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Migrant Participation in Local European Democracies: Understanding Social Capital through Social Movement Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Social capital is examined within the framework of responses to non-European Union immigration in four European cities: Lille and Toulouse, in France, and Florence and Bari, in Italy. Analysis of variations in immigrant participation in local party politics and nongovernmental organizations indicates that social capital is not a monolithic construct and qualitative differences must be included in the analysis if the role of social capital is to be understood. Social movement analysis is used to explain these differences, by examining the presence and autonomy of immigrant social-movement entrepreneurs, the character of local political opportunity structures in which these elites act, and the cultural framework that significantly influences local integration regimes.

Keywords: 1. international migration, 2. social capital, 3. immigration policy, 4. France, 5. Italy.

RESUMEN

Se analiza el capital social en el contexto de las respuestas a la inmigración que no proviene de la Unión Europea en cuatro ciudades europeas: Lille y Toulouse, en Francia, y Florencia y Bari, en Italia. El análisis de las variaciones en la participación de los inmigrantes en la política de los partidos políticos locales y en las organizaciones no gubernamentales indica que el capital social no es una construcción monolítica y que para entender su papel se deben incluir las diferencias cualitativas. El análisis de los movimientos sociales se usa para explicar estas diferencias al examinar la presencia y la autonomía de los empresarios del movimiento social inmigrante, el carácter de las estructuras de oportunidad política local en las que estas élites actúan y el marco cultural que influye significativamente en los regímenes de integración local.

Palabras clave: 1. migración internacional, 2. capital social, 3. política de inmigración, 4. Francia, 5. Italia.

The arrival of non-European Union (non-EU) immigrants to Europe has put pressure on the political systems of host states, especially at the local level. Academic and political debates on “citizenship,” “integration,” “incorporation,” “insertion,” and “multiculturalism” have dominated urban political agendas concerning migrants. Although terminology varies, scholars of migration essentially focus on the same issue: immigrant participation in host societies and the incorporation of migrants into the political and socioeconomic fabric of the host communities. Much discussion has focused specifically on migrants’ individual and collective participation in local politics, examined in a variety of ways. Two prominent approaches focus on (1) migrant social movements and collective action (see Della Porta, 1999; Simeant, 1998), and (2) the creation of multi-ethnic social capital (see Penninx *et al.*, 2004; Ireland, 1994).

This article examines social capital within the framework of responses to non-EU immigration in European cities. It argues that social capital, defined as the creation of a political community based on equal access, multi-ethnic participation, and shared base values through which inter-ethnic communication is filtered, can be better understood through the use of social movement analysis. In the immigration literature, there has been little dialogue between the social movement and social capital approaches. On one hand, scholars of migrant social movements in Europe focus on collective action as a response to the shortcomings of local political systems, indicating a lack of social capital. Conversely, social capital approaches examine collective action as a sign of the successful incorporation of migrants into urban systems.

This theoretical divide is evident beyond the immigration literature. Since Robert Putnam published *Making Democracy Work* in 1993, social capital has been at the center of debates on political culture and modern democracy. Among Putnam’s greatest critics are leading scholars of social movements (see, for example, Tarrow, 1996). This article contends that despite differing interpretations of collective action, many similarities exist between the social movement and social capital approaches. Indeed, through the comparative study of local immigration politics in Europe, social movement analysis offers significant tools for understanding social capital. First, both approaches focus on nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other support organizations, but social movement literature addresses the de-stabilizing effects of protest, whereas social capital literature examines the role of NGOs as pillars of modern democracy. Second, social movement studies discuss the impact of collective action on “democratic accountability,” whereas the social capital school attempts to demonstrate links between NGO activity and “government responsiveness.” Third, both study the question of

“political inclusion,” defined in terms of participation and the openness of political and social systems. Finally, the collective action question is the central problem analyzed in both fields.

Research Design and Methods

This article focuses on four cities chosen for their structural similarities, Florence and Bari in Italy and Toulouse and Lille in France. It derives from a larger project that I developed on the integration of non-EU immigrants in those cities, which was based on archival research and approximately two hundred interviews between 1995 and 2001 with members of local, provincial, and regional governments and nongovernmental actors, including the local and regional leaders of political parties, trade unions, voluntary associations, economic cooperatives, and immigrant communities.

To control for population size, I chose mid-sized metropolitan areas that share similar immigration histories and demographic compositions (migrants represent between 5% and 8% of each city’s population).¹ These cities also represent cases where inter-ethnic political communities have developed. These communities exhibit important similarities and differences in their migrant composition, which controls for this variable. Globally, the immigrant populations display similar characteristics. First, the immigrant population in the four cities comprises several nationalities, the largest group in each constituting about one-quarter of the total legal immigrant population. Second, women represent between 50% and 56% of the legal immigrant population in each city.² Third, each has large immigrant communities that spoke the host language before arrival: Most North Africans in Toulouse and Lille already knew French and many Albanians, Somalians, and Ethiopians in Florence and Bari already spoke Italian.

Important differences regarding the ethnic composition of each city’s migrant population control for the impact of ethnicity on political incorporation. As is typical of most French cities, migrants from the Maghreb, especially Algeria and Morocco, have a high profile in Lille and Toulouse. Both cities also have populations from sub-Saharan Africa. In Lille, there is a large Congolese community because of the city’s proximity to Belgium. Lille’s role as a transit point between London, Paris, and Amsterdam has led to a recent influx of Chinese and East

¹ Florence, 650,000; Bari, 630,000 (CENSIS [www.censis.it]); Toulouse, 650,000; and Lille Metropole, 900,000 (INSEE [www.insee.fr]).

² Bari 27%, Florence 28%, Toulouse 25%, and Lille 27%. Data in this paragraph are from official censuses: CENSIS and INSEE (see note 1).

Europeans, especially through human smuggling networks that have been established in this area.

The Italian cases exhibit greater ethnic variety. In Florence, the Chinese are by far the largest migrant population. There are also significant communities of migrants from the Philippines, Cape Verde, Sri Lanka, Ethiopia, Somalia, Romania, Albania, the former Yugoslavia, Morocco, Tunisia, Egypt, Iran, Nigeria, and the United States. Given its proximity to the Balkans, Bari's recent migration flows have been dominated by Albanians and inhabitants of the former Yugoslavia. Bari also has sizable migrant communities from Morocco, Tunisia, Cape Verde, and Somalia. Many Palestinians came to study at the university (especially during the 1980s) and later settled in the city.

Finally, a focus on two countries allows me to systematically vary country differences across national, city pairs, while controlling items within each pair. The selection also allows me to control for the structure of local economies: Florence and Toulouse have mixed economies based on commerce, tourism, and industry, whereas Bari and Lille are industrial cities attempting to rejuvenate themselves after recent recessions.

Understanding Qualitative Differences in Social Capital

Social capital theorists contend that participation in NGOs strengthens the cultural bases of democratic societies by increasing interpersonal trust and aiding the creation of communal identities. By emphasizing participation in the nongovernmental sector, these arguments focus on the institutionalization of social norms. They attempt to explain why democratic norms exist and how they are maintained.

Opponents of the social capital approach claim that these theories are ill-defined and lack adequate measurement because of normative and methodological difficulties associated with cultural phenomena. The lack of conceptual consensus within the literature has facilitated these attacks: The definitions for social capital range from the creation of strong collective cultural bonds to the simple creation of a common market of ideas or an accepted language of discussion.

This article does not defend one, single definition of social capital; instead it defines it broadly as political community based on equal access to institutions, political participation, and shared base political values. This article utilizes elements of social movement analysis to better explain the qualitative nature of social capital. Even though proposed theoretical and operational social capital definitions vary extensively, certain characteristics remain constant in these conceptual models. Paolo de Renzio (1998) accurately lists traits present in most social capital studies: 1) social capi-

tal deals with social organization in that it focuses on the structure of human relations; 2) social capital theories focus on the economic, social and political spheres and examine how they influence each other; 3) these models discuss norms, values, and traditions that promote interpersonal trust while also examining social networks that bring citizens together to resolve communal problems; and 4) social capital is inherently positive.

This final characteristic is the most problematic. Social capital is presented as a monolithic construct with inherent positive effects on democratic societies, such as government efficiency, interpersonal trust, economic development, democratic participation, and communal identity. In the field of immigration politics, social capital is either viewed as a communal resource for ethnic populations to improve their political or socioeconomic standing (see, for example, Portes, 1995; Waldinger, 2001) or it is discussed in terms of the extension of citizenship rights to migrants (Penninx *et al.*, 2004).

Recently, the monolithic nature of social capital has been questioned (De Renzio, 1998; Foley and Edwards, 1999; Sciarrone, 1998; Stolle and Ronchon, 1998) as authors have attempted to open the black box presented in earlier works. This article, thus, asks: "How does NGO activity influence democratic societies, positively or negatively, and what mechanisms cause variations in social capital?" It argues that democratic societies, even those considered backward (Southern Italy in Putnam's work as an example), have developed around structures of social interaction as well as cultural norms, which give meaning to those relationships. These meanings are not always positive. Moreover, I argue that distinctions between types of social capital do not always need to be viewed as "more" or "less" positive, but rather as simply different models of social interaction. This is certainly true of urban immigration politics. This study indicates that levels and types of social capital, discussed in terms of the participation of migrants in local political systems, vary from community to community, reflecting local cultural and institutional variables.

*Social Capital and Local Immigration Politics:
Identifying Integration Regimes*

Social capital is a theoretical construct that focuses on the structure and content of political and social interaction, as well as on the resulting cultural norms. The integration of foreigners entails two political spheres: 1) political and civil rights under liberal notions of citizenship, and 2) cultural acceptance within communitarian expectations. These aspects of local immigration regimes mirror the broader social capital issues discussed above. The first sphere of local immigration politics addresses

structural questions of social interaction whereas the second addresses its content. Social capital exists in each of this study's cases, but analysis of the structure and content of the cities' immigration regimes highlights differences in the types of communities that have developed.

Immigration, Public Discourse, and the Political Agenda

The first question posed in this study is: "How is the immigration issue presented on the local political agenda?" Some immigration scholars (for example, Ireland, 1994; Della Porta, 1999) have noted the impact of political discourse on public attitudes, which reflect notions of trust and community. Four distinct integration regimes were apparent with regard to political discourse (Table 1). Lille has a "progressive regime"

Table 1. Urban integration regimes.

	<i>Lille</i>	<i>Florence</i>	<i>Toulouse</i>	<i>Bari</i>
<i>Focus of integration agenda</i>	Political and social rights	Multiculturalism, economic integration, anti-racism	Cultural assimilation, economic integration	Economic integration
<i>Most important issues on immigration agenda: Framing the question</i>	Social and economic integration of immigrants in periphery; fighting economic racism, crime, Islamic extremism; rights of sans papiers	Illegal vendors, crime, organized crime, Gypsies, housing, fighting racism (public attitudes), intercultural education	Social isolation in periphery, crime, relationship between immigrant youths and police, fighting economic racism	"Frontier of Europe": mass invasion, humanitarian disaster, border controls, organized crime, economic competition in agriculture sector
<i>Immigrant political activity and representation</i>	Greater political autonomy, effective immigrant representation	Limited political autonomy, limited immigrant representation	Limited political autonomy, lack of immigrant representation	Lack of political autonomy, ineffective immigrant representation
<i>Contact between local leaders and immigrant NGOs</i>	Political exchange with immigrant communities	Limited contacts with immigrant communities	No recognition of, nor direct contact with immigrant communities	Token contacts with immigrant communities
<i>Type of integration model</i>	Progressive definition of social, political, and cultural integration	Paternalistic model of integration: little political exchange	Individual is center of assimilation model with no recognition of cultural differences	Humanitarian model of integration based on social need and moral obligation

that includes a political agenda focused strongly on issues of political and civil rights, group empowerment, economic integration, and anti-racism. In Florence, one also finds positive discussions of integration, usually framed in terms of multiculturalism, but with a strong focus on anti-racism because anti-immigrant forces have succeeded in portraying immigration as a threat to the city's well being by linking it to organized crime, economic substitution of the local labor force, and low-cost, imitation artisan goods. Thus, Florence represents a "mixed regime." Toulouse, a "republican regime," has an agenda focused on anti-racism with limited positive discussions of integration and city leaders openly espousing cultural assimilation. Finally, in Bari, integration remains a relative non-issue. The city represents a "conservative Christian" regime. Humanitarian aid to illegal migrants is the central aspect of the integration movement, which is tied to the Catholic Church. Immigration is discussed in terms of these clandestine waves, human trafficking, and imported crime.

Political Participation and Representation

As stated above, immigrant political activity and representation are important aspects of social capital because these variables are fundamental characteristics of democratic systems, especially at the local level. Both focus on immigrants' level of willingness and of ability to participate in local politics. Analysis of these variables clearly indicates four separate models of immigrant participation.

Lille represents the most integrated of the four cities because a truly sophisticated immigrant political elite has formed within that city. All political parties, except on the extreme right, present foreign-origin candidates on their lists for local, national, and European elections. Even though many of these candidates are included only symbolically, others are serious contenders and have won seats in the City Council, Regional Council, French Parliament, and European Parliament. Many neighborhood council representatives have immigrant origins. Moreover, foreign-born candidates have even gained personal followings, and with that, independence from political parties. Facing a disagreement with the party, such candidates can potentially shift to another, taking many votes with them.

Additionally, immigrants in Lille influence local leaders through two advisory councils created by the local government: the Conseil Communal de Concertation, with elected members, including immigrants, from numerous associations, who address the city's social and economic issues; and the Schema Local d'Integration (SLI), responsible for advising

local leaders on integration programs and strategies. The SLI is in constant contact with associations and grassroots movements, as well as city leaders. Thus, migrants enjoy representation in Lille through traditional channels as well as special bodies working on social integration and immigration issues.

Immigrant representation in Florence, Toulouse, and Bari is much less developed than in Lille. Immigrants appear on party lists in Florence and Toulouse, but they lack the autonomy enjoyed by their Lille counterparts. In Toulouse, the immigrant presence in politics is merely symbolic. For example, the mayor has appointed an Algerian-born businessman as city councilor "in charge of integration." However, this individual is out of touch with the local immigrant community, and many of its members even ridicule him. In the eyes of many immigrants, this appointment is merely a "symbolic gesture" by local political officials, who wish to create and maintain an image of representation that does not really exist. Thus, it has devalued party politics. No special bodies have been created for the purpose of immigrant representation, and integration strategies are developed through social service bureaucracies, such as the Fonds d'Action Sociale (FAS), the Service Sociale d'Aide aux Emigrants (SSAE) and the City Department for Social Affairs and Solidarity, all of which lack points of public access. Representation exists only through informal networks created between some political leaders and migrant associations.

Compared to France, the Italian cases are characterized by the small number of foreign-born candidates on party lists, resulting from lower naturalization rates. However, in Florence, a number of immigrants have become active in party politics, and they have even more legitimacy than their counterparts in Toulouse. Nonetheless, they enjoy nowhere near the autonomy of Lille's immigrant candidates. In Florence, immigrants interested in party politics are dependent on the parties of the left, the Democratici di Sinistra (DS) and the Rifondazione Comunista. Immigrant candidates from these two parties have won seats in neighborhood councils and in town councils in Florence's suburbs. However, immigrant candidates, like their native-born Italian counterparts, have difficulty expressing themselves as individuals within the rigid party structure. For example, in June 1999, Syrian-born Yusuf Hamad won the largest number of preference votes in the election for one of the city's five neighborhood councils. Because the DS won the city election thanks to a coalition of center-left parties, other parties in this coalition asked for the presidency of one of the neighborhood councils in exchange for political support. The other councils had established Florentine politicians as their presidents, so the local party chose to concede Mr. Hamad's neighborhood council to the Partito Popolare Italiano for the first two years of a

four-year term. This decision is not a question of ethnicity, but because immigrants like Mr. Hamad have no alternatives to the DS in local politics, their bargaining position within the party is weak.

Florence's advisory councils on migration issues are characterized by a significant lack of authority. City, provincial and regional councils include political leaders, immigrants, and representatives of native NGOs. These bodies act as useful spaces to hold public discussion on questions concerning integration, and they also coordinate policy objectives dictated by local governments. However, their lobbying power for alternative integration policies is weak.

Finally, Bari represents the least developed of the four cases. The city has almost no immigrant political entrepreneurs, and immigrants generally do not participate in party politics, preferring to concentrate their activities in the nongovernmental sector. As a result, they do not hold any leadership positions within local political institutions or party structures. Immigrant councils have been established in Bari at both the city and regional levels but both are impotent owing to a total lack of governmental support and migrant interest.

Immigrant Activity in NGOs

Obviously, channels of representation extend beyond government and political parties. Social movements and NGOs are prominent on the agendas of political scientists. For decades, these arenas were the only channels open to immigrants in Western Europe, whose needs were often ignored by government officials. On one hand, autonomous movements gave migrants a collective voice in local politics. Collaboration with left-wing groups, such as labor unions, Christian organizations, and "new" social movements (environmentalists, for example) strengthened immigrant participation in West European politics at both the local and nation levels.

In most European cities, immigrant NGOs have maintained their autonomy with regard to the services they offer user populations. Conversely, in order to be heard, migrant social movements often rely on the support of native NGOs. Autonomy is as equally important in the nongovernmental sector as it is in party politics. Moreover, access to local government officials also affects migrants' ability to influence policy agendas. For this reason, this article's analysis of social capital includes examination of the structure of nongovernmental activity in addition to a discussion of its importance. Immigrant participation in the nongovernmental sector, in terms of individual activity in native groups and the presence of immigrant NGOs, is most complete in Lille where mi-

grants participate in both types of organizations (Table 2). In Bari, immigrant NGOs are generally weak and poorly organized, and migrants rarely mobilize politically through native NGOs. Florence and Toulouse represent mixed models.

Table 2. Immigrant participation in the nongovernmental sector.

		<i>Collective participation</i>	
		<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>
<i>Individual participation</i>	<i>Strong</i>	Lille	Florence
	<i>Weak</i>	Toulouse	Bari

Some significant observations concerning the character of migrant participation in local nongovernmental sectors arises from this analysis of the four cities. In Lille, migrant activity is generally well-coordinated and the staffs of migrant NGOs are largely professional and stable. This is, in part, related to the unity of the local migrant community discussed above. However, this can also be attributed to the activities of local officials who fund the migrant nongovernmental sector and offer institutional support. Conversely, in Bari, which is considered a transit city for many migrants entering Italy, the instability of the local population has made individual mobilization difficult. Moreover, the lack of concrete institutional support has resulted in a less developed migrant nongovernmental sector.

Toulouse and Florence represent mixed models based on characteristics similar to the local political systems described above. In Toulouse, the commitment to republican politics and local leaders' failure to recognize ethnic diversity has created a split in the nongovernmental sector. On one hand, few migrants volunteer or work for native organizations. However, immigrant NGOs are well developed and professional, yet they cannot be considered integrated associations because little contact exists between them and their native counterparts. This has led to a model based on autonomy and isolation. Local officials fund the immigrant organizations but have few contacts with them, and the organizations often contest government positions on integration issues.

Conversely, in Florence, local government ignored migrants' needs for decades. For this reason, native NGOs with both left-wing and Catholic traditions became very active as lobbies for migrants' rights, and they also offered services to immigrants. These organizations have developed and essentially monopolized those arenas, creating a paternalistic system in which migrants depend on those organizations, rather than organizing collectively and autonomously. Many immigrant groups exist in Florence, but they focus more on cultural activities than on political or social objectives.

In terms of the structure of immigrant participation within local political systems in Western Europe, the presence of strong inter-ethnic social capital based on institutionalized collaboration has led in Lille to the development of autonomous and integrated immigrant activity, which can be considered a sign of political citizenship. Strong social capital also exists in Toulouse and Florence. However, structural problems in these cities—related to the relationship between migrants, native NGOs, and local officials—have resulted in social capital models that not only differ in character but that may be harmful. In Toulouse, migrants have mobilized in response to marginalization, resulting in self-isolation, which has hindered efforts to create inter-ethnic social capital. In Florence, inter-ethnic collaboration exists, but autonomy does not because of a paternalistic system that leads migrants to depend on local actors. In Bari, social capital is weak, and this has hurt the development of a public immigration agenda. These differences are reflected in immigrant social movements.

Explaining Social Capital

According to Sidney Tarrow (1994), collective action is a puzzle in that it “occurs even though it is so difficult to bring about.” Similarly, Charles Boix and Daniel Posner (1998) write about social capital: “Cooperation sometimes *does* take place in contexts where, according to theory, actors should have little incentive to engage in it.” Individuals are generally viewed as rational, self-interested beings. The social movement literature asks why collective action is possible given this premise. Early rational choice studies of collective action focused on overcoming the “free rider” problem through combinations of selective and collective incentives. According to authors, such as Mancur Olson, Russell Hardin, and others, individuals will not participate in collective action unless it is in their interest to do so. This is the same question that guides the social capital literature. In the case of immigration, why should local citizens and leaders expand cultural notions of citizenship in order to integrate immigrants? Why should immigrants take part in political and civic organizations of the host community, especially if those migrants intend to return to their home countries?

Analysis of Collective Action

For most of the 20th century, the collective action question was not a major part of the research agenda in political science. However, during

the 1960s and 1970s, scholars began asking: “What explains the timing and content of social movements?” Until then, protest had been viewed merely as the expression of discontent, especially when framed in Marxist terms. Early scholars in this field realized that this discontent was expressed at some moments but not at others, which created a theoretical puzzle: What accounts for these differences?

In the thirty years that followed, the social movement literature saw the development of three major strands that attempted to explain the mechanisms of political protest. The first focuses on resource mobilization and examines the internal structures of social movements and the people who run them. Two fundamental notions, introduced by John McCarthy and Mayer Zald (1973), refer to “social movement organizations” and “social movement entrepreneurs.” According to this approach, professional leaders utilize modern organizational techniques to create collective action.

The second strand of the social movement literature has come to almost dominate the subfield. Scholars in this camp focus on the social contexts that surround collective action, called opportunity structures. According to this approach, social movements result from political opportunities shaped by institutional variables, and then they create new ones. The premise of these works (Della Porta, 1990; Kitschelt, 1986) is their focus on *external* structural factors.

The third approach focuses on the content of protest rather than its structure. According to this school (Melucci, 1988; Gamson, 1988), political culture gives meaning to social movements, which constructs new identities. Thus, collective action does not result from the mere existence of social injustice but rather from collective identities.

Explaining Social Capital through Social Movement Analysis

The distinctions between the four cities would lead us to expect significant social movements related to immigration in three of the four cases. In fact, the social movements that exist in the cities closely reflect the types of social capital found in each. Lille has strong migrant-led movements focusing on social and political citizenship. Florentine movements are similar in content, but they are dominated by native Italian actors, generally from left-wing organizations. In Toulouse, migrant-led rallies for political integration draw fewer than one hundred participants, compared to general protests organized by native groups “against racism and discrimination,” which have attracted more than ten thousand people. Finally, Bari has no significant immigration-related social movements.

Briefly applying elements of social movement analysis, one can explain the strength and content of these movements: Immigration-related movements are strong in Lille and Florence because of the presence of numerous associations (entrepreneurs), a commitment to social justice that comes from left-wing traditions (cultural framework), and a general responsiveness to public protest by local officials (opportunity structure). In Toulouse, the presence of numerous NGOs (entrepreneurs) and lack of public access to local decision-makers (opportunity structure) have created a propensity for social movements. The issue of anti-racism is more significant than migrants' rights, specifically, because of the city's strong republican roots (cultural framework) that focus on "equal treatment." In Bari, immigration-related movements are less significant because NGOs are more focused on social than political goals (lack of entrepreneurs) and local elites dominate decision making without much public participation (restrictive opportunity structures). Few citizens mobilize over immigration because the local tradition of tolerance (cultural framework) is not conducive to strong passions on either side of the issue.

The social capital literature attempts to identify relationships between institutionalized participation and cultural norms, but a major shortcoming is that it fails to identify mechanisms linking these variables. This brief description of migration-related social movements shows that social movement analysis accurately identifies these mechanisms. Applying this analysis to social capital adequately explains the characteristics of the case cities.

Integration Organizations and Entrepreneurs

If strong leadership is the key to successful ethnic integration, then Lille should be the most integrated of the case cities. Immigrant-aid organizations are active in all four cities. However, only in Lille does one find a strong vision of real social and political integration. This can be explained by the presence of not only integration organizations but also integration entrepreneurs, in the immigrant communities as well as the local nongovernmental sector. This gives Lille's integration regime the most complete internal structure of the four cases (Table 3).

Table 3. Presence of integration entrepreneurs.

	<i>Strong immigrant entrepreneurs</i>	<i>Weak immigrant entrepreneurs</i>
<i>Strong native entrepreneurs</i>	Lille	Florence
<i>Weak native entrepreneurs</i>	Toulouse	Bari

The integration regime in Lille is characterized by both the native and immigrant communities' strong attention to immigrant social and political inclusion. Local authorities, taking a firm position on the issue, have carried out social programs, have attempted to legitimize non-EU immigration, and have included the city's foreign-born members (not necessarily citizens) within its social and political fabric. In the nongovernmental sector, organizations, such as MRAP, Ligue des Droits de L'Homme, and CIMADE, have given legal and political aid to the local immigrant population.

Immigrant organizations have also provided strong leadership in local integration politics. During the 1980s, France Plus, a national immigrant political association was very active in city politics, and since then, other organizations, such as Espace Integration and Texture, have formed as political lobbies and interest groups. These associations are the reason behind many immigrants' success in local politics. They sponsor open discussions on citizenship and integration and empower the local immigrant community as a political class. In some instances, they even mobilize voters. Another association, SAFIA, is active on issues that concern immigrant women. The local chapter of the Comité de Soutien des Sans Papiers is the most successful in France. They have helped regularize over fifteen hundred clandestine immigrants through seven hunger strikes with five hundred participants. Many other organizations exist on the neighborhood level, especially in Lille-Sud, where one finds the largest concentration of immigrants in the city.

In Florence and Toulouse, one finds partial integration regimes that seem to complement each other. Within the native community, Florence has strong political leadership on the question of integration, but city leaders have paid little attention to the issue. However, Florentine NGOs have been at the forefront of local immigration politics since the early 1990s (Koff, 1999). Labor unions and voluntary associations have consistently organized high-profile protests against racism, and conferences and programs on social integration. This is especially true in the Catholic Church, where the local cardinal and his political and social councilors have been at the forefront of debates regarding social integration. Traditionally left-wing associations have focused more on the expansion of cultural notions of citizenship and political rights, such as the right to vote in local elections and the creation of immigrant councils in local government.

One of the initiatives advanced by the Florentine nongovernmental sector has been the organization of the local immigrant community into a unified political body. Success was achieved in the early 1990s under the banner of the Coordinamento Anti-Razzista but because the group was too dependent on its Italian leadership, it had limited strength.

When its Italian co-presidents and founders left, the organization quickly disbanded. Since then, the local immigrant community has remained disorganized, divided, and without strong political entrepreneurs.

Unlike Florence, immigrants are the backbone of Toulouse's integration effort. On a city level, leadership on the immigration issue is weak. Native associations and local leaders have focused on the social problems linked to immigration, such as housing, health, unemployment, and crime, but they have done little in terms of political and civic enfranchisement of foreign-born residents. Within the city's immigrant quarter, the Mirail, hundreds of entrepreneurs and organizations exist. Through social and civic activities, local associations attempt to enfranchise immigrant residents and create a sense of civic virtue within the quarter. Community centers, such as the Maison de Quartier de Bagatelle, sponsor weekly cultural and social events that are filled to capacity. Debates are often organized on topics, such as religion, citizenship, racism, and social exclusion. One association, in particular, AMIS, is especially active in neighborhood activities because its leaders coordinate the quarter's civic activities. Moreover, the association attempts to construct links between the local immigrant community and native associations (see the section on opportunity structures below).

In Bari, native associations provide the only leadership in integration politics, but their activity is isolated. Because the region is often utilized by immigrants as a temporary residence before they move to northern Italian cities, a stable class of political entrepreneurs has not formed. Some personalities have emerged, but they have all moved away in time. Moreover, the immigrant communities are not just divided along ethnic lines (as is the case with Florence); those ethnic groups are also divided internally. In some ethnic communities, as many as four or five associations compete for a base. This debilitates immigrant involvement in politics as well as public discussions of citizenship. Weak immigrant leadership exists within local trade unions, but its impact on local social capital is marginal. Hence, the task of expanding local notions of citizenship is left to Catholic groups that focus more on social action than cultural and political discussion.

Opportunity Structures

Social capital arguments are heavily criticized for one glaring weakness: failure to account for external or systemic factors. Although entrepreneurs are often the mechanisms through which social capital and citizenship are expanded, these agents of integration are constrained by the systems in which they operate. Obviously, there are many types of

opportunity structures. Here, this article focuses on one specific variable that strongly influences immigration agendas: local party systems. Throughout Europe, immigration has caused heated debates in party politics. The subject has divided both the left and the center-right and it has led to the re-birth of extreme right parties. Sweeping generalizations are usually inaccurate because immigration debates rarely respect traditional party cleavages. However, it can be said that parties on the left, with their stronger commitment to social equity, tend to support integration programs more than do those on the right, and obviously, parties on the extreme right openly oppose immigration and cultural diversity. Thus, party systems constrain the actions of integration entrepreneurs in terms of policies, funding, and the general political climate surrounding immigration. (For the characteristics of the party systems in the four cases, see Table 4.) Specifically, this table breaks down the local systems through two factors: the strength and unity of political camps. Because the extreme right remains on the margins of most European political systems, electoral strength has been substituted by influence on the local immigration agenda.

Table 4. Characteristics of the political factions in the four cities.

	<i>Center Left</i>		<i>Center Right</i>		<i>Extreme Right</i>	
	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Strong</i>	<i>Weak</i>	<i>Influential</i>	<i>Little influence</i>
<i>Unified</i>	Lille	Toulouse	Toulouse	Lille	Bari	Lille
<i>Divided</i>	Florence	Bari	Bari	Florence	Florence	Toulouse

In Lille, integration is positively addressed because of the strength and unity of the left. During interviews with officials from seven local political parties, five commented on the “non-democratic” nature of local politics because of the socialist party’s monopoly on power. The left is very strong and united behind a socialist tradition that emphasizes integration (see below). The center-right is reasonably united at the local level. However, its general weakness has prevented it from influencing local integration politics. The extreme right is comparatively strong, especially in certain city quarters. It is also united as its supporters are mainly from the working class, especially those who are unemployed. Even though Jean-Marie Le Pen has an especially strong following in Lille, immigration is not a focus of the local party. Instead, it concentrates its platform and activities on urban decay and unemployment. Thus, it has had little direct impact on local immigration politics. The combination of these factors has allowed pro-integration civic organizations to thrive because they encounter little political opposition and enjoy the legitimacy of government support.

Florence clearly demonstrates that the immigration issue can cut across traditional party lines. The city is in Italy's central Red Belt, where the right has never won an election since the fall of Mussolini's Fascist regime. The difference between Florence and Lille lies in the composition of the political camps. Florentine politics are characterized by their divisive nature. During interviews with eight party officials, seven referred to the "politics of self-interest." This feature has definitely carried into the immigration arena. On one hand, the left has made a concerted attempt to support integration and expand notions of citizenship. Conversely, many workers in Florence have opposed immigration based on perceived economic substitution in the labor market. Similarly, merchants have opposed immigration because of problems related to unlicensed peddlers and the sale of low-cost imitation artisan products. These social divisions have at times ripped the left apart leading to violent debates within these parties, especially the *Rifondazione Comunista*. The center-right is equally divided as conservative elements oppose immigration while Catholic forces support integration on humanitarian grounds (in part due to the political activity of the Catholic Church). The extreme right, represented by the secessionist party *Lega Nord* and the neo-fascist *Alleanza Nazionale*, is divided and relatively weak electorally. Its social action and grassroots activities, such as anti-immigration petition drives, have influenced local politics. This composition of political groups has led to the schizophrenic nature of Florentine immigration politics. Integration organizations thrive socially, but they are separated from local institutions. Therefore, their effectiveness is reduced because they do not enjoy the same consensus or legitimacy as their counterparts in Lille.

In Toulouse, immigration has traditionally been a political nonissue. The city's institutions are divided, making it difficult to carry out coherent integration policies. Whereas the city government has been controlled by the center-right since the early 1970s, the departmental and regional councils are in the hands of the left. As a result, each of these bodies follows a different agenda, creating a difficult situation for many of the organizations active in local immigration politics. The center-right is united and has strong leadership. The left is also reasonably united but does not show strong leadership. As a result, it is the center-right that dictates the local immigration agenda, leading to the prevalence of anti-racism and assimilationist programs. Because such policies do not recognize ethnic differences, most immigrant associations do not work with local institutions. This has led to the isolation of the nongovernmental sector in the Mirail quarter, where the immigrant population is significant. The extreme right is violently divided between supporters of *Le Pen* and *Bruno Mégret*, and thus, locally, its position has weakened even more.

Bari represents the only case where the right dominates local politics. The left is divided and weak, and thus, it is the third political camp in the city behind the center-right and the extreme right, which are hard to distinguish because the former is very conservative and the latter is more moderate than its counterparts in the other three cities. Divisions exist within the right but rather than being based on party affiliation, they reflect generational change resulting from the massive substitution of elites after corruption scandals rocked Italian politics in the early 1990s. Although the xenophobia in Florence does not exist in Bari, the dominance of the right has pushed integration off of the local agenda, and immigration is discussed only in terms of border controls and clandestine migration. This has left integration organizations and entrepreneurs on the margins of migration politics, with little available space in which to operate.

Integration Ideologies

Systemic analysis based on social movement organizations and opportunity structures offers insights for understanding of social capital models. However, these variables alone are inadequate. Social capital encompasses both the structure of human relations and the norms that give social interaction meaning. Without norms, it would be impossible to predict mutual expectations and the strength of communal identities. For this reason, cultural analysis is invaluable to social capital theory.

Lille is the best integrated of the four cities, not only because of the strength of the nongovernmental sector, but also because of the importance of social inclusion in local political traditions. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, international notions of socialism have changed radically. Sectoral and geographical differences have replaced class struggle. In Lille, however, strong ties to the socialist dogma of past eras remain. A possible explanation rests in the local tradition of mutual aid that dates back to the Middle Ages. Over the centuries, Lille's geographic position between Paris, Brussels, and Amsterdam has exposed it to numerous military invasions and sieges. Local historians have noted the tremendous sense of solidarity that these hardships created among local citizens. Even though economic inequalities have traditionally existed in Lille, the city remains true to its social mission.

This mission, which includes charity based on moral responsibility, is progressive and far surpasses mere material aid. The city's notion of socialism includes ideals of equality and fraternity that come from the French revolution as well as Marxist theory. Through NGO and union activity, European immigrants from Portugal, Italy, and Poland have integrated into local politics and society, despite experiencing economic hardship.

Today, with regard to non-EU immigrants, this model of integration has been developing slowly, but it exists nonetheless. The left has a monopoly on power, in part, because of these ideals. The extreme right has avoided the immigration issue because of this political culture. One local Front National representative noted that were they to follow Le Pen's national example by directly attacking immigrants in their campaign platforms, they would lose more votes than they would gain.

Cultural factors have also strongly affected immigration politics in Florence. The city is well-known for its divisive political style, dating back to its days as a city-state under the Medici family. Immigration has divided the city more along invisible cultural lines than it has along traditional political cleavages. On one hand, the city's socialist tradition has given birth to radical movements in favor of social justice. Catholic forces have also been quite progressive since the 1950s, when Christian Democratic Mayor Giorgio La Pira attempted to build Florence's international reputation as a humanistic city dedicated to the eradication of social injustice and the construction of peace. These traditions are countered by strong ethnocentric forces that have at times isolated the city. Neither outside influences nor change are readily welcomed among certain elements of the local population, especially the merchants, who compose influential lobbies. Throughout the century, this political class has conducted strikes, marches, and protests when confronted with political or economic change. During interviews, most officials expressed the opinion that the city's greatest political problem is that its leaders concentrate on Florence's cultural legacy rather than looking ahead to the future. This has certainly been the case with regard to immigration. The first public act of the current mayor, Leonardo Domenici, was to march with merchants against the presence of immigrant peddlers in the city center. His second public act was "to dispatch police against immigrant drug dealers," and his third was to crack down on the local Gypsy population. Soon after, he replaced the director of the Immigrant Office who is one of the best known leaders in the local integration movement, thus, debilitating its influence. He obviously espouses a brand of socialism very different from that practiced in Lille. These mixed traditions have created significant difficulties for integration organizations. They have also impeded strong governmental leadership, and chaotic and destructive situations have arisen periodically.

Toulouse has a strong republican tradition. Originally, it was an independent city-state that aspired to achieve the standing of those of Northern Italy. However, once Toulouse became part of the French empire, it was unquestionably loyal. The city became a regional capital under the French monarchy. Later, it remained loyal to the new republic in the face of adversity. After the French revolution, some cities, such as Bordeaux,

Marseilles, Lille, and Lyon were contemplating a counter-revolution. They came to Toulouse seeking the support of local leaders before seceding and creating a new state. Toulouse's leaders remained loyal and refused to support this plan, thus saving the republic. Since that time, the republican sentiment has been further strengthened by the mass migration of anti-Fascists from Spain and Italy during the inter-war period.

The republican tradition has moderated local politics. Neither the extreme left nor the extreme right has had electoral success. Because the republican model does not recognize ethnic differences, the city remains a bastion of support for civil rights and social equality, but it does not attempt to achieve these objectives through cultural pluralism. At the same time, many youths of foreign origin are embracing their home-country identities (especially North Africans), and they have isolated themselves from the local governmental and native nongovernmental sectors. The republican tradition combined with severe socioeconomic inequalities in Toulouse has led to what many consider parallel models of social capital: one for natives and one for immigrants and their children.

Bari is the most "tolerant" of the four cases. The city's cultural characteristics have tempered its structural deficiencies. The people are open, and the city prides itself on being "a bridge between east and west" given its proximity to the Balkans. Also, because Bari has had a strong emigrant tradition, many local residents are sympathetic to the hardships of immigration. Indeed, immigrants find almost no cultural difficulties related to integration upon arrival. Puglia, the region where Bari is located, was even nominated by the Italian government for the Nobel Peace Prize for the humane way that local residents have responded to constant waves of clandestine immigration. Unfortunately, informal kindness is no substitute for systemic social programs. The problem in Bari is that immigrants remain on the fringes of the local political and social fabric. They are tolerated, even accepted, but they are not included. This suggests that cultural variables alone cannot lead to social and political integration.

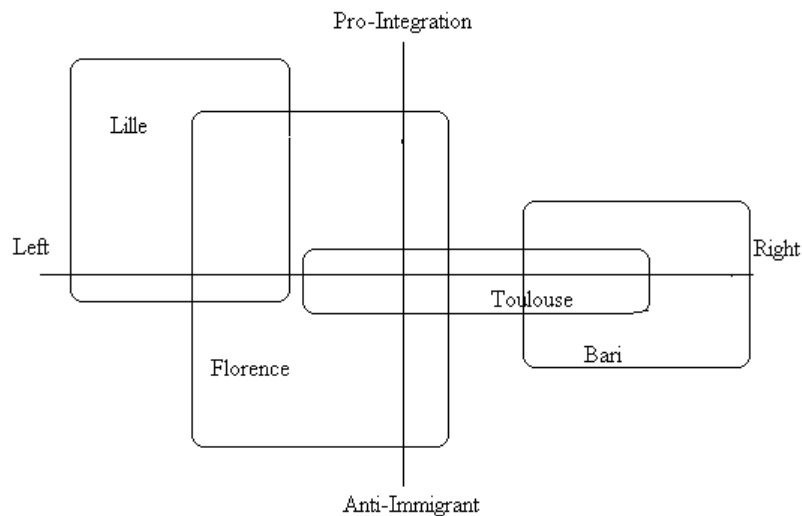
Conclusion

In an attempt to understand social capital, this article does not offer absolute definitions, but instead indicates the relevance of certain social movement variables. Recent work on social capital has begun to identify differences in types and form. For example, in *Better Together*, Robert Putnam and Lewis M. Feldstein (2003) discuss the differences between "bonding" social capital that unites homogeneous groups and "bridging" social capital that brings together different communities. The problem with these perspectives is that they assume that social

capital is inherently positive. When inter-ethnic conflict erupts, such as that which has afflicted the Balkans, the authors attribute this to a lack of bridging social capital.

Social capital is not simply a good that binds or bridges elements of a modern democratic society. Instead, it involves the structural and cultural frameworks in which human relations take place. This means that it is always present, even when conflict erupts, and it even contributes to this conflict as much as it does to its eradication. In the case of non-EU immigrants in Western Europe, this study has shown that migrant participation in local political systems is dictated by the institutional and cultural factors that shape these systems. Thus, non-EU migrants integrate into spaces that have been created by institutional and cultural variables. One cannot argue that Lille has more or less social capital than Bari, for example. Its social capital is different. If anything, one can argue that the social capital present in Florence or Toulouse has hindered long-term integration processes because migrants either submit to a paternalistic model (Florence) or exist in a parallel society (Toulouse). The integration regimes in the case cities can be displayed spatially based on the strength of pro-integration and anti-immigrant influences as well as traditional political forces (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Location of integration regimes in two dimensional space.



A serious concern about social capital arguments exists: These approaches place all forms of political participation on the same level. They do not recognize power differentials in the nongovernmental sector. This study indicates that significant differences in power exist be-

tween migrants and natives in the case cities based on the ability to rally public support for integration and access to political leaders. Autonomy has been discussed because it signifies equal participation. If migrants depend on natives for mobilization or representation, they are not truly participating as members of a community. Such “political integration” cannot be considered social capital because differences in power lead to submission or even exclusion.

This argument, however, raises a significant problem. If social capital is always present, if it dictates the framework that guides human relations in plural democracies, and if it includes differences in political power, then how can we explain typologies and distinctions? I argue that social movement analysis offers a useful tool to understanding differences in social capital. Specifically, the activities of nongovernmental entrepreneurs, the external limits placed on them by opportunity structures, and the cultural frameworks that create collective identity and shared meaning are the mechanisms that define political communities. These mechanisms identify sources of power and how political actors relate to and utilize them (Table 5).

Table 5. Social movement analysis scales for the four case cities.

	<i>Lille</i>	<i>Florence</i>	<i>Toulouse</i>	<i>Bari</i>
Organizations/ Entrepreneurs	+	+	+	-
Opportunity Structures	+	0	-	-
Cultural Framework	+	0	0	+
Total	+3	+1	0	-1

Note: Positive variable = +; Mixed variable = 0 ; Negative variable = -.

In Lille, migrants are in a positive position in terms of integration entrepreneurs, opportunity structures, and cultural framework. Florence and Toulouse both have mixed cultural factors and a strong presence of entrepreneurs. The slight difference between the two regimes lies in Florence’s better opportunity structures. Bari lacks integration entrepreneurs and has poor opportunity structures, and only its cultural traits facilitate integration. These results closely reflect the evidence presented above concerning levels of integration, indicating the explanatory value of social movement variables.

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