



Universität Hamburg
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FAKULTÄT
FÜR ERZIEHUNGSWISSENSCHAFT



Political efficacy and immigrant background, language-use and literacy skills between two PIAAC Cycles

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Agenda

- 1 Theoretical Background and Research Questions
- 2 Data and Methods
- 3 Results
- 4 Discussion

1

Theoretical background



Theoretical Background

Recent concept of *super-diversity*: a dynamic interplay of variables among an increased number of new, small and scattered, multiple-origin, transnationally connected, socio-economically differentiated and legally stratified immigrants

Countries differ in their discourses of diversity dependent on, among other aspects, ongoing political discourses, media representations and public debates

01

Being part of the discourse on country's diversity requires literacy skills (usually) in the official language

Vertovec, 2022



Theoretical Background

Literacy skills and political efficacy, based on PIAAC 2012 data

- In a cross-country analysis, adults with low literacy skills tended to volunteer less and to have lower feelings of social trust and political efficacy (Grotlüschen & Heilmann, 2021).
- In a two-country analysis, German immigrants had lower levels of political efficacy than non-immigrants. In the U.S., political efficacy did not have a significant relationship to immigration background (Rose et al., 2019).

02a



Theoretical Background

Literacy skills and political efficacy, based on PIAAC 2012 data (cont-d)

- Another cross-country study, showed that first-generation migrants in Austria, Canada, Germany, and the U.S feel low political efficacy and report volunteering less. When taking literacy proficiency into consideration, many effects for political efficacy disappear (Grotlüschen et al., 2021).

Literacy has an independent relationship with political efficacy

Migrant status is less relevant

02b

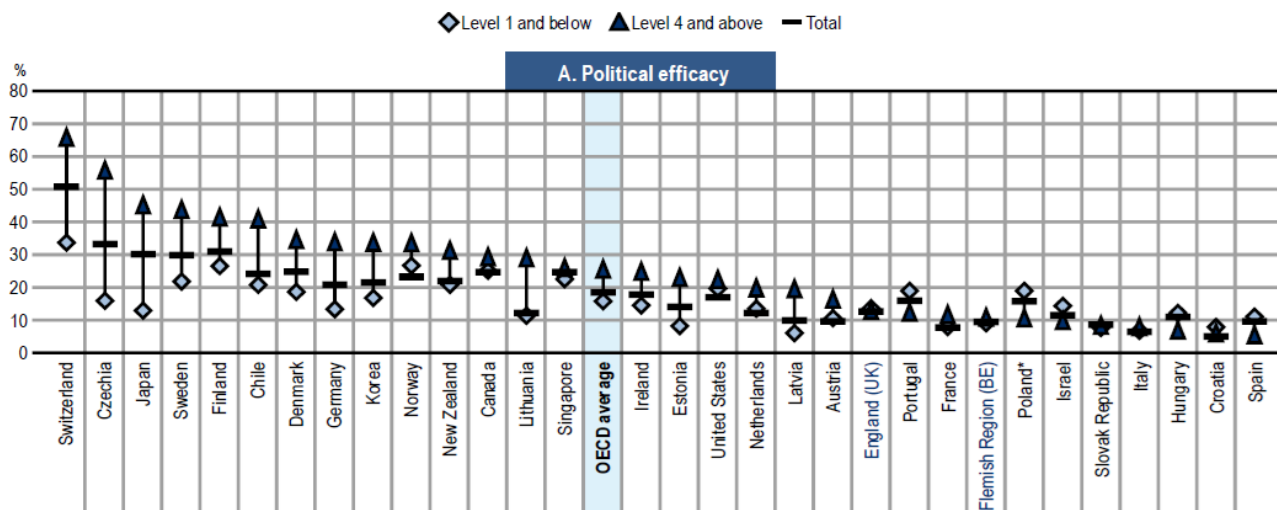


Motivation

- Spain, Croatia, Hungary, Israel, Poland, and Portugal: lower **numeracy** - higher political efficacy
- Italy, Slovakia, Flanders, France, England, Austria, the United States, Canada: no difference

Figure 4.11. Civic engagement outcomes, by numeracy proficiency level

Adults aged 25-65 reporting positive outcomes for political efficacy, trust and volunteering



OECD, 2024

Research Questions

- RQ1: whether the relationships between political efficacy and immigrant background, language use at home, and first language have changed.
- RQ2: whether the relationship between political efficacy and literacy has changed.
- RQ3: whether the relationships between political efficacy and economic inequality, democracy, and populism have changed.

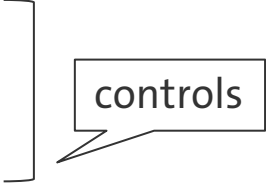
2

Data and methods



Data

PIAAC 2012 and 2023

- Outcome: Political efficacy: belief that people like me have a say in what government does
- Independent Variables
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Education
 - Parent/non-Parent
 - Immigration background (Foreign-born of foreign-born parents, Foreign-born of mixed heritage, Foreign-born of native-born parents, Native-born of foreign-born parents, Native-born of mixed heritage, Native-born of native-born parents)
 - Language-use: First language as test language | Home language as test language
 - Literacy

Methods

- Linear regression model separately for 2012 period and 2023
 - Model 5: political efficacy = controls + immigration background + first language + home language + literacy
- Cross-country: 14 countries
- Changing literacy threshold
 - Level 2 or above
 - Level 3 or above
 - Level 4 or above

Austria
Belgium
Czech Republic
Estonia
Finland
France
Germany

Hungary
Ireland
Italy
Lithuania
Poland
Slovak Republic
Spain

4

Results



Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2023

2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														
Native-born with native-born parents	x	x	x	+	+	-	x	-	x	x	x	+	-	-

+ the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy
 x relationship not statistically significant

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2023

2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

→ First language as test language	x	-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
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- + the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
- the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy
- x relationship not statistically significant

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2023

2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

→ Home language as test language	x	x	x	x	x	x	+	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
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- +** the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
- the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy
- x** relationship not statistically significant

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2023

2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

→ Literacy proficiency level (Level 2 or above)	+	x	+	+	x	+	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	+
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+ the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy
 x relationship not statistically significant

x relationship not statistically significant + the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2012 to 2023

2012	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														
Native-born with native-born parents	x	x	x	+	+	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-

2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														
Native-born with native-born parents	x	x	x	+	+	-	x	-	x	x	x	+	-	-

x relationship not statistically significant + the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2012 to 2023

2012	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

First language as test language	x	x	x	x	+	x	x	x	x	x	x	+	x	x
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2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														

First language as test language	x	-	x	-	-	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	-
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x relationship not statistically significant + the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2012 to 2023

2012	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

Home language as test language	x	x	x	-	x	x	x	x	+	x	-	x	x	x
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2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														

Home language as test language	x	x	x	x	x	x	+	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
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x relationship not statistically significant + the higher the [variable] the higher the political efficacy
 - the higher the [variable] the lower the political efficacy

Cross-country: Immigration – Language-use – Literacy: 2012 to 2023

2012	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														
Variables														

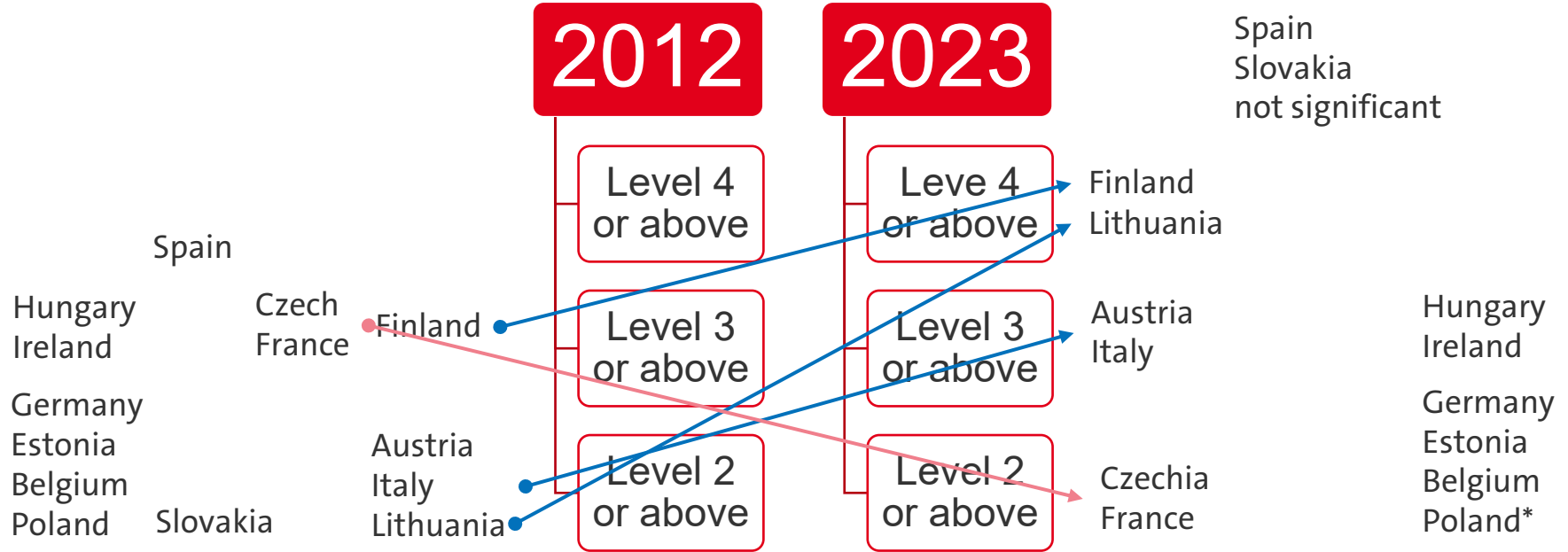
Literacy proficiency level (Level 2 or above)	+	+	x	+	x	x	x	x	+	+	+	+	x	+
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2023	Germany	Austria	Czechia	Estonia	Finland	France	Hungary	Ireland	Italy	Lithuania	Poland*	Slovak Republic	Spain	Belgium (Flanders)
Model 5														

Literacy proficiency level (Level 2 or above)	+	x	+	+	x	+	x	x	x	x	-	x	x	+
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*Poland has a significant negative relationship in 2023. However, OECD (2024a, p. 54) advises caution in interpreting the results of the Polish data, due to the high share of respondents with unusual response patterns.

Cross-country: Literacy level threshold change: 2012 to 2023



4

Discussion



Summary

- RQ1: whether the relationships between political efficacy and migration status, language use at home and first language have changed.
 - Expectation: native-born adults and those who use the official language more likely report that they have a say in the government,
 - An opposite relationship is more often in 2023 than in 2012.
- RQ2: whether the relationship between political efficacy and literacy has changed.
 - In 6 of the 14 countries the literacy level at which political efficacy is higher for those with higher literacy either went up or became not statistically significant in 2023.
- RQ3: whether the relationships between political efficacy and economic inequality, democracy, and populism have changed.
 - Not that much! In a few contexts the quality of democracy plays a role in 2023, while it did not in 2012; economic inequality or support for populism remained significant with the same signs in 2012 and 2023.

Something
has changed!

Something
has changed!

Discussion

- The change in foreign-born adults and those with lower official language use, never the less, feeling to have a say in the government, more often than their native counterparts, in a number of countries may have to do with the party representation in the government.
 - Rather than vote shares for right-/left-wing parties, party representation in the government may be what this change is associated with (needs to be explored).
 - The change may be related to the phenomenon of *super-diversity* (increased number of multiple-origin and socio-economically differentiated immigrants).
- The higher literacy requirements for having a say in the government puts pressure on the individuals and systems to acquire or provide, respectively, these needed skills.
- Both of these findings support the need for adult education provision, and particularly civic education, for all adults (not specifically focused on immigrants or unemployed).



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