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Immigrants' Voice through Protest Politics in Canada and Australia: Assessing the Impact of Pre-Migration Political Repression

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This paper examines immigrant participation in protest politics in Canada and Australia. It focuses on the related impact of immigrants' pre-migration experience of political repression. Three main findings emerge. First, immigrants from repressive regimes abstain more from protest politics than those from non-repressive regimes. Second, the higher the degree of repression in the country of origin, the more likely immigrants are to abstain from protest politics. Third, even after living for 30 years in the host country, some groups of immigrants continue to abstain from protest politics to a greater degree than the local population. This article contributes, therefore, to two understudied aspects of immigrants' political adaptation: immigrant participation in protest activities and the impact of their pre-migration experiences.

Keywords: Political Participation of Immigrants; Repression; Australia, Canada

One of the challenges facing immigrants in their adaptation to their host country's political system is their ability to acquire a political voice of their own. As it should be for all citizens, the voice of immigrants must be loud and clear so that the public authorities can listen, understand, and properly respond to their demands (Verba *et al.* 1995). Without the ability to be clearly heard, immigrants are unlikely to see their unique needs, preoccupations and preferences adequately met. There are several conventional ways in which immigrants can express their voice and participate in the political process: contact public officials; become involved in community organisations; join ethnic groups; or work for a political party and vote when they become enfranchised. Another way of expressing their voice is to become involved in protest

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politics such as signing petitions, joining boycotts, demonstrating publicly or even occupying a building.

Protest politics has become a common way for people to express their voice in Western democracies. In fact, while protest politics used to be the channel of participation for the marginalised strata of society, it is increasingly becoming a 'normalised' channel (van Aelst and Walgrave 2001). Nowadays, protests are seen as 'the continuation of conventional participation by other means' (Dalton 1996: 70; see also Barnes *et al.* 1979; Inglehart 1990; Jennings *et al.* 1989; Nevitte 1996; Norris 2002). Yet, even though protest activities have become part of the political repertoire of citizens in Western democracies, scholars have paid little attention to immigrants' involvement in such activities. Aside from Junn (1999) and Ramakrishnan (2005), who examined ethnic minority and immigrant participation in several types of activity, including protest activities, immigrant participation in protest politics has not been systematically investigated. Thus, the question has yet to be answered: Do immigrants express their voice in this new normalised form of participation?

This question is worth investigating because new immigrants settling in Western democracies increasingly come from repressive regimes; the proportion now reaches 55 per cent in Australia and about 75 per cent in Canada.[1] So while protests are becoming more common in Western democracies, vast majorities of new immigrants are coming from countries where protests are likely to be severely repressed. This raises a second question: Do immigrants who have lived under repressive regimes express their views through protest politics as other immigrants do? Answering this second question requires understanding whether and how pre-migration experiences can influence immigrants' participation in the host country. Though empirical research to date has paid close attention to the impact of immigrants' socio-economic situation or to the impact of institutions on immigrants' participation in their host country (Black 1987; Chui *et al.* 1991; Jones-Correa 2001; Junn 1999; McAllister and Makkai 1992; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Tam Cho 1999; Uhlaner *et al.* 1989), the evidence about the impact of pre-migration experiences on newcomers remains scarce. That people are socialised to politics and tend to develop attitudes that reflect the prevailing norms and reality of the political system in which they were socialised is far from being a new argument in sociology and political science (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1988; Inglehart 1990; Niemi and Hepburn 1995). Yet there are very few attempts to systematically assess the impact of pre-migration socialisation and experiences, and most attempts are primarily done by studying immigrant communities case by case.

Likewise, very few scholars have systematically investigated the impact of pre-migration political experiences. Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) indicate that immigrants from repressive regimes who have migrated to the United States are just as likely to vote as other immigrants from non-repressive regimes.[2] However, it is difficult to evaluate whether the same findings would hold for protest politics as the two types of involvement, voting and protests, greatly differ from each other. Whereas voting is done anonymously, protests are public and usually express discontent with

government officials. In sharp contrast, Harles indicates that the level of participation with Canadian politics that immigrants from Laos engage in is tainted by their pre-migration experiences (Harles 1997: 724). These immigrants refer to their pre-migration political experiences to justify their reluctance to participe in and discuss politics. Finally, Black has shown that pre-migration political activity in their country of origin is a significant determinant of immigrants' political involvement in Canada (1987). Black does not provide specific evidence regarding protest participation but his findings generally suggest that if immigrants did not protest in their country of origin they may also abstain from doing so in their host country.[3] The above studies suggest that pre-migration experiences matter and that the experience of political repression might discourage immigrants from protesting. Having lived under a repressive regime, immigrants might have developed a fear of speaking out against government and/or might not have developed the habit of protesting. The direct consequence would likely be that these immigrants prefer to abstain from protesting. However the reverse could also be true and one might expect that immigrants who have experienced political repression will want to enjoy their new-found political freedom even more than the local population, who may take this freedom for granted. This second possibility might lead us to expect that immigrants who have experienced political repression would protest at least as much as the local population.

There is a lack of evidence with regard to whether immigrants are active in protest activities and the specific impact of having lived under a repressive regime. This article thus provides evidence from a cross-national perspective on both of these research gaps. This research is designed to examine two case-studies: immigrant protest participation in Canada and Australia, both fruitful environments in which to study the political adaptation of immigrants. A substantial proportion of their populations are immigrants (about 20 per cent for Canada and over 24 per cent for Australia according to the 2006 census in each country), and in the last few decades there has been a significant change in the proportion of immigrants originating from repressive regimes. This number has increased dramatically to constitute a majority of new immigrants arriving each year. Canada and Australia, like most other Western democracies, thus face the challenge of helping a large number of immigrants who have experienced political repression to adapt to democracy in the host country.

The article is divided into four sections. The first presents an overview of several reasons—in addition to experiencing political repression—that could lead immigrants to participate in or abstain from protest politics. The second section presents the research design and the data used for the project and the third and fourth sections provide the empirical evidence for Canada and Australia respectively.

The purpose of this article is to contribute to our understanding of immigrants' political adaptation and specifically the impact of pre-migration political repression. But it is also to understand how the voices of immigrants contribute to democratic dynamics in their host country. Protest politics, like other channels for citizens to express their views, is a space that immigrants need to occupy. At stake is not only

immigrants' capacity to have their voice heard but also the development of a vibrant and inclusive democracy.

Protest Politics and Immigrants

In addition to experiencing political repression in the country of origin, there are several reasons that might limit immigrants' capacity, opportunity or desire to protest. First, as some of the research already cited indicates, immigrants' resources play a significant role in their level of political involvement. Upon arrival in the host country, many immigrants live in a precarious socio-economic situation. This means they might not have the tools to fully understand the political issues and communicate their preferences; they might not be financially stable enough to miss work in order to participate in protest activities; they might have concerns other than politics; or they lack the time to protest.

Second, protesting is a social affair (Jennings *et al.* 1989; McCarthy and Zald 1977; Opp 2004). 'Associations and organizations are usually the motor driving street protest, and they mobilize their members first' (van Aelst and Walgrave 2001: 480). This means that protest politics, like other forms of participation, is not solely a matter of having the means to participate, but also a matter of being asked to participate (Verba *et al.* 1995). Upon arrival in the host country, not all immigrants possess a rich and dense social network, at least not as dense as that of the local population. Research has provided clear evidence of the importance of ethnic networks for immigrants' political adaptation (Fennema and Tillie 1999); therefore for those immigrants who lack a dense social network, social isolation might also be an obstacle to involvement in protest activities.

Third, people often protest to make known their disapproval of the current public authorities (Opp 2004: 16). There is little evidence about how immigrants generally feel *vis-à-vis* the public authorities and institutions of their host country. One likely scenario is that many immigrants are supportive of and enthusiastic about their new country; for many, immigration represents the best chance for starting a new life and living in a better social, economic and political environment. Therefore, immigrants might be more optimistic about their host governments than the local population, and simply may not see any reason for protesting.[4]

Finally, it is also possible that immigrants have different values from the local population, values that could lead them to be less inclined to protest. It can be argued that modernisation leads to a political culture less submissive to political authority and more oriented toward self-expression and post-materialist values: these are factors that may be associated with a greater involvement in protest activities (Inglehart 1990). With many of the immigrants coming from very poor and traditional countries in comparison to their new host country, the above argument suggests that immigrants might have more materialist and traditional values than the local population, resulting in a greater respect for the local authorities. Such a

cultural gap could mean that immigrants are less inclined to protest than the local population.

The above considerations lead to two hypotheses:

- *H1*. Regardless of their origin, immigrants participate less than the local population in protest activities because they are short of resources, lack a social network that mobilises them, see no reason to protest against government, and have different values from the local population. In short, they participate less because they are more likely to be part of the disadvantaged strata of society.
- *H2*. Immigrants from repressive regimes participate even less than other immigrants because they fear speaking out publicly against government or have not developed the habit of protesting.

However, we need to bear in mind a third hypothesis:

- *H3*. Immigrants are *more* likely to take part in protest activities than the local population, especially those coming from repressive regimes.

Even though this hypothesis is somewhat counter-intuitive, taking into consideration all the other factors that could lead immigrants to protest *less*, this third hypothesis still deserves some serious consideration. We might expect immigrants to be very enthusiastic about their new political environment and to express a strong desire to integrate and become full and active members of their new society. From that perspective, protesting, like any other channel of participation, would be an opportunity to exercise their new citizenship and enjoy every single political freedom and right. Therefore, even though there are many reasons that lead us to expect that immigrants will be less likely to participate in protest politics, the opposite is also possible, so this third hypothesis will also be explored.

Research Design and Data

Canada and Australia are used as the two case-studies in this research because of their large intake of immigrants. Moreover, similarities in the historical, cultural and political legacies between these two countries facilitate comparison of the results. Finally, the Canadian and Australian data provide an over-sized sample of immigrant respondents that further facilitates the investigation.[5]

The data for Canada were drawn from the 2000 Canadian component of the *World Values Survey* (WVS) and its special sample of recently arrived immigrants. For this project we selected 1,319 people who were born in Canada and 428 immigrants who have lived in Canada for a maximum of 10 years but who arrived in Canada after the age of 10 (see Table 1).[6] The analysis relies on the *Freedom in the World Country Rating* published by Freedom House to determine the degree of repression in the country of origin. This rating generates scores for the degree of civil liberties and political rights in various countries. For the purpose of this analysis, these scores are

Table 1. Detailed classification of immigrants: Canada

Scale score	List of countries (n)	Total (n)	% immigrant sample
0	United Kingdom (2); Barbados (1); Costa Rica (1); St-Kitts and Nevis (1); Montserrat (1)	6	1.4
1	France (8); Italy (2)	10	2.3
2	Mauritius (2); Israel (4)	6	1.4
3	Jamaica (3); Honduras (1);	4	0.9
4	India (23); Peru (1)	24	5.6
5	Hong Kong (40); South Korea (6); Philippines (15); Sri Lanka (28); Nepal (1); Turkey (1)	91	21.3
6	Taiwan (25); Bangladesh (14); Gambia (1); Senegal (1); El Salvador (1)	42	9.8
7	Latvia (5); Pakistan (22); Guatemala (1); Jordan (1); Morocco (9); Paraguay (1); Malaysia (2); Guyana (1)	42	9.8
8	Lebanon (7); Nigeria (3); Tunisia (3); Ukraine (8); Egypt (3); Kuwait (1);	25	5.8
9	Bosnia (12); Ghana (1); Romania (14); Russia (14); Armenia (6); Ivory Coast (2); Tanzania (2); Serbia (2); Indonesia (3); South Africa (1); State of Bahrain (1); Panama (1)	59	14.0
10	China (83); Rwanda (2); Iran (2); Haiti (3); Cameroon (2); Algeria (8); Togo (1); Chad (3); Estonia (2); Guinea (1); Bulgaria (1); Kazakhstan (1)	109	25.9
11	Syria (1); Belarus (2); Saudi Arabia (1); Albania (3)	7	1.6
12	Vietnam (1); Afghanistan (2)	3	0.7
Total		428	100

Note: All immigrants arrived between 1990 and 1999.

converted into a single score, which has been called 'repression', for every country. This repression value is created by calculating the average 'repression' score on both the civil liberties and the political rights of the country during the 15-year period prior to an immigrant's migration to Canada. Each immigrant is thus classified along a scale measuring the degree of political repression (or un-democratic environment) they were exposed to. For instance, if a Russian immigrant arrived in Canada in 1995, his or her 'repression' score is obtained by calculating the average *Freedom* score of Russia from 1980 to 1995. The scale ranges from 0 to 12 where 0 means no repression and 12 means severe repression.

The data for Australia were drawn from the *2004 Australian Election Study* and its special sample of immigrants. Like the Canadian case, my analysis relies on the *Freedom in the World Country Rating* to determine the degree of repression in the country of origin. Each immigrant is thus classified according to his or her average 'repression' score, based on the same criteria as for the Canadian sample (see Table 2). The *2004 Australian Election Study* includes 274 immigrants who arrived in Australia after the age of 10, and 889 respondents from the local population.

Of course the proposed measurement of political repression cannot accurately predict the frequency and severity of a migrant's particular experience of political

Table 2. Detailed classification of immigrants: Australia

Scale score	List of countries (n)	Total (n)	% immigrant sample
0	New Zealand (18); United Kingdom (70); Ireland (3); Austria (1); Netherlands (8); Switzerland (2); Sweden (1); Italy (11); Malta (2); United States (2)	118	43.1
1	Japan (4); Chile 1969–1973 (2)	6	2.2
2	Israel (1); Tonga (1); Lebanon 1955–1974 (4); Mauritius (1)	7	2.6
3	India (8); Sri Lanka 1970–1985 (2); Malaysia 1974 (1); Samoa (1)	12	4.4
4	Lebanon 1976–1980 (2); South Korea (1); Sri Lanka 1987 (2)	5	1.8
5	Cyprus (3); Turkey (1); Malaysia 1978–1987 (3); Philippines 1990–1995 (4)	11	4.0
6		0	0.0
7	Argentina (1)	1	0.4
8	Portugal (2); Lebanon 1994 (2); Indonesia (3); Philippines 1975–1989 (4); Taiwan (1); Brazil (1); Zambia (1); Zimbabwe (1)	15	5.5
9	Egypt (2); Sudan (1); Chile 1985 (1); South Africa (5)	9	3.3
10	Yugoslavia (16); Greece (10); Hungary (3); Poland (2); Russia (1); Jordan (1); Ghana (1)	34	12.4
11	Romania (1); Iraq (4); Burma (3); Ethiopia (2)	10	3.6
12	Czechoslovakia (1); Syria (1); Cambodia (7); Vietnam (21); China (16)	46	16.8
Total		286	100

Note: For immigrants arrived before 1973, historical sources were used instead of the Freedom House Index (Freedom House Index first starts in 1973).

repression. For example, some immigrants may have experienced first-hand repression such as violence or the death of loved ones. Others may have only felt secondary effects and were never direct victims. Thus, the classification assumes an immigrant's personal experience of political repression to be based on the overall practices of repression in the country. This said, even if this classification does not indicate the extent of the repression that an immigrant may have personally experienced, it nevertheless indicates the dominant political context in which he or she was socialised. Research in political science has long shown that the values and norms of the political system in which a person grew up have an impact on their subsequent adult political beliefs (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1988; Inglehart 1990). Therefore, the measurement used in this study should adequately capture the general experience that most immigrants had of political repression prior to their migration to the host country.

It is important to emphasise the differences in the survey methodologies used to interview the respondents in Canada and Australia. While face-to-face interviews were used to collect the Canadian results, mail questionnaires were used in Australia. Given the literature on 'social desirability effects' (Berinsky 2002; Davis 1997), we could expect the immigrants interviewed face-to-face to be more reluctant to admit

to having protested than the respondents interviewed via mail questionnaires. Second, it is also important to emphasise that immigrants interviewed in the Canadian and Australian surveys differ significantly in terms of their length of residence. While those in Australia were randomly selected, in Canada only those who lived in the country for up to 10 years were interviewed. The consequence is that, while Australian immigrants in the sample have lived there on average for 29 years, the Canadian immigrants have resided in Canada on average for only six years. It is important, however, to emphasise that the primary objective of the research is to compare the *immigrant* population to the *local* population within each country and *not* to compare the two countries. Furthermore, despite the differences between the two sets of data used, the analyses reveal somewhat similar patterns of results that will be presented below.

Evidence from Immigrants in Canada

I begin by examining immigrant participation in Canadian protest activities. The first step is to determine whether immigrants in Canada participate in protest activities and how their participation compares to that of the local population. The dependent variable is dichotomous and measures complete abstention from protest politics. The variable equals 1 when respondents have never been involved in any of the five types of protest activity (signing a petition, joining a boycott, attending public demonstrations, joining an unofficial strike, or occupying a building) and equals 0 when they have participated in at least one of these protest activities. The dichotomous nature of the variable provides the opportunity to identify whether immigrants systematically avoid protest participation (see Table 3 for the construction of the variables used).

Descriptive data, as set out in Table 4, indicate that immigrants are more likely to abstain from protest politics than the local Canadian population: while 21 per cent of the local population report never having protested, 60 per cent of immigrants report no involvement in any of the five types of protest activity. As Table 4 shows, however, not all types of protest activity result in substantial differences between immigrant and non-immigrant involvement. In fact, for more 'radical' activities, such as occupying a building, joining an unofficial strike or attending a public demonstration, there is virtually no gap in the percentage of immigrants and non-immigrants abstaining. What is particularly noteworthy is that immigrants abstain more than the local population for activities such as signing a petition, an action that is often seen as common practice for populations in Western democracies (69 per cent vs. 22 per cent). These results are maybe not that surprising if we accept the hypothesis that immigrants who experienced political repression will fear political participation, especially when their identity is publicly revealed. Even though each form of protest activity involves a certain level of public commitment, signing a petition is the least anonymous—signatories provide their name, address and telephone number on a document that may ultimately be given to a public official. In comparison, joining a

Table 3. Construction of variables

Pre-migration experience of political repression	Scale from 0 to 12 indicating the average score for civil liberties and political rights for the 15-year period in the country of origin (*Freedom House Index*) prior to immigrants' arrival in Canada or Australia. 0 means no repression; 12 means severe repression
Protest participation	Dichotomous variable: 1 = not involved in any protest activities; 0 = involved in at least one *Canada*: indicates whether respondents have taken part in five types of protest activity: signing a petition; joining a boycott; attending a public demonstration; joining an unofficial strike; occupying a building. *Australia*: indicates whether respondents have taken part in 2 types of protest activity in the last five years, including taking part in a protest, march or demonstration, and signing a written petition.
Education: highest degree attained:	*Canada*: 1 = primary school at best; 2 = secondary school at best; 3 = at least some post-secondary education. *Australia*: 0 = finished high-school; 1 = post-secondary technical training; 2 = professional diploma; 3 = university degree
Age	Age in years
Female	1 = female; 0 = male
Income	*Canada*: Household income on a 10-point scale; *Australia*: Household income on a 16-point scale
Employed	1 = full-time or part-time employed; 0 = all others
Interest in politics	0 = not at all interested; .33 = not very interested; .67 = somewhat interested; 1 = very interested
Group membership	Scale indicating the number of groups of which respondents are members; possibility of 15 groups in Canada and five groups in Australia
Attitudes toward authority	Nine-point scale from 0 to 1 indicating whether respondents strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with the following statements: (1) 'It is good have a strong leader who does not have to bother with elections and parliament to rule the country'; (2) 'It is good to have the army rule the country'; 1 = strongly agree with both statements and 0 = strongly disagree with both statements
Satisfaction with government	0 = very dissatisfied; .33 = fairly dissatisfied; .67 = fairly satisfied; 1 = very satisfied
Materialist values	Five-point scale where 4 means strong materialist values and 0 strong post-materialist values. Respondents get 1 point each time they mention as a first or second choice the 'materialist values' choices from the two items presented below: (1) 'If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? And which would be the next most important? (a) maintaining order in the nation (mat. choice); (b) giving people more say in important government decisions (post-mat. choice); (c) fighting rising prices (mat. choice); (d) protecting freedom of speech (post-mat. choice)'. (2) 'If you had to choose, which one of the things on this card would you say is most important? And which would be the next most important? (a) a stable economy (mat. choice; (b) progress toward a less impersonal and more humane society (post-mat. choice); (c) progress toward a society in which ideas count more than money (post-mat. choice); (d) the fight against crime (mat. choice)'.
Left–right self-placement	Respondents' left–right self-placement on a 0–10 scale where 0 means left and 10 means right

Table 4. Protest abstention among immigrants in Canada

	Percentage abstaining from:					
	All protest activities	Signing a petition	Joining a boycott	Public demonstration	Unofficial strike	Occupying a building
Local population (n = 1,319)	21	22	80	79	92	97
All immigrants (n = 428)	60	69	91	83	99	98

Source: 2000 Canadian component of the *World Values Survey* and its special sample of recent immigrants.

boycott or a public demonstration is much more anonymous and participants can often go unnoticed. Therefore immigrants, especially those from repressive regimes, might find it more difficult to sign a petition compared to being involved in other types of activity because such a political act requires that they reveal their identity publicly. As for joining an unofficial strike or occupying a building, these are not completely anonymous activities—particularly should the migrant be arrested—but the opportunity to participate is so rare that it may explain why there is only a small difference between immigrant and non-immigrant participation.

The data in Table 5 further indicate that there are differences between ethnic groups in terms of their protest participation: immigrants from Africa (80 per cent) are the most likely to abstain, and those from Western Europe the least likely (17 per cent).[7] That abstaining from protest politics varies across groups of immigrants might not come as a big surprise. After all, each group of immigrants brings a unique set of cultural and political experiences upon arrival in Canada. The questions that interest us here though are: What specific pre-migration experiences might explain these variations in abstention from protest politics? Can pre-migration political repression explain these group variations? In what way? And does experience of repression increase or decrease abstention? It is not clear from these data whether there is a strong correlation between immigrants abstaining from protest activities and the intensity of political repression they may have experienced, and also whether that correlation is positive or negative. Moreover, as mentioned before, other

Table 5. Protest abstention among groups of immigrants in Canada

	Immigrant groups						
	Africa	South Asia	East Asia	South/Eastern Europe	Middle-East	Western Europe	Others
Average repression score for sample, 0–12	9.0	5.5	7.6	8.9	7.8	0.8	4.8
% abstaining from all protest activities	80	67	64	56	47	17	35
N =	20	93	175	68	42	12	18

Source: 2000 Canadian component of the *World Values Survey* and its special sample of recent immigrants.

explanations (resources, mobilisation, satisfaction with government and values) can account for the gaps between groups of immigrants as well as between immigrants and the local population.

To answer these questions, a multivariate logit analysis was conducted including variables such as the respondent's gender, age, income, education, interest in politics, employment status, group membership and the respondent's satisfaction with the government, materialist values, attitude toward authority, and left–right self-placement. Table 3 specifies the precise construction of these variables. The repression variable indicating the level of political repression in the country of origin was also included in the analysis. This variable ranges from 0 to 12, where 0 means there was no repression in the country of origin and where 12 means severe repression. The purpose of this analysis is to assess whether experience of political repression explains immigrants' abstention from protest politics net of the other explanations.

The results of the multivariate analysis presented in Table 6 (Model 1) corroborate previous research done on the determinants of protest participation among the general population (McCarthy and Zald 1977; Opp 2004: 16; van Aelst and Walgrave 2001). They indicate that members of groups and respondents with greater interest in politics or a higher level of education are less likely to abstain than the other respondents. Moreover, those satisfied with the government, deferential to authority, and who possess materialist values abstain more.

The analysis also indicates that immigrants' pre-migration experience of political repression does influence their propensity to protest (B coefficient = .09); and, moreover, leads to greater abstention rather than greater participation. The higher the degree of political repression in the country of origin, the more likely an immigrant is to abstain from protest activities in the host country. To ease the interpretation of the logit analysis, predicted percentages were generated by holding all the independent variables other than the immigrant variable and the repression score at their sample average (immigrants and non-immigrants together). Predicted percentages presented in Figure 1 indicate that the proportions of immigrants who have never protested are 46 per cent for those from countries with no repression (0 on the repression scale), 60 per cent for those from countries with moderate repression (6 on the scale), and 71 per cent for immigrants from countries with severe political repression (12 on the scale). Also striking is the fact that immigrants—even when controlling for all the above variables and regardless of their experience of repression—are still more inclined to abstain from protest politics than the local population (B coefficient = 1.32). The predicted percentages show that the difference between local and immigrant populations who abstain is now 27 percentage points (down from 39 in the descriptive data).[8] It appears that immigrants in their first 10 years in the host country, regardless of their origin, tend to abstain from protest politics more than the local population.

Given the striking distinction in immigrants' abstention between signing a petition and all other forms of protest activity, additional analyses were performed separately for signing a petition only (Model 1B) and for all other forms of protest activity

Table 6. Origins of protest abstention among immigrants in Canada

	Protest abstention														
	Model 1 Local+immigrants: all protest activities			Model 1B Local+immigrants: petition only			Model 1C Local+immigrants: all but signing petition			Model 2 Local only: all protest activities			Model 3 Immigrants only: all protest activities		
	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ
Immigrant (dummy)	1.32	.32[a]	+27	1.63	.33[a]	+36	−.26	.37			n.a			n.a	
Level of repression in country of origin	.09	.04[c]	+25	.09	.04[c]	+24	.12	.05[c]	+23		n.a		.09	.04[c]	+27
Length of residence (ref. cat. 0–3 years)															
4–6 years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		−.03	.25	
7–10 years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		−.30	.27	
Female	−.11	.12		−.33	.12[c]	−7	.19	.12		−.23	.15		.14	.22	
Age	.00	.00		.00	.00		−.00	.00		.00	.01		−.00	.10	
Income	−.03	.02		−.05	.02[c]	−10	−.02	.02		−.06	.03[c]	−8	.06	.04	
Education	−.48	.12[a]	−20	−.41	.12[b]	−18	−.25	.11[c]	−10	−.45	.13[a]	−15	−.11	.30	
Interest in politics	−.81	.21[a]	−16	−.66	.21[b]	−14	−.86	.19[a]	−17	−.72	.25[b]	−10	−.78	.38[c]	−18
Employed	−.11	.15		−.11	.15		−.43	.15[b]	−8	−.23	.17		.26	.26	
Group membership	−.12	.03[a]	−24	−.11	.03[a]	−26	−.15	.03[a]	−50	−.23	.05[a]	−23	−.00	.04	
Satisfaction with government	.92	.26[a]	+18	.82	.25[b]	+17	.88	.24[a]	+18	.82	.29[b]	+11	2.07	.60[a]	+48
Materialist values	.15	.06[c]	+11	.20	.06[b]	+16	.16	.06[b]	+13	.07	.08		.29	.11[b]	+27
Left–right self-placement	.02	.03		.03	.03		.08	.03[b]	+16	.03	.03		−.01	.05	
Attitudes toward authority	.80	.26[b]	+17	1.16	.26[a]	+27	.61	.27[c]	+11	1.11	.33[b]	+20	.16	.42	
Constant	−.60	.48		−.85	.48		1.07	.43[c]		−.13	.54		−1.89	1.14	
Pseudo R^2		.16			.20			.09			.10			.06	
N		1,746			1,747			1,746			1,319			427	

Source: 2000 Canadian component of the *World Values Survey* and its special sample of recent immigrants.

Note: Min–max prob.Δ indicates the change in the probability of abstaining when the variable varies from its minimum to its maximum value, holding all other independent variables at their sample averages; a: $p < .001$ b: $p < .01$ c: $p < .05$ Entries report binary logit estimates (regressions with robust standard error).

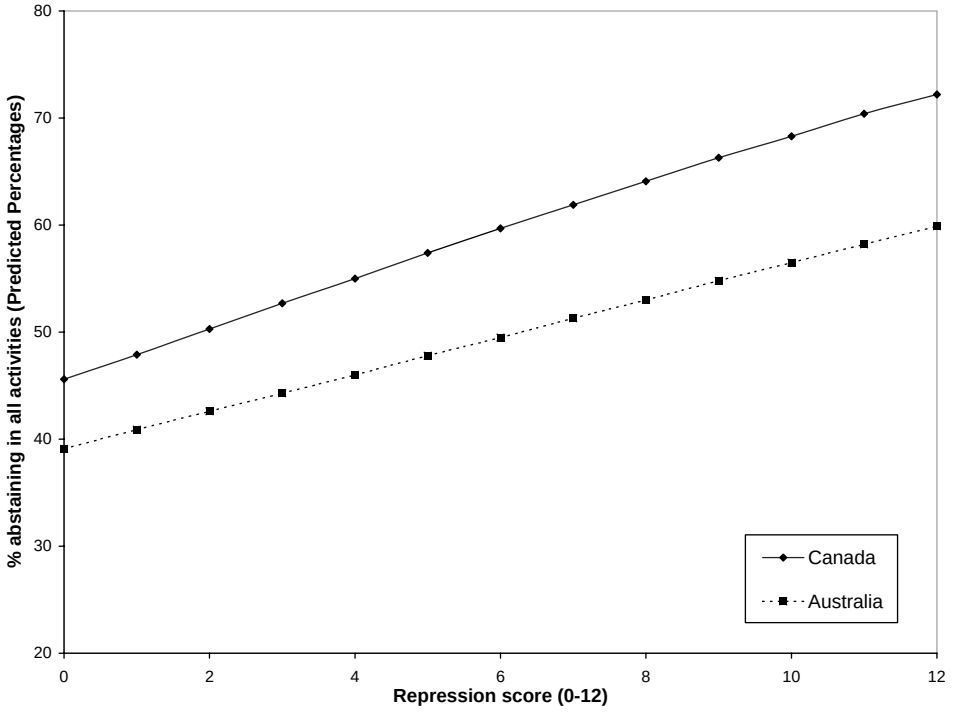

Figure 1. The impact of pre-migration experience of political repression in Canada and Australia (predicted percentages)

Source: 2000 Canadian component of the *World Values Survey* and its special sample of recent immigrants; 2004 *Australian Election Study* and its special sample of immigrants
Note: Predicted percentages are presented. These were generated using multivariate analyses presented in Tables 6 and 9, by holding all the independent variables other than the immigrant variable and the repression score at their sample means.

(Model 1C). The results indicate the same patterns for both analyses (see Table 6): the more repressive the countries of origin, the more likely immigrants are to abstain from either signing a petition or from all other forms of protest activity. Moreover, the magnitude of the impact for the repression variable is approximately the same whether we examine all protest activities together (Model 1), only signing a petition (Model 1B) or all protest activities except signing a petition (Model 1C). It is worth mentioning, however, that the immigrant variable is not statistically significant for Model 1C. This is probably explained by the fact that there was initially little difference in immigrant and non-immigrant abstention in these types of activity.

It is possible that the predictors for abstaining from protest activities are not the same for immigrants and non-immigrants, and it is also possible that the propensity to protest increases for immigrants the longer they live in their host country. In order to test for such possibilities, two separate analyses were performed: one for immigrants and another for the local population. The analyses presented in Table

6 (Models 2 and 3) include the same control variables as in Model 1 plus the length of residence of the immigrant (Model 3 only); the dependent variable here measures abstention from all protest activities (as in Model 1). The results indicate that there are significant differences in the predicting factors of immigrant and non-immigrant abstention. While education, income and membership in groups are significant, and negative, determinants for the abstention of the local population, they are not significant for the immigrant population. On the other hand, materialist values are a significant and positive predictor of abstention only for the immigrant population. Only interest in politics and satisfaction with the government are common predictors for both immigrants and non-immigrants, though the effect is much larger among immigrants. These findings indicate that the dynamics of mobilisation for protest politics differ substantially among immigrants and non-immigrants. What is conducive to protest participation among the local population is often not among immigrants, and *vice versa*. This supports the need to conduct immigrant-specific studies of immigrant political participation. The distinction in the predictors of protest abstention between immigrants and non-immigrants will be further discussed in the next section.

Quite important, however, is the fact that the repression scale (for the immigrant model) remains a statistically significant predictor in Model 3. The severity of the political repression that immigrants experienced in their country of origin correlates to the likelihood that they will abstain from protest politics in their new country. The magnitude of the impact is also comparable to that measured in Model 1 and experience of political repression is the second most important predictor of protest abstention by immigrants (next to satisfaction with the government and equal to materialist values). Finally, the analysis indicates that there is no correlation between immigrants' propensity to protest and their length of residence, at least in regard to the first 10 years in the host country. Immigrants in Canada for 4–6 or 7–10 years are just as likely to abstain from protest politics as those in the country for 1–3 years.

The evidence from Canada thus supports both H1 and H2. First, regardless of their experience of repression, immigrants tend to abstain from protest politics more than the local population; and second, immigrants who have experienced political repression prior to migration are even more likely to abstain than other immigrants. H3, where immigrants who experienced political repression would be more likely to be involved in protest activities, is not supported.

Evidence from Immigrants in Australia

Are the Canadian findings unique? Can they be replicated in other national contexts? In order to answer these questions the analysis now turns to Australia. In addition to providing some comparative evidence to the Canadian findings, the Australian case offers many advantages lacking in the Canadian case. First, the immigrant sample for Australia is composed of immigrants who have lived in the host country for an average of 29 years. The Canadian findings show that, in the first 10 years, a

substantial proportion of immigrants failed to integrate into protest politics. The Australian case, however, will provide evidence for immigrants' adaptation over the long haul.

Second, the Australian survey was conducted using mail questionnaires which limit 'social desirability effects'. For the Canadian case, because the interviews were performed face-to-face, we may hypothesise that immigrant respondents were reluctant to admit their participation in protest activities. With mail questionnaires, immigrants in Australia might feel more comfortable admitting to protest participation because of the greater anonymity that such a methodology provides.

Finally, the Australian questionnaire imposed a limited reference period to the question on protest participation. Unlike the Canadian questionnaire, which measured immigrants' participation in protest activities during their entire residency in Canada, the Australian survey was limited to protest participation in the last five years. In this regard, Canadian immigrants may have appeared to abstain more than the local population simply because they have not had opportunities to protest (recall that all Canadian immigrants questioned lived in Canada for up to 10 years maximum). The Australian questionnaire, however, overcomes such a limitation by allowing a five-year window of reference that somewhat equalises the opportunities that immigrants and non-immigrants may have had to participate in protest activities. This provides for a more reliable test through which to compare the participation of immigrants with that of the local population. The Australian analysis uses the same model as for Canada. Respondents in Australia were asked whether, over the past five years, they had taken part in a protest, march or demonstration, or signed a written petition to express support for or discontent with the government. Once again, the dependent variable is dichotomous and measures abstention from both types of protest activity.

The Australian findings are similar to the Canadian ones in some respects. While 37 per cent of the local population report not having been involved in protest activities in the last five years, 52 per cent of immigrants reported the same; a 15-percentage-point difference (see Table 7). The Australian data do not offer the opportunity to examine immigrants' participation in a wide variety of protest activities, but a quick comparison of their involvement in signing a petition and taking part in a protest, march or public demonstration mimics the pattern observed in Canada (compare Table 7 with Table 4). The gap between immigrant and non-immigrant involvement in protest activities is primarily due to immigrants'

Table 7. Protest abstention among immigrants in Australia

	Percentage abstaining from:		
	All protest activities	Signing a petition	Protest and others
Local population (n = 889)	37	38	83
All immigrants (n = 274)	52	56	86

Source: 2004 *Australian Election Study* and its special sample of recent immigrants.

reluctance to sign a petition: there is an 18-point difference between immigrants and non-immigrants for abstaining (56 vs 38 per cent) and only three points for taking part in a protest, march or public demonstration (86 vs 83 per cent); see Table 7. Once again, the act of signing a petition, which citizens of Western democracies consider to be a normal thing to do, appears disquieting for many immigrants, even after they have lived for many years in the host country. The likely explanation is that signing a petition is not appealing to immigrants who have experienced repression because such a political act requires them to publicly reveal their identity.

The findings for Australia are consistent with the Canadian findings in that immigrants abstain from protest politics more than the local population, especially when it comes to signing a petition. There are major differences, however, in the levels and gaps of abstention between immigrants and non-immigrants in the two countries. First, levels of abstention are higher among the local population in Australia than Canada (37 per cent compared to 21). It is not the purpose of this article to investigate the source of these discrepancies. However speculation suggests that these differences may be accounted for by the wording of the questions posed by the two countries; while the Canadian survey asked respondents if they had 'ever' taken part in protest activities, the Australian one asked specifically 'in the past five years'.

Second, the proportion of immigrants to non-immigrants who abstain is more than 2.5 times larger in Canada than in Australia. Moreover, while abstention is higher among Australian-born respondents than among their Canadian counterparts, it is higher among Canadian immigrants than Australian immigrants. There is more than one possible explanation to account for such findings. One likely possibility is the difference in length of residence of the immigrant population in each country. Another possibility is the discrepancies in the origin of immigrants in each country. Indeed, while a large proportion of immigrants in the Australian sample come from Western Europe (see Tables 2 and 8), this group is marginal in the Canadian sample, where there is a much larger contingent of immigrants from East and South Asia. Therefore, abstention could be more important among Canadian immigrants than Australian immigrants because they lived in the host country for a shorter period of time and/or come from countries that are more repressive. Nevertheless, even though there are some important differences in the levels of abstention and gaps between

Table 8. Protest abstention among groups of immigrants in Australia

	Immigrant groups						
	Africa	South Asia	East Asia	South/Eastern Europe	Middle-East	Western Europe	Others
Average repression score for sample, 0–12	9.3	4.7	9.8	6.5	6.9	0.0	4.4
% abstaining from all protest activities	62	33	68	64	37	39	86
N =	21	15	65	42	19	105	7

Source: *2004 Australian Election Study* and its special sample of immigrants.

immigrants and non-immigrants in both countries, the same pattern is observed: immigrants in Canada and Australia protest less than the local population.

What about the political experiences immigrants may have had in their country of origin? In Australia, as in Canada, the results show that immigrants' place of origin *does* impact on their propensity to protest. Table 8 indicates that immigrants from East Asia are the most likely of all groups of immigrants to abstain (68 per cent), with those from South Asia the least likely (33 per cent).[9]

It was expected that protest politics would vary across groups of immigrants in Australia because of the unique set of political experiences that immigrants bring with them upon arrival in the host country. The Canadian findings showed that pre-migration political repression is a powerful predictor of the variation in immigrants' abstention from protest activities—however, these findings were observed for an immigrant population who had recently arrived in Canada. The Australian data allow us to examine whether a previous experience of political repression continues to shape immigrants' participation in protest activities even after having lived in Australia for a few decades. Table 9 examines the impact of pre-migration political repression among immigrants in Australia. Similar to the Canadian analyses, in addition to a variable indicating whether or not respondents were immigrants, a repression variable indicating the level of political repression of the country of origin is included. Moreover, the analysis controls for the impact of alternative explanations (resources, mobilisation, satisfaction with government and values). A multivariate logit analysis was conducted using the same independent variables as in the Canadian model. The results, presented in Table 9 (Model 1), only partially corroborate the Canadian results: overall, for both immigrants and non-immigrants, those who are a member of a group as well as those who have a greater interest in politics are more involved in protests than the other respondents—they abstain less. Moreover, those who are deferential to authority and have materialist values abstain more. In contrast to the Canadian findings, male respondents and those to the right of the ideological spectrum are more likely to abstain; no such relationship was observed for Canada. Finally, while there was a negative association between respondents' education and protest abstention in Canada, no such relationship is observed in Australia.

However, the Australian findings are consistent with the Canadian ones with regard to the impact of pre-migration political repression, which continues to influence immigrants' protest participation, even after they have lived for almost 30 years in Australia. As in Canada, the impact of experiences of repression is to increase abstention rather than participation; those who come from severely repressive regimes abstain more than those who come from non-repressive ones. Predicted percentages were obtained using the multivariate analyses. By keeping all the independent variables—other than the repression variable—at their sample average, the percentages indicate that the proportions of respondents who have never protested are 39 per cent for immigrants from countries with no repression (0), 50 per cent for those from countries with moderate repression (6), and 60 per

Table 9. Origins of protest abstention among immigrants in Australia

	Protest abstention														
	Model 1 Local+immigrants: all protest activities			Model 1B Local+immigrants: petition only			Model 1C Local+immigrants: protest and others			Model 2 Local only: all protest activities			Model 3 Immigrants only: all protest activities		
	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ	B	RSE	Min–max prob.Δ
Immigrant (dummy)	.15	.20		.19	.20		−.02	.27			n.a			n.a	
Level of repression in country of origin	.07	.03[b]	+21	.08	.03[b]	+24	−.02	.04			n.a		.08	.03[c]	+24
Length of residence (ref. cat. 0–10 years)															
11–20 years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		.09	.49	
21–30 years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		.26	.56	
31–40 years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		.47	.58	
41+years		n.a			n.a			n.a			n.a		.68	.66	
Female	−.44	.13[b]	−10	−.43	.13[b]	−10	−.25	.18		−.48	.15[b]	−11	−.25	.29	
Age	−.00	.01		−.01	.00		.01	.01		−.01	.00		−.02	.00	
Income	.00	.02		.01	.02		−.00	.02		.03	.02		−.07	.04	
Education	−.13	.08		−.14	.08		−.15	.10		−.18	.09[c]	−12	.07	.15	
Interest in politics	−1.23	.27[a]	−30	−1.04	.26[a]	−25	−.92	.37[c]	−9	−1.31	.32[a]	−31	−.98	.53	
Employed	−.11	.16		−.09	.16		.13	.20		−.15	.19		.13	.37	
Group membership	−.31	.08[a]	−26	−.29	.08[a]	−25	−.14	.10		−.34	.09[a]	−26	−.24	.19	
Satisfaction with govt	.66	.34		.56	.34		1.00	.39[b]	+12	.62	.40		.82	.74	
Materialist values	.31	.12[b]	+15	.22	.12		.67	.15[a]	+15	.27	.14		1.19	.65	
Left–right self-placement	.09	.04[c]	+21	.07	.04[c]	+17	.21	.05[a]	+25	.09	.04[c]	+20	.07	.07	
Attitudes toward authority	1.19	.33[a]	+29	1.17	.33[a]	+28	.87	.52		1.13	.39[b]	+27	.46	.26	
Constant	−.20	.41		−.07	.40		−.13	.53		−.16	.46		.18	1.07	
Pseudo R^2		.12			.11			.15			.11			.13	
N		1,163			1,163			1,163			889			265	

Source: *2004 Australian Election Study* and its special sample of immigrants.

Note: a: p <.001 b: p <.01 c: p <.05; entries report binary logit estimates (regressions with robust standard error). Min–max prob.Δ indicates the change in the probability of abstaining when the variable varies from its minimum to its maximum value, holding all other independent variables at their sample averages.

cent for immigrants from countries with severe political repression (12); refer back to Figure 1.

Once again, given the distinction in immigrants' abstention between signing a petition and taking part in a protest, march or public demonstration, additional analyses were performed to test for the impact of pre-migration political repression separately for the two types of activity (see Models 1B and 1C). These analyses indicate that the impact of pre-migration repression is statistically significant only for signing a petition (Model 1B).[10] The repression impact thus seems limited to signing a petition. Arguably, taking part in those other activities is rare for everybody, both immigrants and non-immigrants, and therefore there is little room for the experience of repression to exert any significant influence here.

The Australian findings suggest a long-term impact of migrants' pre-migration experience of political repression. However, another possible explanation is that the degree of repression may only serve as a substitute for the length of residence in Australia. Essentially, immigrants from repressive regimes would abstain more from protest politics because they have been in Australia for a shorter period and not because of an experience of political repression. Intuitively this makes sense, since recent waves of immigrants are composed of larger proportions of immigrants from repressive regimes than older waves. In order to test this hypothesis and to investigate for any immigrant-specific protest participation mobilisation, separate analyses were performed for immigrant and non-immigrant respondents in which variables measuring length of residence are included.

Models 2 and 3 of Table 9 present the results. First, as observed for Canada, the analyses indicate different mobilisation factors for immigrants and non-immigrants. While factors such as gender, education, belonging to groups and left–right self-placement are significant in predicting local population participation, these factors are not significant for immigrants. Also, while an interest in politics is positively associated with protest participation and an attitude toward authority is positively associated with refraining from protests for the local population, these factors are only barely statistically significant for the immigrant population (p value = .07 in both cases); however this may be due to the small sample size used for immigrants.

The repression scale for the immigrant model remains a statistically significant predicting factor even when controlling for length of residence. In fact none of the variables for length of residence are statistically significant.[11] These complementary analyses thus indicate that the political repression effect observed in Table 9 (Model 1) cannot be explained by a shorter length of residence. These findings raise another question: Why is length of residence not a significant predicting factor? Intuitively it would seem that protest participation would increase with length of residence. Arguably, the answer is that there is not enough variation in the distribution of the lengths of residency in the sample and, more specifically, only about 10 per cent of immigrants in the sample have been living in Australia for up to 10 years. Therefore, while it is likely that the Canadian data failed to capture change in protest behaviours with length of residence because most immigrants had been in the country for too

short a time, the Australian data might fail to capture any change with length of residence because most immigrants have lived in the country for too long. But this is a hypothesis that could only be verified in future research and with data that offer a better distribution in immigrants' length of residency.

Hypothesis 2, then, is once again supported: the more repressive the countries of origin, the more likely immigrants are to abstain from protest politics. Furthermore, even after immigrants have lived in the host country for about 30 years, the degree of repression an immigrant experienced is still a powerful predicting factor of abstaining from protest politics. In fact, the most striking finding in the Australian analysis is that the degree of political repression produces the only statistically significant result for the immigrant population.[12] A comparison between the Canadian and the Australian results also indicates that immigrants' experience of political repression is the only commonality between the two countries. Certainly, in the Canadian case, satisfaction with the government is a stronger predicting factor than political repression (48 vs. 27 min–max probability change) and materialist values are as strong a predictor as repression, but these relationships are unique to Canada and are not replicable for Australian immigrants. Overall, when immigrants in both countries are compared, their experience of political repression stands out from other factors, both because of the magnitude of its impact and of its salience in both national settings.

Yet, even if the experience of political repression is the only common predictor of immigrants' protest participation in Canada and Australia, it is only part of the story in explaining why immigrants protest or not. Many other findings deserve some attention. In the comparison between Canada and Australia, it is intriguing that satisfaction with government and materialist values are predicting factors only for immigrants in Canada and not for those in Australia. There is no obvious reason why this is so. Furthermore, while the Australian findings support the Canadian ones in regard to the impact of pre-migration political repression, they also diverge in one important aspect: in Canada the immigrant variable was statistically significant even when controlling for the experience of repression. In Australia it was not statistically significant. In short Australian immigrants are as likely to protest as the local population, once the experience of political repression is controlled for.

There are a few possible explanations for this difference between Canada and Australia. First, one could argue that the large difference between the length of residency for Australian (29 years) and Canadian (six years) immigrants could account for this discrepancy. After having lived for more than 29 years in Australia, immigrants' reluctance to protest—independent of the experience of repression—could have vanished, with only the impact associated with the actual experience of repression still enduring. However, currently, there is little support for this hypothesis: there is simply no change in immigrants' protest abstention with length of residence in either country.

Another possible explanation raised earlier is the difference between the composition of the immigrant sample in each country, with more immigrants in

the Canadian sample coming from repressive regimes. Again, this hypothesis needs to be discarded, as our analyses, by controlling for immigrants' experience of political repression, should control for that possibility. A third possible explanation lies, as mentioned earlier, in the question-wording and the five-year window of reference that the Australian survey imposed on respondents, but it is difficult to assess the extent to which this can fully explain the discrepancy between the Canadian and the Australian findings. Finally, another explanation could be that the dynamics and success of immigrants' integration are different in each country—and probably easier in Australia. For reasons difficult to identify here, immigrants would become involved in protest activities more easily in Australia than in Canada. Following this line of reasoning, one could wonder whether compulsory voting in Australia might, beyond electoral participation, facilitate immigrants' political participation more generally. This is only a speculative proposition, however, and there is not yet evidence that compulsory voting helps immigrants' adaptation even for electoral activities.

The comparison of the two countries reveals intriguing findings not only for the discrepancies it highlights but also for the similarities between them. In comparing immigrants to non-immigrants, it is puzzling to see the effect of group membership and education. Why is group membership important for mobilising the local population in both countries but not for the immigrant population in either Canada or Australia? Tillie (2004) was able to show that groups and organisations play a central role in mobilising immigrants in the Netherlands. The fact that this is not the case for Canadian and Australian immigrants is intriguing. One possible explanation could be that only certain types of group specifically mobilise immigrants—for instance ethnic groups—but Tillie showed that both ethnic and non-ethnic groups played a mobilising role. In any case, verifying such a hypothesis would necessitate further investigation which is not possible with the current data because neither survey used for this paper asked respondents about their membership of ethnic groups.

Similarly revealing are the results concerning education: in both countries, the level of education amongst the local population increases their protest participation whereas the same is not seen for the immigrant population. These results are in effect consistent with the research done by other authors showing that the education effect on political participation is weaker among immigrants than the local population (Ramakrishnan 2005; Tam Cho 1999). The reason remains to be identified; however, one possible explanation may be that education helps develop the skills which allow navigation of the political system as well as a greater familiarity with the political system. For immigrants, such skills may be minimised because their education was attained in another country.

These contrasting findings between immigrants and non-immigrants indicate that immigrants' mobilisation follows different dynamics than that of the local population. Overall, the Canadian and Australian analyses identified only a few factors explaining immigrants' protest abstention and this really highlights the need to better understand these specific dynamics of political mobilisation among immigrants.

Conclusion

This paper has examined whether immigrants in Canada and Australia express their voice through protest politics and whether their experience of political repression prior to immigration has an impact on their involvement in such types of activity. Clear findings emerge from the analysis. Immigrants' experience of political repression plays a major role in determining their willingness to participate in protest activities; those coming from repressive regimes abstain more than those from non-repressive regimes, and the more severe the repression the greater the degree of abstention. Rather than encouraging and motivating immigrants to take every single opportunity to express their political voice now that they live in a democracy, many immigrants appear reluctant to speak out publicly and prefer to stay away from most protest activities. Hypothesis 2 is thus supported and H3 rejected.

What is noteworthy about these findings is that they hold true in two national settings, Canada and Australia.[13] One criticism could certainly be that the Canadian and Australian data are not really comparable: they were obtained using different survey methodologies and the average length of residence of immigrants in each case is substantially different. These differences in methodologies are important. Nevertheless, the same trends are observed: both Canadian and Australian immigrants' abstention from protest activities increases with the level of repression that prevailed in their country of origin.

Finally, there are also some important differences between the Canadian and the Australian findings that must be emphasised. If immigrants in Canada, regardless of their origin and experience of repression, abstain more than the Canadian local population, the same is not true in Australia, where only those who experienced a certain level of repression tend to abstain more than the local population. There is thus mixed support for H1. Whether immigrants, regardless of their origin, will participate or not in the protest politics of each host country is likely to be associated with several factors unique to each country: the specific origin of the newcomers, their length of residence in the host society, and the specific capacity of each country to integrate its immigrant population into the political process.

The main conclusion that emerges from these analyses is that the impact of the pre-migration experience of political repression proves to be powerful, enduring and systematic in two distinct national settings. Immigrants from repressive regimes avoid expressing their voice through protest politics even for something as simple as signing a petition, and the Australian case tells us that this holds true even after having lived for 30 years in the host country. So why do experiences with political repression cause immigrants to refrain from voicing political demands through protest activities? It could be argued that, coming from a repressive regime, immigrants are more likely to hold materialist values, to have a greater respect for political authority or to possess a right-wing ideology, and that these are responsible for immigrants' abstention. But this is not the case: the analyses indicate that the effect of repression still dominates when all other variables are held constant.

It could also be argued that other factors unaccounted for in the analyses could explain immigrants' greater abstention and the repression effect. One of those hypotheses is that becoming an official citizen of the host country encourages immigrants to become politically involved, especially when it comes to protest activities. The argument is that not possessing citizenship makes immigrants feel more vulnerable and less inclined to challenge public authorities or to commit illegal acts. This is particularly true in light of the possible consequences affecting their chances of citizenship. Unfortunately, it is not possible to examine the impact of possessing citizenship in the Canadian survey because the data did not indicate immigrants' citizenship status. But it is clear from the Australian evidence that such a hypothesis cannot account for the trends in protest abstention in this country: all immigrants in the Australian data possess citizenship of the host country—this was a requirement for being interviewed—and yet immigrants from repressive regimes still abstain more than the local population.[14]

Another hypothesis may be migrants' weaker proficiency in English, a significant determinant in immigrant participation (Uhlaner *et al.* 1989). However, the evidence from Australia indicates that this hypothesis cannot account for trends in protest participation among immigrants there, as those who filled in the questionnaire had to have sufficient knowledge of English in order to participate in the lengthy survey, provided in English only.

If the above explanations cannot explain the repression effect, what else can? It is difficult to provide a definitive answer to that question, in part because we do not know the extent of the personal experience of repression that immigrants may have encountered—we only have an idea of the degree of repression in the country in which they lived prior to migrating to Canada or Australia. The proposed answer is therefore only tentative. The experience of political repression almost certainly provides immigrants with a fear of speaking out publicly, especially against government and public officials; a fear that endures even in a new country where the political context is different and the institutions are democratic, and even after 30 years in that new country. The repression effect would thus represent a case of enduring pre-migration political experiences and persisting pre-migration socialisation. That the gap in participation is largest between immigrants and the local population for signing a petition gives support for this hypothesis. It is probably the fear of formally revealing their identity that leads such a large proportion of immigrants to abstain from signing petitions.

Research on immigrants' political adaptation has made tremendous progress in pointing out the impact of institutions and immigrants' situation in the host country on their political adaptation (Black 1987; Chui *et al.* 1991; Jones-Correa 2001; Junn 1999; McAllister and Makkai 1992; Ramakrishnan 2005; Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001; Tam Cho 1999; Uhlaner *et al.* 1989). The findings in this paper contribute to demonstrating that pre-migration experiences must also be considered for understanding immigrant political adaptation. We already know that newcomers' pre-migration political participation affects participation in the host country (Black

1987), that pre-migration political affiliation influences the development of a new partisan attachment in the host country (Finifter and Finifter 1989), or that coming from a repressive regime has no systematic impact on voting among immigrants in the United States (Ramakrishnan and Espenshade 2001). It is now also evident that pre-migration experiences of political repression matter, at least when it comes to protest participation.

That people are socialised to politics and tend to develop attitudes that reflect the prevailing norms and reality of the political system in which they were socialised is far from being a new argument in sociology and political science (Almond and Verba 1963; Eckstein 1988; Inglehart 1990; Niemi and Hepburn 1995). Yet, there are very few attempts to systematically assess the impact of pre-migration socialisation and these are primarily done by studying immigrant communities case by case. The evidence provided by Black (1987), Finifter and Finifter (1989), Ramakrishnan (2005), Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) and this study indicates that, beyond studying immigrant communities case by case, some recurrent patterns about the impact of pre-migration experiences and the context of socialisation can be identified across immigrants of different origins. This highlights the need to pay greater attention to the context in which immigrants are socialised in the country of origin. Future research must better understand how the socialisation experiences that immigrants bring with them impact their adaptation to the host political system, especially at a time when newcomers in Western democracies increasingly come from countries where the social, economic and political contexts largely differ from that prevailing in their host countries.

In conclusion, in a broader perspective this study addresses the normalisation of protest politics and the expression of immigrants' political voice. While scholars increasingly talk about protest politics as a common way for citizens to express their voice and as being a part of the normal political repertoire in Western democracies, this paper indicates that protest has not yet fully been extended to all segments of society. For a large proportion of immigrants in Canada, Australia and probably in other Western democracies, protest politics is not yet an option they dare to use to communicate their needs and preferences, especially for those new waves of immigrants coming from repressive political regimes. Immigrants do not only lag behind the local population with regards to the expression of their political voice through conventional forms of activity, they also do so with regard to their capacity to attract the attention of public officials and government through protest participation.

The question then becomes: How can we help immigrants to voice their needs and preferences in protest activities or other channels of participation? There is no easy solution. Analyses have demonstrated that the main predicting factors of immigrant involvement in such activities are their satisfaction with the government, materialist values and pre-migration experience of political repression.[15] There is simply no easy way to influence immigrants on these matters. With regard to the first two factors, it is simply nonsense to encourage greater cynicism and dissatisfaction among the

immigrant population, and values such as materialist ones are unlikely to change quickly. As far as the experience of political repression is concerned, public authorities can try building programmes to familiarise newcomers with their rights and freedoms in a democracy, and help them overcome those haunting memories. The Australian evidence indicates how enduring such memories are and how difficult it might be to appease an immigrant's fear of speaking out publicly. But special educational programmes for newcomers might nevertheless be a promising avenue. Research has already proven how effective some of these programmes of democratic training have been for populations in transition to democracy (Finkel 2002; Morduchowicz *et al.* 1996). If these programmes can work in political contexts that are often unstable, there is no reason to believe that they could not have an impact among immigrant populations in Western democracies like Canada and Australia. These are important matters that need to be addressed by public authorities because at stake is not only immigrants' capacity to have their voices heard, but also the development of a vibrant and inclusive democracy.

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Notes

[1] Data provided by Citizenship and Immigration Canada and the Australian Department of Immigration and Multiculturalism and Indigenous Affairs. The author is solely responsible for the classification of countries according to their democratic status.

[2] Ramakrishnan (2005: 90) indicates that some groups of immigrants in the United States, who come from repressive regimes, are less likely to participate in protests, but this conclusion applies predominantly to white immigrants. In any case, the differences are modest, roughly six percentage points.

[3] Although not directly related to political participation or repression, Finifter and Finifter (1989) also demonstrate the significant impact of pre-migration experiences. They indicate that partisan preferences in the country of origin play a significant role in the development of a new partisan attachment among immigrants in Australia.

[4] Alternatively, many immigrants experience downward socio-economic mobility and discrimination in the host country. It is also possible that newcomers quickly become disillusioned with the host country and exhibit low levels of satisfaction with public authorities. This would increase rather than decrease the motivation for protesting.

[5] Methodological constraints have limited the inclusion of other countries in the investigation. Some preliminary analyses conducted on the United States and New Zealand produced sample sizes too small to provide any reliable results and did not provide all the necessary information to replicate the Canadian and Australian analyses.

[6] Immigrants living in Canada for more than 10 years were not interviewed, and those who arrived in Canada before the age of 10 were not included in the analysis for this paper. For the latter, the argument is that immigrants who arrived before the age of 10 have been primarily socialised in the democratic host country and not in the country of origin; their experience of repressive regimes is therefore quite limited.

[7] The pattern for each specific type of protest activity is broadly the same. For each group of immigrants, the largest gap in abstention with the local population is observed for signing a petition.

[8] With the repression score held at 0 and all other independent variables held at the sample averages.

[9] Abstention varies substantially when immigrants from similar regions in the world are compared in Canada and Australia. For instance, while abstention among African immigrants in Australia is 62 per cent, the respective figure is 8 per cent in Canada. It is important to mention that such differences are not surprising because immigrants, even if coming from the same region, do not necessarily come from the same country. The level of repression varies substantially from one country to another even within a similar region—and even when coming from the same country, immigrants in the Canadian and Australian samples have lived in their countries of origin at different times which means they have not necessarily accumulated the same baggage of political experiences.

[10] Because of the timing of arrival in the host country, the Canadian and Australian samples have substantially different immigrant compositions. For instance, there is a much larger proportion of immigrants from countries with a repression score of 0 for Australia than for Canada. In order to facilitate the comparison between the two countries, some additional analyses were performed for Australia in which immigrants with a repression score from 0 to 3 were excluded. The results indicate that, even when excluding those immigrants from non- and less-repressive regimes, the variable remains statistically significant. The results are not presented for reasons of space.

[11] The length of residence in Australia and the score on political repression present a positive correlation among the immigrant population, but the correlation is not as strong as one might have expected (Pearson coefficient = $-.33$, statistically significant at a .001 level).

[12] The Australian findings suggest that the Canadian findings were not only the consequence of the survey methodology. Immigrants from repressive regimes answering a mail questionnaire in which they enjoy greater anonymity than when participating in a face-to-face interview also abstain more than the local population from protest activities.

[13] Some tentative analyses were also performed using the cases of the United States (World Values Survey data) and New Zealand (Election Studies data) and the results are consistent with those presented in this paper.

[14] Immigrants, like non-immigrants, were selected from the electoral roll, and therefore necessarily possess Australian citizenship.

[15] Interest in politics is another predictor of protest abstention. But in this case, immigrants are more interested in politics than the local population, which actually helps to reduce the gap in protest abstention.

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