



AALBORG UNIVERSITY
DENMARK

Aalborg Universitet

Religious Differences as Barriers to Immigrants' Integration in Civil Society

Evidence from Denmark

Jørgensen, Anders Bastrup; Qvist, Hans-Peter Y.

Publication date:
2023

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

[Link to publication from Aalborg University](#)

Citation for published version (APA):
Jørgensen, A. B., & Qvist, H.-P. Y. (2023). *Religious Differences as Barriers to Immigrants' Integration in Civil Society: Evidence from Denmark*. Poster presented at Population Association of America 2023 Annual Meeting, New Orleans, Louisiana, United States.

General rights

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in the public portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from the public portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal -

Take down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us at vbn@aub.aau.dk providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Religious Differences as Barriers to Immigrants' Integration in Civil Society: Evidence from Denmark

Anders Bastrup Jørgensen & Hans-Peter Y. Qvist

Department of Sociology and Social Work, Aalborg University, Denmark



Research Aim

- To investigate the extent to which different immigrant groups, based on the dominant religion in their country of origin, reach parity with native Danes in their levels of volunteering over the years they spend in Denmark.

Background

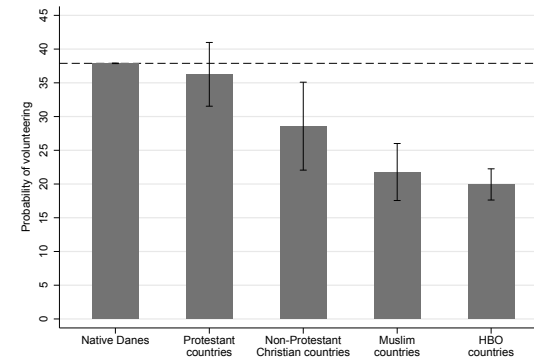
- Existing research** has suggested that immigrants reach parity with natives' levels of participation in civil society organizations over the years they spend in their destination societies (e.g., Aleksynska 2011; Voicu & Şerban 2012).
- Theory:** These findings are surprising considering the general scholarship on immigrant integration, which suggests that processes of integration, especially for immigrants from religiously and culturally distant countries, occur slowly and usually extend over generations (van Tubergen 2020). Religious differences are theorized to be key barriers to immigrants' social, economic, and cultural integration in Western European societies (Alba & Foner 2015; Drouhot & Nee 2019).
- What we set out to do:** We critically examine the notion from previous research that immigrants fully reach parity with natives in their levels of civic participation, focusing on volunteering in civil society organizations. In addition, we distinguish between various immigrant groups based on the dominant religion in their country of origin.
- The case of Denmark:** Denmark's otherwise historically Protestant population is becoming more ethnically and religiously diverse due to increased immigration. Participation in civil society organizations is an essential part of social life for many people in Denmark.

Estimation strategy

- Statistical model:** We use multilevel linear probability models with individuals nested in their country of origin to investigate the extent to which immigrants reach parity with natives in their level of volunteering over the years they spent in Denmark.
- What we do:** In all models, we regress volunteering on dummies for the different immigrant groups, include survey year fixed effects, and estimate robust standard errors. In Figures 2 and 3, we include immigrants' *length of residence* in Denmark as a moderating variable to assess the extent to which immigrants reach parity with natives over the years they spend in Denmark.

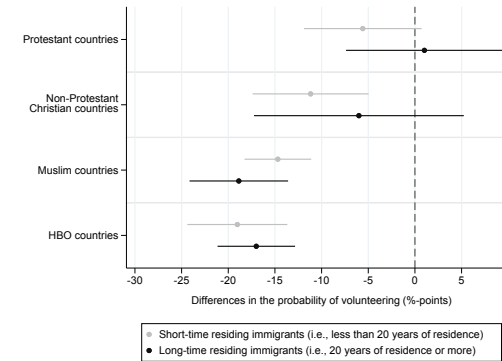
Results

Figure 1. Predicted probabilities that natives and immigrants' volunteer. Full sample.



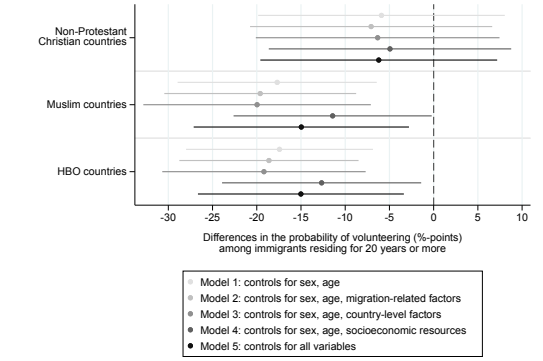
Note: Error bars show 95 % confidence intervals. HBO = Hindu, Buddhist, and other countries.

Figure 2. Differences in the predicted probabilities that natives and immigrants' volunteer, conditional on immigrants' length of residence. Full sample.



Note: Error bars show 95 % confidence intervals. The dashed line indicates native Danes as the reference group. HBO = Hindu, Buddhist, and other countries.

Figure 3. Differences in the predicted probabilities that long-time residing (i.e., 20 years of residence or more) immigrants volunteer. Immigrant sample.



Note: Error bars show 95 % confidence intervals. The dashed line indicates long-time residing immigrants from Protestant countries as the reference group. HBO = Hindu, Buddhist, and other countries.

Data and central variables

- Data:** Repeated cross-sectional survey data with information about formal volunteering merged with administrative register data containing information about immigrants' country of origin, length of residence, and socioeconomic resources.
- Analytic sample:** 13,853 natives and 1,918 immigrants originating from 127 countries.
- Dependent variable: Volunteering.** A binary variable indicating if a person has volunteered in a civil society organization within the last year (1) or not (0).
- Central independent variable: Immigrant groups based on the dominant religion in their country of origin.** We distinguish between five groups: (1) Native Danes; Immigrants from (2) Protestant, (3) Non-Protestant Christian, (4) Muslim, and (5) Hindu, Buddhist, and other countries.

Conclusion

- Large integration differentials:** In Denmark, large integration differentials in volunteering exist across immigrant groups. This result nuances previous research (see the section "Background").
- While immigrants from predominantly Christian, especially Protestant, countries reach parity with native Danes' level of volunteering, substantial native-immigrant gaps in volunteering remain for immigrants from mainly Muslim and Hindu, Buddhist, and other countries.
- In line with previous theorizing, we conclude that religious differences seem to be a barrier to immigrants' integration into civil society.
- Future research** should examine *why* these integration differentials in volunteering occur.

References

- Alba, R. and Foner, N. (2015): Strangers No More: Immigration and the Challenges of Integration in North America and Western Europe. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Aleksynska, M. (2011): "Civic Participation of Immigrants in Europe: Assimilation, Origin, and Destination Country Effects." *European Journal of Political Economy* 27(3):566–85.
- Drouhot, L. G. & Nee, V. (2019). "Assimilation and the Second Generation in Europe and America: Blending and Segregating Social Dynamics Between Immigrants and Natives." *Annual Review of Sociology* 45(1):177–99.
- Voicu, B. & Şerban. (2012). "Immigrant Involvement in Voluntary Associations in Europe." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*. 38(10): 1569–87.
- van Tubergen, Frank (2020): "Immigration and integration" in *Introduction to Sociology*. New York: Routledge.

Contact info ☺

Anders Bastrup Jørgensen (PhD Student)
e-mail: anbaj@socsci.aau.dk
Twitter: [a_bastrup](https://twitter.com/a_bastrup)

Hans-Peter Y. Qvist (Associate Professor)
e-mail: hpg@socsci.aau.dk
Twitter: [HPQvist](https://twitter.com/HPQvist)