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IMMIGRANT LANGUAGE GROUPS IN RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS

The Experiences of Chilean-Swedes in the Malmö-Lund Area of Sweden.

Abstract

During the process of migration, many immigrants undergo a number of changes in their relationships to their religious organisations. One factor that has emerged as especially important in immigrants' congregational affiliation is the availability of language groups in immigrants' mother tongues. This article examines how these groups are formed and the roles they play in the lives of their members. The study is based on interviews conducted with Chilean-Swedes living in the Malmö-Lund area in Sweden. All participants were connected to Catholic, Pentecostal and Jehovah's Witness congregations in various ways. The study concludes that the overall tendency is that language groups serve a number of positive purposes for their participants. In addition to the prominent linguistic factor, the language groups were also significant for social contact with other Chilean-Swedes and the intimacy experienced in the groups. The interviews also revealed that language groups were at times experienced as negative by some of their members.

Keywords: religion, immigrants, congregation, language groups

Introduction

Worldwide, many societies have been profoundly influenced by globalisation and international migration. The resulting changes have affected nearly all areas of life including the state of religion and the religious affiliations of individuals. Migration has affected both the function and construction of religious groups, creating a number of structural changes in religious organisations (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Haddad et al. 2003; Warner and Wittner 1998; Yang and Ebaugh 2001). One aspect of the process which is particularly worthy of analysis is the way in which religious organisations handle their members' heterogeneous backgrounds, including factors such as members' theological, traditional, national, ethnic, and language backgrounds. The resulting changes and adaptations that religious organisations have

undergone in turn influence congregation members in their experiences of group membership. This dialectical process was observed in one of the first large-scale sociological studies on migration (Thomas and Znaniecki, 1996/1918). This study examines Polish peasantry in the United States and Poland, and highlights the changing role played by the Catholic Church in the United States in the lives of many Polish immigrants. Other later contributions to the field of congregational adaptations to immigration include Herberg (1960), who focused on the complex and changeable character of religious organisations that are affected by immigration and Mol (1970, 1978, 1979) who made compelling contributions with his studies of religion, identity and migration. During the last 20 years there have been a number of studies that are related to the subject. The situation and construction of immigrant congregations in the United States have been examined and studied both from an individual perspective, as from a structural perspective (Haddad et al. 2003; Warner and Wittner 1998). The adaptation and difficulties within different denominations in the USA have been explored and analysed from different aspects such as what language the communities should use or how to integrate the second generation into congregations built on ethnicity (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Haddad et al. 2003; Roof and Manning 1994; Warner and Wittner 1998). How immigrants in Sweden construct congregations and handle the differences in their members' background has not been studied extensively, although there are studies of how the Catholic Church in Sweden has handled its members multi-ethnic background (Gärde 1999) and how and why Jews in Sweden participate in religious communities (Ilicki 1988). Nevertheless, no study has made in-depth analyses of how immigrants within congregations experience these changed congregations, of which one important adaptation is the construction of specific national, ethnic and/or language groups.

Language groups within congregations are built around a number of organisational principles, most commonly language and/or nationality. In some cases the cohesiveness of the group is based on ethnicity as is the case with Roma groups. In other cases groups are built around a common continental origin (people coming from the African continent or from Latin American countries). In this article all of these groups will be referred to as language groups independently of the different organisational principles for the groups. There also exist groups within congregations that work specifically with their members' language skills. While they are also often termed 'language groups', they are not included in the present study.

The main purpose of this article is to explain why language groups attract immigrants and to explore the significance they have for their members. The religious organisations studied include Catholic, Protestant and Jehovah's Witness congregations in southern Sweden. Furthermore, the article will explore different ways in which these groups may be experienced as negative by their members. I will first provide a background by describing how various religious organisations in Sweden have responded to the linguistic heterogeneity of their congregation members, focusing especially on the policies and actions surrounding the question of language groups.

Material for this article is primarily based on twenty-three in-depth interviews I conducted during the spring of 2000 with Chilean-Swedes living in the southern

Swedish cities of Malmö and Lund. The reasons for studying Chileans-Swedes are foremost methodological. Primarily there are numerous immigrants from Chile living in Sweden, which facilitates securing participants and ensuring them anonymity. Secondly, they have been living in Sweden for an extensive period of time, making it possible to study the processes of change over time. A third reason for the choice of Chilean-Swedes is that I understand and speak Spanish which makes it possible for the interviewees to speak their mother tongue without using a translator.

The persons to be interviewed were contacted with help of a person with good knowledge of the Latin-American group in Malmö and Lund, and through contact with some congregations in these cities. The criteria for the persons to be interviewed were that they were from Chile, that they were older than twenty years when they came to Sweden, and that they had been living in Sweden for more than ten years. Being or having been a member of a religious group in Sweden was not a criterion of selection, but at the time of the interviews, most of the participants were either current or former members of religious congregations. All of the participants had been into contact with various religious organisations. The interviewed persons are not particularly representative for Chilean-Swedes living in the southern Swedish cities of Malmö and Lund, however their experiences with language groups within congregations were varied and in the majority of cases closely connected to these. They also expressed their experiences in an articulated and reflective manner.

This article also incorporates findings from field studies within the Catholic congregations in Malmö and Lund, within a Pentecostal congregation in Malmö and within a Jehovah's Witness congregation in Malmö. Other material used for the study are interviews with priests, pastors and other officials working within congregations in Malmö and Lund having been in contact with Chilean-Swedes.

Language groups within Swedish religious organisations

Within host-country religious organisations in Sweden, immigrants frequently encounter the challenge of adapting to a new language. Churches or denominations are sometimes 'national', as is the case with the Greek Orthodox Church or the Russian Orthodox Church in Sweden. In these cases the language of the denomination is the mother tongue of most of its members. In other cases the language of the immigrant is not the same as the language presented in the denomination. Major denominations in large Swedish cities often offer mass and meetings in their members' mother tongues, effectively forming language groups within larger congregations. In this section I will show how some congregations in Sweden have handled the formation of language groups and the ways in which the congregations have changed as a result. The examples given are in no way representative of all congregations in Sweden, but should nonetheless provide a solid understanding of the difficulties that arise in congregations with linguistic minorities. The examples from the Malmö-Lund area are from the research I conducted on Chilean-Swedes, and thus the groups are mainly Spanish-speaking.

The Catholic Church

In Sweden the Catholic Church has gone through major changes due to immigration, and the church has grown from 15,200 members to 158,100 during the last 50 years (Gärde 1999). Officially, the Catholic Church in Sweden does not allow for separate congregations to be constructed around distinctions of language or nationality. The argument for this policy is that the church should be transnational and transcultural. It is argued that organising different language groups in separate congregations would effectively create division in the church and thereby harm the Catholic unity in Sweden. The fact that Polish immigrants have been allowed to establish a Polish congregation in Stockholm shows the inconsistency in the Church's application of the policy. Despite the Catholic Church's official stance, there are those who believe that all Catholics have the right to participate in religious sermons and to be guided spiritually in their mother tongues. A common solution to this dilemma has been to organise national or language groups *within* the congregations. Presently, almost half of the members of the Catholic Church in Sweden belong to a language group (Gärde 1999).

There are two Catholic congregations in Malmö: Vår Frälsares församling, which consists of a single Swedish-speaking group; and St. Maria in Rosengård, which was founded in 1986. In addition to the regular Swedish group, St. Maria regularly holds four language groups. One group is Polish, one primarily Croatian, one Vietnamese, and one group in which Spanish is spoken and most members come from Latin America. In 2000 the Spanish language group consisted of about 200 members and between 20 and 40 people regularly participated in mass and other religious meetings in Spanish. At the time of this study, the group did not have its own priest. Priests came once or twice a month for religious sermons from the congregations in Lund and Trelleborg. The priests were Spanish-speaking but not Latin American. The group members appreciated that they could attend a mass in Spanish, but some of them wished that they could have their own priest, preferably from Latin America. Problems with not having a resident Latin American priest included the difficulty of engaging in on-going work with children, teenagers and the elderly as well as conducting confessional services in general. One of the women in the group stated that she feared the group would cease within a few years if they did not get their own Latin American priest.

Pentecostal denominations

Pentecostal denominations in Sweden have established language groups within their congregations as a way of actively reaching out to immigrants. As a result, one finds in major Swedish cities Pentecostal congregations consisting of various language groups, normally Finnish, Spanish-speaking, African, Roma, and Arab groups (Stoor 2002:170-174). However, the hope is that these groups gradually no longer will be needed and effectively will merge into the parent congregations. For the most part this has not happened. Instead, some groups have withdrawn from the congregations and become independent regarding meetings, administration and leadership. In some cases the language groups have become completely separated, both physically and organisa-

tionally, from their parent congregations. There is fear among Pentecostals that this will lead to an overall fragmentation of the movement into separate factions based on nationality, ethnicity and language.

In Malmö the Pentecostal movement has had various language groups over the years. One of the most successful groups has been the Spanish language group that was founded in 1980. In the beginning a small number of adherents met occasionally, but over the years the group grew steadily. By the mid-1990s the group had almost 200 members. One explanation regarding the popularity of the group was that, at the time, it had its own Latin-American pastor. The meetings were sometimes interpreted into Swedish for ethnic Swedes who came to worship. In 1998 the group split into two factions due to internal conflicts, one of which left the Pentecostal congregation. In 2000, the Spanish Pentecostal group had only about fifty members and the group leader was a Croatian man who spoke only some Spanish. The meetings were occasionally held in Swedish and translated into Spanish, so as to open the group to Christians from outside the Latin American community.

Jehovah's Witness

Jehovah's Witness congregations in Sweden have many immigrant members. The organisation is, to some degree, structured accordingly. Out of about 340 congregations in Sweden, 60 are organised around a language other than Swedish (Skog 2001). There are also minority language groups within various congregations. The congregation in Malmö is one of these. Within the Malmö congregation there is a Spanish language group that meets three times a week. Approximately 40-60 people regularly participate in the meetings. Twice a year all Spanish language groups within the Jehovah's Witness organisations in Sweden come together for a general meeting.

This section makes it apparent that there exists great variation in the ways in which congregations in Sweden deal with their members' heterogeneous linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The upcoming sections will show how this is perceived by members of some of the groups.

Reasons for belonging to language groups

Religious immigrants in Sweden face the challenge of membership in religious organisations that are different from those in their countries of origin. These immigrants must now make active choices about the communities and groups in which they participate. This is often a departure from the situation in immigrants' countries of origin, in which they were often 'born' into faiths and congregations. Belonging to a group based on language and/or national boundaries is something that most Swedish immigrants have not experienced in their countries of origin. During the course of this research, various explanations arose as to why participants belong to language groups

within congregations in Sweden. Important explanations include language, national and cultural aspects, the intimacy of the groups, and a number of other factors.

Language

There are many reasons for immigrants to belong to language groups within their congregations, but my research shows that the primary reason is the opportunity to participate in religious ceremonies in their mother tongues. After some time in a language group, members encounter other positive aspects of language groups that often were not experienced in the congregations in their countries of origin. I will later present these aspects in more detail. When the studied Chilean-Swedes first contacted religious organisations in Sweden, language was often more important than theological content, creating a tendency to join new and different religious organisations in Sweden. This could also mean that if language is of such central importance in congregational affiliation, immigrants in Sweden may withdraw from religious organisations altogether if unable to find a religious organisation that serves them in their mother tongues.

One of the reasons for immigrants' selection of language groups is that it is important to fully understand what is said during mass. One of the female participants said that the part of the religious meetings that was the most important for her was the intellectual content and to «understand 100 per cent» was crucial to her participation. To others, language had emotional significance. These congregation members appreciated that they could understand what was said and mentioned that they felt more comfortable and familiar in Spanish meetings. It «feels more like home» one of the women explained. This was especially true for people belonging to the Catholic Church who regularly attended confession. Another aspect of language is immigrants' ability to actively participate in services. Congregation members may have few problems understanding Swedish, but speaking is often more challenging. Many of the interviewees talked about how they wanted to sing the hymns and loudly read the texts during mass but had difficulty doing this in Swedish. «It is not the same to think in Spanish and to say it in Swedish», one of them said.

It must be acknowledged that although many immigrants have lived in Sweden for a long time, there have been few opportunities for them to become familiar with Swedish religious terms and expressions. Participants often mentioned that Swedish people rarely talk about their religion or religious faith. Some of them even mentioned that they experienced Swedes as a people who did not to talk about religion or religious questions at all. It seems that such a trend at least partially explains the difficulties encountered during the interviews held in Swedish, in which the participants seldom had Swedish words and expressions with religious content in their vocabularies. Thus, despite proficiency in Swedish, immigrants may not understand what is said and sung during religious ceremonies. Another issue for those taking part in Catholic ceremonies in Sweden is that Swedish is often the priest's second language (a great number of the Catholic priests in Sweden are born abroad and are therefore also immigrants). Priests often speak Swedish with such a heavy accent that it may even be difficult for those born in Sweden to understand.

National and cultural aspects

It has been demonstrated that language groups within congregations primarily are attractive because they offer religious meetings in the mother tongues of immigrants. Nonetheless, there are other aspects of language groups that influence people's choices to join and continue in their participation. One aspect is that the language groups allow immigrants to participate in meetings in which they nationally and culturally feel at home (Gärde 1999; Lewins 1978; Loutchko and Ericson 1988; Mol 1970). The language groups are normally connected to a specific country or region and the ceremonies held in language groups are similar to those held in the country of origin. In the interviews conducted with Chilean-Swedes, some of them complained that Swedish ceremonies are too strict and formal. One woman said:

We are more happy and they are more serious. Or the difference is that they are grave. They play the organ like this: tam, tam, tam! Such old music! No! We play guitar. You are supposed to celebrate. It is a festival! We celebrate that it is Sunday, that it is a festival.

This woman was accustomed to having celebratory mass and in the Spanish language group she was able to do so, which helped to make her feel at home.

Having contact with others from their countries of origin is another strong reason that the Chilean-Swedish participants belong to language groups. One of the interviewed men said that celebrating mass with other immigrants who had the same background as he made him feel more comfortable. He also pointed out that 'small things' like what is eaten after mass or the strength of the coffee are significant for his well-being during religious meetings. To many immigrants, congregations function as «a home away from home» (Mol 1970:259; Warner 1997:222).

The national and cultural aspects of congregation leaders also play a strong role in the strength and longevity of congregations. As mentioned above the language spoken by the priest greatly influences immigrants' experiences of participating in religious meetings. In addition to language, the leader's nationality is also of great significance. An early study of immigrant congregations conducted by Mol (1970) concludes that «[t]he Polish and Italian immigrants do not feel at home in the French Church and tend to drift away from the Church unless a priest of their own *nationality* is present» (Mol 1970:255, italics are mine). This was also the case in the Catholic Church in Lund some years ago. For a long time, the congregation had a Swedish priest with a good knowledge of Spanish and ceremonies in Spanish were occasionally offered. When the congregation employed a priest from Latin America in 2001, the members asked for Spanish ceremonies on a more regular basis and more people from Latin America started to participate in the religious meetings. This indicates that common language alone is not a sufficient condition for immigrants' participation in congregations.

One important explanation of immigrants' lesser participation in host-country religious meetings is that the immigrants feel they do not belong to the congregations, culturally or nationally (Ilicki 1988; Mol 1970). This is due to the fact that the congregations are composed mainly of host-country members. In many cases a feeling of not belonging may arise because the congregation is dominated by another immigrant

group or is composed of a variety of immigrant groups (Basgöz 1984; Eastmond 1989; Glazer and Moynihan 1970:103-105; Karlsson, 1999; Lindmark 1984; Martin 1990:56; Roof and Manning 1994).

Intimacy

Language groups within congregations normally do not attract too many people. They are often small and the common background of their members often makes the groups intimate and family-like. Members of language groups often share several commonality factors in addition to their religious faith. They belong to the group as a result of speaking the same minority language. They normally come from the same country, share similar cultural heritage and all members are immigrants. Because the groups are small there is close contact between members. One of the interviewees stated that: «In our group we are like a family». She also explained how they make contact with members who have not come to the group for a while, often making home visits to find out how they are. The group she belongs to even decided to set common rules for their teenagers, including curfews and appropriate ages to begin dating.

The small groups and the intimate interactions within the groups result in a strong sense of belonging and group-identification. It is likely that these social aspects of the congregations are especially attractive for immigrants because they have often left behind many of the social structures to which they are accustomed in their countries of origin. Lewis, Fraser and Pecora (1988) go so far in their study of Indochinese refugees resettled in Utah as to claim that the studied refugees primarily belonged to congregations for social reasons and that the theological content of the congregations was only a secondary motivation for membership.

Mediating and explanatory factors

There are two other important factors that influence immigrants to continue to participate in language groups within their congregations: first, the language group works as a mediating factor in the immigrants' new environment, and second, belonging to the language group could serve as an explanation as to why immigrants had to leave their countries of origin. The former factor was popularised in the beginning of the 20th Century in William I. Thomas' and Florian Znaniecki's book *The Polish Peasant* (1996/1918). The study follows the changes taking place in Polish Catholic congregations in the United States and Thomas and Znaniecki describe the congregation by stating that «its activities are much broader and more complex than those of a parish [...] in the old country» (Thomas and Znaniecki 1996/1918:116). They conclude that the function of congregations in members' lives was in no way limited to religious matters. Instead the congregation had many social aspects that assisted immigrants in mediating their foreign surroundings. This conclusion has later been confirmed in other studies on immigrant congregations (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Herberg 1960; Lewis 1978; Lewis et al.1988; Mol 1979:36; Pétursson 1985; Pryce 1986; Sander 1993:194-195), in my study of the Latin American group in The Pentecostal congrega-

tion in Malmö (Nordin 1996) and also for some of the Chilean-Swedes studied in 2000 (Nordin 2004).

During my participation in language group activities, it became apparent that many participants were very satisfied with what the group offered them. In many cases participants actively took part in congregational activities within the group. Being part of the language group gave them a sense of meaning and belonging in Sweden. For some participants, membership in these groups came to serve as an explanation as to why they had to leave their country of origin. For these participants, forced and painful migration finally became meaningful upon joining these language groups within congregations. Some said that they had come to understand that it was God's will that they had to come to Sweden because there are a lot of people here who need to learn to know Jesus. Through these religious interpretations of their stay in Sweden, what was once seen as a meaningless political exile gained purpose and meaning (Nordin 1996).

Summary of reasons for belonging

All above-mentioned aspects of language groups – language, culture, nationality, intimacy, mediating factors and explanatory factors – were mostly experienced positively by the members of a group. Belonging to this kind of religious group not only creates a bond for the members based on common religious belief, but also allows a shared participation in a host of non-religious activities. These factors help create strong ties to the group and may make it, as Daren Sherkat and John Wilson (Sherkat and Wilson 1995:1000) suggest, «extremely difficult for them to leave the faith». However, it must be kept in mind that although immigrants feel a strong affiliation with their language groups, this is not always because the religious group they belong to in their new host country *resembles* the religious group they belonged to in their countries of origin. It is rather the opposite. In other words, those aspects of the language groups that make the immigrants stay within the groups are in many cases those that were *lacking* in their religious groups in their country of origin, for example that the groups are intimate and familiar, that the unity in the groups are built on a common language, nationality or cultural background and not primarily on religious fellowship, and that the language groups works as a mediating factor in the immigrants' new environment.

Difficulties in the language groups

Although the language groups within the congregations were mostly perceived positively by the study's participants, there were sometimes problems. Criticism of the groups had to do with lack of possibilities to change group, that they prevented full participation in Swedish society and intergenerational language conflicts.

Lack of choice

One problem is when a person no longer wants to participate in a specific group for non-religious reasons, but still wants to belong to a language group. This was for some of the interviewees due to the fact that they did not feel comfortable with some of the other members of the group or was dissatisfied with the religious officials. These persons appreciated the other aspects of the language group, but some social aspects made it hard for them to stay within their groups. Two of the interviewees had previously belonged to a Spanish-speaking language group in a Jehovah's Witness congregation for a long time and being part of the group was very important to them. When I conducted the interviews both of them had just divorced from their wives, which are prohibited by Jehovah's Witnesses. Their former wives and their children were part of the same language group as the two men. The men did not want to continue in the same group as their former wives. At that time it was too painful to meet their ex-wives and to confront the other members of the group. Nonetheless, they felt a need for congregational affiliation and the opportunity to practice their religion with others. The dilemma here was pronounced by the fact that there were no other Spanish-speaking language groups nearby. The solution for one of the men was to participate in the ordinary (Swedish-speaking) group of the congregation, but he did not feel comfortable there and could not fully understand what was said during mass. The other man did not take part in any religious services at the time of the study and said that he really wished that there was some way that he could do so.

There are also situations in which members are not satisfied with the clergy in the language group. One of the interviewees did not get along with the new pastor of her group and did not like the way he held religious ceremonies. She wanted to participate in mass and other religious meetings in Spanish, but this group was the only one nearby which offered such an arrangement. Her solution was to continue with the group but less frequently, and to try to avoid direct contact with the pastor.

The problem in these three cases is that, although they were not satisfied with the social aspects of their groups, the individuals did not have the possibility of joining another congregation or religious group. If this had happened in their country of origin, it would probably have been easier for them to find another suitable congregation. Also, the social ties to their former groups may not have been as strong if their social interactions had not depended so heavily on the groups.

Integration into Swedish society

A second problem with the groups that I want to highlight is that small, intimate groups with only immigrant members can sometimes prevent full participation in Swedish society. Although groups sometimes function as mediators with Swedish society on *practical matters*, there is a risk that group members feel that their need for *social* contact is fulfilled within the group. Language group members may therefore have little contact with people outside the group, and thus have little contact with people lin-

guistically and culturally different from themselves. Some of the interviewees mentioned this issue during one of my previous studies (Nordin 1996). They said that their best friends were part of their language groups and that they were seldom in any close contact with others, neither Swedes nor other Latin Americans. For some of the interviewees, the only time they attempted to establish close contact outside of their groups was when they were doing missionary work. One of the men said:

...and sometimes I want to meet new people so that I can help them and... I think that sometimes we close ourselves in and we often forget the others. But God wants us to go out there and help them...

This indicates that these language group members at times make contact with others, but the impact is usually unilateral. People who try to convert others seldom do that because they want to learn about how other people think or want to adapt to other ways of life. People in small, intimate missionary language groups thus have little opportunity to find out how their host-society works in general and what values are common to members of that society.

Intergenerational language problems

The third problem with language groups is the participation of second-generation immigrants in the groups. This is one aspect of language groups within congregations that has been highlighted in other studies (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000; Goette 2001; Mullins 1987) and that has proved to be very complex. Ebaugh and Chafetz conclude in their study of various immigrant religious congregations in Houston that intergenerational differences and difficulties in integrating second generation members to the congregations:

...appear to alienate most youth from immigrant religious institutions. These issues cut across religions and ethnicities and are widespread. The future of immigrant congregations rests substantially on whether and how they are resolved (Ebaugh and Chafetz 2000:445).

Like their parents, second-generation immigrants also may feel a need to belong to a group where they feel at home linguistically, culturally and nationally. Nonetheless, this does not necessarily mean that a language group in the congregation is the right place for them. Many second-generation immigrants identify both with their parents' countries of origin and with Sweden and often speak Swedish better than their parents. The generational language aspect was one that turned out to be problematic for some of the people that I interviewed. One of the women mentioned that her children understood what was said during mass and other religious meetings in her language group, but that the language was not a 'living language' for them. They normally spoke Swedish at home, in school, and with their peers. The solution could then have been to instead participate in a Swedish mass. However, since they seldom or never spoke about religion or religious matters outside language groups, they had not learned a Swedish religious language.

Conclusion

Religious organisations are undergoing a number of changes in response to migrational flows. One of the most prominent changes is the creation of language groups within congregations. The research I conducted within Catholic, Protestant and Jehovah's Witness congregations demonstrates that these language groups play an important role for their Chilean-Swedish members. The study also revealed some factors that made these groups attractive for their members. The foremost reason for belonging to these groups was linguistic comprehension and familiarity. Other aspects that often made language groups attractive included a common culture and national background within the groups. Group-intimacy as well as a number of other factors were also experienced positively. What should be taken into account is that those aspects that attract members to these religious groups are not always those aspects that were present in the religious organisations that they belonged to in their countries of origin. For various reasons the groups were sometimes also problematic for their members. Aspects that came up were connected to lack of choice, problem with integration into Swedish society and inter-generational language difficulties.

Various religious organisations in Sweden have discussed and evaluated the effects of language groups. Within religious organisations, it is common to find voices both for and against language groups. The common argument against the groups is that they segregate their members from the mainstream or dominant group and from Swedish society as a whole. Those who are proponents of the groups argue that everyone has a right to participate in mass and to receive spiritual guidance in their mother tongues (see for example Gärde 1999:120-132). One solution to this disagreement could be to keep the language groups and develop closer ties to the other groups within the congregation. There is also the option of having common meetings in Swedish, in which parts of the sermon are translated into other languages. Finally, it is conceivable that each language group could be responsible for a different part of the meeting. Most of this article has addressed the negotiation of first-generation immigrants' linguistic needs in religious organisations. The situation of second-generation immigrants is different and it is not self-evident that they require or desire participation in language group meetings.

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Unlike religious leaders who argue that more unskilled immigrant workers are needed, most members think there are plenty of Americans to do such work. Discussion. The leaders of the religious organizations discussed above have all made clear statements that immigration laws need to be changed to allow for a legalization of illegal immigrants and increased legal immigration. However, the Zogby poll reported here indicates that most members of these religious communities have a very different point of view. Question 4 used neutral language and found a sizeable minority willing to support a conditional legalization when the question is asked by itself and before offering an alternative way of dealing illegal immigrants living in the United States. Membership in religious groups often involves various ethnic communities. Most religious groups do not seek to return to or to recreate a homeland for their members. Religions can, however, provide additional glue that reinforces diasporic consciousness. What about the notion of diasporic religion? Hinnells (1997a:686 in Vertovec 2000) defines this as "the religion of any people who have any sense of living away from the land of the religion, or away from the old country." They are religious minorities in the countries where they now reside. Vertovec (1997) argues that religious and other soc immigrants to the United States, formulated in the writings of Will Herberg and Oscar Handlin, emphasized cultural continuity and the psychological benefits of religious faith following the trauma of immigration. Although this perspective captures an important reason for the centrality of religion in. 7. New immigrants are also bringing new forms of Christianity and Judaism that have shaped the content and the language of services in many existing churches and synagogues. Churches and other religious organizations also play an important role in the creation of community and as a major source of social and economic assistance for those in need.