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## Why do some cities adopt more diversity policies than others? A study in France and Germany

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**Abstract** An increasing sociocultural heterogeneity of populations and vocal demands for the recognition of diversity have become common features of, in particular, cities in Western Europe. Do cities reshape policies in response to such developments? And to what extent do they implement policies that accommodate difference? We use data from an original survey of urban policy actors in the twenty largest cities of France and Germany to identify city-level diversity policy instruments. In both countries, such instruments are widespread, contradicting assumptions of dominant assimilationist paradigms. And yet, the degree of adoption across cities varies. Drawing on institutionalist theory, we investigate what might explain differing adoption rates. The main finding is that key determinants at the urban level differ between the two countries. In France, the political constellation is crucial; higher numbers of diversity policies are associated with centre-left dominance. In contrast, in German cities, political consensus around diversity policies seems to prevail and higher adoption rates are associated with higher population diversity. Our findings provide a first wide-ranging account of the adoption of diversity policy instruments in European cities. They demonstrate that such policies exist at a relevant scale. They further help explain why the adoption of diversity policy instruments is uneven.

**Keywords** Diversity · Policy instruments · Cities · Germany · France

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## Introduction

This article investigates to what extent cities adopt diversity policies and why some are more likely than others to do so. Cities are important arenas for public policy innovation and diffusion (Mossberger et al. 2015). Across Europe, there is increasing recognition that the heterogeneity of urban populations requires adequate policy responses. The “intercultural opening” of institutions has been much discussed in the past two decades, often as part of immigrant integration policy. Previously disadvantaged groups, such as citizens with disabilities or LGBT people, have demanded, and partly achieved, recognition (Ayoub 2016; Barnartt and Scotch 2001; Gammerl 2010; Imrie 1996). Municipal policies including an “age-friendly dimension” and aiming at promoting healthy and independent lives of the elderly are also spreading in Europe (Green 2013; Steels 2015). How widespread are urban diversity policies, defined here as the use of policy instruments aiming to adjust the public administration and its services to a heterogeneous population and to publicly acknowledge the sociocultural diversity of the population? And why are some cities more likely than others to adopt such diversity policies?

Previous literature has often focussed on immigrant integration policies. Debates centred around whether and how urban policies differ from those pursued by the national state (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008; Dekker et al. 2015; Schiller 2015). Many publications have outlined integration policies and discourses in one, two, or sometimes more cities (e.g. Alexander 2007; Gesemann and Roth 2009; Hadj-Abdou 2014; Legros and Vitale 2011). And yet, we see deficits both in capturing variation across cities (and not only between city and nation state) more systematically and in offering explanations of this variation. We also lack studies that systematically look at a wide range of policy measures or instruments, selected in an analytically informed way.

In order to address these deficits, our study compares both a relatively large number of cities within the same national contexts and across two national contexts, in this case Germany and France. We thus account for national-level and city-level influences on policies.

We further take a broad perspective by looking at diversity policies. References to *diversité* or *Vielfalt* have become common in political life. Furthermore, scholars believe that cities in particular have to respond to an increasing and manifold heterogeneity of their populations (e.g. Harth 2012, p. 357). To what extent can we identify not only diversity rhetoric but also diversity policies? Such policies may include adjustments of services or steps to publicly acknowledge the diversity of the urban population. They may respond to a diversification of the population in a more general sense, to the relative exclusion of particular groups from, for example, public employment or cultural offers, or to specific needs of some groups. This study includes explicit “diversity management policies”, such as diversity trainings, as well as interventions that are not labelled as “diversity policies”.

The following section outlines assumptions regarding determinants of organized actors’ responses to change and calls for reform. We then explain the data and



methods underlying our analysis, before section four presents empirical results. Section five offers conclusions.

### Why cities' policies (may) differ: causal assumptions

Previous literature has identified a number of factors that determine whether and how corporate actors, like firms or administrations, respond to new challenges. We draw on a study of diversity programmes in US firms by Dobbin et al. (2011) in distinguishing four major factors assumed to shape policies. Summarizing previous institutional literature, Dobbin, Kim and Kalev discuss as potential determinants of diversity programmes: “external pressure, internal advocates, functional demand, and corporate culture” (2011, p. 387).<sup>1</sup> We re-interpret their suggestions to fit the different contexts of urban policy taking into account further literature. As cities differ from corporations and are not even organizations, we need to adjust the explanatory framework. The structures of political power in a city, for instance, are not comparable to the hierarchical structure of a firm. Still, we follow the institutionalist literature in assuming that four factors potentially affect the likelihood and frequency of diversity policies in cities.

**First**, urban policies may respond to external pressure.<sup>2</sup> Such pressure can come from regulatory interventions, public debates, normative expectations, and the example of others in the organizational field. Regulatory interventions may be exercised by the nation state or supranational bodies. Thus, the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in force since 2008, put pressure on public institutions to ensure the preconditions for inclusion. Discriminatory treatment is prohibited according to the European Convention of Human Rights and more recent European Union legislation. National laws forbid discrimination on grounds of nationality, religion, physical appearance, etc. In France, a law of 2012 obliges state administrations to ensure higher representation of women in top positions (Bender et al. 2014, p. 89). The broader cultural context also exercises external pressure on what happens within cities. For example, major international firms increasingly adopt diversity policies. Further, in both countries a public discourse exists that celebrates diversity as beneficial (Sabbagh 2011; Sénac 2012; Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2016). In Germany, a national integration plan of 2007, signed among others by the Association of German Cities (*Bundesvereinigung der kommunalen Spitzenverbände*), calls on local authorities to support integration and participation of immigrants, including, for instance, through an “intercultural opening” of the administration (Bundesregierung 2007, pp. 31–35). Cities in both Germany and

<sup>1</sup> For a study of cities using a similar framework, see Clingermayer and Feiock (1990) on the determinants of urban economic development policies.

<sup>2</sup> The concept of opportunity structures captures external context emphasizing enabling conditions rather than pressures (see, e.g. Meyer and Minkoff 2004). Obviously both pressures and opportunities, sometimes in the sense of absent adverse pressures, are important.



France can sign diversity charters or acquire a label as diversity-friendly<sup>3</sup>—programmes that exert soft pressure on urban actors to at least consider adjustment. From a sociological institutionalist perspective, a discursive and normative environment exists that may lead urban actors to “mimetically” adapt to ensure legitimacy (see Meyer 2008, p. 794; Deephouse and Suchman 2008). In France, this environment is more ambiguous. A formally “colour blind and universalistic framework” of republicanism allows different, sometimes more assimilationist, sometimes more pluralistic interpretations (Bertossi 2012, p. 443; on the longer-term background Favell 1998). This situation may be described as an opportunity structure that leaves room for different political initiatives on the part of urban actors.

**Second**, “institutionalists have generally seen functional need as a driver of the spread of new programs and practices” (Dobbin et al. 2011, p. 387). A functional need for reforms may arise when an organization does not achieve its goals or when its staff composition is seen as unsatisfactory. In cities, a functional need for diversity policies may exist where the size and demands of disadvantaged populations call for such interventions. For example, phenomena of exclusion and underrepresentation may be seen as requiring political interventions. Further, a city that strategically presents itself as open to the world and cosmopolitan in culture, for instance because foreign investment, the attraction of highly skilled foreigners, or tourism is important for its economic development, may implement measures that highlight its diversity (Glick-Schiller and Çağlar 2009, p. 189; Richter 2014).

**Third**, the existence and strength of diversity policy in all likelihood depends on supporters (or “internal advocates”) and opponents in the city. Without a voice that sets the agenda by transforming difficulties into policy problems (Stone 1989), functional need is unlikely to be translated into action. Immigrant representatives may be a pressure group for diversity policy (de Graauw and Vermeulen 2016). The literature on urban policies has emphasized the importance of the political constellation and the influence of major political parties’ positions on issues of immigration or gender equality (Sack 2012, p. 323; Jorgensen 2012, p. 253). Some authors have aimed to identify “urban regimes” or “advocacy coalitions” (Sabatier 1988), i.e. coalitions of actors with specific resources and structures of interaction, as preconditions of particular policies (Hohage 2013; Good 2005).

**Fourth**, Dobbin, Kim and Kaley mention corporate culture, understood as a “past pattern of attentiveness to social norms” (2011, p. 387), as conducive to the adoption of equal opportunity and diversity programmes. More generally, this is a reference to the path-dependence effects of a specific tradition or culture. While cities are not organizations, it is legitimate to ask whether specific experiences and traditions shape their responses to diversity. For example, Barbehön and Münch (2016, pp. 38, 52) assume that “specific local cultures” exist and shape what diversity means in a city and what policies are considered appropriate.

<sup>3</sup> Le Label Diversité dans la fonction publique, French cities can be awarded a “label diversité” in the name of the state to honour their engagement for the development of diversity and against discrimination (Bereni and Epstein 2015). See also Bender et al. (2014, p. 93).



The analysis presented here investigates the influence of some potential determinants of the adoption of diversity policies by German and French cities. In particular, we examine the role of functional need and advocacy. Given that cities are contested political spaces with a range of political actors—not hierarchically structured organizations—we expect pro- and counter-advocacy to play an important role. Moreover, we capture the influence of the external context, i.e. external pressure, by comparing cities in two different national political and cultural environments. An examination of the effects of city-specific cultures must be left to future research, as we could not identify any appropriate and available indicator. We argue that both national and local factors influence the prevalence of diversity policies, but their interplay differs across national contexts. Significant variation across cities is related to the effects of functional needs and the political constellation that play a different role in the two national contexts.

## Data and methods

In order to establish the prevalence of diversity policy instruments, we conducted a survey of urban actors in the 20 most populous cities of France and Germany.<sup>4</sup> These cities feature a wide range of relevant urban actors and vary substantially in their demographic makeup and socioeconomic characteristics. The information obtained through the survey is not yet available in the literature (for partial information, see Association des maires de grandes villes de France 2011; DESI 2012) and cannot be obtained reliably from published sources. The field period ran from April 2015 to February 2016. Respondents were offered a paper and an online questionnaire consisting of closed- and open-ended questions (for details, see Moutselos et al. 2017).

We could not draw our targeted respondents from a pre-defined population. Thus, we identified, for each city, a set of composite actors (“*komplexe Akteure*”)<sup>5</sup> involved in local politics<sup>6</sup> and diversity-relevant fields. We only included actors with a minimum level of organization, like an office and identifiable representatives, and did not capture shorter-term forms of social mobilization. We then sent the head of the organizations the questionnaire in their function as leaders of the organization (for a similar methodology, see Baglioni and Giugni 2014). The targeted set of respondents included political actors (leaders of main parties and council factions), city government and administration (mayors and heads of departments), organiza-

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<sup>4</sup> For more details, see the technical report for the survey (Moutselos et al. 2017). We excluded Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg because they are regional states and thus equipped with other powers and political structures than local authorities. We excluded Paris on similar grounds—it is the sole municipality in France that is simultaneously a *Département*. Anonymized data will be made publicly available at the GESIS Data Archive for the Social Sciences (<http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-analysis/data-archive-service/>).

<sup>5</sup> We follow a terminology suggested by Scharpf (1997, ch. 3). The term covers corporate (*korporative*) actors that have some degree of formal organisation and collective actors, that is, looser umbrella structures or social movements.

<sup>6</sup> Some organisations may have local offices but mainly formulate claims at the national level. We excluded those.



tions representing the local economy and labour market (employers, chambers of commerce, etc.), trade unions, social welfare organizations (Caritas, Diakonie, Secours Catholique, Secours Populaire, etc.), and local bodies representing groups commonly associated with diversity (such as large immigrant organizations, councils for the disabled, senior citizens, and immigrants, gender equality representatives). Respondents were informed that cities would be anonymized in later survey analyses. This helps reduce response bias and increases the response rate.

The data set comprises 694 completed questionnaires, representing a response rate of 45% for the German cities and 20% for the French cities. For the individual German cities, the response rates range from 36 to 58%, and for the individual French cities included here from 13 to 31%. Lower response rates in France are a known problem. We excluded two French cities from our analysis where the response rates were below 10%. All other cities yielded a sufficient number of respondents for all questionnaire items of interest.

Our dependent variable is a cumulative index of nine diversity policy instruments. This procedure parallels that of the multiculturalism policy index (<http://www.queensu.ca/mcp/home>). Our study included policy instruments that are, first, common, and, second, fall within the competences of French and German cities (see, e.g. Wollmann et al. 2010; Bogumil and Holtkamp 2013). Policy instruments have been defined as tools of government, organizing “specific social relations” between the state and those the instruments are addressed to (Lascoumes and Le Galès 2007, p.4; see also Howlett 1991). We include instruments aiming to accommodate and recognize the sociocultural diversity of the cities.<sup>7</sup> In the survey, respondents were asked how their city had changed its administration and its services “to respond to the increasing diversity of forms and ideas of life in the population”. Further, we inquired whether the city had taken measures to “make the diversity of the city’s population symbolically visible”. Specifically, we asked about nine different instruments falling into three different sets. Like policies of affirmative action, diversity policies mix several aims (King 2007: 110). In the first set of instruments, we included those aiming to strengthen equal opportunities within the city through changes within the city administration. We asked (1) whether *recruitment practices* [to the municipal civil service] had been modified and (2) whether *diversity trainings* for the city’s employees had been introduced.

The second set of instruments aims to adjust public services to the needs of a heterogeneous population. As changes to the services the city provides, we asked whether (3) a dedicated office had been opened dealing with *discrimination complaints*, (4) the city was making *publications* available in several languages, (5) an intercultural opening of the *public library*’s services had occurred, and (6) the programme of urban *museums* had been re-oriented towards new target groups.

<sup>7</sup> Studies of ‘multiculturalism policies’ are partly related, but have a more limited scope. Banting, Kymlicka and co-authors, for instance, focus on ‘policies of public recognition, support, and accommodation’ but only relating to ethno-cultural groups (Banting et al. 2006: 52) or more specifically immigrant minorities, historic national minorities and indigenous peoples. Their index includes ‘policies that seek to recognize and accommodate ethnic diversity as a fact of society’ (56).



Third, we included questions about instruments aiming to symbolically recognize the city's diversity and communicate that to residents as well as the wider world (tourists, investors). We inquired (7) whether *streets or squares* had been *renamed* to make the population's diversity symbolically visible. We further asked (8) whether the *programme of cultural establishments* had been extended (e.g. specific exhibitions, film festivals, etc.) and (9) whether the city was conducting *campaigns* (advertisements, posters, competitions) *to underline its diversity*.

Our approach to studying diversity policies is innovative. Since there are no extensive and systematic data, we can draw on to construct the indices ad hoc (for such a procedure, see Grim and Finke 2006) or an agreed-upon definition of "diversity policies" as yet, our selection of instruments may be supplemented and refined in future research. Still, even if the list of policies might not be exhaustive,<sup>8</sup> we believe that it captures the major interventions falling within the competences of French and German cities and that the resulting index provides a reliable basis for the comparison of the 40 cities.

To avoid overestimating the existence of diversity policies, the accuracy of the answers was further validated through establishing an "accuracy threshold". Some respondents may overestimate the existence of a policy to show their cities in a positive light, while others may not be sufficiently informed about specific policies (e.g. changed recruitment practices in the local administration) and underestimate their existence. A threshold was determined for each city through verifying the existence of one policy for which this was feasible (the existence of an anti-discrimination office) and cross-checking what share of positive answers was associated with a correct result (see Biemer 2004 on using administrative records to control for potential measurement error). This threshold was applied to all questions, determining whether a policy was coded as "existing". Two policies that concern inner-administrative practices were only counted as existing if a majority of respondents from the administration affirmed that. We accept the risk of underestimating the prevalence of little-known diversity policies.

### How widely are the different interventions adopted?

Our first result is that diversity policies are very common, in both German and French cities (Fig. 1). This is particularly remarkable for French cities, where the recognition of diversity is still more contested, while in Germany all big cities have, for instance, signed the *Charta der Vielfalt*, documenting their positive approach to diversity (<http://www.charta-der-vielfalt.de>). However, even in France cities seem to follow the institutionalization of diversity policies at the national level. A study conducted in 2011 for twelve French cities already found evidence of a *politique de la diversité* (Association des maires des grandes villes de France 2011).

Looking at the different interventions, we find that with one exception, all diversity policies are practiced in at least one-third of all cities. This is proof of

<sup>8</sup> We offered respondents the opportunity to add further policies. Not many used it. They mentioned, for instance, naturalization ceremonies (that may be part of a more assimilationist policy) or the existence of immigrant representation bodies.



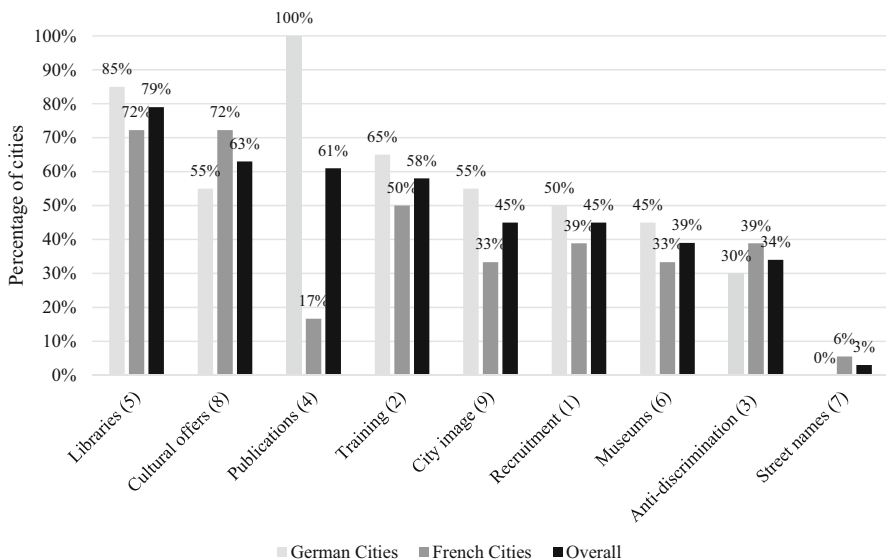


some convergence across cities and between countries towards accommodating diversity. At the same time, their prevalence differs significantly (Fig. 1).

Cultural policies constitute a field relatively open to diversity-oriented change. The intercultural opening of **public libraries** is an extremely common instrument, adopted in more than three-quarters of the cities. This evolution reflects ongoing debates within the profession. The Association of Librarians of France (2015) encourages libraries to endorse a *Charter* stating that “collections, resources and contents available in or from libraries are a reflection of the plurality and diversity of society”. In the libraries of large French cities, the commitment to include different groups of users is reflected, for instance, in the development of multilingual collections. Another initiative is the creation of spaces for audiences with a disability. In Germany, Münster’s city library has a whole area for newcomers and emphasizes its commitment to serving everyone, regardless of origins.

The broadening of programmes of **cultural establishments** is also a very popular diversity policy in both countries, particularly in France. For example, “Rennes au Pluriel” is a 2-week festival around cultural diversity and co-organized by the city and a number of associations. More than half of the German cities also carry out such activities. In Karlsruhe, the city’s cultural office organizes various events for tolerance and diversity including annual days of European culture (*Europäische Kulturtage*).

**Museums** are less open to change than libraries. Less than 40% of the sampled cities have re-oriented their museums’ programmes towards new target groups. More specifically, only in one-third of the French cities and almost half of the German cities were such changes introduced. This finding confirms previous



**Fig. 1** Prevalence of different diversity policy instruments



research—in 2005, a survey of local cultural offices in Germany showed that intercultural activities were seen as particularly important for libraries and much less so for museums (Institut für Kulturpolitik 2005). For museums, change seems to be a recent development, often linked with celebrating the history of ethnic diversity and immigration in specific exhibitions (Deuser 2012; Deutscher Museumsbund 2015).

Making **publications available in several languages** comes up as a common policy in the cities of our study. A closer look at this result, though, shows that this impression is due to policies of German cities. All German cities make publications available in languages other than German, and German city websites are good illustrations of this policy. In addition, one finds, for instance, flyers on the transformation of a neighbourhood in Turkish or brochures on services for parents with children in English. Among French cities, less than one-fifth provide foreign-language materials. Although a significant share of immigrants speak French and do not need such offers,<sup>9</sup> this cannot explain the full picture. Language carries a stronger symbolic meaning in France (Wright 2000), and there may be more reluctance to envisage that official publications, i.e. publications representing the state, can be in another than the official language. Still, some localities and regions deviate from the dominating approach.

Offices where residents can find support in cases of **discrimination** are not very common. More than one-third of the sampled French cities have introduced such a service, while among German cities slightly less than one-third have done so. In Lille, for instance, the city finances a free counselling service at the *Maison de la médiation et du citoyen* for victims of discrimination. In the German cities of Hannover and Nürnberg, offices within the city administration offer free counselling. In both countries, national law does not require local authorities to set up such bodies. However, the French state encourages cities to combat discrimination as part of urban policy and a 2014 ministerial circular promulgated the creation of local counselling units (CGET 2014). The uneven implementation of the circular shows that French cities have discretion over setting up such offices. Still, in France in particular, the inscription of the fight against discrimination in the political culture of the country and civil society mobilization around this problem have generated a context in which adopting such policies may be seen as a source of legitimacy for institutions (Fassin 2002; Streiff-Fénart 2012). And yet, offices supporting victims of discrimination only exist in a minority of cities.

Turning to internal changes in the administration, we find that **diversity trainings** are fairly popular. More than half of the cities have introduced such trainings for their staff, a figure that rises to more than two-thirds in Germany. Munich, for instance, has developed trainings on “intercultural understanding” and a series “Diversity opens up opportunities” (“*Vielfalt macht’s möglich*”) for all junior city staff (Schröer and Szoldatits 2010). In Nantes, the administration has implemented

<sup>9</sup> Immigrants from Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Sub-Saharan Africa often state that they learnt French as children and already knew it well before coming to France, see [https://www.ined.fr/fichier/s\\_rubrique/19558/dt168\\_teo.fr.pdf](https://www.ined.fr/fichier/s_rubrique/19558/dt168_teo.fr.pdf) (pp. 31–33).



trainings for city employees as well as officials in employment services aiming to raise awareness of discrimination in employment.<sup>10</sup>

Although the underrepresentation of, among others, people of immigrant backgrounds in the civil service is a common phenomenon, this has not generally led to a revision of **recruitment practices**. Half of German and 39% of French cities have implemented such changes. Cities may, for example, have revised their criteria for the assessment of applications (on Munich Schröer and Szoldatits 2010). In France, measures against disadvantage with regard to public employment access are often part of a neighbourhood strategy and not an explicit diversity policy. Our respondents may have had such measures in mind when they referred to diversity-relevant changes of recruitment practices. They include targeted information about job openings and support for potential candidates in the application process (Meziani-Remichi and Maussen 2017).

A significant number of cities conduct **campaigns** (advertisements, posters, competitions) **underlining their diversity**. One-third of French cities run such campaigns, a bit less than the 55% of German cities. In Bordeaux, a “Calendrier de la laïcité et du vivre ensemble” for 2017 portrays the main religious traditions in the city. Montpellier presents itself as a gay-friendly city on the “Journée Internationale contre l’Homophobie et la Transphobie” by colouring the city logo in the colours of the rainbow and by raising the rainbow flag at the City Hall.<sup>11</sup> The city of Dortmund conducts a campaign “Wir ALLE sind Dortmund”/“Every single one of us is Dortmund”.<sup>12</sup>

The least common policy is the **renaming of streets** (see Berg and Vuolteenaho 2009; Giraut 2014). We could identify only one city in France where this has happened. In some cities, official committees or advisory boards have passed lists with candidates for new street names, often names of women (e.g. Landeshauptstadt Hannover 2013), but this does necessarily seem to lead to actual renamings. Possibly, street renamings have occurred elsewhere, but are so rare and little publicized that our respondents are not aware of them, or they do not see such acts as demonstrating diversity.

Qualitative research on the introduction of the different policy instruments would be necessary to determine what makes one policy more likely than another. In this article, we focus on explanations for the higher or lower frequency of a set of diversity policy instruments. So far, we have established that, with the exception of street renamings, the instruments we enquired about exist both in French and in German cities. We now turn to offer explanations for the higher or lower number of such interventions in the different cities.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.nantes.fr/lutte-discriminations> and <http://www.ira-nantes.gouv.fr/index.php?id=455&type=123>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.montpellier.fr/4243-journee-de-lutte-contre-l-homophobie-et-la-transphobie.htm>.

<sup>12</sup> Wir ALLE sind Dortmund: Kampagne wirbt für weltoffenes Dortmund, 24 April 2015 [http://www.dortmund.de/de/leben\\_in\\_dortmund/nachrichtenportal/alle\\_nachrichten/nachricht.jsp?nid=354332](http://www.dortmund.de/de/leben_in_dortmund/nachrichtenportal/alle_nachrichten/nachricht.jsp?nid=354332).



**Table 1** Prevalence of diversity policy instruments in individual cities

Number of policies	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
No. of German cities	0	1	0	5	4	2	3	3	2	0
No. of French cities	2	1	2	3	3	5	0	2	0	0
Overall	2	2	2	8	7	7	3	5	2	0

### Why do some cities have many and others few diversity policies?

While diversity policy measures are widespread, the number (and thus range) of instruments adopted differs across cities (see Table 1). For the 38 cities in this study, the range is from no to eight policy instruments (out of a potential maximum of nine). Seventeen cities have adopted more than half of the nine interventions, while 21 cities have adopted less than half of them. In the first group, we find seven French and ten German cities. In the second group, we find eleven French and ten German cities. On average, French cities have adopted 3.6 instruments, while in German cities the average is 4.9. The difference is not very large, but a *t* test of group means reveals that it is statistically significant, which points at important variation between the two countries. Simultaneously, the wide range of outcomes within the two countries points at the existence of city-level processes. Contrary to explanations that focus exclusively on either the local or the national level, we aim to account for variation at both levels.

We now turn to investigating differences among cities. We test the impact of determinants that are potentially influential on the number of city-level diversity policies first by looking at pairwise correlations and then by running a multivariate regression analysis for each of the countries.

To test the influence of **functional need** for diversity policies, we use the size of the immigrant (foreign-born) population. The bigger the immigrant population, the bigger the demand for, for example, foreign-language publications or appropriate library offers. Demand for symbolic recognition is also likely to be greater with a more numerous immigrant population, although there is no automatic link between the two. We do not have a measure of the extent of exclusion of particular groups from public services and city administration—a desirable further indicator of functional need for diversity policies.

We use three indicators to test the impact of potential **pro-diversity advocacy** in the city. These are, first, the political affiliations of the mayors in the past 10 years, second, the average share of votes of centre-left and left-wing parties in the past two council elections, and, third, the share of councillors with an immigrant background. We chose to operationalize city-level advocacy in these ways because we hypothesize that pro-diversity policy change is more likely to happen due to ideological and programmatic commitments of centre-left and left-wing parties and a significant political presence of immigrant populations at the city level (Givens and Luedtke 2005, p. 16; Griffin 2014). We further test to what extent the strength



**Table 2** Number of diversity policy instruments and potential impacting factors, pairwise correlations

	Number of policies	
	German cities	French cities
% Foreign-born	0.559	– 0.243
% Of left-wing parties	0.097	0.308
% Councillors with immigrant background	0.454	– 0.017
% Of extreme-right	(–)	– 0.359
% Unemployment	– 0.366	– 0.21

of the extreme right has an inhibiting effect on diversity policies. This is based on the assumption that a stronger extreme right will put pressure on other parties leading them to refrain from adopting diversity policies (Carvalho 2016). We only test this for France, as here the *Front National* has been a political force present in local councils since the 1980s while in Germany the success of the *Alternative für Deutschland* is very recent and extreme-right presence on the councils of big cities has been patchy and marginal.<sup>13</sup>

In our analyses, we additionally control for the level of unemployment as an indicator of the overall economic situation at the city level (Kantor and Savitch 2002, 10). A better economic situation could be associated with more resources of the city potentially available for diversity policies.

Table 2 shows the correlations of these factors with the number of diversity policies. We conducted separate analyses for cities in Germany and France for three reasons. First, the percentages of foreign-born in French cities are consistently lower than in German cities, and a pooled sample would pose problems of interpretation of the coefficients in the multivariate analysis. In addition, a separate pooled-sample, multilevel regression analysis was conducted; being a German as opposed to a French city was consistently found to have a strong and statistically significant effect on the number of diversity policies in models. Third, including a binary country variable in the pooled-sample OLS model increased the size and statistical significance of the variable “percentage of foreign-born” and halved the size of the effect of political advocacy variables on the existence of diversity policies, compared to a model that does not include the binary country variable. This is a sign that the variable “country” (in other words, national context) has a mediating effect on both variables and justifies splitting the sample.

<sup>13</sup> Electoral data were drawn from: [www.data.gouv.fr](http://www.data.gouv.fr) (France) and the official publications of the German Länder. Mayor partisanship was determined by whether a mayoral list/candidate had been endorsed by a political party of a certain partisan orientation or mayors’ personal affiliation. For determining the electoral percentage of left-wing and centre-left parties, we looked at the combined electoral performance of SPD, Die Grünen, and Die Linke (Germany) and of the Parti Socialiste, Parti Communiste, Front de Gauche and Les Verts/Europe Écologie Les Verts (France) in the previous two municipal elections (second-round results for France). For the percentages of the French extreme-right, we averaged the Front National percentages of the last two municipal elections using the highest scores of either round.



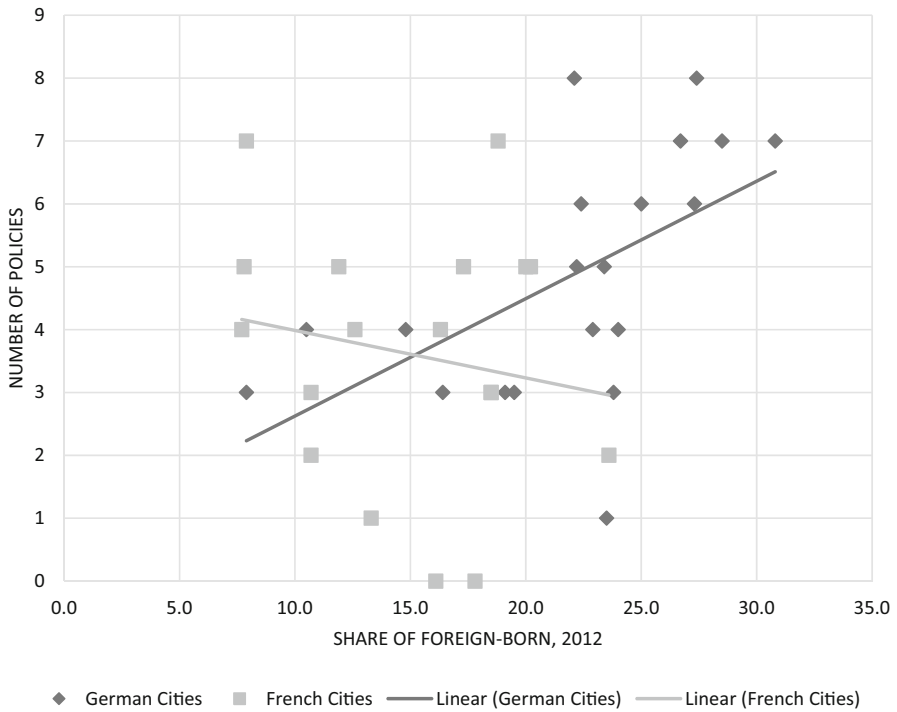


Fig. 2 Share of foreign-born and number of diversity policy instruments in German and French cities

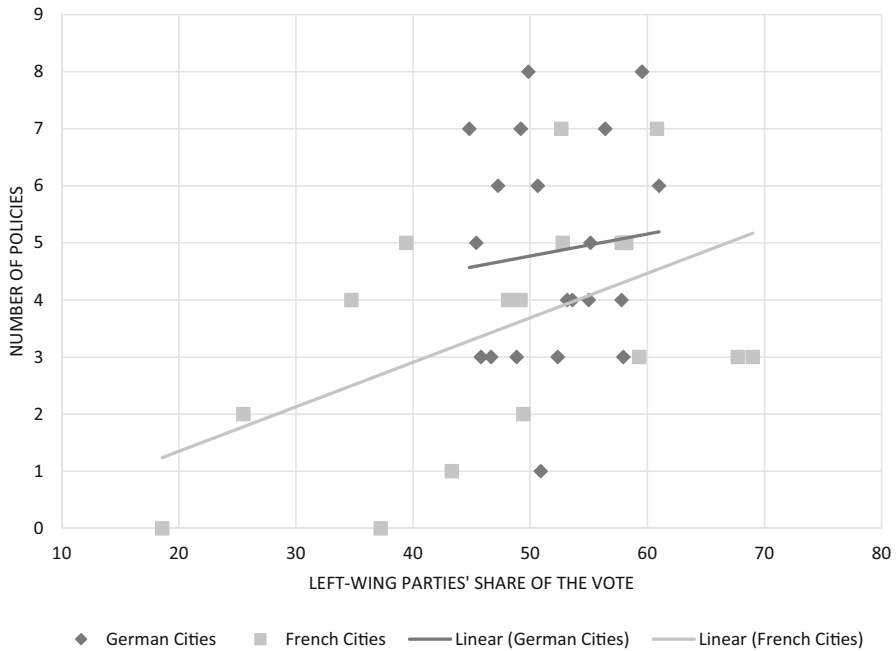
### Size of the immigrant population

For German cities, we see a clear correlation between shares of foreign-born inhabitants and number of diversity policies. We interpret this as support for the assumption that functional need for such policies, measured as more sizeable minority population, has a positive effect. However, if we turn to the French cities, the relationship between share of the foreign-born and the number of diversity policies seems weakly negative (see Fig. 2). This is a strikingly divergent pattern pointing at fundamental differences in how local conditions influence local policy. We will get back to this further below.

### Advocacy: political constellations in cities

Comparing the number of diversity policies and the political affiliations of the cities' mayors in the 10 years prior to the survey, we find that in both countries the average number of diversity policies is higher where mayors belonged to or were affiliated with a left-wing party, but the difference is much more pronounced in France. More specifically, in Germany we find that cities with a left-wing mayor for an uninterrupted 10-year period had one (1) additional diversity policy compared to





**Fig. 3** Left-wing electoral power and number of diversity policy instruments in German and French cities

other cities, while in France cities with a left-wing mayor for the past 10 years had 2.3 additional diversity policies compared to the remaining country sample.

Similarly, the average share of votes for centre-left parties in the past two local council elections is weakly correlated with the number of diversity policies in German cities and strongly correlated in French cities (see Fig. 3). In other words, the difference between more left-wing- and more right-wing-dominated cities is pronounced in France, while in Germany political differences do not seem to matter for the prevalence of diversity policies. Both indicators point towards a relative political consensus over diversity policies in German cities, and higher contestation in French cities. Reinforcing the above, we find a strong, negative correlation between the share of votes for extreme-right parties and the number of diversity policies implemented in French cities.

The third factor used to test the influence of internal advocacy is the presence of councillors with an immigrant background. For the case of France, data are only available for eight cities.<sup>14</sup> The pairwise correlations in Table 2 demonstrate that the percentage of councillors of immigrant origin is strongly and positively correlated with the number of diversity policies in Germany, while the effect is negligible in France.

<sup>14</sup> We use the share of councillors of immigrant origin as calculated in Schönwälder et al. (2011) and Keslassy (2009).



**Table 3** Diversity policy instruments in German cities: OLS regression results

	No. of instruments (1.1)	No. of instruments (1.2)	No. of instruments (1.3)	No. of instruments (1.4)
% foreign-born	0.170** (2.49)	0.153** (2.14)		0.131 (1.46)
Left-wing mayor	1.268 (1.66)			
% of left-wing parties		0.103 (1.18)		
% councillors with immigr. background			0.178* (1.78)	0.077 (0.64)
% unemployment	- 0.233 (1.07)	- 0.318 (1.27)	- 0.274 (1.20)	- 0.176 (0.76)
Constant	2.306 (0.91)	- 1.66 (0.38)	5.67*** (3.01)	2.74 (1.01)
$R^2$	0.44	0.39	0.27	0.35
$N$	20	20	20	20

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

### Multivariate analysis

In order to provide a more powerful test for the hypothesized relationships, we now turn to a multivariate analysis. For reasons explained above, we conduct separate multivariate analyses for cities in Germany and France. The empirical results for each country were essentially the same as the results yielded when we included interaction effects by country in a pooled-sample regression analysis.

The OLS regression analysis largely confirms the exploratory correlation analysis. In the case of Germany, the percentage of foreign-born residents is positively associated with a higher number of diversity policies in our models, and the effect is strong and statistically significant. For instance, in model 1.1, a 6–7% increase in the percentage of foreign-born predicts one additional diversity policy. This finding corroborates the hypothesis that diversity policy-making at the city level in Germany is a response to the functional needs arising from the presence of immigrant-origin populations. Among political advocacy explanations, the constant presence of a left-wing mayor in the last 10 years and the electoral strength of left-wing and centre-left parties in German cities are found to have a positive association with the existence of more diversity policies, but the effect is not statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that differing party constellations, that we assumed to be ideologically and programmatically distinct, promote diversity policies is not corroborated. Model 1.3 predicts a positive and statistically significant association between number of diversity policies and the presence of councillors of immigrant background, an example of overlapping descriptive and





**Table 4** Diversity policy instruments in French cities: OLS regression results

	No. of instruments (2.1)	No. of instruments (2.2)	No. of instruments (2.3)	No. of instruments (2.4)
% foreign-born	- 0.027 (0.29)	0.022 (0.23)	0.047 (0.41)	0.052 (0.47)
Left-wing mayor	1.952** (2.22)			
% left-wing parties		0.070** (2.15)		
% extreme right			- 0.153 (1.37)	- 0.191** (2.29)
% unemployment	- 0.282 (1.13)	- 0.409 (1.72)	- 0.181 (0.55)	
Constant	7.147 (1.93)	5.831 (1.43)	7.737 (1.82)	5.576*** (3.67)
$R^2$	0.41	0.40	0.30	0.28
$N$	18	18	18	18

\* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$

substantive representation at the city level. However, the effect disappears when we include a control for the percentage of foreign-born who reside in the city. Possibly, the presence of councillors with immigrant background partially mediates between the percentage of foreign-born in a city and the policy outcome (Table 3).

In the case of France, by contrast, the specified models (2.1–2.4) provide no evidence for a relationship between the percentage of foreign-born in the city and the number of diversity policies (Table 4). This somewhat surprising non-result holds true for various model specifications and leads us to reject the hypothesis that city-level diversity policy in France is a response to the functional needs arising from high percentages of foreign-born. On the other hand, variables related to local politics and the corresponding partisan processes are found to have a consistently strong effect and in the hypothesized direction. For instance, in model 2.4, a 10% increase in the percentage of the extreme-right electoral share in local elections predicts two fewer diversity policies, holding the percentage of foreign-born at its mean value. Conversely, the strong electoral performance of left-wing and centre-left parties, or the uninterrupted presence of a left-wing mayor, is positively and significantly associated with the number of diversity policies (models 2.1–2.2). These results confirm the initial impressions offered by pairwise correlations: diversity policy at the city level is a much more politically contested field in France than in Germany. The political variables are correlated with each other and are thus not included in the same model. Neither in German nor in French cities does unemployment—admittedly a crude indicator of the budgetary possibilities of the cities—have an effect on diversity policies.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> We ran the models substituting median per capita income at the city level for unemployment rate, and the results were unaffected.



Is the effect of functional need for diversity policies dependent on a political constellation, or opportunity structure, allowing it to manifest itself in actual diversity policies, i.e. does the dominance of the Right work as a “lid” preventing such pressure from having an effect? We split the sample of French cities into those with and without a left-wing mayor in the last 10 years, to test whether under left-wing rule the share of foreign-born residents has an effect on the prevalence of diversity policies. However, the correlation of the percentage of foreign-born and the number of diversity policies is still (weakly) negative.<sup>16</sup> Even in left-wing French cities, a higher percentage of foreign-born is not associated with a higher number of diversity policies. In other words, left-wing municipal coalitions seem to act out of programmatic preferences for diversity policies, even in cities with low percentages of foreign-born. Inversely, French cities with robust right-wing majorities exhibit low numbers of diversity policies even when they have high percentages of foreign-born and there is, subsequently, a higher demand for them. Here, programmatic opposition to such policies seems to be decisive.

These results may suggest that, beyond their own positions, ruling centre-right parties in French cities make concessions to the extreme right—at least with regard to promoting diversity policies. This would be in accordance with literature expectations about “contagion effects” (Sprague-Jones 2011; Carvalho 2016; Schain 2006). We cannot draw any conclusions as to whether left-wing parties are influenced by the presence of a strong extreme right, because the cities with left-wing majorities are also those where the extreme right has its lowest scores. However, the fact that left-wing mayors implement diversity policies even when there is less population diversity in their cities points at a programmatic consolidation of such policies in French left-wing politics.

## Discussion and conclusions

The present paper offers a framework that codifies, counts and analyses local policies responding to the increasing diversity of city populations in two large Western European countries. Based on an original survey of city actors in France and Germany, we find that “diversity policies”, that is policies that acknowledge and accommodate the heterogeneity of the population, exist in the big cities of both countries, pointing at the existence of a relevant policy type. Diversity is not only rhetoric but a field of practical political intervention and clearly, public policies at the local level are relevant (see also Borraz and Le Galès 2010; Le Galès and Vitale 2013). The fact that diversity policies exist so widely can be interpreted as evidence of pressures arising from expectations in the public of both countries and even the broader international context.

Some types of policies included in the study are more widely implemented than others. Several factors may contribute to this, including particular preferences,

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<sup>16</sup> Similarly, when we included an interaction term (percentage of foreign-born x left-wing power) in the OLS regression for France, the estimated coefficient for the interaction term was small and did not reach statistical significance.



limited resources, expertise and political constellations in different policy fields. Further research and more detailed case studies are needed to clarify the influence of each factor.

While diversity policies exist across cities, their number in the individual cities differs widely. To explain variation across cities and building on a sociological institutionalist framework, we tested a number of city-level determinants more systematically, in particular functional needs and political advocacy. It turned out that in order to understand the differences between cities we have to refer to country-specific processes. Indeed, it is a core finding of this study that the determinants of diversity policies at the urban level differ across countries. Of the four determining factors discussed here, functional need is crucial in one context and advocacy in another. We find that German cities respond to the presence of a relatively large immigrant population, more policies exist where population diversity is higher. French cities, on the other hand, differ in the implementation of diversity policies irrespective of the diversity of their populations. Instead, what matters here is the electoral dominance of centre-left and left-forces and, conversely, a strong extreme-right presence that has an inhibiting effect. Apparently German cities are marked by a relative political consensus on the issue of accommodating diversity where it exists. This underlines assumptions of policy change in Germany towards more open attitudes to difference (Triadafilopoulos and Schönwälder 2016). In contrast, French cities are marked by a political rift, and accommodating diversity depends crucially on the political constellation. And yet, this urban reality is not one of an assimilationist France that rejects any acknowledgement of group difference in its public sphere—as often argued in the literature (Simon 2013, p. 209; Escafré-Dublet and Kastoryano 2012, p. 2). Rather, as argued by Bertossi (2012), different approaches at the city level are possible. Further research should investigate to what extent the political culture in the two countries or institutional factors encouraging a higher or lower politicization account for the fact that different processes underlie the prevalence of diversity policies. Future research should also examine the actual impact of different types of urban diversity policy instruments. This article has demonstrated that diversity policies are a relevant phenomenon. In order to explain their prevalence, we need to consider conditions in both local and national contexts.

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