to transition from being a party member to also be placed on the ballot and to transition from being nominated to also becoming elected.

Our main finding with regards to the steps along the way to becoming a politician is thus that the major hurdles for immigrants lie in (i) transitioning from being a party activist to becoming nominated and (ii) in transitioning from being nominated to being placed on an electable position. On the whole, these findings lend more convincing support to the notion that it is party elites who undermine immigrants' chances to hold elected office and not immigrants reduced willingness to enter electoral politics. Immigrants do want to enter electoral politics, but are thwarted by party elites

In the rest of Table 3, we use the explanatory factors from Table 2 to conduct a classic mediation analysis for each step to becoming elected. This analysis has the advantage that it takes into account exactly how important different characteristics are for the probability of a political career and then shows how much of the under-representation that remains after we have controlled for these characteristics. As should be clear from the regression coefficient for the migrant indicator when the model includes municipality fixed effects, socio-economic status from registry data as well as the five indices, the general pattern remains in the sense that the most important hurdles for immigrants occur in the transition from being a party member to being nominated and from being nominated to being elected.

Conclusion

[To be written]

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Appendix

Survey questions used to create our indices

Efficacy (eight items)

- To what degree do you agree with the following propositions? (11-point scale)
 - I am qualified enough to engage in politics.
 - I have a good understanding of the major issues.
 - I would be as good a politician as others.
 - I know more about politics than others do.
 - Most people can affect political decisions.
 - Politicians care about the citizens' opinions.
 - Politicians usually do what most of the people would like them to do.
 - Citizens can affect policy through elections.

Political interest (six items)

- Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics? (four alternatives)
- How interested are you when it comes to... (11-point scale)
 - ...municipal politics?
 - ...county politics?
 - ...Swedish politics?
 - ...EU politics?
 - ...politics outside EU?

Network (nine items)

- How often do you discuss politics with... (four alternatives)
 - ...your colleagues?
 - ...your friends?
 - ...your family?
 - ...elected politicians?
 - ...others who are politically involved?
 - ...someone else?
- Do you know someone who... (binary)
 - ...participates in demonstrations and/or other political actions?
 - ...is a member of a political party?
 - ...has held political office in the municipality or the county?

Encouragement (twelve items)

- Has any of the following persons suggested that you should join a party? (binary)

- A friend
 - A colleague
 - A family member
 - A party member or other politically involved person
 - An elected politician
 - Someone else
- Has any of the following persons suggested that you should run for office? (binary)
 - A friend
 - A colleague
 - A family member
 - A party member or other politically involved person
 - An elected politician
 - Someone else

Socialization (three items)

- When growing up, how often did your parents discuss politics with you?
- How often did you discuss politics with your teachers or class mates during high school?
- How often did your parents talk about you possibly becoming a politician one day?

Are immigrant responders more positively selected?

If immigrants were more positively selected than those born in Sweden, the estimates of their political engagement would be biased upwards, also when compared to the Swedish-born population. To reduce the biases caused by non-responders, Statistics Sweden has calibrated weights based on registry data. These weights are used throughout our analyses. Table 5 shows what the descriptive statistics would look like if we used the pure design weights instead. As expected, both immigrants and Swedish-born appear more politically engaged when the design weights are used. That just shows that respondents are positively selected on observables used for the weight calibration. However, as shown by the last column, there does not appear to be any difference between those born in Sweden and abroad with regards to how severe this selection bias is.

Table A1: Descriptives with weight comparison

	Design weights		Calibrated weights		Difference		Dif-in-Dif
	Swe	Imm	Dif	Swe	Imm	Dif	
Political interest	0.53	0.54	0.01	0.50	0.52	0.02**	0.01
Efficacy	0.47	0.45	-0.02**	0.45	0.43	-0.02*	0.00
Network	0.37	0.33	-0.04***	0.36	0.32	-0.04***	-0.00
Encouragement	0.11	0.12	0.01	0.10	0.11	0.01	-0.00
Socialization	0.22	0.26	0.03***	0.23	0.27	0.04***	0.00
Current member	party 0.06	0.06	-0.00	0.06	0.05	-0.01	-0.00
Ever party member	0.15	0.14	-0.01	0.14	0.12	-0.02	-0.01
Could consider to join party	0.41	0.38	-0.03**	0.42	0.38	-0.04***	-0.02
Could consider public office	0.36	0.38	0.02*	0.37	0.39	0.02	-0.00

Note: The comparisons are based on between 6079 and 6339 observations, with two thirds born in Sweden and one third born abroad. For political interest, it is also shown how the results change if we exclude political interest in the EU and in countries outside EU.

Inter-survey reliability

Because our survey is population-based, we do not have to worry about selection into our sampling frame. However, in all surveys, there is a risk that non-response may bias the answers and make them non-representative for the population of interest. Because the population's attitudes are unknown, it is difficult to assess the size of this problem.

One approach is to compare our data with identical questions in other surveys. We have included four questions that are identical to questions in the surveys sent out by the SOM institute (Society, Opinion and Mass media). The SOM surveys are the largest and most well-known studies on attitudes in Sweden and are therefore the obvious standard to be compared with. We currently only have access to the 2015 version of SOM. Because our survey was distributed in 2017, we will update this comparison when newer versions of SOM are available. Because the attitudes to one of the four questions (government approval) have changed dramatically over the last few years, we have excluded this variable from the comparison. It will be added as soon as we have SOM data for 2017.

The table below shows the mean values for our survey and SOM. The SOM data come without weights, but because of the case-control approach, we cannot use our data unweighted. The comparison is therefore made using our design weights (adjusting for different sampling probabilities) and our calibrated weights (adjusting for different response rates with respect to information available in registry data). While the latter weights should take us closer to the unobservable population averages, it is possible that the design weights better matches the unweighted SOM data. While two of the three variables show statistically significant differences when compared with the SOM data, we regard these differences as quite small. After all, we are comparing two different surveys with two years between them. Besides, the fact that the differences are smaller when we use design weights (and the estimates therefore should be more biased) may indicate that our data, when weighted by calibration weights, is actually closer to the true population values than what the SOM data are.

Figures A1 and A2 show the exact distributions of the answers to these variables. Our assessment is that our answers are similarly distributed as the answers to the SOM survey.

Table A2: Inter-survey comparison

	Our data	SOM 2015	Difference	St. Dev.
Weight our data with calibrated weights				
Political interest	2.39	2.24	-0.14***	0.80
Left-right scale	3.06	3.09	0.03	1.17
Interpersonal trust	6.20	6.63	0.43***	2.40
Weight our data with design weights				
Political interest	2.31	2.24	-0.07***	0.77
Left-right scale	3.09	3.09	0.01	1.17
Interpersonal trust	6.48	6.63	0.15**	2.30

Note: This is a comparison between our data and the SOM survey. A variable for government approval will be added when newer SOM data is available.

Figure A1: Comparison with SOM when our data are weighted with calibration weights

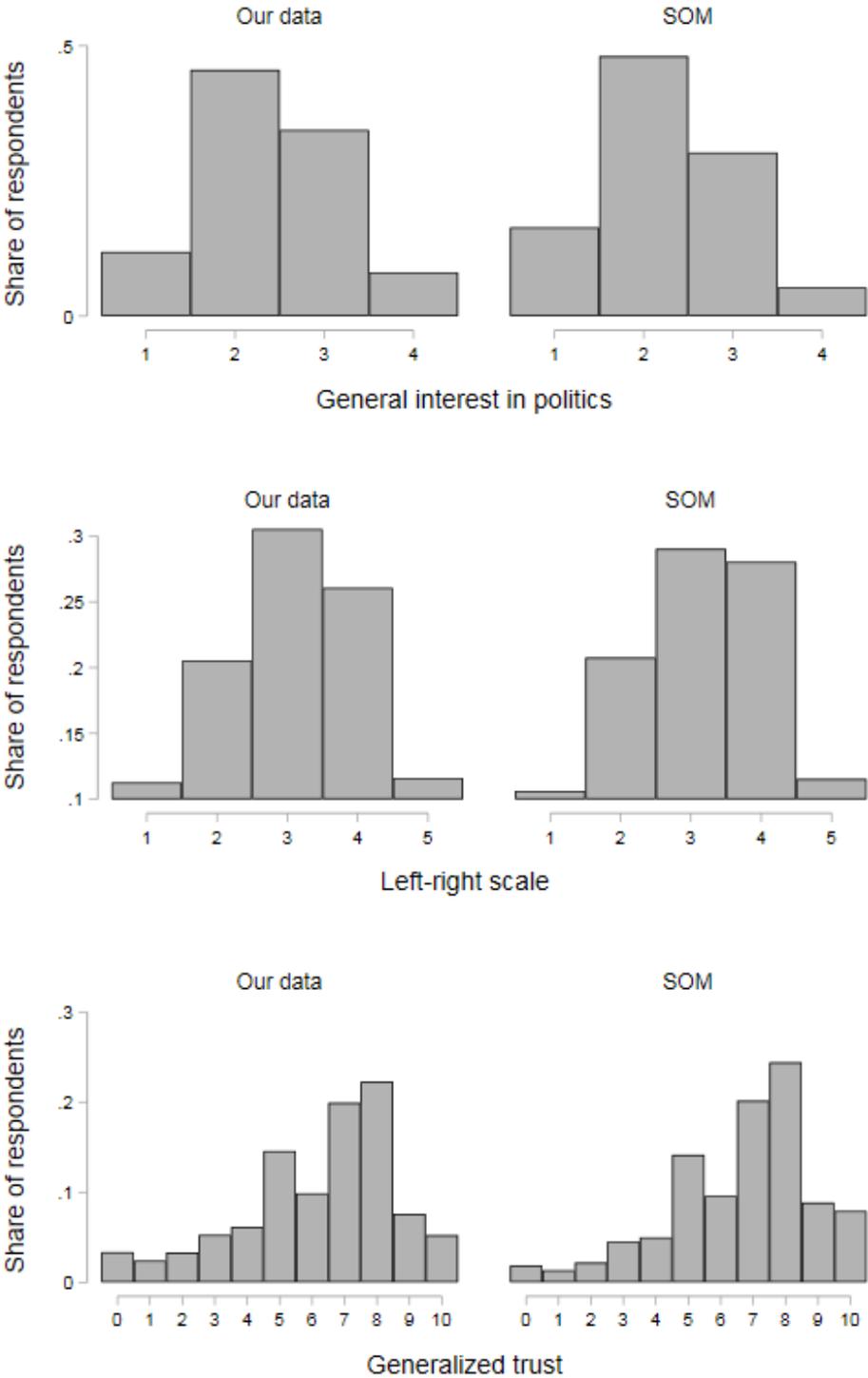


Figure A2: Comparison with SOM when our data are weighted with design weights

