

# The role of immigrant associations in the social

Inclusion of young people with migrant background

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**Keywords:** Migrant youth participation, immigrant associations, migrant youth

- The Portuguese integration policies and tools are an important basis of resources to the immigrant associations, shaping their activities and initiatives offered to young people.
- Immigrant associations are mainly focused on the social integration of immigrants and their descendants as well as in the maintenance of a sense of belonging to a cultural heritage.
- Immigrant associations are contexts of non-formal education that may contribute to young people's school success.
- Immigrant associations that promote youth volunteering contribute to youth civic engagement.

**Purpose:** This article account for an investigation on the role of immigrant associations in the promotion of social inclusion of young people with migrant background.

**Design/methodology/approach:** After selecting nine immigrant associations located in Portugal, we carried out a broad set of interviews with the coordinators of those associations and with young people that are Afro-descendants and Eastern-European-descendants aged between 15 and 25 years.

**Findings:** Immigrant associations have three different focuses to respond to young people's needs fostering their social inclusion. Most afro-descendants associations focus mainly on the promotion of young people's school success and in the development of leisure activities, youth volunteering and geographic mobility. On the other hand, Eastern European associations and Guinee Bissau association focus mainly on the transmission, maintenance and expression of immigrants' cultural heritage.

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Today the scale and speed of migration waves are striking and unprecedented. Mass migration to Western Europe since the 1960s has increased remarkably leading to enormous changes in Europe's population landscape. Europe became in the course of the last half century, a "continent of immigration" (Okolski, 2012), witnessing as well an increasing diversity of immigrant populations and, additionally, the increasing number of refugees and asylum seekers. Consequently, the integration of people with migrant background - whose cultures, languages, religions and values may differ significantly from those of most long-established residents of a given host society - is one of the main challenges of the European societies and,

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inevitably, an issue of crucial relevance in political and academic agendas (OECD/European Union, 2015; Diehl, Lubbers, Muhlau & Platt, 2016; Grzymala-Kazłowska & Phillimore, 2017).

Integration implies making the immigrants and their children full members of societies where they live, having the same access of native-born citizens to valuable social resources or opportunities such as benefiting from education, health, societal institutions, political system and labour and housing markets (Alba & Foner, 2017). The integration processes can occur across various dimensions: economic and educational; social e spacial (as social relationships and geography); cultural (changing values, attitudes, behavior and lifestyle); civic and political participation and identity domains (that is, the processes through which individuals develop a sense of belonging with nation, places, communities and people among whom they live) (Ager & Strang, 2008; Spencer & Charsley, 2016).

Migrant youth participation, in particular, has been considered a crucial factor towards the promotion of integration, as it facilitates the development of community bonds and a sense of belonging to the hosting societies (Albanesi, Cicognani & Zani, 2007; Eggert & Giugni, 2010; Global Migration Group, 2014; Guo, 2014). Researchers, propelled by the unprecedented increase of immigration waves, have developed a growing interest in the civic participation of immigrants and, particularly, of young people with immigrant backgrounds (Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005; Jensen, 2010). Nevertheless, civic participation of immigrant and second generation youngsters is still an under-researched area, both internationally (Lee & Pritzker, 2013; Ishizawa, 2015) as nationally (Trovão, 2012; Ribeiro, Malafaia, Neves, Ferreira & Menezes, 2015). Therefore, this paper tries to contribute to a better understanding of immigrant associations' practices and youth civic participation, shedding light on the role of immigrant associations in the social inclusion of young people with migrant background.

### **1.1 The alleged flight from politics: does civic life died or reborn itself?**

For the past 20 years, the promotion of youth civic participation has been prominent on the European Union's youth policy agenda (European Union, 2016). Studies on youth participation are often motivated by a concern with the so-called crisis of citizenship, as younger generations seem to show relatively little interest in political and social participation (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2010; Menezes et al., 2012). Research on political participation in contemporary democracies has, for a number of years, been concerned with declining levels of party affiliation and civic and political engagement among young people as well as middle-aged and old citizen (Bessant, Farthing & Watts, 2016).

Younger generations, in particular, are certainly less attracted by conventional modes of participation as the traditional political engagement than past generations. Youth political disengagement from formal democratic arenas is visible in the dramatic shrinkage in the political parties membership, low electoral turnout, distrust of politicians and political parties, and in a disenchantment about the overall functioning of the democratic process (Harris, Wyn & Younes, 2007; Sloam, 2013; Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Nevertheless, it has been argued that the lamentations shed on the alleged "flight from politics" and on the decline of political and civic engagement are premature. We may acknowledge that today citizens participate less in institutional and electoral politics, but also develop new and alternative forms of political and civic behaviour (Norris, 2002; Berger, 2009). Researchers, in a different perspective, have been arguing that participation changed, rather than declined.

In late modern societies, young people seem to prefer to engage in alternative forms of participation that take place outside traditional sphere of politics, for instance through social movements, non-governmental organizations and volunteering (Print, 2007; Sloam, 2013, 2016; Chou, Gagnon, Hartung & Pruitt., 2017; Jardim & Silva, 2018). Young immigrants, in particular, participate in associations and voluntary work relatively frequently (Romaní, Feixa & Latorre, 2012). Besides, young people prefer to participate on their own terms, showing a preference for cause-oriented politics (Chou, Gagnon, Hartung & Pruitt, 2017), non-hierarchical, non-institutionalized and community-based forms of engagement that have more meaning to their everyday lives (Syvertsen, Wray-Lake, Flanagan, Wayne & Briddell, 2011; Amnå & Ekman, 2014). Harris and his colleagues (2007) claimed that young people are not 'bowling alone', but that they prefer to "be engaged in informal activities that are not structured through organizations or by adults" (p. 24). These scholars identified new activities and spaces, such as clubs, gigs

or dance events, which can be used as alternative public spheres where young people create communities, politics or express publicly political concerns.

Ekman and Amna (2012), in order to extend the definition of civic, social and political participation to include new and more imaginative forms of participation that move beyond traditional ones, created a new typology of participation, which include 1) manifest political participation, 2) civic participation (or latent political) and 3) non participation. In manifest political participation citizens may engage in formal political engagement and in extra-parliamentary activities or activism, like signing petitions or taking part in protests, demonstrations and strikes. Civic participation includes personal interest in politics and societal issues or attentiveness to political issues as well as civic engagement such as voluntary work. Lastly, in passive form of non-participation people perceive politics as not interesting, do not follow political and civic affairs and do not feel any particular need to make their voices heard. In active types of non-participation citizens feel disgusted with political issues and political discussions are actively avoided.

Taking into consideration that in Portugal there is still a lack of information regarding the specific contexts that promote opportunities and experiences of participation, as associations (Fernandes-Jesus, 2013), and especially attended by groups of young people with less opportunities to participate, we decided to focus the study on immigrant associations and on young people with migrant background that are involved in those contexts.

## **1.2 Participation of young people with migrant background in immigrant associations**

Following international trends, in Portugal young people have progressively disengaged from formal political arenas and voting (Menezes et al., 2012; Cabral & Salgado, 2018), but are increasingly active in civic groups, namely volunteering organizations (Romão, Gaspar, Correia & Amaro, 2012). Civil society groups, such as associations, have received specially attention from Robert Putnam (2001) and Warren (2001). Putnam argues that civil society groups can 'instil in their members habits of cooperation and public-spiritedness' (Putnam, 2001: 338), foster social capital, enable people to engage in the public sphere, to learn how to address problems collectively, and to self-organize to improve common life. On the other hand, Warren (2001) affirms that participation in associations may contribute to the development of individual autonomy, which includes a sense of efficacy or political agency, developing organizational and political skills, capacities for deliberative judgment and civic virtues.

Immigrant associations, in particular, are considered a crucial context for the study of the participation and integration of immigrants and descendants in the host society (Schrover & Vermeulen, 2005). In the Portuguese context, the political, social and civic mobilization of immigrants occurs essentially through these contexts (Teixeira & Albuquerque, 2005). Sardinha (2009, p. 76), defines immigrant association as "an organization formed by individuals who consciously define themselves as members of an ethno-cultural group (based, for example, on variables such as country of origin, common heritage, language, religion etc.) within a larger context". Immigrant associations may represent a space for socialization, education, information, solidarity and mediation between the society of origin and the hosting society, as well as a context for the reinterpretation and expression of traditions and cultural belongings (Albuquerque, Ferreira & Viegas, 2000).

Immigrant associations have been studied as a context for the expression of immigrants' common cultural background (Sardinha, 2009), as service providers to facilitate immigrants' integration, as a channel for political participation and representation in the host country (Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Predelli, 2008), and as a source of transnational connections with the homeland (Guarnizo, Portes, & Haller, 2003; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2015).

The literature reveals mainly positive relationships between associative engagement of migrant groups and other phenomena, such as access to higher-quality jobs (Myrberg, 2011), political participation (Handy & Greenspan 2009; Terriquez and Kwon, 2015), the creation and extension of informal networks (Romaní, Feixa & Latorre, 2012), the development of generalized trust (Achbari, 2015), inter-personal co-operation and democratic skills (Warren, 2001). Nevertheless, contemporary enthusiasm for the beneficial effects of participation in associations should avoid overly romantic or optimistic ideas. Mere associative participation does not guarantee the development of agency, critical thinking or other related

skills (Dodge & Ospina, 2016). Nina Eliasoph (2001, p. 39), has suggested that voluntary associations can teach their members 'to care about the world and talk about their political concerns; but they can also teach members how not to care and to silence these concerns'.

In Portugal, the analysis of associative practices of young people with an immigrant background is still very scarce (Horta, 2010), deserving a stronger place in the scientific agenda. Moreover, the study of the associative dynamics of migrants from Eastern Europe have remained less visible. In this sense, this paper attempts to address this research gap by providing a solid theoretical and empirical contribution on immigrant associations as well as on the differentiated forms of participation and meanings young people with African and eastern European background attach to their engagement. Thus, we question how immigrant associations may be spaces of participation with significant contributions to the engagement and social inclusion of young people with migrant background.

## 2 METHODOLOGY

This article is part of a larger study on the associative participation of young people with migrant background in Portugal. The study covers nine immigrant associations located in different urban contexts: four Afro descendants associations and five Eastern European associations. We opted for a qualitative methodology, selecting the interview as the main method and the semi structured interviews and group interviews as the main technique. The interviews provide detailed insights of specific phenomena and allows to have access to participants' understandings of their own experiences (King & Horrocks, 2010). This methodological choice is justified by the need to listen to the experiences meaning making and perspectives of both the leaders of the associations and the young people with African and Eastern European background who participate in those contexts.

We conducted 23 individual interviews with 18 associative leaders and technicians as well as individual and group interviews with 46 young participants of the 9 associations. The interviews with leaders and technicians had three main themes: 1) the goals, spheres of action and constraints of the association; 2) the concerns about the young participants and 3) the relationship of the association with the immigrants' country of origin. The interviews with young people also had 3 main themes: 1) young people's motivations to participate in the association, and the meanings and benefits attributed to their participation; 2) the meanings attributed to school and expectations about school and professional career; and 3) young people's sense of belonging to Portugal, to the country of origin and to the cultural heritage. All the interviews were recorded and were analyzed through content analysis techniques. The major limitation of this study was the young people's limited time availability that did not allow us to do in-depth field work.

### 2.1 Sample selection and procedure

The data collection process began with the mapping of immigrant associations and youth associations attended by young people with migrant backgrounds in Portugal. 107 associations were identified. However, 37 associations of the 107 have no means of contact available and there is no certainty as to whether they are still active or not. Most associations are located in Lisbon (76). 60 associations have as their main target audience Afro-descendants, namely Cape Verdeans, Angolans, Sao Tome, Mozambicans, and Guineans; 13 associations are aimed at immigrants and descendants from Eastern European countries, such as Ukrainians, Moldovans and Romanian; and finally, 7 associations are aimed at Brazilian immigrants.

As the focus of this study is on immigrant associations that clearly work with and for young people we identified 20 associations, targeted either at young people of African descent or young people from Eastern Europe. Within these 20 associations we selected nine associations who have a sustained work with these two youth groups. The option for nine case study contexts allowed us to develop a comprehensive and in depth understanding of the work done by immigrant associations and of the diverse modes of participation of those two ethnic groups. In order to achieve a balanced geographical distribution, we selected associations located northern (two associations), central (one association) and

southern (six associations) regions of Continental Portugal. Some associations that would be of interest to this study were excluded as some are destined mainly to children, some temporarily interrupted their activities and some were unavailable. After selecting the 9 associations, we visited each one and conducted individual interviews with 18 associative leaders and technicians. Lastly, we undertook individual and group interviews with a total of 46 young people with an African and Eastern European background aged between 15 and 25 years old. Table 1 include information about the 9 associations.

**Table 1: General description of the immigrant associations**

Name of associations	Year of creation	Number of members	Ethno-cultural background of members
A1 - Cape Verdean Association	1983	480	Cape Verdean (80%) and other nationalities (20%)
A2 - Cape Verdean Association	2001	1000	Afrodescendants (70 %), portuguese (20%) and romani people (10%).
A3 -Association of Afro descendants	1999	300	Afrodescendants (95%) and portuguese (5%)
A4- Guinea-Bissau Association	2007	200	Afrodescendants
A5 -Association of Romanian and Moldovan immigrants	2006	300	Romanian and Moldavian (90%), and other nationalities (10%), as Ukrainian, Portuguese and Afro descendants.
A6 - Eastern European association	2008	1000	Ukrainians(70 %), Russians and Moldovans(20 %), other nationalities of eastern Europe (10%)
A7 - Eastern European association	2004	3000	Ukrainians (60 %), e Moldovan, Belarusian, Russian, Georgian (40%)
A8 - Ukrainian association	2003	1500	Ukrainians
A9 - Ukrainian association	2016	100	

Below we present a brief description of the leaders and technicians interviewed (table 2).

**Table 2: General description of the leadership interviewed**

	Number of Leaders (L) and technicians (T)	Age	Female	Male	Nationality
A1	3	L: 36; T: 26-29	3		Cape Verdean (3)
A2	4	L: 48; T: 24-29	2	2	Cape Verdean (3) e Portuguese (1)
A3	1	L: 54	1		Cape Verdean
A4	1	L: 49		1	Guinean
A5	4	L: 41; T: 23-35	3	1	Romanian (1), Portuguese (2) and Afro-descendant (1)
A6	1	L: 48	1		Moldovan
A7	1	L: 49	1		Ukrainian
A8	2	L: 48; T: 46	1	1	Ukrainian
A9	1	L: 19		1	Ukrainian
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>12</b>	<b>6</b>	

All associations are adult-driven, with the exception of A9 which have young people in the leadership. All members of the association's coordination have a migrant background. Table 3 presents a socio-demographic characterization of the young people interviewed.

**Table 3: General description of the young people interviewed**

	Number of young people	Female	Male	First Generation immigrants	Second generation immigrants
A1	7	2	5		7 Afro-descendants
A2	8	4	4	2 Cape Verdeans and 1 Sao Tome	5 Afro-descendants
A3	5	5		1 Cape Verdean	4 Afro-descendants
A4	4	3	1	1 Angolan, 1 Guinean and 1 Sao Tome	1 Afro-descendant
A5	6	3	3	1 Ukrainian and 3 Romanian	1 of romanian origin e 1 Afro-descendant
A6	3	2	1	2 Ukrainian e 1 Russian	
A7	3	2	1	3 Ukrainians	
A8	5	3	2	3 Ukrainians	2 of Ukrainian origin
A9	5	2	3	5 Ukrainians	
<b>Total</b>	46	26	20	25	21

Of the 46 young people interviewed, 39 are between 15 and 21 years old. The remaining 7 young people are between 22 and 25 years old (one from A1, two from A3, one from A7 and three from A9). Most of the first generation immigrated to Portugal in their childhood, when they were between 1 and 14 years old, and 3 young people from A6 came to Portugal when they were 15 years old. Regarding the socio-economic characteristics of young people, Afro-descendants belong to families with low educational attainment and low socioeconomic status. On the other hand, most young people of Ukrainian, Romanian and Russian background (with the exception of some young people from A5 and A8) belong to families with high educational attainment, that is, with a bachelor's degree and a master's degree. Thus, they have access to greater cultural, social and economic capital.

### 3 RESULTS

#### 3.1 Immigrant integration in Portugal: implications to immigrant associations

There have never been so many foreigners living in Portugal as today. In 2018, according to data from the Foreigners and Borders Service (SEF, 2019), there are 480,300 foreign citizens resident in Portugal with residence permits. The four main nationalities residing in the country includes Brazil (105,423), Cape Verde (34,663), Romania (30,908) and Ukraine (29,218). These immigrant communities started to move to Portugal since 1990s (Padilla & França, 2016).

According to an international study of Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), Portugal has the 2nd most favorable integration policies within the developed world. Considering several dimensions of integration, Portugal presents positive results in terms of low levels of discrimination, family reunification policies, access to education, labor market mobility, and temporary and permanent residence permits. Regarding education, Portugal is one of the few countries developing basic support to help immigrant pupils to access pre-school, vocational and higher education or to prevent them from dropping out. Portuguese schools receive a favorable range of support to implement intercultural education and to target immigrant pupils' specific learning needs. For instance, intercultural mediators are available to orient newcomer parents about schools and children of immigrants are entitled to learn Portuguese as second language (Huddleston, Bilgili, Joki & Vankova, 2015).

High Commissioner for Migration (ACM) is the institution of the Portuguese government that is responsible for the implementation of public policies in the area of migration, namely in promoting the integration of immigrants, refugees and ethnic groups and in the development of social inclusion programs for immigrant descendants. Among many integration policy tools developed by ACM it is included the National Immigrant Support Centres (CNAI); National Network of Local Immigrant Support Centres (CLAIS), Advisory Council for Immigration Affairs (COCAI); Technical Support Office for Immigrant Associations (GATAI); 'Promotion of Immigrant Entrepreneurship; Portuguese for All Program (which offers Portuguese language courses for foreigners) and the Choices Program (Padilla & França, 2016). Moreover, several monitoring reports and qualitative assessments suggest that many of the ACM programs such as CNAI, CLAI, and Choices Program are reaching a large number of immigrants in need and are appreciated by beneficiaries (Huddleston, Bilgili, Joki & Vankova, 2015).

GATAI and Choices Program that in 2019 is in the seventh edition deserve a special attention. GATAI works with the Immigration Advisory Council to recognize immigrant associations, increase capacity, expand their networks and provide small-scale funding. *On the other hand*, Choices Program, launched in 2001, fosters the social inclusion of disadvantaged young people, particularly immigrant youth, descendants of immigrants and ethnic minorities (ACM, 2015). The immigrant associations of this study acquire funding through the application to public projects, from ACM, *and they also receive support and donations from local companies and municipalities*. Besides, associations A2 and A5 (Cape-Verdean association and Association of Romanian and Moldovan immigrants) have projects funded by the Choices Program, destined to implement activities for young people with migrant background. Thus, we may conclude that the integration policies of host countries, in the case Portugal, are an important source of rights and resources to immigrant associations, influencing and contributing for the development of their activities and initiatives (Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Escobar, 2010).

### 3.2 The main aims of immigrant associations: from social integration to cultural expression

The main aim of all Afro descendants and Eastern European associations is the promotion of social integration of immigrants and descendants. For this purpose associations develop four main actions as the table below shows:

**Table 4: Main aims of the immigrant associations**

Main aims	Afro descendants associations				Easter European associations				
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
Support in solving problems of legalization, regularization and documentation of immigrants	Green	Orange	Red	Blue	Pink	Olive	Yellow	Cyan	
Social support for immigrant families	Green	Orange	Red	Blue	Pink	Olive	Yellow	Cyan	
Promotion of opportunities of insertion in the labour market and training courses	Green	Orange			Pink	Olive	Yellow	Cyan	
Promotion of opportunities for socialization	Green	Orange	Red	Blue	Pink	Olive	Yellow	Cyan	Purple
Promotion of opportunities of learning and expression of the cultural heritage	Green			Blue	Pink	Olive	Yellow	Cyan	Purple

As literature indicates, immigrant organizations have long provided essential social services to immigrant populations, assuming a role of mediators between immigrant communities and public institutions. In this sense, they assist immigrants and descendants in dealing with daily issues of legalization, and give practical guidance and access to information that are necessary for migrants' integration in the labor market and in society, such as accommodation or healthcare (Hung 2007; Boccagni & Pilati, 2015). On the other hand, immigrant associations are contexts of socialization and non-formal education which aims to reinforce common cultural ties between immigrants and their



descendants who share the same language and cultural background (Cordero-Guzman, 2005; Babis, 2016). For instance, through the celebration of cultural events, teaching of mother tongue, history, culture and traditional dances of the homeland.

### 3.3 The strong ethnic focus of associations and associative strategies to promote interculturality

Although most associations, except Ukrainian associations A8 and A9, include members from different ethnic backgrounds and nationalities, exists a dominant ethnic group in each of these associations: most members of the A1, A2, A3 and A4 association are of African descent, most members of A5 have Romanian and Moldovan origin, and most members of A6 and A7 are of Ukrainian origin. Lastly, A8 and A9 have only members with Ukrainian background. Therefore, we may say that these organizations have a dominant ethnic focus, being that the social ties woven in these contexts grounds in the similarity of ethnic origin.

The number of members of other ethnicities and nationalities is a minority and this is explained by several factors. A1, A2 and A3 were initially created to respond to the integration needs of the Cape Verdean population. Those associations are located in a community with a majority of African descent population. Additionally, since A1 is located in a region where there is no other immigrant associations, it felt obliged to address the needs of immigrants from other nationalities that live in the region. A2 also decided to broaden the target audience to address the social needs of vulnerable populations of the locality, including immigrants and Portuguese without migrant background. The A4 was formed to preserve and express the African cultural heritage of Afro-descendants, therefore its members are made of Afro-descendants. The A5 is mainly made up of Romanian and Moldovan immigrants and descendants because the locality of the association has a large population of these nationalities. However, due to the presence of other ethnicities and nationalities in the locality A5 also decided to accept members from other ethnicities. Finally, the A6 and A7 are constituted mostly by Ukrainian migrants because they are outnumbered in the northern region of Portugal when compared with others eastern European nationalities.

The minority ethnic members of each associations participate mainly to enjoy services related to social support, training and professional integration opportunities and political integration such as legalization and regularization of documents. The children and young people, in particular, engage in leisure activities, socialization and school support. Though associations A1 and A5 carry out activities particularly related to the cultural heritage from the majority of its members, such as the celebration of Cape Verdean festivities (in the case of A1) and Moldovan and Romanian dance groups and cultural festivities (in the case of A5), members of any ethnicity or nationality can participate.

A1 and A5 develop strategies to promote an intercultural dialogue between the young people of the association and young people with different nationalities and ethnic background from the locality and other regions of Portugal, as illustrated by the following words of association leaders and staff:

Grace (leader, A1): "We go to local schools and with the voluntary support of young people from the association we discuss various intercultural themes, such as stereotype, discrimination, cultural differences, and we also show African culture, for example through African dance workshops".

Vanessa (technique, A1) - "We promote intercultural gatherings to bring together as many ethnic groups, different cultures, children, adults and young people as possible".

Emma (leader, A5) - "Here, we rarely speak romanian. (...) It is very important that young people relate to young people from different cultures and localities. This has always been our goal since 2008 when we created the folk dance group. Young people who participate in this group have already been to Funchal, and come to meet many young. We promote exchanges with dance groups even with Portuguese ranches, where they learn Portuguese dances".



Cecily (technique, A5) – “The exchanges we make at the regional and national levels promote opportunities for mobility and relationship among young people of different nationalities, ethnicities and localities, helping them not to be in a logic of segregation. We also promote sport exchanges with young people from other places here in the Algarve, because in Algarve there is a great rivalry between some territories”.

### 3.4 Types of immigrant associations who works with young people with migrant background

Given the fact that organizations can be categorized based on the type of services, actions or focus of the activities they provide (Cordero-Guzmán,2005), data analysis resulted in the identification of three different focus of action.

#### 3.4.1 Associations with a focus on school success

**Table 5: Actions of associations with a focus on school success.**

Actions	Afro descendants associations				Easter European associations				
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
School support									
Teaching of primary and secondary education subjects of the Ukrainian Educational System									
Support in the search for educational and professional pathways									
Training activities destined to young people's relatives									

#### 3.4.2 Associations with a focus on leisure activities, youth volunteering and mobility

**Table 6: Actions of associations with a focus on leisure activities, youth volunteering and mobility**

Actions	Afro descendants associations				Easter European associations				
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
Leisure activities, practice of a sport									
Activities of youth volunteering in the association and in local community									
Exchanges between young people of different ethnicities, localities and associations									
Cultural and leisure excursions outside the locality									

Associations A1, A2, A3 and A5 are located in an urban context where there is a lack of cultural, sports and leisure activities. In this sense, they function on a daily basis, offering leisure activities and the possibility to practice a sport. Young people construct their own reasoning and meanings in what concerns their participation.

Most young people from A1 and A2 attend the association daily.

Henry (A1, second generation, 17 years old) – “Association is very important because after school we get together here and we are not closed at home. We feel at home here. We are a family and our companionship is very important. We come to the association to socialize, talk and play PlayStation”.

Mary - (A2, second generation, 19 years old) - "What motivates me to come to the association is to be with people, to socialize. When I started coming to this ludic place, about a year ago, I met more people and made more friends with the people here in the area which helped me in my integration"

Luke (A5, first generation, 18 years old) - "Association is an opportunity for us to have fun, to socialize with different types of people and distract ourselves from the outside world that only requires psychological effort and work".

For young people from A5 youth exchanges have a seductive appeal. The opportunity to travel and get to know people with different ethnic and cultural backgrounds is very interesting and a motivation factor:

Richard (A5, first generation, 19 years old) - "What encourages us to participate in the association is youth exchanges. It's one of the most interesting things here. (...) We meet young people from other Choices projects, people from different cultures and ethnicities, such as Gypsies.

Delilah (A5, second generation, 15 years old) - "Thanks to the exchanges we have with young people from other localities and different nationalities we have opportunities to travel and learn more about the geography of Portugal, to get to know new places, make new friends and at the same time we strengthen the friendship of our group. Madeline (first generation, 17 years old) - And it's always good to socialize with different people. Luke - It helps us get more general knowledge and understand others' point of view, culture and religion".

Girls from A3 also attend the association to play a federated sport, a they take part of the female handball team.

Rose (A3, second generation, 23 years old) - " Thanks to handball we travel and get to know many places. At weekends we have game and at the end of the year we have tournaments where we get to know other people from Lisbon, Porto, Algarve, and then we keep in touch. And that's good because we are not closed here. "

Associations A1 and A5 promote youth volunteering in association and in the local community. Young people reveal different motivations to become enrolled in those type of activities:

Sophie (A1, second generation, 20 years old) - "The association asks me to do activities related with arts and creativity because they know I like arts. For example, I was asked to think about painting activities to do with the younger ones. (...) They call me because they know that I adhere and do a thousand things to be always present. (...) My participation in the association helps us to deal with different people, to work collectively as a team, and respect both differences and everyone's opinions. If I had not been involved with other people, and saw such a diversity, I could look at people differently, in a more prejudiced way".

Delilah (A5, second generation, 15 years olds) - I volunteer because I like and also to diversify my daily routine which is school, home and study. Luke - Going with a group of young people to the beach to pick up garbage is a different thing. Even if it doesn't seem very significant, it is always something to do and help the local community.

Daniel (A5, second generation, 17 years old) - "I teach drama classes to children and young people here at the association. This was my first experience as a director. I volunteer to help and also to develop my skills. I have a responsibility to look after children or youth. And I'm gaining responsibility and maturity".

As young people refers, the involvement in associations through volunteering activities may indeed have various beneficial effects to young people's civic development, namely for the development of civic virtues. According to Warren (2001) this term includes "capacities for reciprocity and recognition of others", "a willingness to play by the rules, attend to the common good, trust others, empathize with others, tolerate differences, respect rights, and deliberate and listen in good faith" (Warren, 2001: 149).

### 3.2.5 Associations with a focus on the transmission and expression of immigrants' cultural heritage

**Table 7: Actions of associations with a focus on the transmission and expression of immigrants' cultural heritage**

Actions	Afro descendants associations				Easter European associations				
	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
Groups of Romanian, Ukrainian, Eastern and African dances									
Teaching of mother tongue (Ukrainian and Russian), history and culture of the homeland									
National and international meetings between Ukrainian children and young people living in different countries									
Celebration of cultural events to spread the culture and/or history of the country of origin									

Eastern European associations and Guinea-Bissau association A4 main concern is young people's unawareness of their cultural heritage. Therefore, they organize informal educational meetings during the weekend for young people to learn their cultural heritage and to engage in cultural practices as folk dance groups. As we will see, young people appropriate these activities and services in different ways:

Anna (A4, first generation, 18 years old) - "We are in the association to continue our traditions, but with a new smell. Telma (second generation, 15 years old) - We add to the traditional dances the influences we have learned today. Raquel (first generation, 18 years old) - We come to the association because we love dancing and being in a group socializing".

Monica (A5, first generation, 16 years old) - "I participate in the folk dance group of Romanian and Moldovan dances. In this group we have the opportunity to do shows and travel. I've been to Madeira, Porto, etc. And in these shows we meet Romanian and Moldovan young people and also young Portuguese people who dance".

Matthew (A7, first generation, 24 years old) - Nowadays we meet on festive days to celebrate our cultural traditions. Laura (A7, first generation, 20 years old) - the benefit of association is to speak the Ukrainian language. I learned to read better Ukrainian here. Association help us not to forget our origins, our traditions and customs.

Ukrainian associations (A8, A9), in particular, constitute a space where young people speak in their mother tongue. In A8 some young people participate due to their parents' interest:

Vera (A8, first generation, 15 years old) - "We came to the association to learn the Ukrainian language better and not to forget our Ukrainian nationality."

Young people from A9 reveal a strong sense of belonging to their homeland and to their cultural heritage. Natasha and Antonio highlight the opportunities to learn the culture and history of Ukraine, to travel and to socialize with Ukrainians as the main reasons to participate in the association.

Natasha (A9, first generation, 19 years old) – “In this association we learn Ukrainian history, traditions, and culture. This is what motivates us the most. Because we live far from our country. The Ukrainian history we cover here is quite important; it helps us to understand what our past was. Here in the association the type of learning is playful, that is, we learn with the help of games”.

Antonio (A9, first generation, 17 years old) – “I come to the association to communicate with. And because we have the opportunity, through meetings and camps, to travel and develop new friendships with Ukrainians living in other areas of Portugal and outside Portugal”.

Yuri has a political engagement in association.

Yuri (A9, first generation, 24 years old) - I do not participate 100%. Whenever I can, I give a hand. (...) I attended meetings to organize demonstrations against the Russian occupation. We made a movie about what happened in Ukraine in 2014 when the war started and we showed it in high schools. Most people were Ukrainian but we also had some Portuguese. And it is this more political part that interests me the most. Because I want to follow a political career in Ukraine later. That is why I now try to follow the political movements.

#### 4 DISCUSSION

One of the most compelling findings of this study that corroborate other studies (Takle, 2012; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2015) is that activities of immigrant organizations directed towards the integration and socialization of migrants in the host society, easily coexist with activities oriented towards the conservation, cultivation and expression of transnational ties with the homeland and its own cultural heritage. The variations founded on associations' focus and actions are partly understood not only by the needs of young participants and immigrants, but also by immigrants' cultural ties and proximity with the homeland (Alonso, 2017). In our study, Eastern European Associations reveal stronger cultural ties and sense of belonging to their homeland.

Afro-descendants Associations A1, A2, A3 and Romanian and Moldovan association A5 focus mainly on the promotion of young people's school success and in the promotion of leisure activities to meet the lack of cultural and leisure activities in the local context and to respond to the social needs of young people whose parents have low socio-economic status. As Boccagni & Pilati (2015) argues the socio-economic position of the ethnic groups and their members influence the activities of immigrant associations. In fact, in Western European countries, the majority of children of immigrant parents with low socioeconomic status are disadvantaged in the field of education, because their families have low levels of academic qualifications and are often unable to provide their children with proper school guidance and support (Alba & Foner, 2017). Therefore, as young afro descendants and for young people of Romanian and Ukrainian origin of these associations recognizes, the school support is particularly important to contribute to their school success and school engagement. Besides, associations considered a leisure and relaxation context to socialize, to play sports, to travel and to volunteer.

On the other hand, the ethnic background influences the aims and practices of the Afro-descendant association A4, and of the eastern European associations A5, A6, A7, A8 and A9. These associations focus on the transmission and expression of immigrants' cultural and national heritage, being designed to build and display “ways of belonging” with migrants' homeland and cultural heritage (Moya 2005; Caselli 2010). Some have groups of African or Eastern European dances (A4, A5, A6, A7), some offer teaching of Ukrainian education system subjects (A6 and A8), and some teach the mother tongue, and teach the history and culture of the home country (A6, A7, A8 and A9). For young people, the association is appreciated as an opportunity to practice a folk dance of their cultural heritage, to socialize with people from the same ethnic and cultural background, to travel, to speak in the mother tongue and have school support, and to learn, in a ludic way, about the culture, the language or the history of immigrants' homeland.

Some immigrant associations also create opportunities for youth participation and agency. Afro-descendant association A1 and Romanian and Moldovan association A5 promote the participation and volunteering of young people in the association and in the local community, taking into account the interests and skills of young people. Thus, volunteering, by fostering youth leadership in activities, promotes personal knowledge and empowerment. This empowerment is achieved because young people have the opportunity to exercise power and initiative, take decisions and co-create the content of their participation, minimizing adult input in activities (Tsekoura, 2016). Young people appreciate volunteering not only as an opportunity to help the association and the local community but also as an opportunity to exercise their skills and interests which contribute to their self-development.

On the other hand, A9 encourages young people's political participation related to political and social issues from Ukraine and the Ukrainians. The Young Yuri is the only one who reveals a political engagement. As Pilati & Morales (2016) argue, some ethnic organizations mainly encourage participation linked to immigrant-related issues and to specific ethnic groups. Most associations (A2, A3, A4, A6, A7 and A8) do not promote youth civic and political involvement. Aligned with the study of Boccagni & Pilati (2015), these immigrant associations are by and large oriented to cultural and leisure activities, with little interest in political claims making. As Nina Eliasoph (2001) points out, associations can be a place where politics are avoided and where civic participation is not encouraged.

Associations A1, A3 and A5 are important contexts of intercultural dialogue. By promoting opportunities for young people to interact and extend social relations with young people with different ethnic, geographic and social backgrounds - either through sports, youth exchanges or cultural events - these associations foster the formation of young people's bridging capital (Putnam & Feldstein, 2004) which may facilitate their social inclusion (Burrmann, Brandmann, Mutz & Zender, 2017; Fong & Shen, 2016). Besides, the opportunities for young people to travel and break through the walls of their social context, whether through exchanges or the practice of a sport, prevent situations of socio-spatial segregation. On the other hand, associations A2, A4, A6, A7, A8 and A9 promote mainly bonding social capital, that is, social ties among young people who already share a reservoir of cultural references, shared experience or common purpose. Summing up, immigrant organizations are a context of participation and non-formal education which helps to shape processes of social and educational inclusion, as well as a place for the construction or expression of migrants' cultural belonging.

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