
Gustavo S.
MESCH

Department of Sociology
University of Haifa, Israel

PERCEPTIONS OF
DISCRIMINATION AND
THE VOTING
PATTERNS OF
IMMIGRANTS FROM
THE FSU IN ISRAEL

Introduction

The political participation of immigrants in the city can be seen as part of the process of social integration in the new society. Previous studies of immigrants have dealt extensively with different aspects of their integration in the new society, including labor market incorporation (Bailey and Waldinger, 1991; Portes and Jensen, 1987; Sanders and Nee, 1987), language proficiency (Espenshade and Fu, 1997) and social integration (Zhou and Logan, 1989). Less research has been done on immigrants' political integration. In particular few studies have dealt with the political participation of immigrants in local issues. This lack of research is surprising given that the local government is responsible in most countries for very basic issues that are important to immigrants, such as education and housing. The goal of this study was to investigate the factors affecting the political participation of immigrants in local issues. More specifically the current study investigates the extent to which immigrants' perception of discrimination is related to the likelihood of immigrants' voting for an immigrant party in Israel.

Literature Review

In general immigrants' political participation appears to be low in most immigrant countries (Togeby, 1999; Fenema and Tillie, 1999). This lack of political interest and active involvement in political issues can be explained by their marginal political status. At the time of migration individuals face the urgent need to learn the language (Mesch, 2003), find housing and access to jobs. At least at the beginning of the immigration, these basic needs do not leave much energy to invest in political organization and action. In addition, this lack of political involvement may be related to the lack of a political opportunity structure that encourages the participation of immigrants in politics (Bousetta, 2000). Political parties do not much en-

courage the incorporation of new immigrants into their ranks. The result is that often immigrants report feelings of alienation from political institutions in the host country therefore increasing migrants' likelihood of avoiding participation in local politics (Diehl and Blohm, 2001). Anwar (2001) found that political parties do not do much to encourage the incorporation of new immigrants into their ranks.

When studying the political mobilization of immigrants in contemporary societies there is increasing evidence that ethnic affiliation is an effective instrument for social and political mobilization. Immigration flows are thought to be one major source for the development of ethnicity. Such streams may be the result of ethnic conflict in the country of origin, but they may also generate a new conflict with other groups in the receiving society (Al-Haj, 2002). After new immigrants are settled, their collective action may be aimed at creating a cultural community within the receiving state and at bargaining to improve their status and conditions.

Ethnicity can be an instrument for mobilization with the aim of increasing a group's access to economic, social and political sources, regardless of its location in the stratification system. In other words, ethnic mobilization can exist among both disadvantaged and well-established groups. Ethnic solidarity and mobilization may actually increase when there is an improvement in the socio-economic standing of an ethnic group and a decrease in the ethnic division of labor. In this sense, ethnic mobilization is fuelled by a group's desire to improve its status and circumstances vis-à-vis other ethnic groups when new social and economic opportunities are introduced.

Alternatively ethnic mobilization may result from grievances about their disadvantaged status and their determination to pursue the group's political interests. This approach assumes a direct relationship between perceptions of discrimination and ethnic mobilization, where the disadvantaged group tends to form a segregated ethnic framework in order to change the rules of the game set by the center. Rejection by the dominant group and stigmatization encountered by the minority groups enhance the retention of ethnic identity. Hence the rise and decline of ethnic affiliation depends primarily on the policies of the dominant group.

Another approach argues that the type of political participation is related to acculturation factors emphasizing the role of integration variables that influence the political participation of immigrants (Back and Soininen,

1998). The main factors considered here are length of residence and language proficiency. Participation in politics is a time-dependent process that requires knowledge of the political system, the different political parties and the different tactics being used in the country for political influence (Junn, 1999). This learning process requires the knowledge of the language as a central tool for the understanding of documents, speeches and local laws. A study on immigrants' participation in Danish local elections indicated that voting was positively related to length of stay: the longer the immigrant has been in the country, the greater the likelihood of participation in local politics (Togeby, 1999).

It remains to be determined, however, whether ethnic mobilization among new immigrants is a reactive behavior, a result of low status or alienation, or a pragmatic strategy for the promotion of status groups, regardless of the extent of integration in the host society, or a temporary process that reflects low acculturation.

The goal of the present study is to address these approaches through an examination of the voting patterns among immigrants in Israel from the former Soviet Union in the 1998 local elections in Haifa. The research questions are:

1. Do immigrants from the FSU vote in the election according to ethnic lines?
2. Are voting patterns the result of immigrants' perception of discrimination or the result of acculturation processes?

The Israeli Context

Immigration from the former countries of the Soviet Union to Israel took place in two waves. The first was during the years 1968-79, when 150,000 Jews arrived in Israel. At that time, the Soviet government was hostile to the attempts of its Jewish citizens to maintain their Jewish nationality and culture in the Soviet Union. The result was a selective migration of cultural and political leaders of the Jewish community from the former Soviet Union. The current wave of immigration started after the dissolution of the Soviet Union and the change in the regime there. Since then, it is estimated that 830,000 immigrants from the countries of the FSU have arrived in Israel.

Studies report a number of differences and similarities between the first and second waves of immigrants from the FSU. In terms of motivation, it appears that the immigrants in the 70s were looking to migrate to the Jew-

ish homeland, whereas the immigrants in the 90s were seeking economic opportunity and political stability (Lisak, 1995). A study that compared the two groups after 4 years in the country shows that both groups differ slightly in age and education. Immigrants in the 70s were younger than those that arrived in the 90s. The immigrants that arrived in the 90s completed, on average, more years of formal schooling than those that arrived in the 70s. Both groups have considerably higher levels of formal education than the comparable Israeli workforce. Whereas the immigrants of the 70s were more evenly distributed across regions in Israel, the immigrants of the 90s were more concentrated in the urban centers of the country. Both groups show high levels of labor force participation; 90 percent of the males and 80 percent of the females were able to find jobs after four years in the country. The data underscores considerable rates of downward occupational mobility in both periods. Nevertheless, the rate of downward mobility or occupational loss was much more pronounced in the 90s than in the 70s (Raijman and Semyonov, 1998). Despite these differences, it is important to note that immigrants from the FSU constitute the largest single country of origin group among the Jewish population of Israel.

Immigrants from the countries of the FSU have developed a highly organized community, both at the local and national level. Immigrants of the FSU are integrated in a highly dense network that includes family and friends. At the formal level, by the end of the 1980s a national umbrella organization representing the 42 immigrants' groups and voluntary organizations was created ("The Zionist Forum") and a national leadership was elected in democratic elections. The goal was to create a non-partisan national organization representing immigrant interest vis-à-vis the national government. As the national elections of 1996 approached, leaders of the organization realized that influence in the national immigration policy requires not a pressure group but a political party, with elected parliament members. The leadership of the Zionist Forum announced the formation of a national party of immigrants (Israel Be Aliyah). In the 1996 national election, the Israel Be Aliyah party won 7 of the 120 parliament seats, entered the government coalition and two of their leaders became the Minister of Immigrant Absorption and the Minister of Industry and Commerce. In 1998 the party decided to run in the local elections and in 20 large localities the party ran alone (Leshem and Lisak, 2000). This type of political organization is the result of a number of factors. First, the migra-

tion wave of the 90s is a migration movement motivated more by the aim to improve personal economic and political conditions. Second, the current migration is mainly of urban immigrants who are highly educated. The size of the immigration and its professional composition created a demand for mass communication media (newspapers and journals) in Russian. The Russian media contributed to the development of the community as they supported the community members' economic activity advertising immigrant establishments. Finally, a shift in the national migration policy from "bureaucratic absorption" to "individual absorption" contributed to the formation of an immigrants' party. The consequence of the shift in the national policy was a low level of governmental involvement and a reduction in the services provided by the national government. The shift made informal social networks, immigrant voluntary organizations and the local government very important in helping the immigrant to access housing, employment, language classes and health services. The decentralization of the immigration policy contributed to the formation of a highly organized immigrant community (Leshem and Lisak, 2000; Katz, 2000).

Since the beginning of the current wave of immigration, 53,000 new immigrants from the FSU have settled in Haifa and have caused a dramatic demographic change in the city and some of its traditional neighborhoods. Haifa is the third largest city in Israel, with a population of 255,300 residents. It is a culturally diverse city, where an urban secular Israeli population shares space with an ultra-orthodox Jewish religious population, new immigrants from the FSU, and Israeli-Arab residents.

Whereas in 1990 the immigrants and the Arab population each represented almost 10 percent of the population, by 1999 the non-immigrant Jewish population had decreased from 80 percent to 66 percent of the city's population and the immigrant element had doubled from 10 percent to 21 percent of the city population. The Israeli-Arab element increased somewhat, from 9.68 percent to 13 percent.

The spatial distribution of the immigrant population in the city is uneven.

Immigrants are residentially concentrated in three sub-quarters of the city: Hadar Hacarmel, Western Haifa and Neve Shannan. In these sub-quarters the percentage of immigrants is above the city average (21%) ranging from 30 to 37 percent. Of course, it is important to remember that these figures represent the distribution according to city sub-quarters. A sub-quarter is a relatively large residen-

tial area (50,000 residents), but examination of the statistical units (5,000 residents) shows that the concentration in smaller areas is much larger. In a number of statistical units in these three sub-quarters the new immigrants represent between 40 and 60 percent of the population (Mesch, 2002).

The concentration of immigrants is the lowest in the Carmel area, an upper middle-class area where a higher percentage of the residents hold professional and academic degrees. A relatively large percentage of the new immigrants are residentially concentrated in the Hadar Hacarmel sub-quarter. Before the arrival of the immigrants, Hadar Hacarmel was an inner city area rapidly declining on every urban indicator. Between 1972 and 1989 the population fell by 17 percent; average income and average education were below the city average. The proportion of the elderly residents in the area was higher than the overall proportion in the city, the proportion of minorities and ultra-orthodox religious groups in the total population was increasing, housing density was higher than in other areas of the city, and the proportion of homeowners was lower.

New immigrants become a new community, and the potential for conflicts with other communities arises. Housing immigrants in a declining and low-income area is problematic. Studies have shown that attitudes toward immigrants in Israel vary according to socioeconomic and employment status. People of low SES tend to have a more negative view of the FSU immigration than those of middle and high SES in the sense that they perceive the immigration as affecting their ability to secure better jobs, housing, and quality of life. Low-income people believe that the extent of the immigration should be limited and that conflicts are likely to arise due to scarcity of resources (Isralowitz and Abu Saad, 1992).

Two central policies have shaped the institutional arrangements of the immigrants' integration process in Israel. First, the national policy on immigration changed from "bureaucratic integration" to "direct absorption". Until the late 1980s, the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption typically provided housing, lessons in Hebrew, and job referrals for new immigrants. During the late 1980s, that policy changed to "direct absorption" shifting the responsibility for immigrant integration away from the government. Upon landing in Israel, immigrants now receive an absorption basket from the government, with a certain sum of money meant to last for a limited period of time. Immigrants are now expected to find housing and

jobs during their first months in the country through informal networks (Lipshitz, 1996).

The second policy change was privatization of municipal services. In January 1995, a non-governmental organization (NGO) was established with the goal to provide housing, employment, and educational services to the immigrant population. The NGO has a board of directors, headed by a former immigrant, representatives of different immigrant organizations, and representatives of local government. Only 40 percent of the operating budget comes from the local government.

In general, the very existence of such an organization creates tensions between the immigrant population and the host society. The role of the immigrant NGO in relation to social integration and ethnic identity has been questioned in several ways, and the NGO has been seen both as helping immigrants to integrate, through providing a community for them within the host society, and as creating a separatist environment. By means of regulating the relationship between the immigrant community and local government, this structure ensures that the needs of the immigrants are recognized, but it also means that the immigrant community's needs are coming increasingly into conflict with local government.

Local government is highly sensitive to the needs and importance of creating a working relationship with the immigrants from the FSU in Haifa. Naturally, one good reason is that they represent 20 percent of the population in any election. But there are more fundamental reasons. Haifa has suffered from a decline in population, and even negative population growth. The immigrants from the FSU represent one of the few sources of population growth for the city, and their contribution has been most important in the renewal of inner city schools and other municipal services. Local government is very sensitive to their needs and invests efforts in retaining this population. In terms of political representation, 20 percent of the local City Council members are from the FSU immigrant community representing the two different FSU immigrants' lists, in accordance with their representation in the population.

In sum, one of the main features of the settlement of immigrants in Haifa is their high residential concentration. A large number of immigrants are located in a relatively small area. The immigrant community is concentrated within a few blocks and is easily recognized. Their high concentration in the inner city area creates conflicts, as they share space with the ultra-orthodox religious Jew-

ish community and with the Israeli-Arab community. In addition, the new immigrants have shown a high level of political mobilization, reflected in various educational and political organizations that negotiate with local government over the allocation of financial as well as political resources to the ethnic community.

Their high concentration, as well as the potential conflicts with other communities, makes them an interesting case for exploration of the variables influencing political participation.

Sampling and Methods

The data for this study were collected from December 1998 to March 1999. The study population consisted of new immigrants from the FSU who had entered Israel since 1989 and resided in Haifa. Data were obtained through the Department of Strategic Planning and Research of the Haifa Municipality. This department keeps records on all immigrant households that apply for local tax reductions, for which they are eligible during their first three years in the country. From this population, a sample was chosen through a series of steps. First, following inspection of the city sub-quarters, those where new immigrants from the FSU resided were selected. Second, the percentage of immigrants residing in each statistical area was calculated and statistical areas were grouped in three categories: areas in which less than 10 percent of the population were FSU immigrants, areas in which 11–40 percent of the population were FSU immigrants, and areas in which more than 41 percent of the population were immigrants. In the next step, statistical areas were grouped into five larger areas (sub-quarters). From each sub-quarter, 200 addresses of immigrants were randomly chosen. Interviewers were sent to these 1,000 addresses to conduct face-to-face interviews. It transpired that at 110 of the addresses selected, the residents of the households were not immigrants; and at 210 apartments the interviewer could not contact the resident after two follow-ups. Some of the addresses of the immigrants were probably outdated. A total of 680 households were contacted and 512 interviews were completed. The questionnaire was administered in Russian and took about 40 minutes to complete.

Measures

This study is restricted to immigrants that participated and voted in the elections. In order to create the depend-

ent variable two items were used. Respondents were asked if they had voted in the last municipal elections in Haifa, and if the response was “yes” they were asked to indicate for which party they voted. For the analysis the variable was coded as a dummy variable. When the respondent indicated a vote for a Russian list the variable was coded 1, and other votes were coded 0. As the dependent variable had 2 categories a logistic regression analysis was used.

The most important independent variable of the study was the percentage of immigrants who lived in the respondent’s neighborhood. The measure was obtained by matching the addresses of the respondents with the percentage of immigrants that resided in the statistical unit (residential areas with a population of about 5,000 residents), according to the 1995 Israel Census of Housing and Population. After a preliminary inspection of the variable 3 categories were defined: immigrants living in neighborhoods with 1-10 percent of immigrants, immigrants living in neighborhoods in which 11-40 percent are immigrants and immigrants living in areas in which 41-60 percent are immigrants. Two other items were used to measure social integration. Respondents were asked whether the closest individual that they would be likely to ask for help is a native Israeli or a new immigrant and whether the closest person that they socialize with is Israeli or a new immigrant. “Israeli” was coded as 1 and “new immigrant” as 0.

Acculturation was measured by a number of variables. One was length of residence in the country. Another was language fluency. This variable was measured with items that indicated the individual’s ability to understand a question and to read a letter in Hebrew.

To measure the respondents’ perception of alienation and discrimination two survey items were used. The respondents were asked to indicate the extent of agreement with the statements “I do not understand things in this country”, and “Immigrants are discriminated against in Israel”. Agreements with the items (strongly agree and agree) were coded 1 and disagreement was coded 0.

A number of additional independent variables were used in the study. Age and years of formal education were measured as continuous variables. Marital status was coded as a dummy variable with 1 indicating married and 0 other. Employment status was measured as a dummy variable with 1 indicating that the respondent is currently employed and 0 indicating unemployed. Home ownership was measured with an item that indicated if the respondent owned the home. “Yes” responses were coded 1 and “no” responses were coded as 0.

Findings

The respondents were on average 46 years old and 64.9 percent were married. Immigrants from the FSU represent a highly educated group as indicated by an average of 13.69 years of schooling. Almost half of them (48.7%) report that they had already bought a home although their average stay in the country was almost 6 years. The distribution of the respondents according to their residential concentration was quite even, about a third reside in neighborhoods in which between 1 to 10 percent of the population are new immigrants, 30.8 percent reside in neighborhoods in which 11-40 percent are immigrants and 36 percent reside in neighborhoods in which there is a high residential concentration of immigrants from the FSU.

The findings regarding political participation are important, as immigrants appear to participate in the same proportion as the general population. In the last municipal election of Haifa, 70 percent of the respondents reported that they had voted. Of the respondents that participated in the last elections, 64.8 percent voted for the lists that are headed by FSU immigrants.

As the percentage of respondents that voted for a Russian party is so large, it is interesting to find out whether they differ from the respondents that voted for other Israeli parties. First we explore the relationship between spatial and social concentration and the patterns of vote.

Table 1
Distribution of Vote According
to Residential Segregation

Type of Vote	0-10	11-40	41-60	Total
Non Russian Party	44.3	28.7	27.0	100.0
Russian Party	23.3	33.0	43.7	100.0

Phi: .226 ($p < .00001$)

Table 1 presents the relationship between residential segregation and voting behavior. According to the table the higher the percentage of immigrants residing in the immigrant neighborhood the higher the percentage of respondents that voted for a Russian list. Of the immigrants that voted for an Israeli party 44.3 percent lived in a neighborhood with less than 10 percent immigrants, whereas 43.7 percent of the immigrants who voted for a Russian list resided in a neighborhood in which between 41 to 60 percent of the residents are immigrants. This relationship between voting choice and percentage of immigrants in the respondents' neighborhood was statistically significant.

In the next section we examine the relationship between the origin of closest friends and voting behavior.

Type of Vote	Russian	Israeli	Total
Non Russian Party	45.4	54.6	100.0
Russian Party	59.0	41.0	100.0

Phi: .130 (p < .021)

Table 2

Distribution of Vote According to Social relationships (Socializing with an Israeli)

Type of Vote	Russian	Israeli	Total
Non Russian Party	53.7	46.3	100.0
Russian Party	73.5	26.5	100.0

Phi: .200 (p < .000)

Table 3

Distribution of Vote According to Social relationships (Asking an Israeli or a Russian Immigrant for Help)

The results in Tables 2 and 3 show a similar pattern. The relationship between voting behavior and social support was statistically significant. A higher percentage of individuals that reported voting for a Russian party reported having an immigrant as the closest person providing social support in time of need and socializing with a Russian immigrant for fun. Individuals who reported voting for an Israeli list reported having more Israeli friends and fewer Russian friends. According to the results it is clear that spatial and social segregation of immigrants are related to their pattern of voting. A high percentage of spatially and socially segregated immigrants reported voting for an immigrant party in the last local elections. Apparently spatial and social segregation from the local population facilitate the mobilization of resources along to ethnic lines.

The next question to be explored is the extent to which voting according to ethnic lines is a temporal or persistent pattern. One way to explore this issue is by looking at the relationship between acculturation variables and voting patterns.

Type of Vote	0-3 years	4-7 years	7-10	Total
Non Russian Party	13.9	20.5	65.6%	100.0
Russian Party	28.3	28.3	43.4%	100.0

Phi: .218 (p < .000)

Table 4

Distribution of Vote According to Length of Residence in the Country

Table 4 shows clear differences according to length of residence in the country. Two third of the voters for an Israeli party were longer-term residents (between 7 to 10 years in the country). Although only 14 percent of the vot-

ers for an Israeli party were in the country less than 3 years, it is noticeable that 28 percent of the voters for a Russian Party were less than 3 years in the country. Overall it is clear that voters for the Russian Party tended to report less time of residence in the country than voters for the Israeli Parties.

Another measure of acculturation is language ability.

Table 5
Distribution of Vote According
to language ability
(understanding a question)

Type of Vote	Unable to understand	Able to Understand	Total
Non Russian Party	35.3	64.7	100.0
Russian Party	48.2	51.8	100.0

Phi: .124 (p < .002)

Table 6
Distribution of Vote According
to reading ability
(understanding a letter)

Type of Vote	Unable to understand	Able to Understand	Total
Non Russian Party	41.8	58.2	100.0
Russian Party	57.0	43.0	100.0

Phi: .145 (p < .007)

The results of Table 5 and Table 6 confirm our previous finding regarding length of residence. A majority of the voters for the Israeli Parties demonstrated better language ability. Close to 65 percent of the voters for the Israeli party reported being able to understand a question and almost 60 percent were able to read and understand a letter. Regarding the voters for a Russian list, less than half of them were able to understand a letter and half of them reported being able to understand a question. The results regarding length of residence in the country and language ability support acculturation theory. According to this perspective the vote for an immigrant party is temporary and represents the lack of understanding of the local language and lack of knowledge of local values and norms. As time goes by and immigrants become more fluent in the local language and local political issues and parties, their willingness to vote for an immigrant party should decrease.

The main hypothesis of this study argues that perceptions of discrimination create a general state of alienation that encourages vote for an immigrant party. In the next section the distribution of vote according to perceptions of discrimination and alienation are presented.

The hypothesis that the vote for a Russian party is motivated by perceptions of discrimination is not sup-

ported by the data. Almost the same percentage of voters for an Israeli and for a Russian Party report felt discriminated against.

Type of Vote	No Discrimination	Discrimination	Total
Non Russian Party	56.0	44.0	100.0
Russian Party	54.0	46.0	100.0

Phi: .020 NS

Type of Vote	No Alienation	Alienation	Total
Non Russian Party	49.6	50.4	100.0
Russian Party	47.2	52.8	100.0

Phi: .022 NS

The hypothesis that the vote for a Russian Party can be motivated by perceptions of alienation was not supported by the data. About the same percentage of voters for a Russian and Israeli list reported feeling unable to understand processes and things in the country.

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Table 7

Distribution of the vote according to perceptions that Israel discriminates against immigrants

Table 8

Distribution of Vote According to perceptions of alienation (do not understand the country)

Multivariate Analysis

Although the bi-variate results provide a clear indication for the effects of social and spatial integration and acculturation in the voting patterns of immigrants, a multivariate analysis is required. In the next step we present the results of a logistic regression predicting the odds of voting for a Russian Party.

According to the results spatial and social segregation and acculturation variables are related to the voting behavior. The longer the immigrant is in the country the less likely he/she is to vote for a Russian Party. Each additional year reduces the odds of voting for a Russian Party by 19 percent. Having close friends that are Israelis reduce the odds of voting for a Russian party. Finally, the most important factor is residential segregation. The higher the residential segregation the higher the odds of voting for a Russian and not an Israeli Party. Consistent with our descriptive findings no relationship was found between perceptions of rejection and discrimination of immigrants and voting behavior.

Table 9
Regression Analysis Predicting
the Odds of Voting for an
immigrant party

Variable name	Model 1		Model 2	
	Parameter Estimate (S.E.)	Odds Ratio	Parameter Estimate (S.E.)	Odds Ratio
Age	-.003 (.012)	.997	-.001 (.12)	.999
Married	.638** (.302)	1.893	.625** (.323)	1.868
Employed	-.352 (.366)	.703	-.208 (.391)	.594
Length of Residence	-.160** (.062)	.852	-.147** (.066)	.863
Apartment Owner	-.197 (.323)	.821	-.570 (.363)	.565
Israeli Friend	-.412 (.289)	.662	-.154 (.327)	.857
Israeli for Support	-.576** (.295)	.562	-.836** (.325)	.433
Language Ability	-.186 (.174)	.830	-.059 (.189)	.943
Israel Discriminates			.014 (.332)	1.014
Alienation			-.076 (.333)	.927
Percentage of Immigrants			2.943** (.850)	18.964
Constant	2.179** (.736)		1.165 (.850)	
R ²	.163		.232	

Discussion

The goal of the present study was to examine the voting patterns of immigrants from the FSU in Israel in the 1998 local elections in Haifa. Two research questions guided this research: Do immigrants from the FSU vote in the election according to ethnic lines? Are voting patterns the result of immigrants' perception of discrimination or the result of acculturation processes?

Regarding the first question our results show a clear tendency for the new immigrants to vote along ethnic lines and for the party that claims to represent the interests of the new immigrants. According to our results in the last municipal election, 70 percent of the respondents reported that they had voted. Of the respondents that participated in the last elections, 64.8 percent voted for the

lists that were headed by FSU immigrants. These results imply that this group of immigrants expressed a high interest for local politics and was highly involved in expressing their voice. These results probably reflect two different but related processes. First, the current group of immigrants is characterized by high levels of education. Education has been found to increase the political involvement of individuals. Second, the local election is of direct interest to immigrants. The shift in the policy of absorption from a bureaucratic model to direct absorption means that the local authority has a say in the provision of services to new immigrants such as help in finding housing, labor skills training, and language courses.

In the second step we explored three different explanations for voting for an immigrant party. The competitive approach holds that ethnicity is an instrument for mobilization with the aim of increasing a group's access to economic, social and political sources, regardless of its location in the stratification system. The reactive approach argues that ethnic mobilization is fueled by people's grievances about their disadvantaged status and their determination to redress it and pursue their political interests. The acculturation approach argues that the type of political participation is related to acculturation factors, emphasizing the role of integration variables that influence the political participation of immigrants. The main factors considered here are length of residence and language proficiency. Participation in politics is a time-dependent process that requires knowledge of the political system, the different political parties and the different tactics being used in the country for political influence.

Our results provide some support for the competitive approach. The positive effect of spatial and social segregation indicates some advantages of the ability to mobilize resources for political purposes. The number and concentration of the immigrants from the FSU are preconditions for creating an immigrant community able to develop communication tools, such as newspapers, community centers and non-governmental organizations. Social and spatial segregation facilitates the mobilization of resources necessary for political mobilization.

Our results do not provide any direct evidence for the reactive perspective. The results show a non-statistically significant relationship between perceptions of discrimination, isolation and alienation from the local society and voting behavior. Yet it is important to note that spatial and residential segregation might be providing some evidence for negative attitudes of the society. Sometimes im-

migrants choose to live in residentially segregated areas to avoid discrimination and negative attitudes of the society.

Finally, the results provide some indication that voting for an immigrant party might be a temporal process. Length of residence and ability to use the language were negatively related to the likelihood of voting for an immigrant party.

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