



**DFG**

UNIVERSITÄT  
DUISBURG  
ESSEN

*Open-Minded*



MAIN RESEARCH AREA  
Transformation of Contemporary Societies

[See Researchgate](#)

[www.achimgoerres.de](http://www.achimgoerres.de)

What are we missing? Explaining immigrant-origin voter turnout with standard and immigrant-specific theories

Dennis C. Spies - Sabrina J. Mayer - Achim Goerres

**IMGES**

- First survey of immigrant voters in Germany in 2017 (two biggest groups, 1st and 2nd generations)
- Classic models of turnout suffice to explain inter-individual differences between Immigrant-Origin Voters
- Immigrant-origin voters predictably behave like native voters

The two most popular members of the two most numerous immigrant groups in Germany

## Mesut Özil



## Helene Fischer



Sources: <http://www.helene-fischer-fans.com/start/>, <https://www.deutschland.de/de/topic/leben/mesut-oezil>

# The two most numerous immigrant voter groups

	K	In %
All eligible voters	61 500	100
Voters without immigrant background (DoM)	55 200	89.8
Voters with immigrant background (1st/2nd gen)	6 300	10.2
Voters with a Turkish background (DTÜR)	730	1.2
Voters with Soviet/Post-Soviet background (DRUS)	1 950	3.2

# Just to know: turnout levels

	DTÜR	DRUS	DoM (natives)
<b>Reported</b>	74	67	88
<b>Estimated</b>	64	58	76

- **1<sup>st</sup> perspective:** The turnout of immigrant-origin voters can be explained by the same theories we also use for native voters (SES, political attitudes and beliefs, group resources).
- **2<sup>nd</sup> perspective:** Immigrant-specific approaches (ethnic networks, identity, discrimination) add explanatory power or maybe even outperform standard electoral theories.

# Standard theories of political participation



<b>Theory</b>	<b>Socio-economic status (SES)</b>	<b>Social and group resources</b>	<b>Political attitudes and beliefs</b>
<b>Hypothesis</b>	The higher one's SES, the more one does also participate politically	The more one is affiliated to a group/network, the more one does also participate politically	Certain attitudes and beliefs increase/lower participation
<b>Variables</b>	Income, education, gender, age	Organizational membership (clubs, churches, etc.), marital status	Political interest, support for democracy, political efficacy, social trust, party identification

- Ethnic networks
  - Mobilisation
  - bridging and bonding capital
- Ethnic identity
  - in and out group perception
  - Integration, assimilation
- Discrimination experiences
  - lower levels of trust and confidence in the political system



- Post-election F2F study (Oct-Dec 2017) after the German federal election
- Two groups: Germans of Turkish/Post-Soviet descent of 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> generation
- Representative survey with 500 interviews per group
  - 70 mins face-to-face survey in German (CASI in Russian/Turkish possible)
- Complex sampling process with onomastic procedure
- Comparable to the **German Longitudinal Election Study** (which we use for the native voter models)

# Regression model results

<b>Standard models for natives (GLES) and immigrant-origin voters (IMGES)</b>	<b>Immigrant-specific predictors only immigrant-origin</b>	<b>Immigrant-specific and standard predictors without attitudes</b>	<b>Immigrant-specific and standard predictors WITH attitudes (trust, interest)</b>
Work well (same direction, same magnitude) for both groups	Those who feel more German 17 % more likely to vote than those who feel more country-of-rigin	Those who feel more German 13 % more likely to vote than those who feel more country-of-rigin	No residual effects of immigrant-specific factors
	No effects: ethnic networks or discrimination	No effects: ethnic networks or discrimination	

- Immigrant-origin voters in Germany can be understood like native voters
- Only ethnic identity effect (assimilation) mediated by political interest
- Self-selection of the two specific groups
  - Difficulty in obtaining German citizenship in Turkish community
  - Russian Germans “returning home”
- Similar findings from United Kingdom for very different immigrant-origin groups