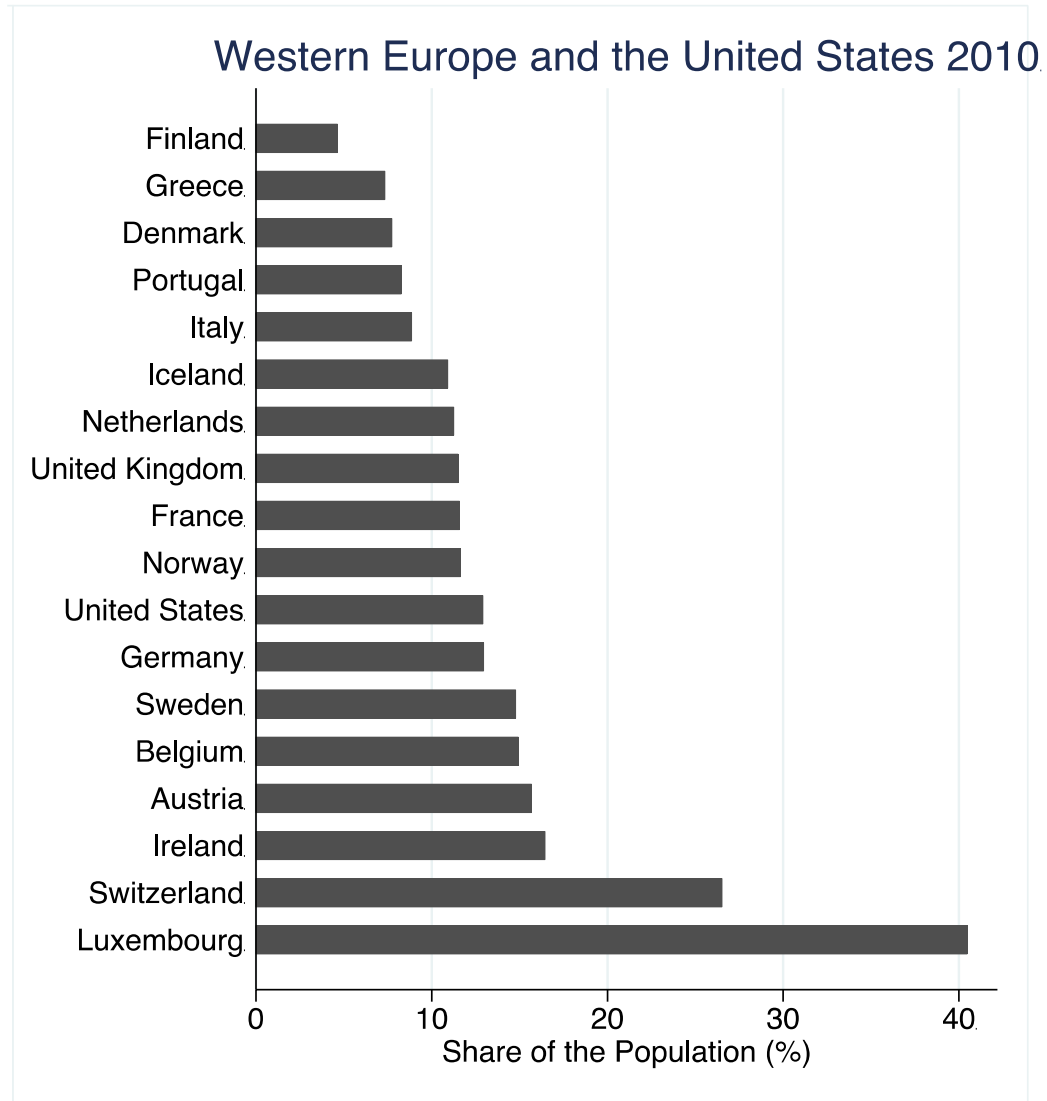


Why are Immigrants Underrepresented in Politics? Evidence From Sweden

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Kåre Vernby (Uppsala University)

% Foreign-Born, 2010



Minority Representation – National Level

(Bloemraad 2013)

Country	Representation index	Minority population	% in pop.*	% in office**
<i>Traditional Immigration Countries</i>				
Australia (2005, House of Rep)	0.20	Non-European	10.1	2.0
Canada (2006, H of Commons)	0.48	Visible minority	16.2	7.8
United States (2007, H of Rep)	0.36	Latino	14.7	5.3
United States (2007, H of Rep)	0.20	Asian Am./ Pacific Islander	4.5	0.9
<i>European Immigration Countries</i>				
Denmark (2009, Folketinget)	0.35	Non-Western	6.4	2.2
Denmark (2001, Folketinget)	0.22	Non-Western	5.0	1.1
France (Ass. nationale, 2007)	0.00	Maghrébins	5.1	0.0
France (Ass. nationale, 2007)	0.33	Caribbeans	0.6	0.2
France (Ass. nationale, 2007)	<0.10	Visible minority	>5.7	0.5
Germany (2009, Bundestag)	0.26	Turks	3.1	0.8
Netherlands (2006, Tweede Kamer)	1.08	Non-Western	10.5	11.3
Norway (2009, Stortinget)	0.11	Non-Western	5.6	0.6
Norway (2003, Stortinget)	0.15	Non-Western	4.0	0.6
United Kingdom (2010, H of C)	0.35	Non-white	12.1	4.2
United Kingdom (2001, H of C)	0.24	Non-white	7.9	1.9

Consequences of underrepresentation

Systematic underrepresentation poses deep challenges to democratic practice and norms:

- Calls into question legitimacy of democratic system (Mansbridge 1999)
- Sends signal to minority population that they are not accepted (Bloemraad 2013, Phillips 1995)
- Diminishes quality of democracy by excluding voices, interests in deliberate decision-making process (Gutman and Thompson 2004; Karpowitz et al. 2012)
- May underrepresent interests/policies favorable to minorities (e.g., Bratton and Ray 2002, Chattopadhyay and Duflo 2004; but Cameron et al. 1996, Dunning and Nilekani 2013)
- Can lead to anti-state violence (Dancygier 2010)

Why underrepresentation?

- Why, then do we observe systematic underrepresentation of immigrant–origin minorities in most countries?
- Existing theories: individual resources & structures/institutions
- But severe data constraints
- “Scholarship on minority representation in Europe is in its infancy.” (Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013, 572)
- Our paper: first comprehensive empirical test of existing theories

Overview & main finding

1. Literature on Immigrant Political Representation
2. Swedish case
3. Data, methods, results

Main Findings:

1. Differences in individual resources and opportunity structures explain relatively little;
 2. Discrimination by party elites likely a key driver
4. Evaluating the role of discrimination
 5. Discussion

Theory: What explains the representation gap?

- Individual-level Resources
 - SES
 - Gender
 - Specific to immigrants: citizenship & length of residence
- Structures/Institutions
 - Electoral laws (esp. American politics; e.g., district magnitude, at-large vs. district)
 - Parties: number, partisanship
 - Specific to immigrants (cross-national): Citizenship laws; multiculturalism
- Discrimination
 - Resistance of party selectors to include minorities due to own prejudice or fear of voters' prejudice, or both
 - Immigrant minorities don't get the same return to resources and structures as do natives

Evidence:

What explains the representation gap?

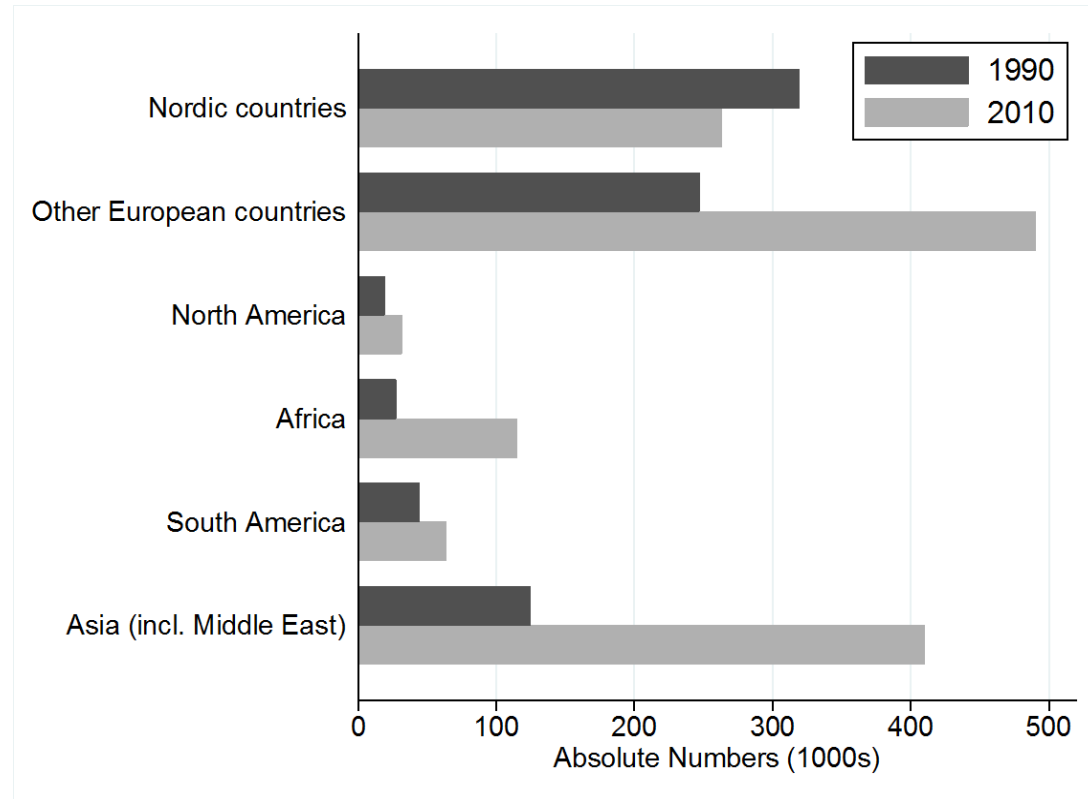
- Very little evidence due to severe data constraints
- To evaluate theories, need to know distribution of individual-level attributes of native and of immigrant candidates and population as a whole – but typically, research only examines composition of legislatures
- Characteristics:
 - Do groups have systematically different resources?
 - Do immigrants and natives face systematically different opportunity structures?
- Returns:
 - Do immigrants and natives with same resources face equal chances of winning?
 - Do immigrants benefit in the same way from permissive electoral institutions?

Data

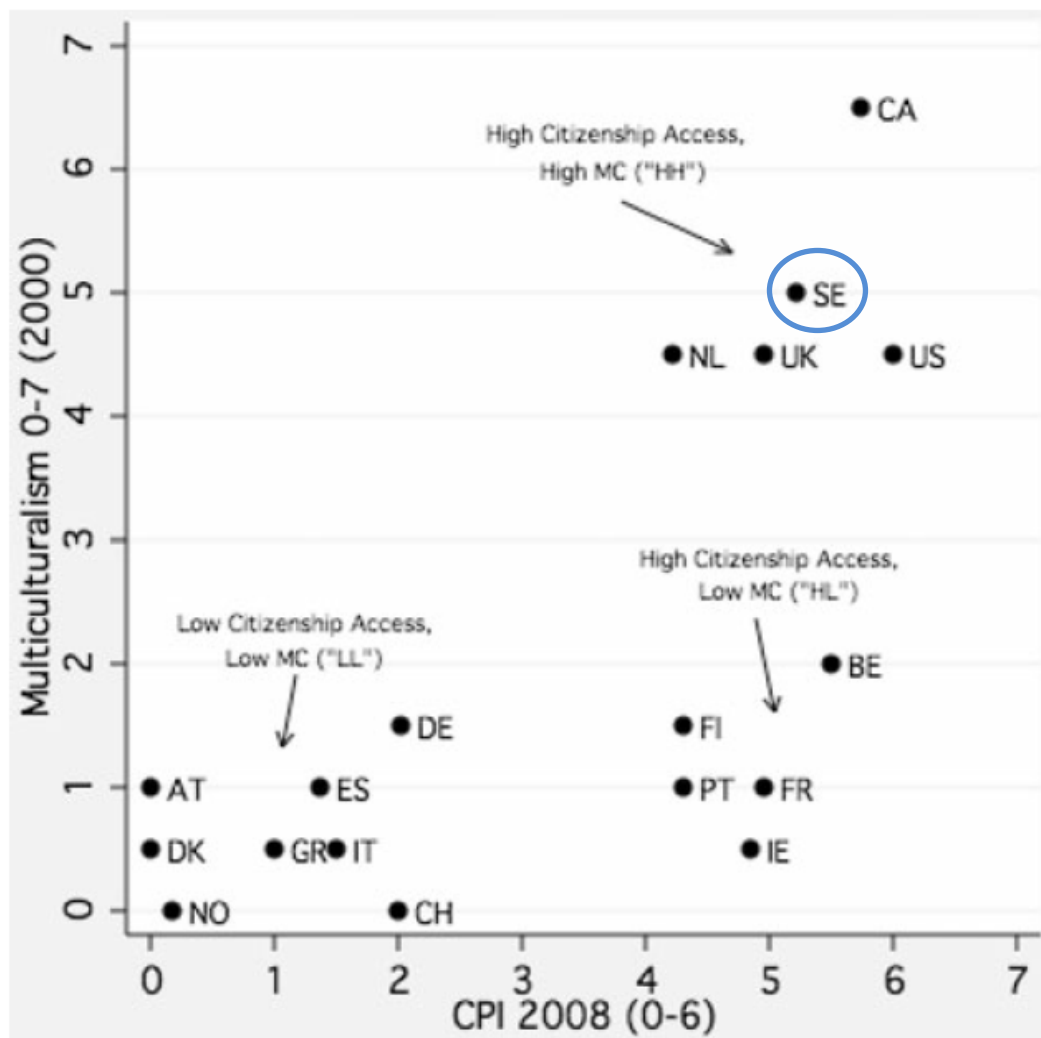
- Registry-based data on entire adult population in Sweden from 1991 to 2010 (accessible only in Sweden)
- Data indicate personal characteristics and whether or not individuals ran and won local office
- Covers 6 local election cycles, 290 municipalities, ~13,000 council seats per election; at-large, PR elections
- Municipalities play an important role in provision of resources (e.g., social assistance, education); control spending amounting to $\frac{1}{4}$ of GDP.
- Important employer (~17% of workforce; ~21% tax rate).

Swedish case: Immigrant population

Labor migrants, refugees, European and non-European – similar inflows as in other W. European countries



Swedish case: Citizenship and multiculturalism



Favorable national institutions – but considerable underrepresentation.
Parity ratio: ~.5

Conceptual approach

- Evaluate relative importance of resources and opportunity structures
- Not focused on identification of existence and size of “immigrant effect” holding all else constant, but on reasons driving this effect

Empirical approach

- Decomposition technique (e.g., see race and gender wage gaps)
- Decompose observed differences in representation into:
 1. Differences in characteristics (explained part) (X 's)
 2. Differences in returns (unexplained part) (β 's)

Economists routinely attribute unexplained part to discrimination – but could also be due to unobserved heterogeneity.

Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

Individual Resources, 1991

Employed

Education

Income

Children

Age Squared

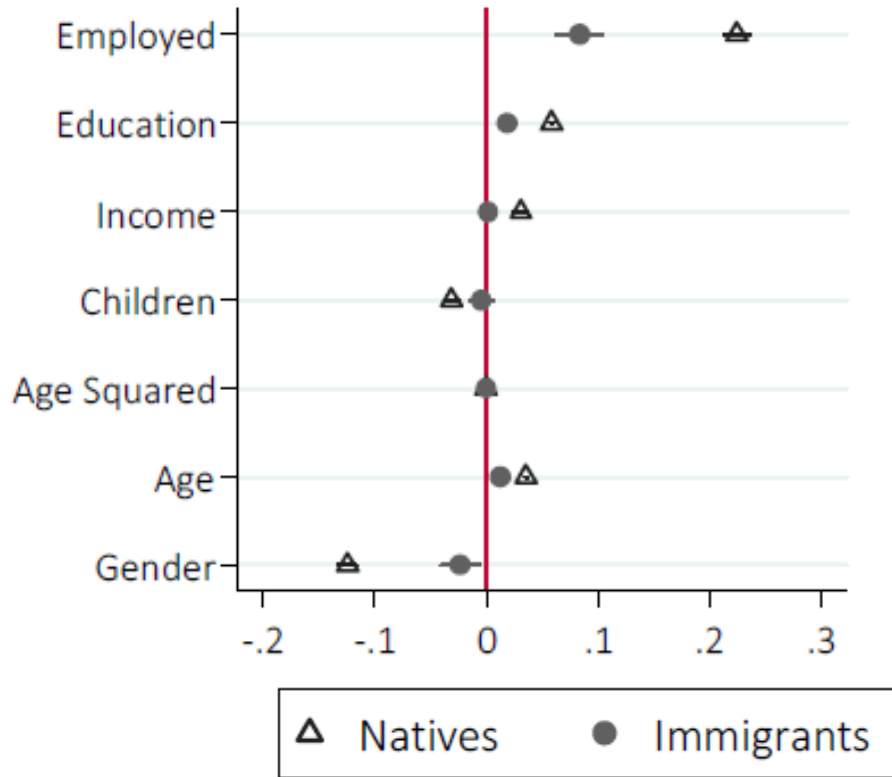
Age

Gender

Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

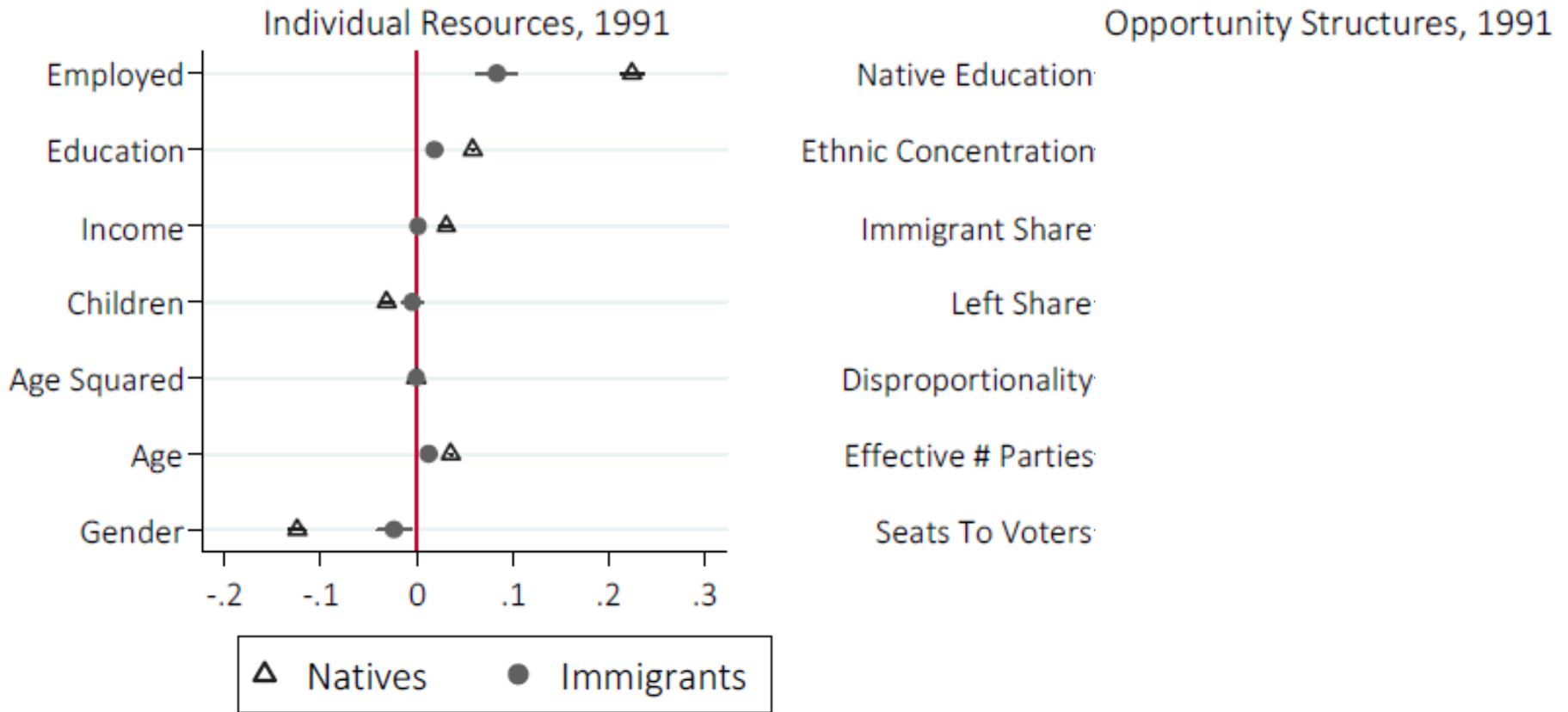
Individual Resources, 1991



Native N: 5,634,068
Immigrant N: 503,999

Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

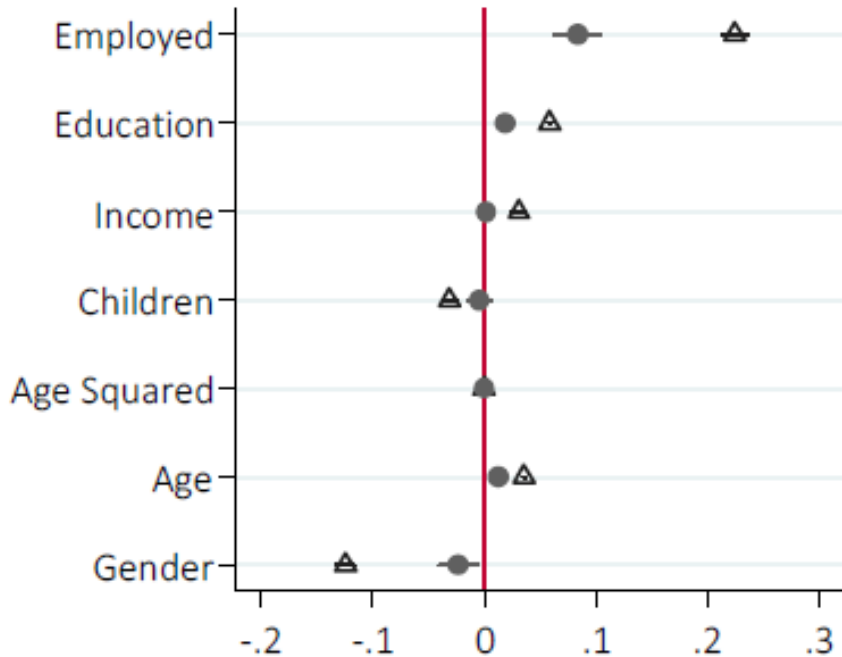


Native N: 5,634,068
 Immigrant N: 503,999

Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

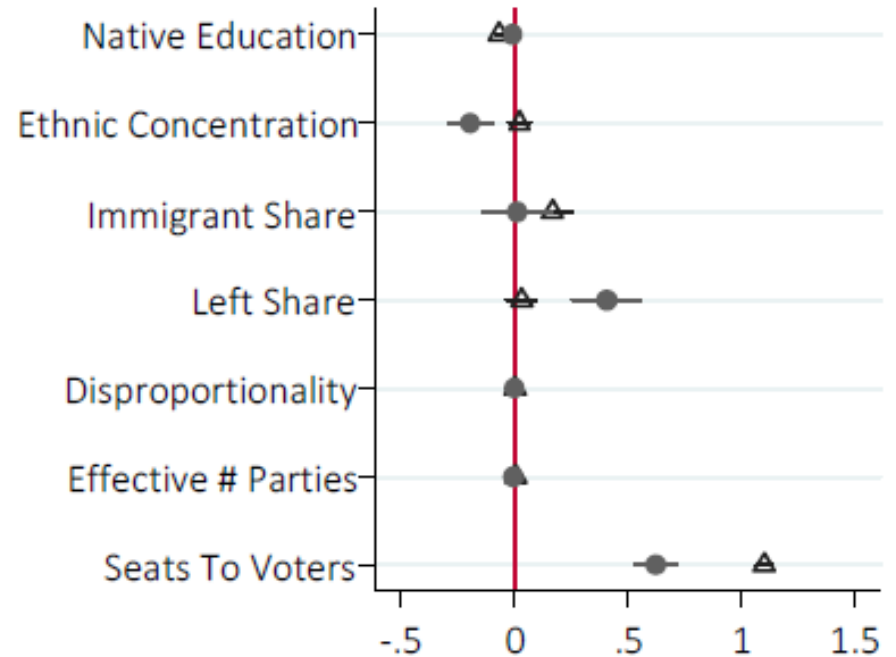
Individual Resources, 1991



△ Natives ● Immigrants

Native N: 5,634,068
Immigrant N: 503,999

Opportunity Structures, 1991



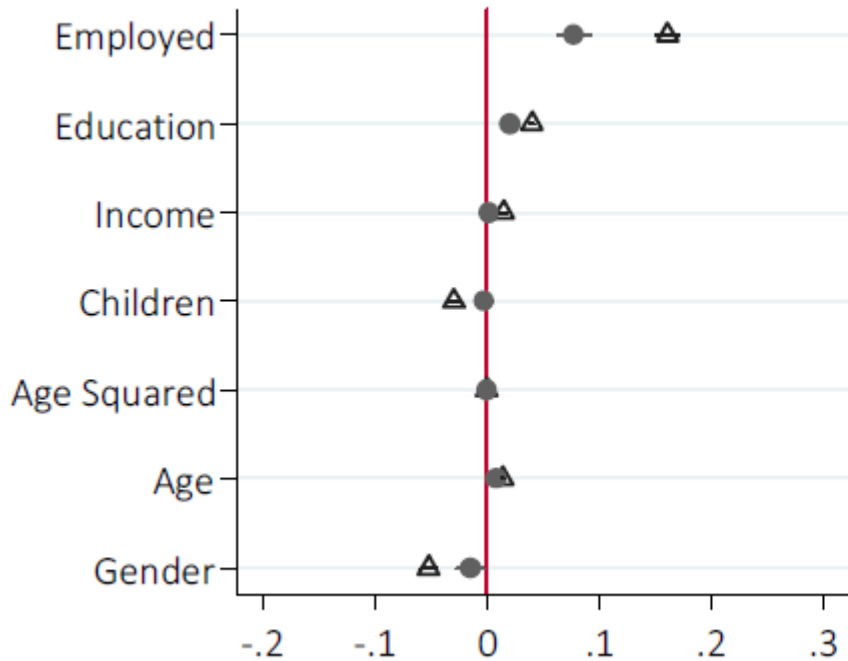
△ Natives ● Immigrants

Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.

Determinants of election to municipal councils (2010)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

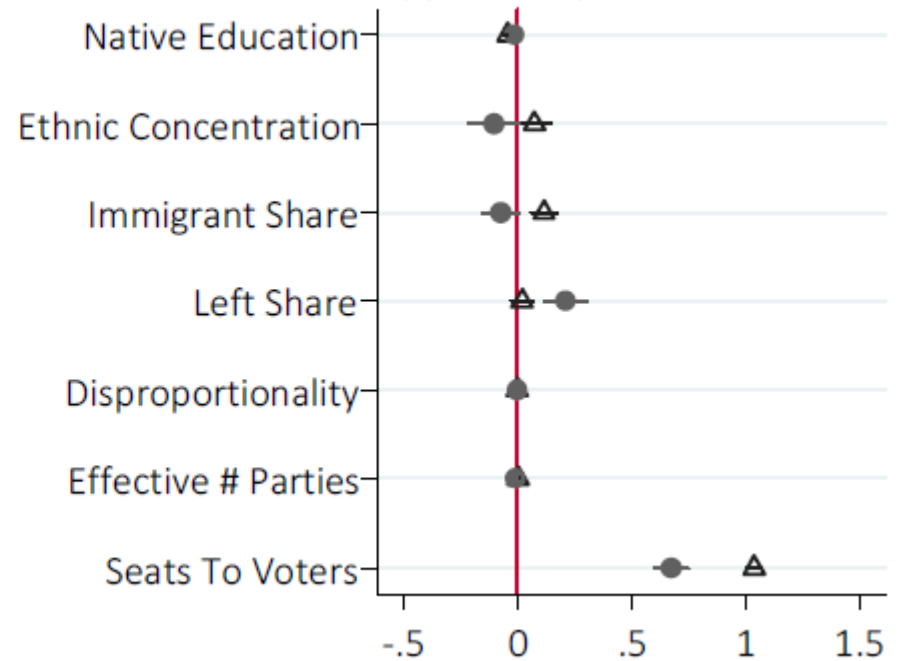
Individual Resources, 2010



△ Natives ● Immigrants

Native N: 6,176,394
Immigrant N: 995,282

Opportunity Structures, 2010



△ Natives ● Immigrants

Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.

Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)

DV: Election (0/1); IV's: resources & structures; OLS

- Take-home point: Immigrants get lower returns to some resources and institutions than natives
- Some narrowing over time
- But how important are these effects? What is the relative importance of returns vs. characteristics?

Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results 1991-2010

(standard errors in parentheses)

	1991
Difference	.136
P(Natives)	.229
P(Immigrants)	.093



Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results 1991-2010

(standard errors in parentheses)

	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
Difference	.136	.129	.119	.105	.104	.100
P(Natives)	.229	.223	.215	.208	.202	.194
P(Immigrants)	.093	.094	.096	.103	.098	.094



Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results 1991-2010

(standard errors in parentheses)

	1991
Difference	.136
P(Natives)	.229
P(Immigrants)	.093
Explained	.022



Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results 1991-2010

(standard errors in parentheses)

	1991
Difference	.136
P(Natives)	.229
P(Immigrants)	.093
Explained	.022
	(.004)
Demographics	-.014
	(.003)
SES	.003
	(.000)
Opp. structure	.002
	(.003)
Seats to voters	.030
	(.002)

Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results 1991-2010

(standard errors in parentheses)

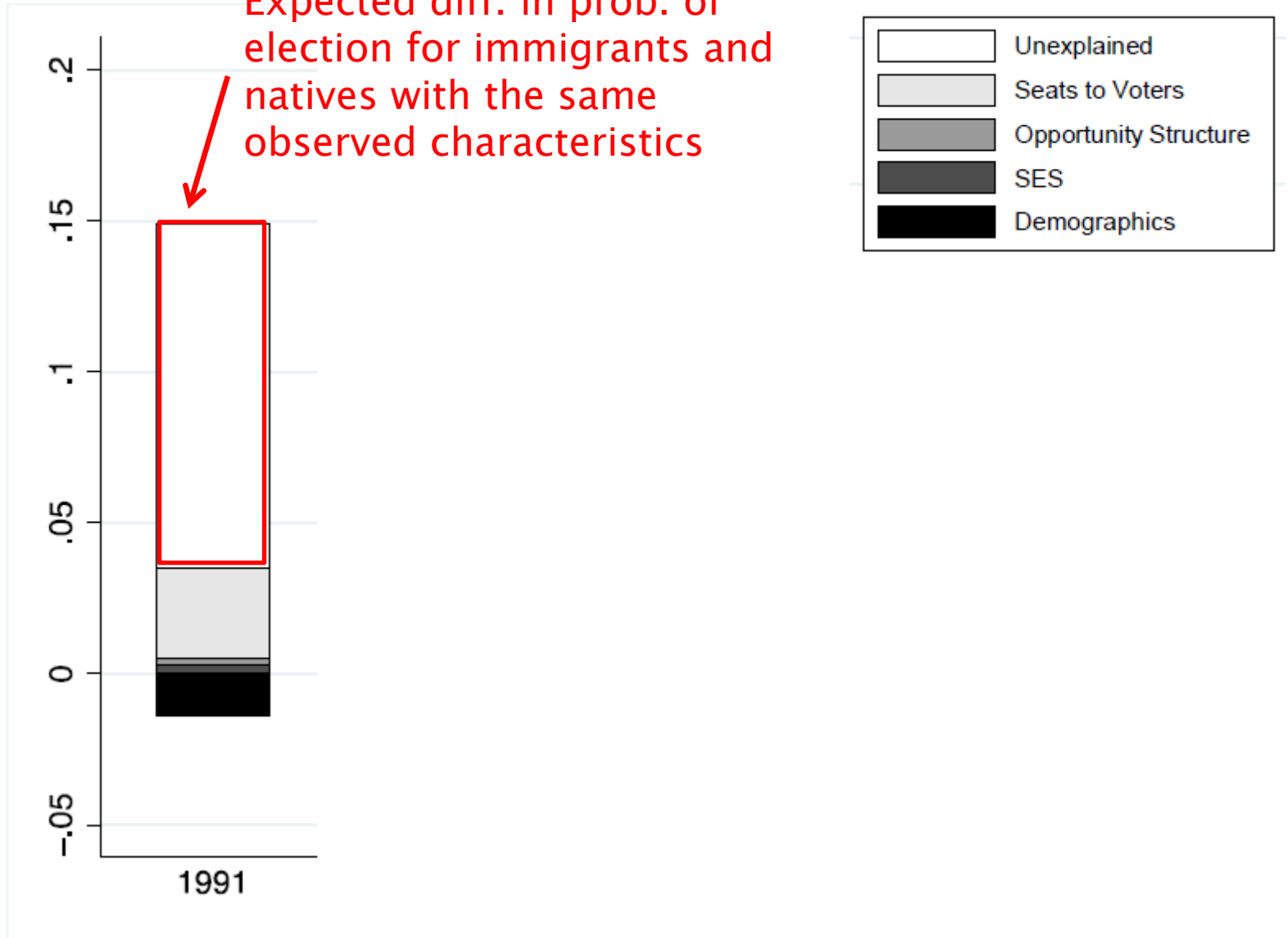
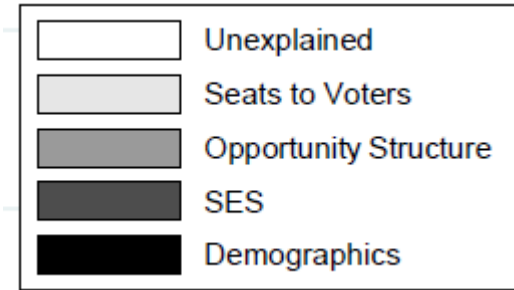
	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
Difference	.136	.129	.119	.105	.104	.100
P(Natives)	.229	.223	.215	.208	.202	.194
P(Immigrants)	.093	.094	.096	.103	.098	.094
Explained	.022	.027	.036	.042	.045	.048
	(.004)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.002)
Demographics	-.014	-.017	-.013	-.011	-.007	-.008
	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.001)	(.001)
SES	.003	.009	.013	.012	.014	.013
	(.000)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)	(.001)
Opp. structure	.002	.000	.003	.007	.008	.006
	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.003)	(.002)	(.002)
Seats to voters	.030	.036	.034	.035	.032	.036
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)
Unexplained	.114	.102	.083	.063	.058	.052
	(.006)	(.006)	(.005)	(.005)	(.005)	(.004)

Decomposing the Representation Gap

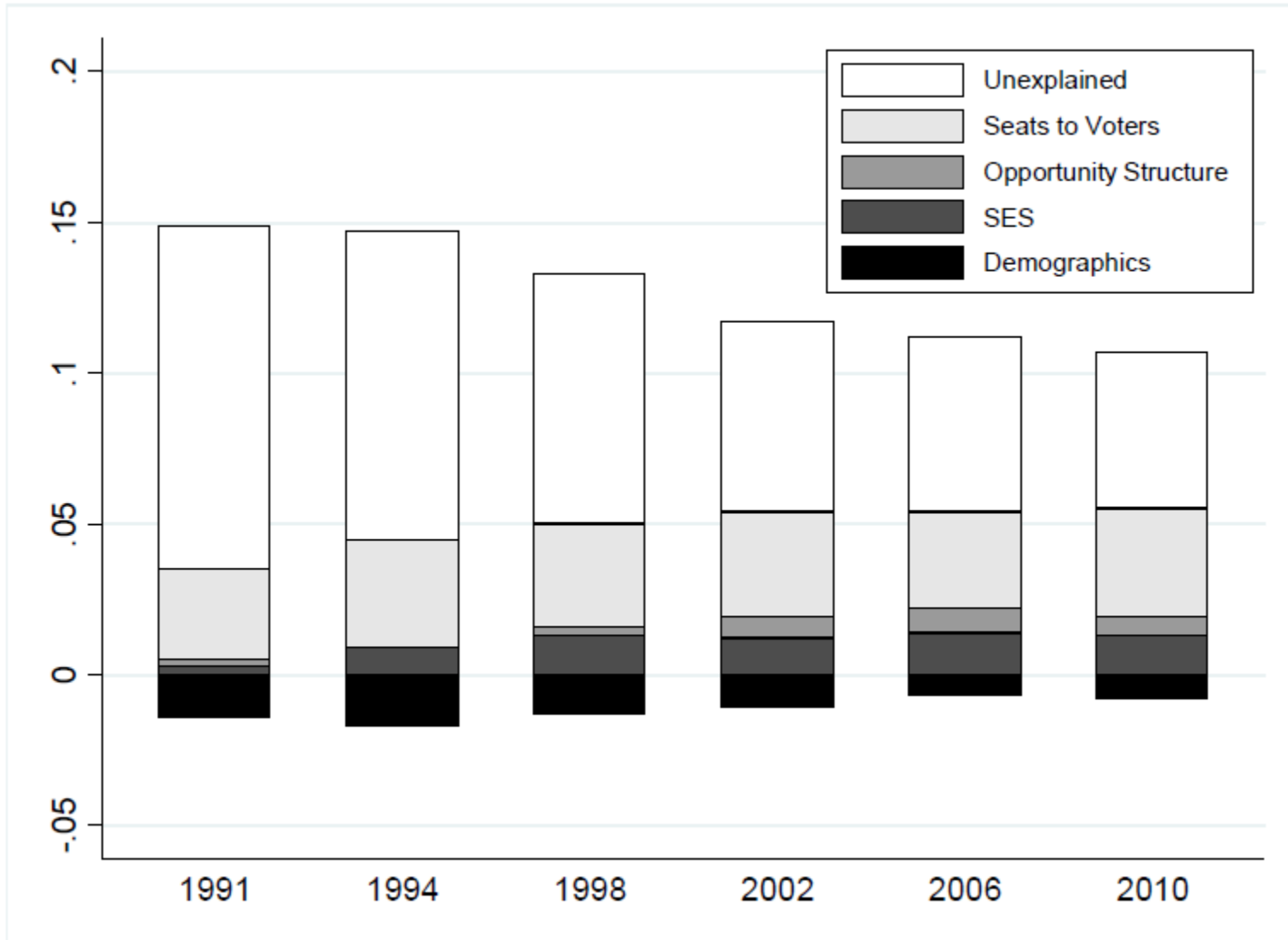


Decomposing the Representation Gap

Expected diff. in prob. of election for immigrants and natives with the same observed characteristics



Decomposing the Representation Gap



Interpretation

- Over time, natives and immigrants receive more similar returns to individual resources and characteristics
- Initially, differences in returns/unexplained part accounts for up to $2/3$ of the representation gap; by 2010, it accounts for roughly half.
- But can we treat unexplained part really as discrimination?

Potential for discrimination

- Selection of candidates by local party elites (not national leaderships)
- Discrimination channels (qualitative lit):
 - Local party committees recruit among those they know
 - Informal criteria matter: e.g., “local roots”; active in party organization; displays of loyalty to party.

“Because there is **no formal application procedure**, it is all about **personal judgments**, it is about getting to know the person in question, that you have been socialising in the [local Social Democratic] association” (Soininen and Etzler 2006: 173)

Placing immigrants on top list positions is “**very controversial**...It is as if we are let into the yard but not the house.” (Blomqvist 2005, 90)

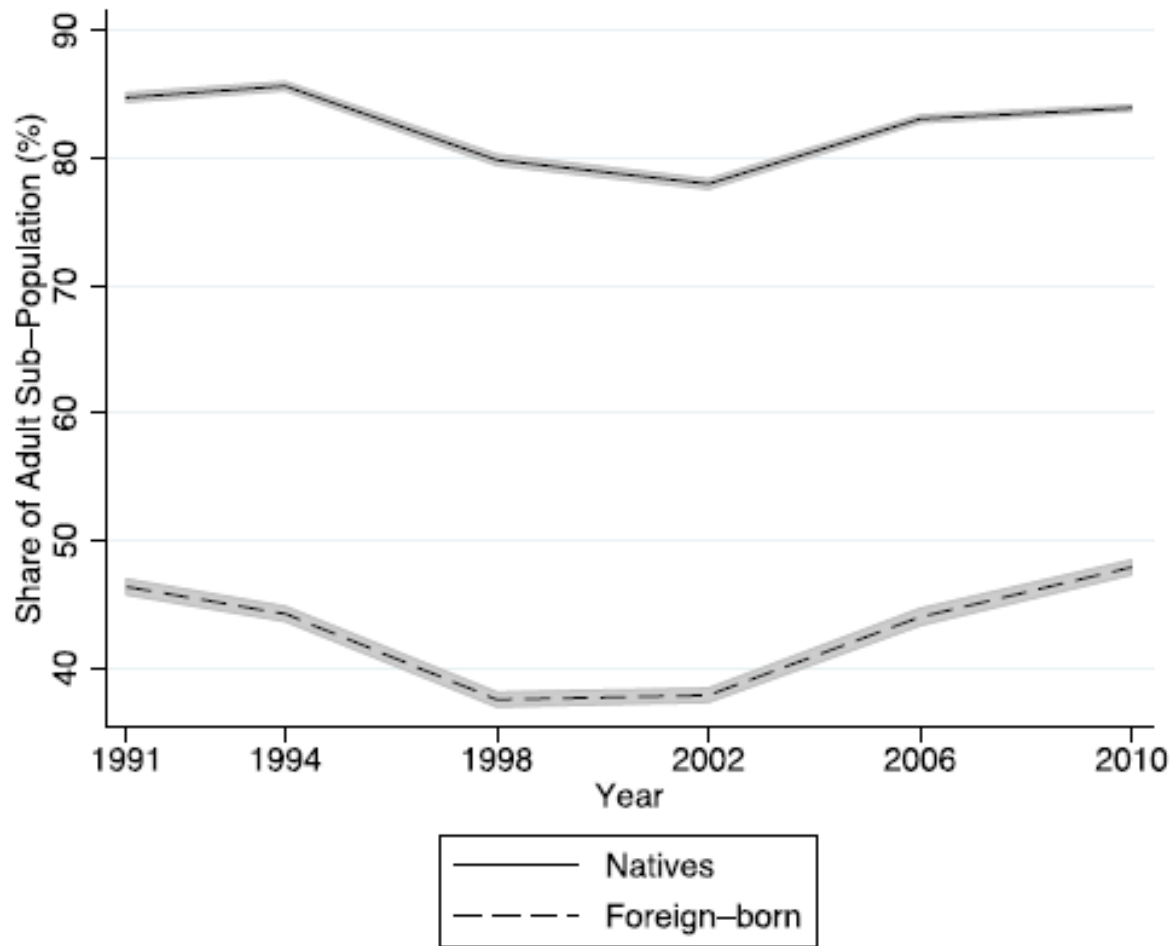
“I’m **skeptical that the party would ever place [immigrants] on an electable position**, or a very powerful position. They use immigrant politicians, but only as tools” to capture some of the immigrant vote.” (Blomqvist 2005, 90)

Potential for discrimination

- Declining and aging local memberships less open to immigrants, more prejudiced.
- Prejudice among voters

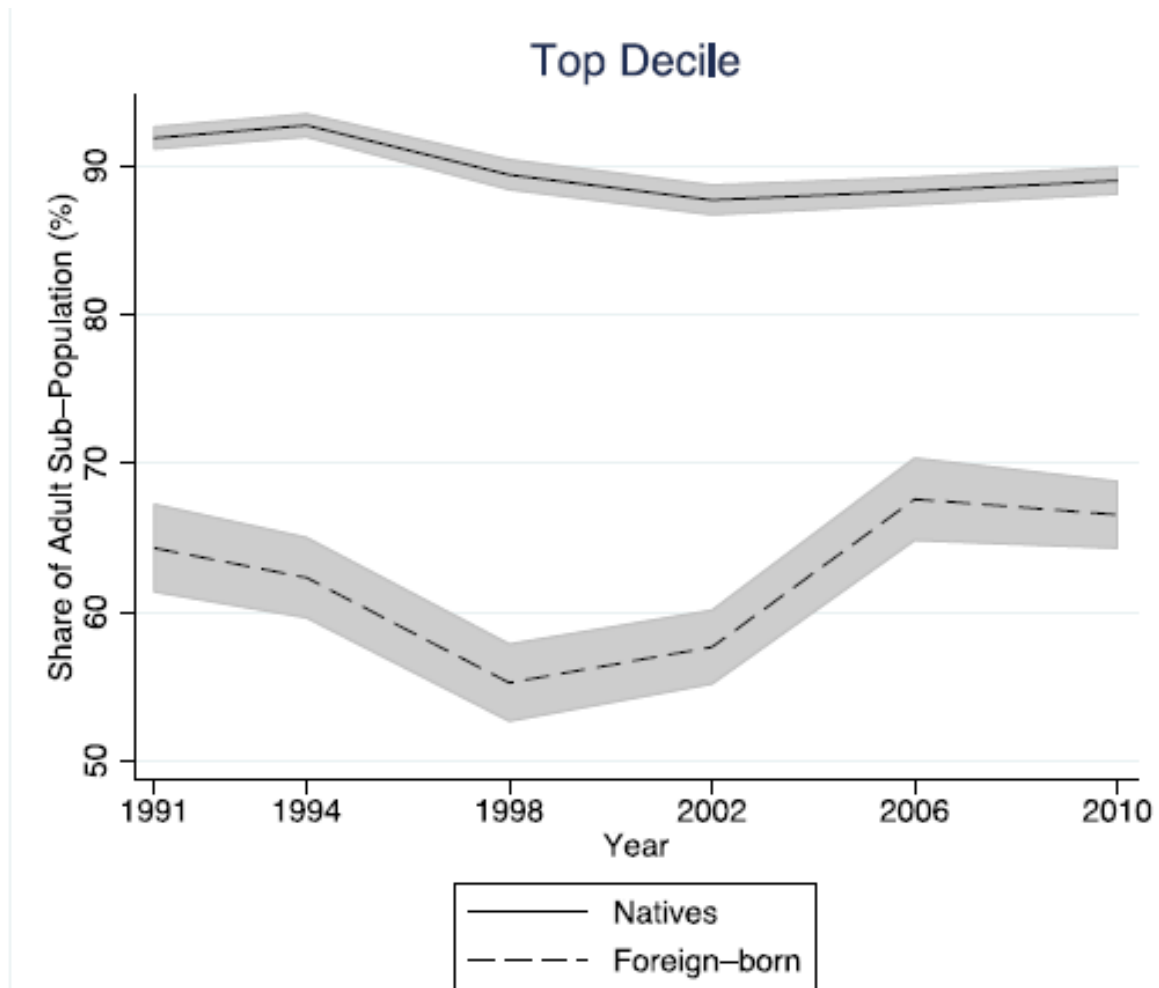
Alternative explanation: Increased political interest & mobilization

Turnout in Municipal Elections over Time



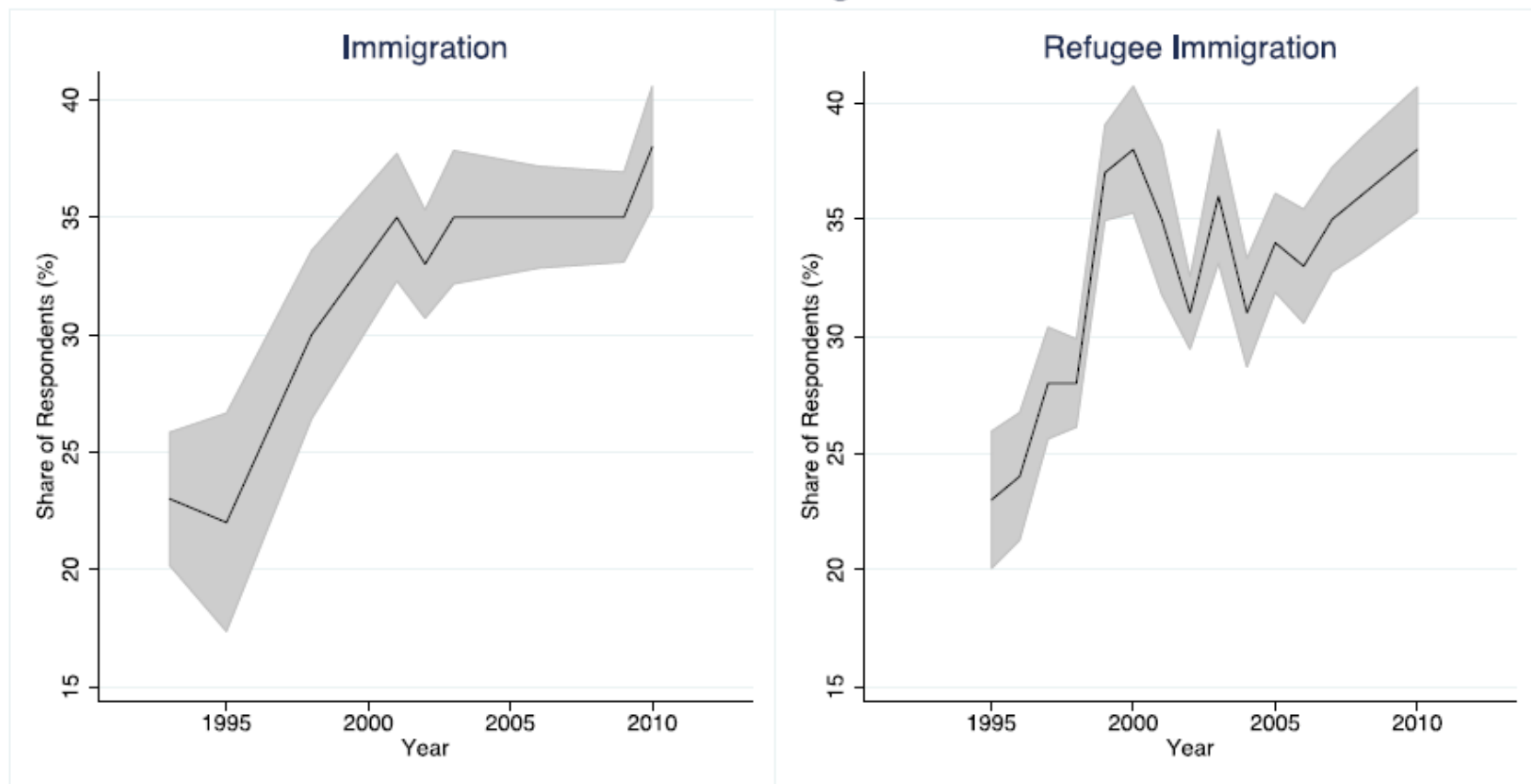
Alternative explanation: Increased political interest & mobilization

Turnout in Municipal Elections over Time



Evidence consistent with declining discrimination: Attitudes

Positive Attitudes to Immigration, 1993–2010

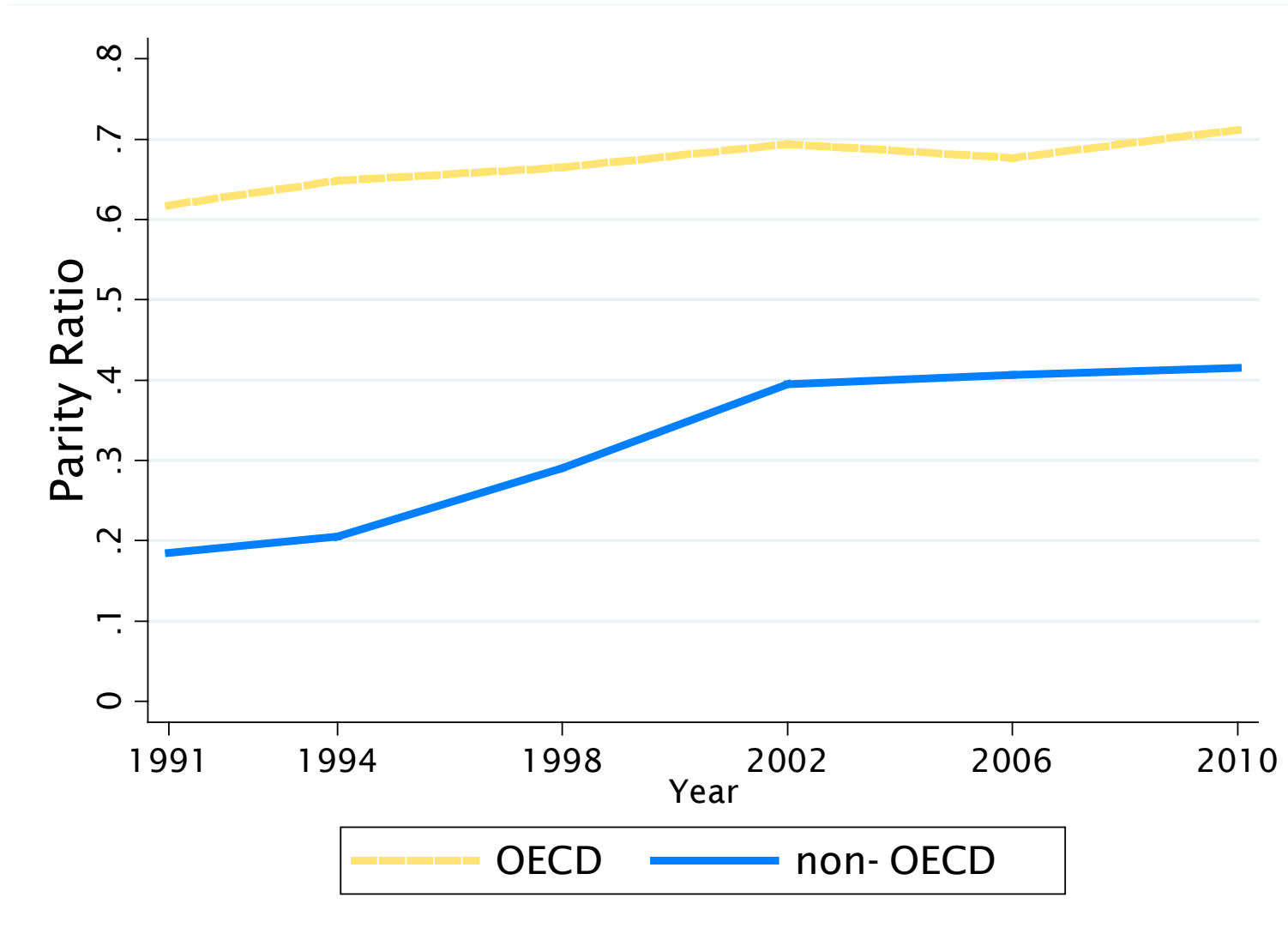


Percentage of respondents agreeing that Sweden should increase or maintain current levels of immigration/refugee immigration

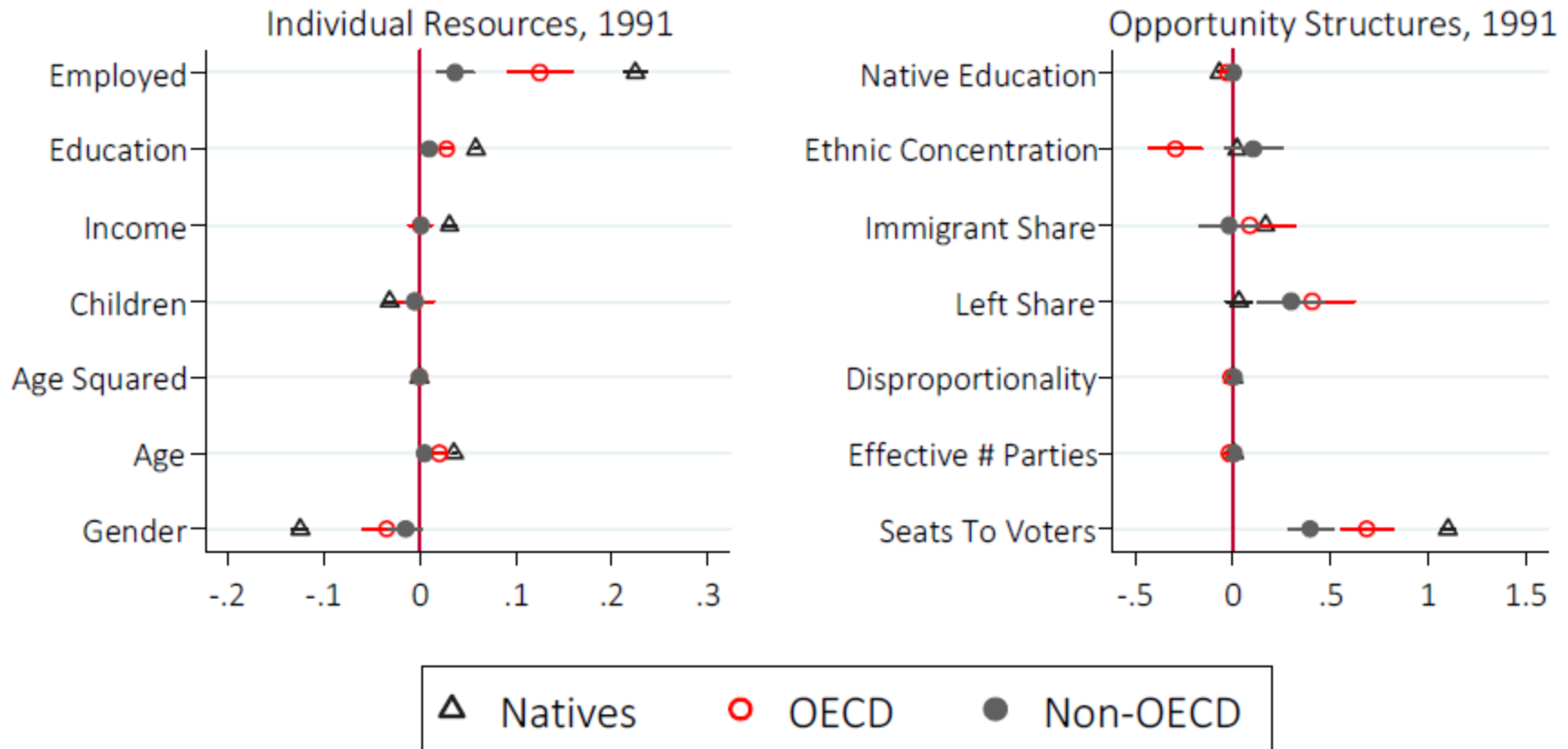
Evidence consistent with declining discrimination: Non-OECD representation on the rise

- If decline in discrimination helps explain reduction of representation gap, we should observe improvements among groups that have been shown to experience discrimination
- Literature: more discrimination as cultural and economic divide grows, esp. when groups sizable
 - Sweden: Discrimination in labor and housing market against immigrants from less developed countries

Parity ratio by group, OECD vs. non-OECD

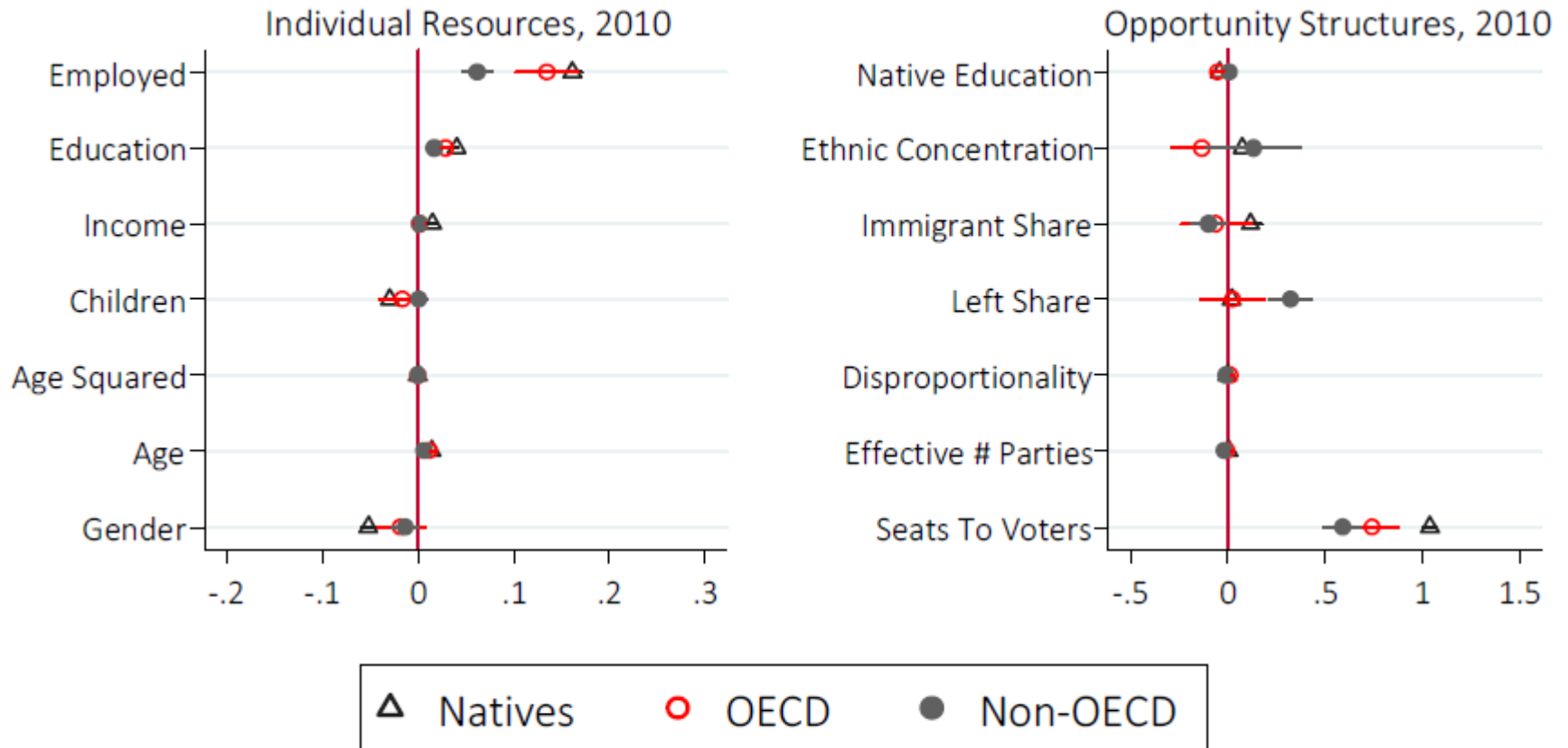


Determinants of election to municipal councils (1991)



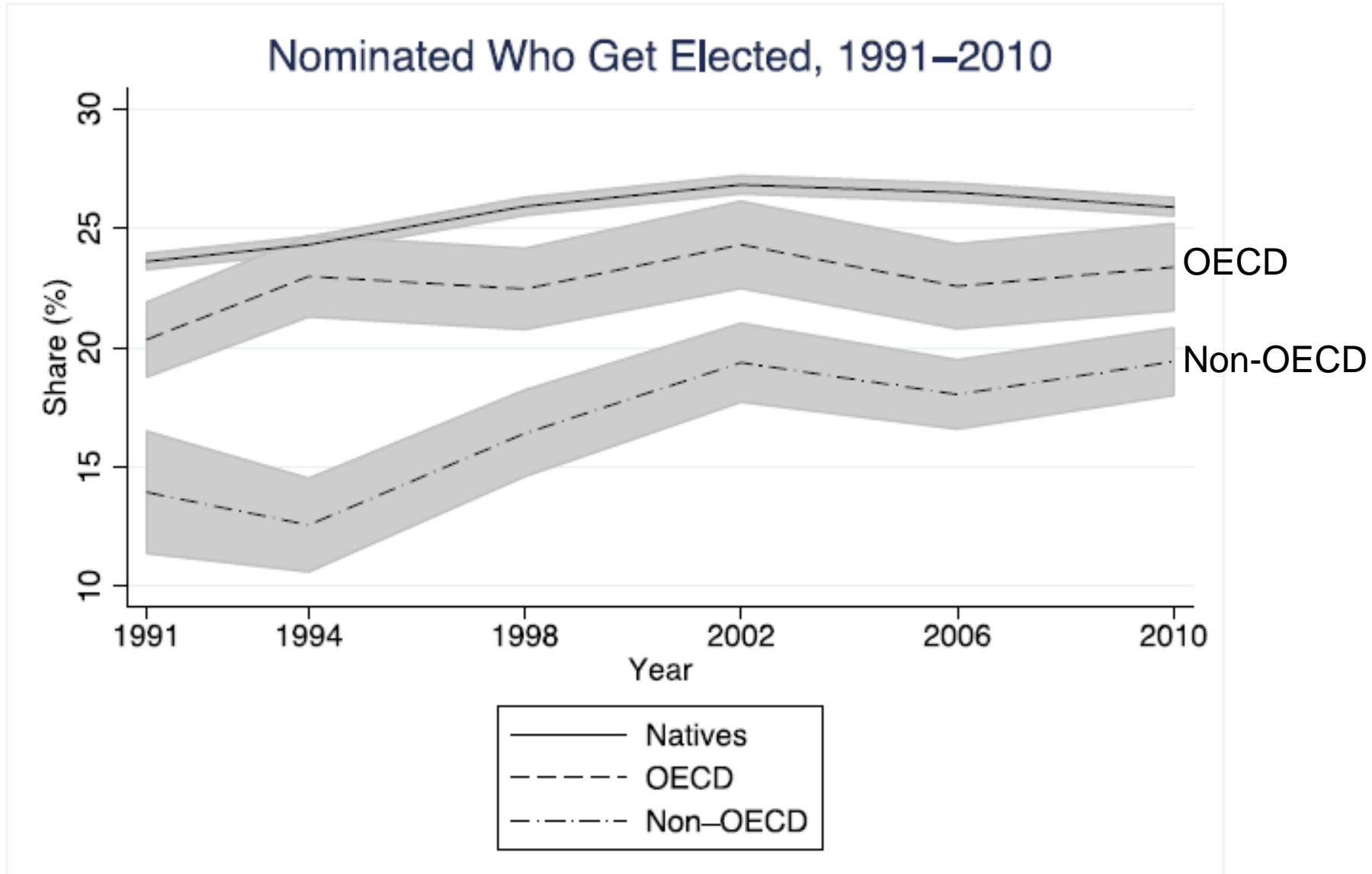
Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.

Determinants of election to municipal councils (2010)



Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.

Less discrimination in terms of list placement



Summary

- Immigrant political underrepresentation serious concern, but literature has not been able to evaluate existing theories properly
- First comprehensive test of the sources of immigrant political underrepresentation over course of two decades
- Contributes to literature on minority representation and to immigrant integration “on-the-ground”



Summary

Differences in returns:

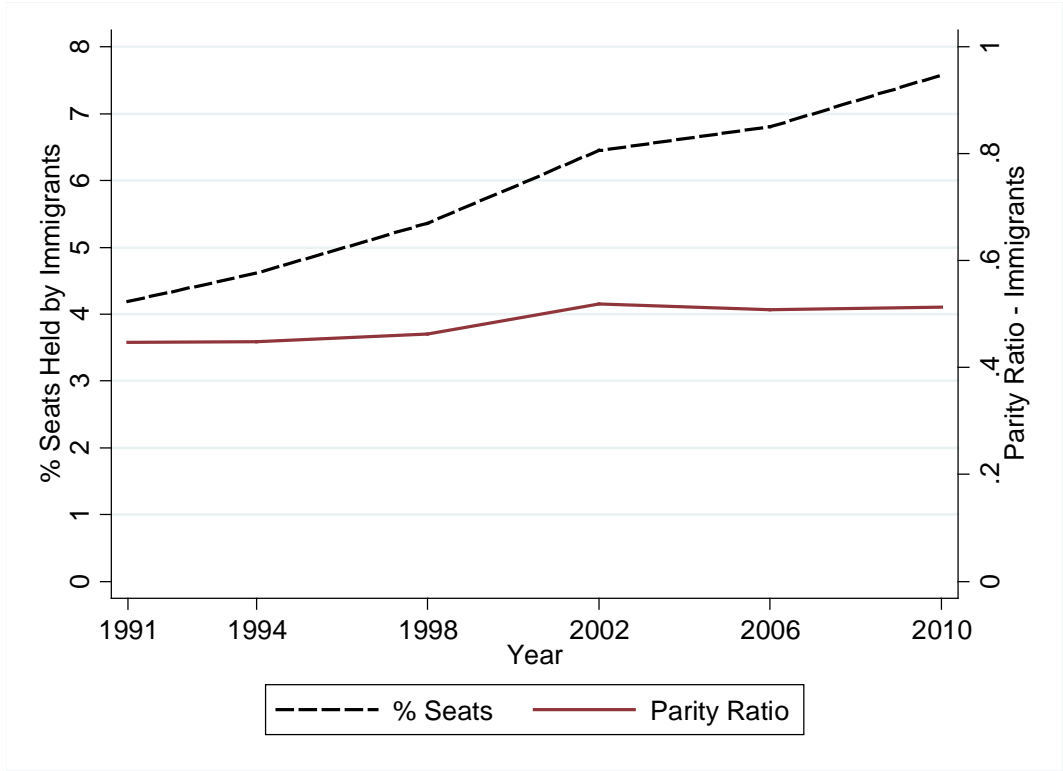
- Lion's share of gap is due to fact that immigrants receive lower returns to individual resources and to permissive electoral institutions; observationally similar natives and immigrants face very different election chances.
- But improvements over time, from 16% to 48%

Differences in characteristics:

- Differences in individual resources play a small role in explaining the immigrant-native representation gap
- Left strength is associated with immigrant winning candidates, but effect is very small
- Seats-to-voters most important structural variable = urban effect = 1 / 3 of representation gap in 2010

Implications

- Improved election chances if immigrants more evenly distributed throughout the country?
- Electoral geography of immigrant representation – political advancement more difficult because of skewed spatial distribution; concentration in more competitive municipalities.
- Role of discrimination in other spheres: discrimination may contribute to settlement patterns

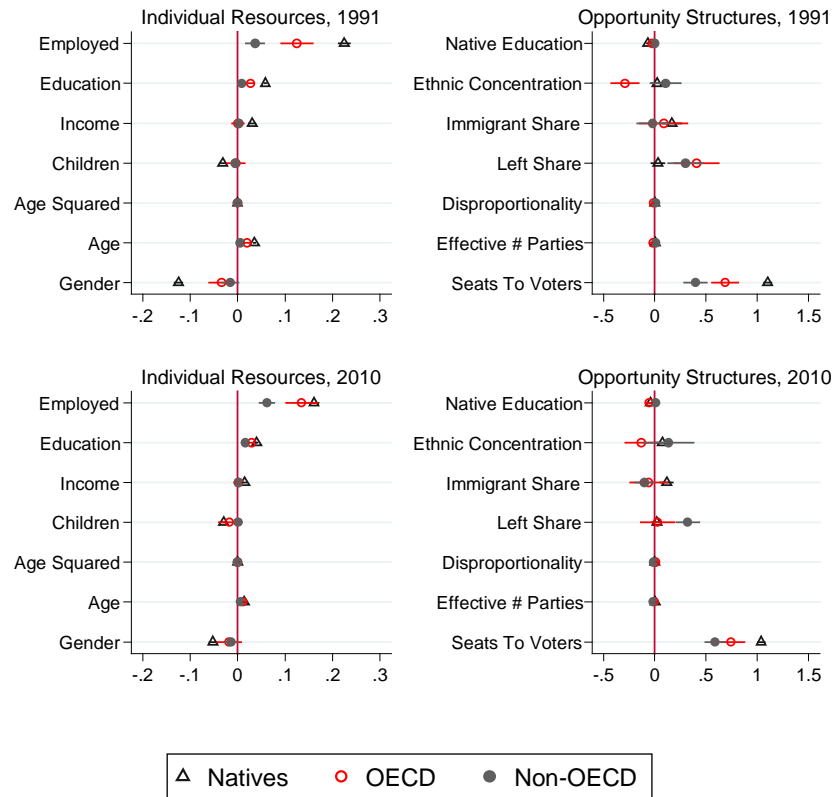


Individual Resources

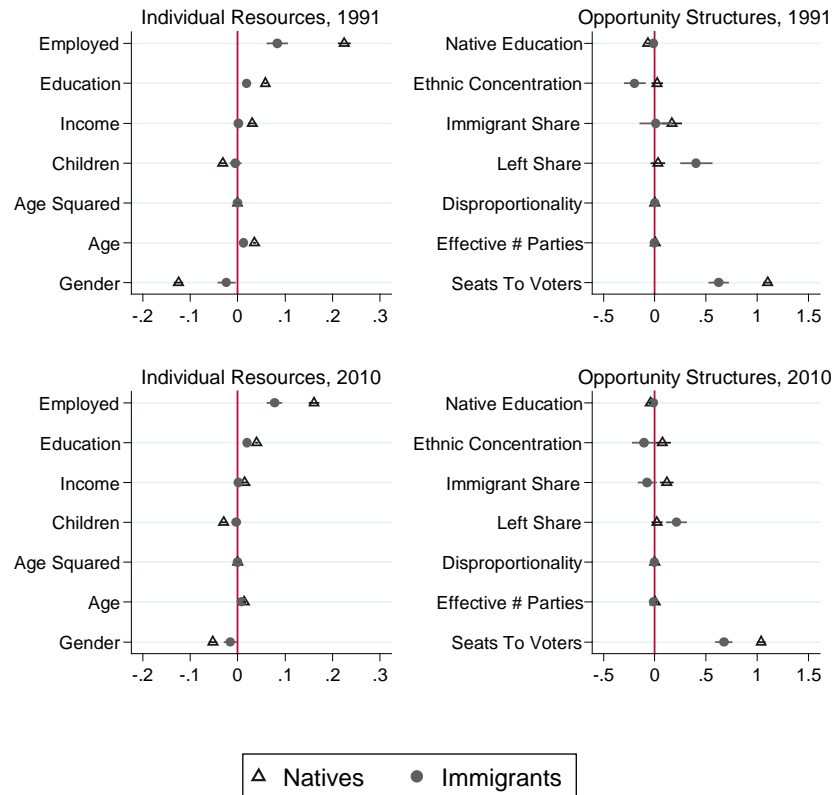
- Employment Status (0/1)
- Years of Education
- Household Income (logged)
- Age/Age-squared
- Gender (1 = female)
- Immigrants only: Time in Sweden, Citizenship

Local Opportunity Structure

- Seats-to-voters
- Effective number of parties
- Disproportionality (Gallagher Index)
- Left Share (%)
- Immigrant Share (%)
- Ethnic Concentration (Herfindahl Index)
- Native Education



Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.



Note: The 'Seats to Voters' coefficient has been divided by 100.

Table 1: Determinants of Election to City Councils in Swedish Municipalities across Groups

	1991		2002		2010	
	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants	Natives	Immigrants
<i>Demographics</i>						
Gender	-.125***	-.023**	-.052***	-.021**	-.052***	-.015*
Age	.036***	.013***	.023***	.010***	.014***	.008***
Age-sq	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***	-.000***
Young children	-.031***	-.005	-.044***	.011*	-.029***	-.003
<i>SES</i>						
Family income	.031***	.002	.017***	.002	.015***	.002
Years of education	.059***	.019***	.048***	.023***	.040***	.020***
Employment status	.225***	.083***	.199***	.093***	.161***	.078***
<i>Immigrant Specific</i>						
Time in country		.005***		.004***		.003***
Citizenship		.048***		.058***		.062***
<i>Opportunity structure</i>						
Effective nr. parties	.007	.007	.004	-.002	.005	-.010
Disproportionality	.002	.001	.002	.003	-.000	-.001
Native education	-.067***	-.009	-.048***	-.013	-.042***	-.012
Immigrant share	.168***	.012	.122**	-.141*	.117***	-.073
Ethnic concentration	.023	-.195***	.050	-.062	.076*	-.104
Left share	.032	.405***	.022	.214***	.021	.212***
Seats to voters	110.238***	62.412***	104.348***	58.367***	103.895***	67.516***
Adj-R ²	.004	.002	.003	.002	.003	.002
Observations	5,634,068	503,999	5,959,168	769,369	6,176,394	995,282

The dependent variable is a dummy indicating whether an individual won election. OLS coefficients with standard errors in

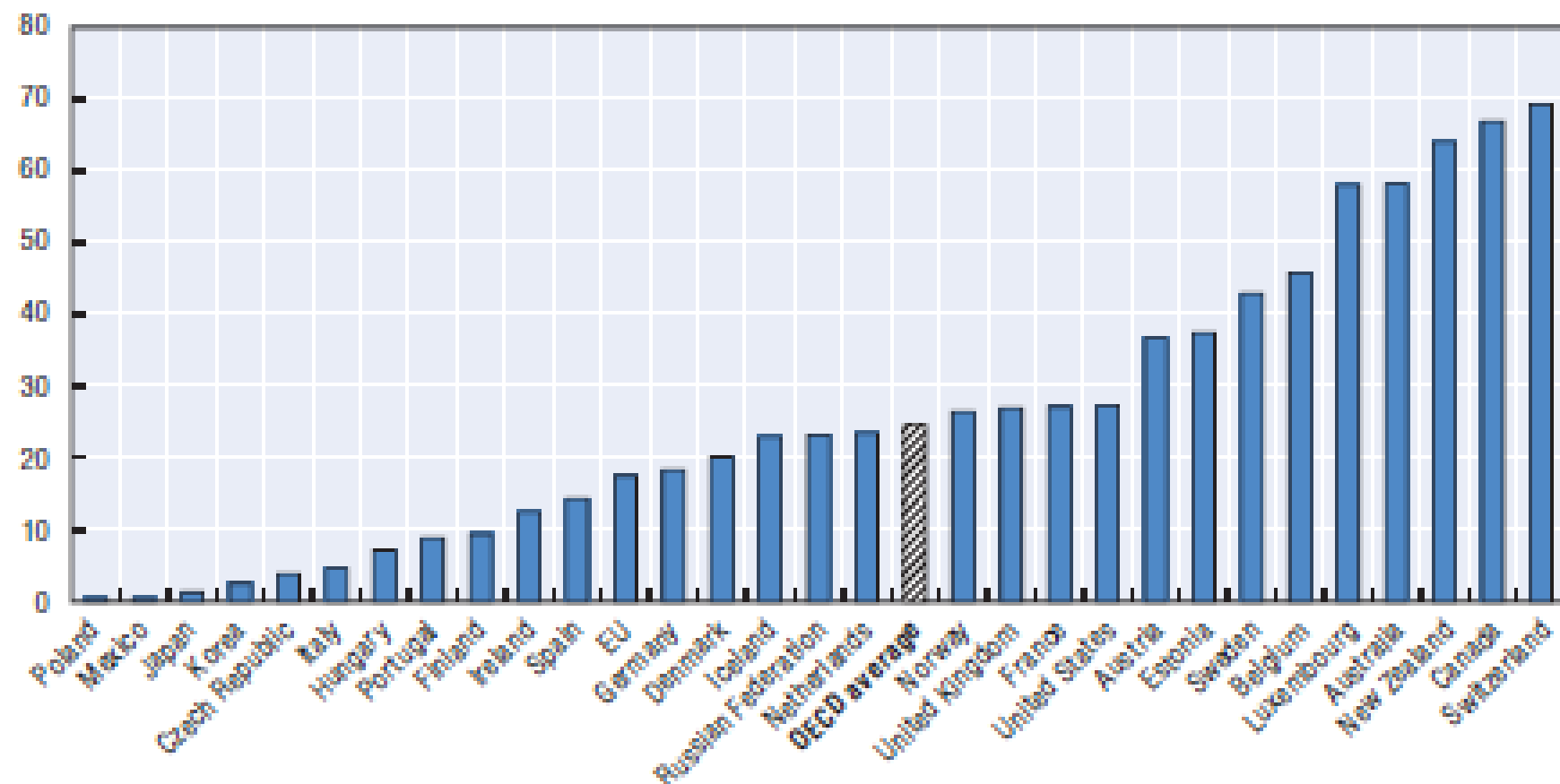
Table A2: Oaxaca-Blinder Decomposition Results for Nomination, 1991-2010

	1991	1994	1998	2002	2006	2010
Difference	.490	.451	.357	.301	.287	.318
P(Natives)	.977	.931	.833	.786	.769	.764
P(Immigrants)	.487	.480	.476	.479	.483	.446
Explained	.106	.114	.128	.159	.191	.177
	(.008)	(.008)	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)	(.005)
Demographics	-.052	-.057	-.044	-.028	-.019	-.021
	(.006)	(.005)	(.004)	(.004)	(.003)	(.003)
SES	.007	.026	.035	.030	.039	.035
	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)	(.002)
Opp. structure	.048	.037	.015	.031	.043	.044
	(.007)	(.006)	(.006)	(.006)	(.005)	(.005)
Seats to voters	.103	.108	.122	.127	.128	.119
	(.005)	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)	(.004)
Unexplained	.384	.337	.229	.149	.096	.141
	(.014)	(.013)	(.011)	(.011)	(.010)	(.009)

The first row reports the percentage point difference in running for a local council seat across groups. The second/third row reports the percentage of natives/immigrants running for a seat. The second block ("Explained") reports the size of the nomination gap that is due to differences in characteristics, and the third block ("Unexplained") reports the size of the nomination gap that is attributable to differences in returns to characteristics. For included covariates, see Table 1. Standard errors are in parentheses.

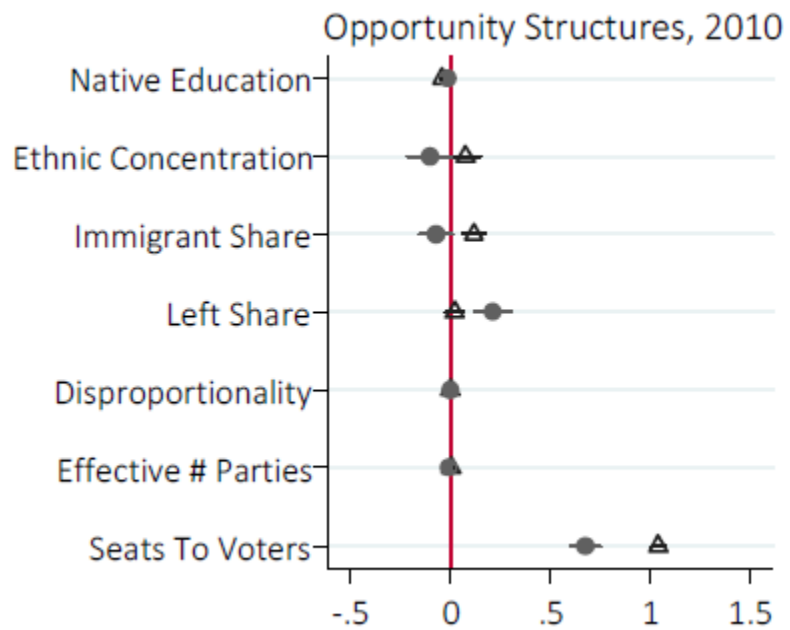
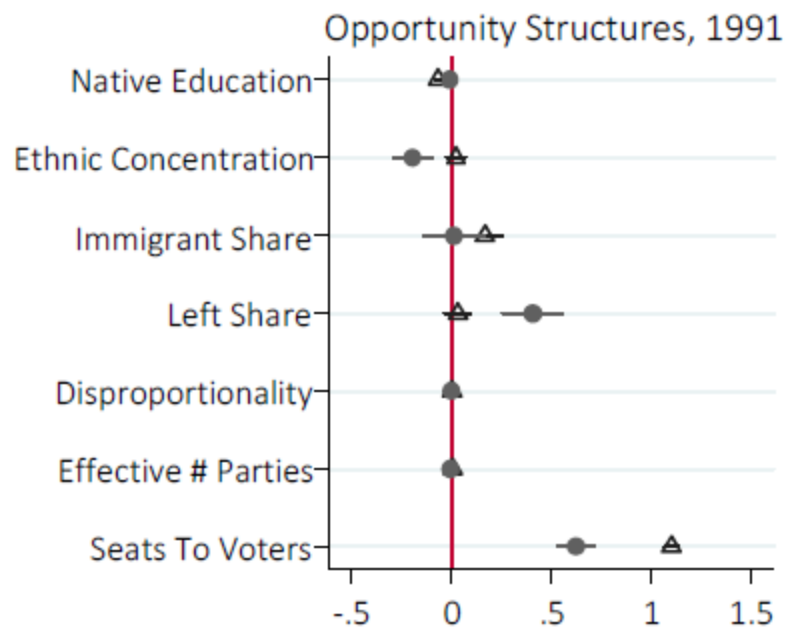


Figure I.14. Number of acquisitions of citizenship between 2000 and 2010, per thousand host-country citizens of 2000



Note: Estimates for Australia and New Zealand.

Source: OECD International Migration Database.

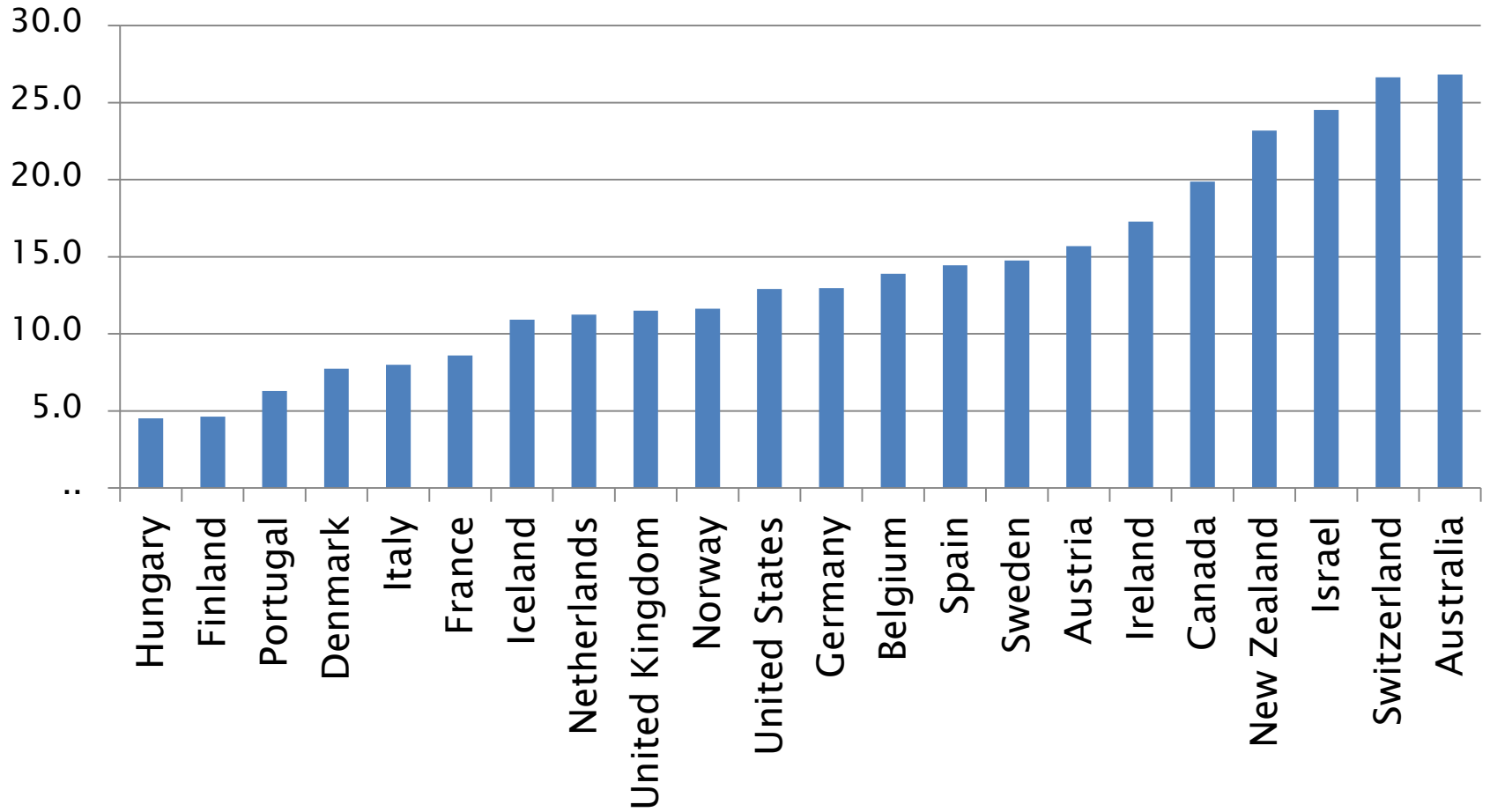


Summary Statistics, 2010 (Aged 18–64)

	Age	Female	Children	Education	Income	Employed	Seats per voter	%OECD-Immig	%non-OECDImmig	Left Share	Eff. No Parties	Time in Sweden	Citizen
Native	41.16	0.49	0.37	12.21	8.08	0.79	0.0018	0.05	0.11	45.10	4.28	41.16	1.00
OECD Immigrant	48.01	0.51	0.32	12.12	7.44	0.68	0.0017	0.06	0.13	44.96	4.23	28.21	0.51
non-OECD immigrant	39.85	0.51	0.54	11.73	7.43	0.59	0.0011	0.06	0.16	44.72	4.30	16.78	0.78
Total	41.28	0.49	0.39	12.15	7.98	0.76	0.0017	0.05	0.12	45.05	4.28	37.89	0.95



% Foreign Born, 2010



Empirical approach

- Decompose observed differences in representation into:

$$Y_{ij} = X_{ij}\beta_j + \varepsilon_{ij}, j = N, I \quad (1)$$

$$\bar{Y}^N - \bar{Y}^I = (\bar{X}^N - \bar{X}^I)\beta^* + [\bar{X}^N(\beta^N - \beta^*) - \bar{X}^I(\beta^I - \beta^*)] \quad (2)$$

Can use results from group-wise regression in (1) to decompose mean outcome differences.

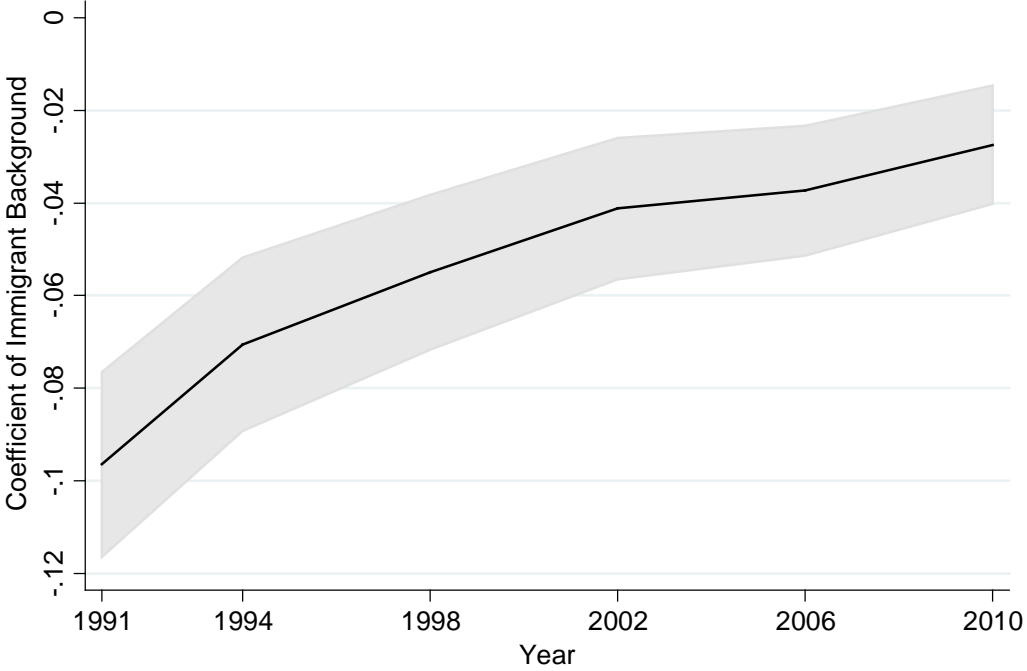
β^* is a non-discriminatory coefficient vector that would be observed in the absence of discrimination.

First part on right is explained part; indicates how much of the gap is due to different characteristics; second part is unexplained part; captures the extent to which the gap depends on different returns to these characteristics in the two groups.

Notes

- 1. There is simply not enough variation to do an OB-decomposition on elected conditional on running if we want to have sufficient precision in the estimates. And in the end I do not think this matters so much since as many as 25 percent of the nominated ends up being elected. And for the years when we have this data (2006 and 2010) as many as 60% of those nominated end up with some kind of position after the elections (municipality boards etc.). But in case we think this is important I guess we could include these results in an appendix.
- 2. OB-decomposition techniques are less well developed for the logit/probit case. The nonlinearity of these models induces additional assumptions and model choices in the decomposition step. But as we say in the paper we have logit results and the pattern for these are very similar to those presented here.

Matching Estimates



% Seats held by group, OECD vs. non-OECD

