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Electoral participation as a measure of social inclusion for natives, immigrants and descendants in Sweden

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ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION AS A MEASURE OF SOCIAL INCLUSION FOR NATIVES, IMMIGRANTS AND DESCENDANTS IN SWEDEN¹

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ABSTRACT

Three decades ago, Sweden extended municipal and provincial voting privileges to non-citizen residents arguing that it would increase political influence, interest and self-esteem among foreign citizens. More recently, electoral participation on the part of immigrants is perceived as being substantially lower than for native-born citizens and questions have arisen regarding the degree to which this may be symptomatic of a larger integration issue. The aim of this paper is to explore the determinants of voting within the context of social inclusion by comparing immigrants, their descendants and native citizens in Sweden while controlling for a range of socio-economic and demographic characteristics, and contextual factors.

We use two unique sets of data to conduct our research. The 2006 electoral survey contains information on individual electoral participation in national, provincial and municipal elections. We match this information to registry data from Statistics Sweden which contains socio-demographic information for every Swedish resident. From these two sources, we are able to create a database which matches voting behaviour to individual characteristics for more than 70,000 residents of whom almost 13,000 are not citizens.

We find that after controlling for demographic, socio-economic and contextual characteristics, acquisition of citizenship makes a real difference to the odds of voting and is therefore a likely and powerful indicator of social inclusion. Immigrants who obtain citizenship are far more likely to vote than those who do not. Arguably, some of this may be attributed to the number of years of residency in the country. However, even non-citizens born in Sweden have substantially lower odds of voting. Country of birth also makes a difference. Immigrants from the Americas and those born in Sweden from immigrant par-

ents are more likely to vote than immigrants from other countries. Somewhat surprisingly, age at immigration does not make a substantial difference to the odds of voting.

INTRODUCTION

Voting in free elections is often viewed as the most basic and important form of political participation. As such, the level of participation can be seen as an indicator of how well democracy is faring. On this yardstick, electoral participation in Sweden is high compared to other democratic countries. Over 80 percent of eligible voters exercised their franchise in the 2006 national, provincial and local elections.¹

Immigration to Sweden over the last 50 years has been substantial. In 2006, 13 percent of the population, or about 1.2 million individuals residing in the country, were born abroad. There are an additional 300,000 people born in Sweden who are the children of immigrants (about 4 percent of the population). Sweden was one of the first countries to extend local and provincial voting rights to immigrants with resident status, arguing that it would increase political influence, interest and self-esteem among foreign citizens. Three decades later, immigrants' electoral participation has shown to be substantially lower than for native citizens (see Öhrvall 2006). To our minds, this could be evidence of a larger social inclusion issue. Thus, the aim of this paper is to explore the act of voting as a measure of social inclusion by comparing voting probabilities of immigrants, their descendants and native citizens in Sweden after controlling for a range of contextual, socio-economic and demographic characteristics.

¹ We note that all three elections take place on the same day. This means that voter turnout is about the same across municipal and provincial elections. The elections of 2006 are particularly interesting because they represent a reversal in the downward trend in electoral participation in Sweden.

We find that after controlling for demographic, socio-economic and contextual characteristics, acquisition of citizenship makes a real difference to the odds of voting. Immigrants who naturalise are far more likely to vote than those who do not. Country of birth also makes a difference. Immigrants from the Americas and those born in Sweden from immigrant parents are more likely to vote than immigrants from other countries. Somewhat surprisingly, age at immigration does not make a substantial difference to the odds of voting. Being born in Sweden, even if parents are born abroad, has a positive impact on the odds of voting. While the odds of voting are lower than for Swedes, being born in Sweden but having immigrant parents generally results in higher odds of voting when compared to those born abroad. Marital status does not have a substantial impact on voting, but having a Swedish spouse increases the odds of voting by almost half. Owning a house is associated with higher odds of voting when compared to either owning an apartment or renting.

Contextual factors are important. The larger the city, the lower the odds of voting. However, the larger the size of the immigrant population, the higher the odds of voting, which suggests that high immigrant populations are not a detriment to voting behaviour. The municipal employment rate is also important—the higher the employment rate, the higher the odds of voting. Minority representation on municipal councils has no measurable impact on voting in any of the models we tested.

RESEARCH QUESTION

Our goal is to assess the degree to which differences in voting probabilities are a product of immigrant status when compared to a set of demographic, human capital and socio-economic characteristics. The primary questions we ask are:

- To what extent do differences in voting participation across immigrant and Swedish-born categories exist?
- If there are differences, to what extent are they explained by contextual, demographic and socio-economic factors, human capital attributes and immigration related factors?
- Does the act of extending voting privileges in municipal and provincial elections to non-citizens serve to increase electoral participation and social inclusion?

In order to assess these questions we first provide a basic historical overview of immigration to Sweden. We then review the literature concerning inclusion and voting participation. With this historical and theoretical background in hand, we then assess the degree to which the probability of voting differs across socio-demographic and immigrant status in the 2006 municipal elections.

We use two unique sets of data to conduct our research. The 2006 electoral survey contains information on individual electoral participation in national, provincial and municipal elections. We match this information to registry data from Statistics Sweden which also contains information for every Swedish resident. From these two sources, we are able to create a database which matches voting to individual characteristics for more than 70,000 resi-

dents of which 13,000 do not have Swedish citizenship but are eligible to vote in municipal and provincial elections.

CONTEXT

Immigration

A bird's-eye view of immigration to Sweden would divide the postwar period into two distinct periods. The first is primarily characterized by labour force immigration while the second by a shift towards refugee and family reunion intake. The first period began after World War II and ended in the first half of the 1970s. During this time, Sweden's economy expanded rapidly, due in part to reconstruction efforts in neighbouring countries. Labour shortages in Sweden were solved in the 1950s through the import of skilled labour through immigration which served to complement the native labour force. This skilled labour was mainly recruited from northwestern Europe, with the majority coming from western Germany and the Nordic countries.

The 1960s saw a shift in the labour force toward unskilled or low-skilled (often imported) workers. In contrast to their counterparts a decade earlier, these workers were used more as a substitute for the native workforce rather than as a complement. While earlier immigrants allowed the economy to grow in size, the immigrants of the 1960s facilitated a widening of the economy. As they arrived, these new immigrants found employment in jobs vacated by Swedes during the expansion of the service sector. The fact that these newly vacated jobs could be filled by unskilled workers resulted from a massive industrial investment aimed at increasing international competitiveness and reducing costs (Lundh and Ohlsson 1999). Immigrants now came largely from Nordic countries but also from Mediterranean countries such as Greece, Yugoslavia and Turkey.

By the end of the 1960s, the situation began to change for immigrants. Fuelled by trade unions, the state changed the rules governing entrance into Sweden. The new rules, implemented in 1968, meant that future applicants for work and residence permits from non-Nordic countries had to apply before they entered the country. Simultaneously, the applicant needed to arrange for both a job and a place to live. This dramatically cut down the labour immigration of non-Nordic countries over the next decades.

Sweden's economic growth dropped substantially following the oil shock crisis of the early 1970s. As was the case for many Western countries, the Swedish economy passed through a period of structural change which saw the decline of the industrial sector and the emergence of a strong service sector. Nordic labour migration, especially Finnish, gradually declined mainly because of a diminishing gap in the standard of living between Sweden and Finland and an increasing demand for labour within Finland. While labour migration dwindled during the 1970s and even more significantly in the 1980s and 1990s, other types of migration started to increase. These new groups were predominantly non-economic migrants (family reunification) and refugees. This also led to a major shift in the country of origin mix amongst the immigrant population. In the 1970s, the major contributors to the immigrant population in Sweden were primarily refugees from Chile, Poland and Turkey. In the 1980s, the lion's share of this new immigration came from Chile, Ethiopia, Iran and other Middle Eastern countries. The entrance of Sweden into the European Employment Strategy/European Union (EES/EU) in 1994/1995 resulted in an increase in labour migration of EU citizens. At the same time, refugee and family reunification policies allowed increasing numbers of immigrants from Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and other Eastern European countries (Bevelander 2004).

EXTENDING THE ELECTORATE: CITIZENSHIP AND FOREIGN CITIZENS

Citizenship

Citizenship in Sweden is based on the *jus sanguinis* principle. People whose parents are Swedish citizens are automatically granted citizenship. However, unlike the case of Canada, the children of non-Swedish citizens who are born in Sweden are not automatically entitled to Swedish citizenship. That aside, Swedish legislation on naturalization is one of the most liberal in Europe. In 2006, 77 percent of eligible foreign-born residents with non-Swedish parents had obtained Swedish citizenship.

Since the 1970s, foreign citizens from most countries over the age of 18 without a criminal record have been able to acquire Swedish citizenship after five years of residency (four years for refugees). Foreign citizens from other Nordic countries can obtain citizenship after only two years of residence.² Gaining citizenship by notification is also possible. This is basically a simplified juridical naturalization procedure used mainly by Nordic citizens. Acquiring Swedish citizenship by notification is possible if the applicant is 18 years of age or older, has lived in Sweden for five years and has not been sentenced to prison during this time.

While entrance to Swedish citizenship has become successively easier, there has existed one formal deterrent. Dual citizenship was forbidden in Sweden until July 1, 2001 except in cases where countries did not allow renunciation of citizenship. While many individuals may see uptake of a citizenship as a fairly casual act, renunciation of a citizenship is much more serious. After 2001, no such demands were placed on applicants (Bevelander 2006).

² If the foreign citizen is either under 18 or with a criminal record, there is a waiting period before the applicant can apply for Swedish citizenship.

Electorate

General elections based on universal suffrage were introduced in Sweden in 1921 when the population voted for the second chamber of the Swedish parliament. It is in this election that women gained the right to vote, thereby doubling the electorate. Since then, the electorate has expanded through gradually lowering the voting age. In 1976, foreign citizens obtained the right to vote in municipal and provincial elections after three years of registered residency. The stated goal of this change was to increase the political influence, interest and self-esteem of foreign citizens (SOU 1975, 15). In 1998, the three-year waiting period for foreign citizens from EU countries, Iceland and Norway was removed. However, voting in national elections still requires Swedish citizenship.

Earlier elections

According to Öhrvall (2006), a distinct increasing trend in electoral participation is visible up to the middle of the 1970s. In 1976, 91.8 percent of the electorate voted in the national election (see Figure 1).³ This represents the highest level of electoral participation measured in Sweden. Sixty percent of foreign citizens exercised their franchise and voted in municipal and provincial elections in 1976 (see Figure 2). Electoral participation gradually decreased until the election of 2006 which saw a slight upsurge in participation (SCB 2006).

Statistics Sweden does not consistently collect information on foreign-born electoral participation. However, they have published electoral participation

³ In Figure 1, voting participation is given based on the 2006 electoral survey. Individuals over the age of 75 are included from 1988 on. This means that prior to 1988, the participation rates shown in Figure 1 are somewhat higher than the actual electoral participation for the years up to 1985.

rates of foreign-born citizens since 1988. Their data suggest that participation rose between 1988 and 1991 and then fell substantially in the 1998 elections. However, Öhrvall (2006) notes that while foreign-born citizens are on average about 8 percent less likely to vote, the decline in voter participation by foreign-born citizens is lower than for native-born citizens.

Tracking voting probabilities of foreign citizens is more difficult, in part because a substantial number of foreign citizens leave the country without telling anyone (Öhrvall 2006). Thus, at least part of the issue may be one of measurement—it is difficult to determine the denominator. Nonetheless, some work done suggests that while initially assessed as high in 1976 (see Hammar 1979), participation rates have decreased substantially since then. In 2002, they were down to 35 percent.

EARLIER RESEARCH

The social inclusion literature states that a fundamental goal of society is to enable its members to participate fully as valued, respected and contributing members (see Toye and Infanti 2004; Laidlaw Foundation 2002; European Union 2001). Indeed, the European Union defines social inclusion as

“a process which ensures that those at risk of poverty and social exclusion gain the opportunities and resources necessary to participate fully in economic, social and cultural life and to enjoy a standard of living and well-being that is considered normal in the society in which they live. It ensures that they have a greater participation in decision-making which affects their lives and access to their fundamental rights” (European Commission 2005, 10).

The concept of social inclusion is linked to that of social exclusion. Both are concerned with access to societal resources (be they tangible, such as financial resources or intangible, such as decision-making power). However,

“where exclusion is viewed as the problem, inclusion is seen as the solution” (Cushing 2003, 5). Much of the debate has focused on exclusion and the continuum running from economic deprivation to societal participation (Rodgers 1995; Byrne 1999). Inclusion has garnered somewhat less attention (Winstanley and Stoney 2000), in part because benchmarking through accepted measures of both inclusion and exclusion are hard to come by (see Gordon et al. 2000).

Studies that have delved into political participation tend to focus on political representation within the context of minority involvement (for recent work see Dawson and Bobo 2006; Kaufmann 2007; White and McAllister 2007). These studies have examined political representation of Latino and Black candidates in the United States and have generally argued that representation is low.

Palermo and Woelk (2003), in examining the rights of national minorities in Europe and rules by which participation can be implemented, argue that the solution is to “facilitate the inclusion of minorities within the State and enable minorities to maintain their own identity and characteristics, thereby promoting the good governance and integrity of the State.”

Representation is a fairly high-level indicator of inclusion, however, within the context of broad political engagement, Burchardt et al. (2002) argue that simple participation in elections through voting can constitute an important measure of inclusion because it taps the degree to which individuals feel that they should take part in the decision-making process at a very broad level.

Many studies have tried to identify factors that affect the likelihood and nature of voting behaviour for the population as a whole. However, studies that include an analysis of the voting behaviour of immigrants and their des-

endants are far less frequent in part because of lack of data and in part because immigrants are generally not given voting privileges until after attaining citizenship. This means that there are relatively few studies which look at voting and immigrant status and even fewer that include foreign citizens.

Tuckel and Meisel (1994), who look at voting by European minorities living in the United States, argue that demographic and socio-economic factors, such as age, education and labour force characteristics are the dominant factors in explaining voting probabilities (see also DeSipio 1996; Bass and Casper 2001; Verba et al. 1995). Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) use multiple years of the Current Population Survey (CPS) to measure the probability of voting based on minority status. They find that minorities are substantially less likely to vote in elections compared to native-born majority residents. Further, these differences are not always reduced from one generation to another. Bass and Casper (2001), using 1996 CPS data found similar results, concluding that generally, age and education are positively correlated with voting as is the length of residence of immigrants. Finally, Lien (2004) finds that Asians born in the United States are less likely to vote than native-born citizens.

Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) extend the model of immigrant voting behaviour by adding controls for generation, language proficiency (in English), duration of stay, ethnic residential concentration and political socialization in the home country. Across generations, they find different patterns in voting participation among different racial/ethnic groups. Except for Black and Asian-American immigrants, a longer stay in the United States increases the probability of voting. Being an immigrant from a repressive regime has a weak negative effect on voting participation. Language proficiency, as measured by the presence of Spanish-language ballots and proximity to co-ethnics

(measured at a state level) did not have a strong effect on the probability of voting. They did find, however, that the political culture in a state influences voting behaviour.

Cho (1999) uses a 1984 survey of California residents to measure the effect of socio-economic variables on voting behaviour of four minority groups (Latino, Black, Asian and non-Hispanic white). She argues that socio-economic variables merely provide the skills for political activity. Socialization determines the degree to which these skills are used. Given that immigrant groups in particular have different socialization experiences, their pattern of voting will differ despite having similar socio-demographic characteristics. Thus, while education had little impact for Asian-Americans, it had twice the impact for Latinos.⁴

Chui et al. (1991) use the 1984 Canadian Election Survey (CES) to measure seven attributes of electoral participation (including voting) using Multiple Classification Analysis. They find that while immigrants did participate less, their offspring either had the same or higher participation rates than was the case for "deeply rooted Canadians." A more recent study by Jedwab (2006) uses the 2002 Ethnic Diversity Survey to conduct a tabular analysis of voting by minorities in Canada. He finds that increased ethnic belonging and ethnic identity had no negative impact on voting participation and that sense of belonging to Canada correlated with higher voter participation. White et al. (2006), using the Canadian Election Survey data, find that immigrants in general have similar voting participation rates to the native-born after controlling for education and income. As with Jedwab, they found that years of

⁴ A study by Daniel Gordon (1970) looked at voting patterns using aggregate level data from 1934 to 1960 in an attempt to determine the impact of the presence of minorities on the electoral process. Using the size of the immigrant group in each of 198 cities and comparing it to voter turnout, he concluded that the presence of immigrants has a strong impact in cities that have municipal parties, but not in cities that are non-partisan.

residence is important in explaining voting behaviour by immigrants. Using the 2002 wave of the Equality Security Community Survey, Bevelander and Pendakur (forthcoming) explored the relationship between personal characteristics, work characteristics, social capital attributes, ethnic characteristics and voting. They find that the combination of socio-demographic and social capital attributes largely overrides the impact of immigration and ethnicity and suggest that it is not the minority attribute that impacts voting. Rather it is age, level of schooling and level of civic engagement which affects voting, both national and provincial.

Messina (2006), while comparing voting results for the latest elections by citizens and non-citizens in a number of European countries, argues that obtaining citizenship and increased years of residency in the country are positively related to higher rates of electoral participation. At the same time, different minorities and immigrant groups show very different voting rates. This could, to some extent, be explained by alienation and apathy due to lower integration by minorities and immigrants. Also, with the increase of refugee migration, a larger share of these individuals is more concerned with the politics of their country of origin.

Adman and Strömblad (2000) study the electoral participation of immigrants in the 1998 Swedish municipal elections. Using a sample of 3000 individuals, they find that immigrants are less likely to vote. However, controlling for background factors causes these differences to disappear. They conclude that this is an indication of the effects of naturalization. In a similar study, Oskarsson (2003) found the same results.

Öhrvall (2006), using a much larger sample for the municipal election of 2002 (and indeed similar in size to the one used in this study), finds a clear

difference in participation between foreign-born citizens and non-citizens. After controlling for various background factors, he finds only a small difference in electoral participation between foreign-born and Swedish-born children of immigrants. Explaining these results, Öhrvall (2006) argues that the exclusion of immigrants from national elections, which receive most attention in the media, reduces peoples' inclination to vote in municipal and provincial elections. He also argues that for immigrants who are not socialized in the Swedish political system, local elections are the least interesting to participate in (Öhrvall 2006; Bäck and Soininen 1994). The other explanation is based on the idea that immigrants that have obtained Swedish citizenship should be more committed to the country than non-citizens. Common to all these Swedish studies is that women are more likely to vote than men, employed more than unemployed, with participation also increasing with age, income and higher educational level.

Internationally, Sweden has a high electoral participation although large differences are measured between different societal groups. Participation is lower for young people, singles, less educated and the unemployed. Järnbert and Öhrvall (2003) suggest that it is these groups who have contributed to the gradual decline in electoral participation since the 1970s in Sweden. Moreover, they observe a clear lower participation of immigrants relative to natives.

Much of the social inclusion literature focuses upon tangible and required activities such as working, or access to a dwelling. However, in our view these are non-negotiable. People need a place to live and by and large families require an income, generally based on employment. There is little choice, and therefore these measures may not reflect actual inclusion. Voluntary involvement on the other hand, such as membership in organizations, charitable activity and voting, may therefore be better markers of inclusion than income

and employment. Indeed voting is completely voluntary, does not involve a negative sanction for non participation and may be a very good measure of the degree to which people feel they are connected with the nation-state. Thus measuring the independent effect of minority status on voting, after controlling for socio-economic factors could offer a useful measure of the degree to which minorities are included in Swedish society.

Based on earlier studies we expect age, marital status and socio-economic integration (based on education and income) to have a positive effect on electoral participation. Having children tends to lower mobility (both national and international) and is thus expected to be indicative of higher levels of integration and in turn higher voting probabilities. Being a minority is expected to decrease the probability of voting. Having a Swedish-born partner is associated with a higher degree of inclusion and thus should result in higher voting participation. Home ownership will likely be associated with higher voting participation. Being educated in Sweden is expected to increase voting participation. Contextual factors such as higher ethnic representation on municipal councils should result in higher levels of voting; however, increased city size and immigrant population should be associated with lower voting rates. Finally, naturalization is expected to result in higher rates of voting.

DATA AND METHOD

The data we use is drawn from two unique databases. The Swedish 2006 electoral survey contains information on individual electoral participation for all those eligible to vote in national, provincial and municipal elections. Since 1964, the current electoral surveys for Sweden are based on the sample information of the labour force survey in Sweden. To this sample, Statistics Sweden matches the actual participation information which is held by the

provincial authorities in Sweden. This information is then again matched to registry data from Statistics Sweden, which also contains information for every Swedish resident. Combining these two sources of information allows us to run weighted logistic regressions to explore the relationship between socio-economic and immigrant characteristics and the odds of voting in the 2006 municipal election. In total we have information for 70,932 residents in Sweden, a third being immigrants (23,678). More than half of the immigrants (12,790) are not citizens but have the right to vote in municipal and provincial elections.

We include twelve variable types in our models. Contextual variables include the log of the city population, the log of the immigrant population, the unemployment rate for the city, and foreign-born municipal council representativity.⁵ Demographic variables include age (six dummy variables), sex (a dummy for males), marital status (four dummy variables), a dummy variable indicating whether there are children in the household and a dummy variable indicating whether the spouse is Swedish.

Socio-economic variables include income quintile (six dummy variables including no income), housing tenure (three dummy variables), schooling (five dummy variables)—and schooling interacted with whether the last level of schooling was outside Sweden—, country of origin (12 dummy variables, including two dummy variables that define the number of immigrant parents a Swedish-born respondent has), years since immigrating, and citizenship. We also interact years since immigrating with citizenship.

⁵ Information on the log of city size and the log of immigrant population for each respondent is drawn from the Registered Total Population (RTB) database 2006. The municipal employment rate is drawn from 2007 Statistics Sweden data and the proportion of foreign-born council members is drawn from Democracy Statistics 2007 (Statistics Sweden 2007).

RESULTS

Descriptives

Table 1 shows descriptive statistics for all the characteristics tested in the four logistic models. Over 80 percent of the population voted in the 2006 municipal election. However, the results from Table 1 suggest that there are substantial differences by age, place of birth, income and level of schooling. Voting by non-citizens is much lower than voting by citizens. Only about 35 percent of non-citizens voted in the 2006 municipal election. As suggested by the literature, younger citizens are less likely to vote. Only 71 percent of those less than 25 years old voted in the municipal election. Non-Swedes, with the exception of those born in North America and Oceania, or those with only one immigrant parent, are also less likely to vote. Income makes a substantial difference. Only about two-thirds of people with no income voted, whereas over 90 percent of people in the top quintile voted.

Schooling also has a substantial impact on the degree to which people vote. As schooling increases, so does the proportion of people who vote. However, it appears that immigrants are generally less likely to vote than Swedish-born citizens with the same level of schooling.

Overall, non-citizens are substantially less likely to vote than citizens. However, there are some interesting patterns. First, the results suggest a somewhat different pattern in terms of age and income, but are generally consistent by schooling.⁶ Younger non-citizens are actually more likely to vote than older non-citizens and income appears to be inversely correlated with voting for non-citizens. As income increases, the proportion of non-citizen voters decreases. Thus, at least at the level of the descriptive information for

⁶ It should be noted that there are very few immigrants arriving after age 24 who have a university degree.

Table 1
Descriptive statistics: % of group that voted, Sweden, 2006

	Variable	Value	Municipal	Municipal incl. non citizens	
Demographic characteristics	sex	female	82%	62%	
		male	81%	66%	
	age in groups	Total	82%	64%	
		< 25	71%	74%	
		25-34	79%	71%	
		35-44	83%	62%	
		45-54	85%	57%	
		55-64	88%	57%	
		65+	80%	64%	
	marital status	Total	82%	64%	
		widowed	71%	68%	
		divorced	77%	67%	
		married	89%	57%	
		never married	76%	73%	
	group	Total	82%	64%	
		Swedish	84%	47%	
		Nordic not Swedish	72%	55%	
		EU not Nordic	70%	62%	
		Oth. Europe	59%	62%	
		African	58%	71%	
		N. Amer. & Oceania	81%	67%	
		S. Amer.	72%	62%	
		Asia	63%	58%	
		2 immig. parents	73%	69%	
		1 immig. parent	80%	64%	
		city type	Suburbs	84%	67%
			Countryside	79%	61%
	Cities < 12,500		80%	64%	
	Cities 12.5 - 25K		81%	64%	
	Cities 25,000+		81%	60%	
	Big cities		82%	64%	
	Commuter towns		81%	66%	
	Larger cities		82%	68%	
Industry towns	81%		65%		
Total	82%		64%		
Socio-economic	income quintile		no income	63%	78%
			first	71%	64%
		second	78%	61%	
		third	84%	59%	
		fourth	87%	50%	
		fifth	92%	43%	
		Total	82%	64%	
Schooling/ Immigrant status	primary	native-born	79%	71%	
		immigrated age 0-9	59%	76%	
		immigrated age 10-19	63%	75%	
		immigrated age 20-24	64%	73%	
	secondary	immigrated age 25+	60%	67%	
		native-born	87%	44%	
		immigrated age 0-9	76%	56%	
		immigrated age 10-19	69%	68%	
		immigrated age 20-24	75%	57%	
	university	immigrated age 25+	77%	53%	
		native-born	92%	27%	
		immigrated age 0-9	77%	75%	
		immigrated age 10-19	79%	78%	
		immigrated age 20-24	66%	70%	
		immigrated age 25+	70%	58%	

citizens, there is broad agreement with previous research. The question we ask is: to what degree do contextual and individual characteristics override those of immigrant status? And how important is citizenship in determining voting propensities and enhancing social inclusion?

Logistic regressions

Table 2 shows results from four weighted logistic regressions (labeled Logit 1 to Logit 4) assessing the impact of these characteristics on voting in Swedish municipal elections. The first includes only Swedes (people with Swedish citizenship with two Swedish parents). The second includes all citizens, regardless of place of birth. The third selects only the foreign-born and the last pools the entire voting population. The models which include non-citizens interact place of birth with citizenship. Thus, interpreting the coefficients for non-citizens requires adding the non-citizen coefficient to the place of birth for non-citizens. For all dummy variable sets, the comparison group is identified in parentheses.⁷ The four columns in each regression identify the coefficient, the standard error, the level of significance and the odds ratio.

Looking first at the model which includes only Swedes (Logit 1), we see that three of the four contextual variables have significant effects. The larger the city, the less likely residents are to vote. Indeed, every log unit increase in the city population reduces the odds of voting by about a sixth. Concomitantly, every log unit increase in the immigrant population increases the odds of voting by a quarter. High employment rates are also associated with higher rates of voting. Living in a city with full employment changes the odds of

⁷ For example, the comparison category for sex is females and the comparison category for marital status is people who are married.

Table 2
Results from logistic regressions estimating the odds of voting, Sweden,
2006

Variable	Comparison group	Value	Logit 1 Swedes				Logit 2 Citizens			
			Coef	S.E.	Sig.	Odds Ratio	Coef	S.E.	Sig.	Odds Ratio
		Observations	47,193				58,152			
		Population	4,888,263				5,988,058			
		Prob>0	0				0			
Contextual variables		Log of city population	-0.17	0.06	***	0.85	-0.15	0.06	***	0.86
		Log of immigrant population	0.23	0.06	***	1.26	0.20	0.05	***	1.22
		% minorities on council	0.00	0.01		1.00	0.00	0.00		1.00
		City employment rate	1.31	0.46	***	3.71	0.87	0.38	**	2.39
Sex	Female	Male	-0.31	0.03	***	0.74	-0.30	0.03	***	0.74
Age	18-25	Age 25-34	-0.44	0.05	***	0.64	-0.45	0.05	***	0.64
		Age 35-44	-0.40	0.06	***	0.67	-0.39	0.05	***	0.68
		Age 45-54	-0.18	0.06	***	0.84	-0.12	0.05	**	0.89
		Age 55-64	0.19	0.07	***	1.21	0.17	0.06	***	1.19
		Age 65+	0.51	0.10	***	1.67	0.49	0.08	***	1.63
Marital status	Single	Married	0.11	0.09		1.12	0.06	0.06		1.06
		Separated/divorced	-0.11	0.06	**	0.89	-0.09	0.05	**	0.91
		Widowed	0.12	0.14		1.13	0.04	0.12		1.04
Origin of spouse	Not Swedish	Partner is Swedish	0.68	0.09	***	1.97	0.72	0.06	***	2.06
Kids in house	No kids	With kids	0.24	0.04	***	1.27	0.23	0.03	***	1.26
Income quintile	No income	Income quintile 1	0.07	0.06		1.08	0.12	0.05	**	1.13
		Income quintile 2	0.31	0.07	***	1.36	0.33	0.06	***	1.39
		Income quintile 3	0.62	0.07	***	1.86	0.62	0.06	***	1.86
		Income quintile 4	0.85	0.07	***	2.33	0.87	0.06	***	2.38
		Income quintile 5	1.07	0.08	***	2.90	1.08	0.06	***	2.94
Tenure	Own house	Own apartment	-0.33	0.05	***	0.72	-0.28	0.04	***	0.75
		Rent dwelling	-0.50	0.04	***	0.61	-0.43	0.03	***	0.65
Schooling	Primary	Lower 2ndary	0.33	0.04	***	1.39	0.33	0.04	***	1.39
		Upper 2ndary	0.51	0.04	***	1.66	0.48	0.04	***	1.62
		Lower university	1.18	0.06	***	3.25	1.13	0.05	***	3.10
		Upper university	1.48	0.07	***	4.40	1.48	0.06	***	4.40
Place of schooling outside Sweden		Last level of schooling outside Sweden					0.08	0.09		1.08
Schooling * Place of schooling		Lower 2ndary * outside Sweden					-0.17	0.12		0.85
		Upper 2ndary * outside Sweden					-0.16	0.12		0.85
		Lower university * outside Sweden					-0.60	0.15	***	0.55
		Upper university * outside Sweden					-0.78	0.14	***	0.46
Place of birth	Sweden	Born in Sweden w 1 imm. parent					-0.22	0.05	***	0.80
		Born in Sweden w 2 imm. parents					-0.53	0.07	***	0.59
		Nordic					-0.81	0.13	***	0.44
		EU not Nordic					-1.12	0.13	***	0.33
		Rest of Europe					-1.12	0.09	***	0.33
		Africa					-0.92	0.14	***	0.40
		N. America					-0.45	0.24	*	0.64
		S. America					-0.40	0.15	***	0.67
		Middle East					-0.69	0.09	***	0.50
		E. Asia					-1.16	0.14	***	0.31
		Rest of Asia					-0.61	0.17	***	0.54
Time in Sweden		Years since immigrating					0.00	0.00	*	1.00
Citizenship	(Not a citizen)	Citizen								
		Citizen * Years since immigrating								

Significance: * = 0.1, ** = 0.05, *** = 0.01

Table 2
Results from logistic regressions estimating the odds of voting, Sweden,
2006

Variable	Comparison group	Value	Logit 3				Logit 4					
			Minorities (non-Swedes)				Total population					
			Coef	S.E.	Sig.	Odds Ratio	Coef	S.E.	Sig.	Odds Ratio		
		Observations	23,678				70,932					
		Population	1,354,719				6,244,501					
		Prob>0	0				0					
Contextual variables		Log of city population	0.04	0.09		1.04	-0.13	0.05	**	0.88		
		Log of immigrant population	-0.02	0.09		0.98	0.18	0.05	***	1.20		
		% minorities on council	0.01	0.01		1.01	0.00	0.00		1.00		
		City employment rate	-0.26	0.53		0.77	0.90	0.35	**	2.46		
	Sex	Female	Male	-0.27	0.04	***	0.77	-0.29	0.03	***	0.75	
Age	18-25	Age 25-34	-0.42	0.08	***	0.66	-0.43	0.04	***	0.65		
		Age 35-44	-0.30	0.08	***	0.74	-0.36	0.05	***	0.70		
		Age 45-54	0.04	0.09		1.04	-0.09	0.05	*	0.91		
		Age 55-64	0.10	0.11		1.11	0.19	0.06	***	1.21		
		Age 65+	0.42	0.15	***	1.53	0.52	0.08	***	1.68		
Marital status	Single	Married	-0.02	0.06		0.98	0.03	0.05		1.03		
		Separated/divorced	-0.09	0.07		0.91	-0.09	0.04	**	0.91		
		Widowed	-0.25	0.18		0.78	0.04	0.11		1.05		
		Partner is Swedish	0.75	0.07	***	2.12	0.75	0.05	***	2.12		
Origin of spouse	Not Swedish	With kids	0.23	0.05	***	1.26	0.24	0.03	***	1.27		
Kids in house	No kids	Income quintile 1	0.22	0.07	***	1.24	0.12	0.05	***	1.13		
Income quintile	No income	Income quintile 2	0.31	0.08	***	1.36	0.31	0.05	***	1.37		
		Income quintile 3	0.57	0.08	***	1.77	0.60	0.05	***	1.83		
		Income quintile 4	0.83	0.08	***	2.29	0.84	0.05	***	2.32		
		Income quintile 5	0.99	0.09	***	2.69	1.05	0.06	***	2.84		
		Tenure	Own house	Own apartment	-0.13	0.06	**	0.88	-0.27	0.04	***	0.76
Schooling	Primary	Rent dwelling	-0.23	0.05	***	0.80	-0.42	0.03	***	0.66		
		Lower 2ndary	0.31	0.08	***	1.36	0.33	0.04	***	1.39		
		Upper 2ndary	0.48	0.08	***	1.62	0.50	0.04	***	1.64		
		Lower university	0.99	0.10	***	2.70	1.12	0.05	***	3.07		
		Upper university	1.47	0.11	***	4.35	1.47	0.06	***	4.37		
Place of schooling outside Sweden		Last level of schooling outside Sweden	0.18	0.09	*	1.20	0.13	0.07	*	1.14		
Schooling * Place of schooling		Lower 2ndary * outside Sweden	-0.15	0.12		0.86	-0.19	0.09	**	0.82		
		Upper 2ndary * outside Sweden	-0.20	0.12	*	0.82	-0.17	0.09	*	0.84		
		Lower university * outside Sweden	-0.51	0.14	***	0.60	-0.57	0.11	***	0.57		
		Upper university * outside Sweden	-0.83	0.13	***	0.44	-0.78	0.10	***	0.46		
	Place of birth	Sweden	Born in Sweden w 1 imm. parent	0.53	0.15	***	1.70	-0.23	0.04	***	0.79	
Place of birth	Sweden	Born in Sweden w 2 imm. parents	0.22	0.15		1.24	-0.55	0.06	***	0.57		
		Nordic	-0.22	0.14		0.81	-0.89	0.10	***	0.41		
		EU not Nordic	-0.30	0.14	**	0.74	-1.00	0.10	***	0.37		
		Rest of Europe	-0.47	0.13	***	0.63	-1.13	0.08	***	0.32		
		Africa	-0.18	0.16		0.83	-0.85	0.12	***	0.43		
		N. America	-0.03	0.17		0.97	-0.72	0.14	***	0.49		
		S. America	0.26	0.16	*	1.29	-0.40	0.12	***	0.67		
		Middle East	-0.01	0.13		0.99	-0.66	0.08	***	0.51		
		E. Asia	-0.46	0.15	***	0.63	-1.15	0.12	***	0.32		
				Rest of Asia			(Comparison)	-0.66	0.14	***	0.52	
		Time in Sweden		Years since immigrating	0.00	0.00		1.00	-0.01	0.00	***	0.99
		Citizenship	(Not a citizen)	Citizen	0.89	0.07	***	2.44	0.93	0.07	***	2.55
Citizen * Years since immigrating	0.01			0.00	***	1.01	0.01	0.00	***	1.01		

Significance: * = 0.1, ** = 0.05, *** = 0.01

voting almost fourfold compared to a city with no employment. Having minority representation on municipal councils has no impact on voting.

As is to be expected, age is important. Being 55 to 64 increases the odds of voting by about a fifth and being over 64 increases the odds by about two-thirds. Marital status does not have a strong impact on voting, but having a Swedish spouse doubles the odds of voting. Having children also increases the odds of voting by a quarter. Being male reduces the odds of voting by about a quarter.

Income is important. The higher the income, the higher the odds of voting. Indeed, being in the fifth quintile changes the odds of voting by a factor of 2.9 compared to people who report no income. When compared to owning a house, either owning an apartment or renting is associated with lower odds of voting.

The higher the level of schooling, the higher the odds of voting. Obtaining an upper university certificate changes the odds of voting by a factor of 4.4 compared to those who only have primary schooling.

Logit 2 includes all citizens regardless of origin. This regression adds 10,959 foreign-born citizens to the population. It also adds a variable that imputes the place of schooling, a variable for place of birth, and years since immigrating. For all foreign-born citizens, we include an interaction term for place of schooling and level of schooling.⁸

Looking only at the variables that are the same between the first two regressions, we see that results for Logit 2 are very similar to those seen in Logit 1. All the variables have coefficients that go in the same direction and are of

⁸ The database we used does not contain a variable indicating place of schooling. We used age, age at immigration and level of schooling to impute place of schooling. For example, if an immigrant arrived in Sweden before the age of 19 and obtained upper secondary schooling, we defined that person as being schooled in Sweden.

roughly the same magnitude. Place of schooling is not significant; suggesting that overall, getting your last level of schooling from outside Sweden does not affect the odds of voting. However, interacting place of schooling with level of schooling suggests some interesting results. Foreign-born citizens with secondary schooling from outside Sweden have about the same odds of voting as those with Swedish secondary school (the coefficient for the interaction with secondary school is insignificantly different from the comparison group). However, foreign-born citizens with foreign university level schooling do have significantly lower odds of voting than those with Swedish university schooling. This impact is high enough to wipe out the effect of university schooling. Thus in essence, people with foreign university level schooling have about the same odds of voting as people with Swedish secondary school education.

After controlling for socio-economic and demographic attributes, we find that place of birth still appears to matter. People not born in Sweden are less likely to vote. Being born in South America reduces the odds of voting by about a third, while being born in Europe reduces the odds by up to half. Being born in East Asia also reduces the odds by up to two-thirds. Generation also matters. Having one immigrant parent reduces the odds of voting by a fifth and having two immigrant parents reduces the odds of voting by about two-fifths. Years since immigrating has only a minor (and weakly significant) effect. Indeed, being in Sweden for 30 years only changes the odds of voting by about a sixth.

At least part of the reason for the small effects on years since immigrating is because the majority of people in our Logit 2 population are Swedes (who have not immigrated). For this reason Logit 3 drops all Swedes and includes only the 23,678 foreign-born and their descendents who are eligible to vote in municipal elections. We include the same variables as found in Logit 2, but

add a variable identifying whether the respondent is a citizen and we interact citizenship with years since immigrating to Sweden.

The most striking thing about the results from Logit 3 is the impact of citizenship. Obtaining citizenship increases the odds of voting in a municipal election by two and a half times compared to a foreign-born non-citizen. For citizens, every year of residence in Sweden increases the odds of voting (being a foreign-born Swedish citizen with thirty years of residence increases the odds of voting by half compared to a newly minted Swedish-born citizen). However, for non-citizens years since immigrating has no significant impact on the odds of voting. These results are reiterated in Logit 4 which includes all eligible voters.

CONCLUSIONS

Much of the social inclusion literature concentrates on “hard” activities. Sweden’s Strategy Report For Social Protection And Social Inclusion 2006–2008 for example examines access to housing, segregation and work. These are useful and typical measures of inclusion, however, we would argue that voting is at least as useful a measure because there is a degree of choice. People have to work, must have housing and ideally should not have to be ethnically segregated. There is little individual-level choice in these measures. As such, they may not be good measures of social inclusion. Voting is different. You don’t have to vote, but voting does allow the individual to express an opinion and affect a societal outcome. Further, if inclusion is about participation then voting is an effective measure of social inclusion because it taps a purely voluntary willingness to participate (see Burchardt et al. 2002).

Given increased globalization and immigration, the integration and inclusion of minority populations is of increased importance within receiving so-

cieties. Despite this, little work has been done on electoral participation of immigrants and minorities both in Europe and North America. However, certain trends in the literature are apparent. Basically, immigrants are viewed as less likely to vote even after controlling for socio-economic characteristics. Even less work has been done on the voter participation rates of resident non-citizens. Often, the impact of being foreign-born is not captured because of a lack of data. However, given the unique dataset we have, we are able to examine the impact of immigrant status in some detail. We find that place of birth and citizenship make a big difference in the odds of voting, but it is nuanced. Age at arrival is important in that people who arrive later in life have lower odds of voting. However, this is only true for immigrants with primary and secondary schooling. Having a university certificate appears to override the importance of age at immigration and in fact, these individuals appear to have high odds of voting.

We found that place of birth is very important. Europeans and Africans are not likely to vote. They simply do not exercise their franchise as much as people from other regions. The reasons for this are worth speculating upon in the case of Europeans (both EU and non-EU members): it may be that they simply do not see themselves as sufficiently tied to Sweden to take part in the process. This is despite having the right to vote even if they don't have citizenship and even if voting could have real impacts on their lives. Generation does have an impact on voter participation. People born in Sweden, but with at least one immigrant parent, are less likely to vote than people with two Swedish parents. However, the effects are muted. Those born in Sweden from immigrant parents are more likely to vote than immigrants. Further, having only one immigrant parent means a higher likelihood of voting than

having 2 immigrant parents. Whether this represents a continuation of segregation or a step toward integration is up for debate.

We find that contextual factors are important. Living in a large city reduces people's propensity to vote. However, we find that higher immigrant populations are not correlated with lower rates of voter participation. This runs counter to Putnam (2007) who suggests that heterogeneous populations have lower levels of participation.

On that note, it appears that granting citizenship has a huge effect on voting. Despite giving people the right to vote, that right is often not exercised if people are not citizens. While it could be that only people who wish to be more involved take up citizenship, it could also be that citizenship offers people the opportunity to see that they have a stake in what is happening politically in Sweden.

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