Pathways Project Workshop
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Conceptualising and Measuring the Political Representation of Citizens of Immigrant Origin

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Conceptualizing Political Representation

- Lively debate in political science about concept of political representation (e.g. Mansbridge; Andeweg & Thomassen; Rehfeld)

- We don't cover all dimensions of political representation

- Focus is on 'descriptive' and 'substantive' representation

- Descriptive representation: presence (*standing for*)

- Substantive representation: agendas, interests, views and policies advocated in parliament (*acting for*)

Why study the political representation of citizens of immigrant origin separately?

- European populations are becoming increasingly diverse
- Diversity is, to a great extent, driven by immigration trends
- New sectors of the 'demos' need to be included in the representation process
- Citizens may (or may not) have preferences over personal characteristics of candidates/representatives
- The personal characteristics of MPs may (or may not) influence how they 'substantively' represent their constituents
- Learning more about the political representation of citizens of immigrant origin (CIOs) offers insights on how democratic representation operates in practice

The tricky part: Defining who is a citizen of immigrant origin

All those individuals who either

- Were born abroad as foreign nationals (1st generation); or
- Have/had one parent of foreign nationality at birth (2nd generation).

Our definition does not fully overlap with:

- Ethnic or 'visible' minorities
- Immigrants

Measuring 'Presence'
Descriptive Political Representation

- We collect data for <u>all</u> MPs who held a seat in the legislative terms covered (1990s-2010s)
- We gather publicly available information on the MPs and their parents from, e.g.:
    - Biographies
    - Parliamentary websites
    - Wikipedia entries
    - Personal websites or blogs
    - Media reports or interviews
- We exhaust all possibilities to obtain publicly available information on immigrant origin

- Additionally, we collect a wide range of variables on:
    - Characteristics of electoral districts of seat held
    - Key socio-demographic variables (gender, education, occupation)
    - Key electoral and parliamentary tenure aspects (number of times elected, position in list, parliamentary group, etc.)
    - Aspects relating to potential discrimination (language, 'visibility', ethnic identity, religious identity)
    - Party career
    - Governmental experience
    - Leadership and committee roles in parliament

Handling missing information

- Even an exhaustive approach produces missing information, especially on parents
- Missing info:
  - Country MP was born: approx. 0.4%
  - Nationality of MP at birth: approx. 25%
  - Country mother was born: approx. 66%
  - Country father was born: approx. 59%
  - Nationality of mother at birth: approx. 61%
  - Nationality of father at birth: approx. 53%
  - All info on nationality at birth: approx. 25%
  - Amount of missing info varies by country: worse in BE, EL, ES, IT

Handling missing information (cont.)

Practical operationalization:

- By default, all MPs classified as not of IO
- If MP born abroad and not known to be a national at birth, MP classified as CIO
- If any of parents foreign national at birth, MP classified as CIO
- If MP born abroad and nationality at birth not known and either parent born not a national at birth, MP classified as CIO
- If MP born abroad and nationality at birth not known and either parent born abroad and not known to be a national at birth, MP classified as CIO
- If both parents born abroad and not known to be a nationals at birth, MP classified as CIO

Measuring Substantive Representation

- We focus on the speeches and parliamentary questions that MPs make at the plenaries of their respective chambers
- The sources are parliamentary records of plenary debates
- Substantive representation assessed with number/proportion of speeches/questions on issues relating to preferences, interests and needs of CIOs
- Various forms of content analysis will be employed: topic models, dictionary-based, etc.
- Data on 'speech' will be linked to descriptive representation database to examine connection between substantive and descriptive representation

The Presentations Today

- Well advanced in data collection on descriptive representation
- Data collection on substantive representation in initial stages (as dependent on descriptive dataset)
- Most presentations dealing with descriptive representation
- A sneak preview on substantive representation analyses

Thanks for your attention

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