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Kayran, E.N.; Erdilmen, M.

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'When do states give voting rights to non-citizens? The role of population, policy, and politics on the timing of enfranchisement reforms in liberal democracies'

Elif Naz Kayran ^a and Merve Erdilmen ^b

^aDepartment of International Relations and Political Science, The Graduate Institute Geneva (IHEID), Geneva, Switzerland; ^bDepartment of Political Science, McGill University, Montreal, Canada

ABSTRACT

Today the inclusion of non-citizens in the electorate is an increasingly common phenomenon. Yet, we know relatively little about under what conditions some states extend such voting rights to non-citizens earlier than others. In this paper, we investigate the timing of local enfranchisement policies for non-citizens in 28 democracies from 1980 to 2010 using event-history analysis. Adding to the conditions studied in earlier work, we examine the extent to which demographic composition, immigration policy regimes, and political partisanship relate to the timing of non-citizen suffrage. We find that higher shares of immigrant residents delay whereas EU membership and economic openness advance the timing of voting rights for non-citizens. At all demographic heterogeneity conditions, less permissive immigration regimes have been able to enfranchise non-citizens earlier. The findings suggest that, over time, having more left-wing parties in the government accelerates the timing of enfranchisement, while right-wing parties contribute to delays. The article brings forward new data and an original explanatory framework emphasising relevance of partisanship and immigration policy at different demographic contexts. Our analysis sheds light on the idiosyncratic state practices in the timing of enfranchisement reforms adding to the debates in migration and citizenship studies and the broader comparative politics field.

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Voting rights; immigration policy regime; immigration; political partisanship; event history analysis

Introduction

When do states give voting rights non-citizen residents? In recent years, there has been growing academic interest in the empirical study of non-citizen voting rights (Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019; Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017). By now it is widely accepted that non-citizen enfranchisement is increasingly common; even though timing of such legislation oscillates widely across countries (Pedroza 2019; Earnest 2015). And yet, there are relatively fewer studies focusing on *when* rather than *how*, governments have chosen to enfranchise non-citizens in the fields of migration and citizenship studies. To

CONTACT Elif Naz Kayran  elif.kayran@graduateinstitute.ch

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remedy this, in this paper, we present an explanatory framework addressing under what conditions and when host countries extended state-wide local voting rights to non-citizens.

Existing literature on non-citizen enfranchisement proposes competing arguments and mixed evidence for several key factors of policymaking on the issue area of immigrant rights, namely the roles of immigrant residents and political partisanship (Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019; Jacobs 1998; Jacobs 1999; Toral 2015). Moreover, there is also surprisingly little systematic evidence on the relationship between immigration policy regimes and political rights for immigrants. These omissions are particularly of note because discerning under what conditions states decide to enfranchise non-citizens requires careful consideration of dynamic factors suited for exploring changes over time. This is different from much of the earlier literature that focuses on slow moving or time-constant conditions such as electoral and political institutions and historical legacies (Earnest 2015; Koopmans and Michalowski 2017). Furthermore, to date, there has been no comparative large-N study which precisely investigated non-discriminatory national reforms that institute local enfranchisement state-wide which are arguably distinct in their rationale compared to enfranchisement efforts relevant only in specific sub-national units.

Our theoretical framework is threefold. First, we contend that the demographic composition of destination countries constitutes a key factor in explaining the timing of enfranchisement. We hypothesise two competing ways in which having a more ethnically heterogeneous population can either advance voting rights through a power resource logic (Seidle 2015) or obstruct through a power dilution mechanism (Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019). Second, we theorise and empirically assess ways in which permissive immigration policy regimes and political partisanship may advance or delay non-citizen enfranchisement. Third, we argue that the ways in which partisanship and immigration policy regimes shape the timing of enfranchisement reforms should be studied under different conditions of demographic heterogeneity. We suggest that the relevance of these two factors may be mitigated by the salience of non-citizen voting rights reforms with respect to the size of existing immigrant population. Empirically, we collect an original quantitative dataset on resident non-citizen voting rights at the local level from 1980 to 2010 in 28 OECD member established democracies.

This study adds to the ongoing debates in the study of non-citizen voting rights on both theoretical and empirical grounds. Applying event history analysis, we find robust evidence revealing that a higher share of foreign-born residents delays, whereas lower heterogeneity accelerates enfranchisement reforms. Next, while more restrictive immigration policy conditions expedite non-citizen enfranchisement, differences across such regimes are not statistically significant. However, our analysis reveals that there may indeed be a trade-off between the number of immigrants and earlier expansion of voting rights. We find that conditions of high demographic heterogeneity and the most liberal immigration policy regimes have so far been the least likely to enfranchise non-citizens. Compared to established democracies with more permissive immigration policies, more restrictive contexts with low demographic heterogeneity have been able to enfranchise non-citizens earlier. In addition, we find significant partisanship effects cumulating over time, revealing a robust difference between contexts on the basis of whether right-wing or left-wing parties have been stronger in government. As expected, the strength of left-wing parties

in government is positively related to earlier enfranchisement, while the opposite holds true for the right-wing.

In the next section, we examine existing work on non-citizen enfranchisement. Then, we outline our theoretical framework and introduce our data on how local non-citizen enfranchisement looks in practice. After our empirical strategy, we present and discuss our findings. The article concludes with the implications of our study and directions for future research on the topic.

Non-citizen enfranchisement in the literature

In recent years a growing number of large-N studies has focused on non-citizen enfranchisement. On the one hand, scholars have investigated variation of non-citizen voting rights in the context of other immigrant integration and citizenship regimes (Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012; Howard 2010; Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017). On the other hand, previous work documents current non-citizen suffrage practices as part of broader legislation of enfranchisement policies including both resident and non-resident citizen voting rights (Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019). In this paper, we concentrate only on non-citizen voting-rights rather than broader citizenship regimes or enfranchisement legislations. Importantly, we focus on the conditions under which such legislations have passed instead of the cross-sectional variation between different practices of enfranchisement. Based on this, we take stock of empirical work on the study of non-citizen voting rights and identify two existing approaches. While the first set of studies are concerned with extra-territorial factors, the second emphasise territorial determinants of non-citizen voting rights.

From the perspective of extra-territorial approaches, scholars argued that increasing globalisation, emphasis in human rights, and trans-national connectedness would be positively linked to more civic rights for non-citizens as part of a decreasing trend in the relevance of traditional citizenship categories (Soysal 1994; Joppke 2007; Sassen 1996). While there is some evidence of a positive relationship between human rights commitments and non-citizen enfranchisement (Earnest 2014), much of these extra-territorial arguments have not stood up to empirical scrutiny (Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012; Goodman 2010; Freeman 2006). However, there is indeed some evidence for the impact of supranational political commitments and historical legacies in granting earlier discriminatory voting rights for certain non-citizens (Pedroza 2019; Koopmans and Michalowski 2017). An emblematic example for this is the European Union (EU). Within the scope of Maastricht Treaty in 1996, EU member states reciprocally extended municipal and EU level voting rights that only cover EU nationals (Jacobs 1999).¹ Therefore, while embeddedness in transnational dynamics may explain whether states would be willing to extend such rights to *some* non-citizens, they are less helpful in explaining the state practices and the timing of non-citizen voting rights available to third-country nationals. We use the term ‘third-country nationals’ here to distinguish non-citizens in European countries that are not EU nationals, as well as all non-citizen residents who are not beneficiaries of favourable treatment in host societies based on their country of origin.

Turning to territorial frameworks, while evidence is mixed on whether courts function as advancing or obstructing voting rights reforms (Pedroza 2019; Arrighi and Bauböck 2017; Groenendijk 2008; Triandafyllidou 2015), proportional representation systems,

robust application of the principle of separation of powers, federalism, and direct democracy are positively correlated with earlier enfranchisement for non-citizens (Earnest 2015, 2014). However, so far, existing literature have emphasised stable and time-constant electoral and political institutions in explaining the timing of enfranchisement. Since we are interested in the differences that may obstruct or advance the timing of non-citizens voting rights in a dynamic perspective, these factors are less informative. Indeed, using case studies, several scholars have already argued and showed that the framing of the voting rights as a policy issue evolve over time and is shaped by the demographic and political context in which expansion of non-citizen enfranchisement becomes possible (Pedroza 2019; Jacobs 1998; Jacobs 1999).

How then can we make sense of the differences in the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement? We argue that three domestic conditions received relatively scant attention. Theoretically, we first concentrate on under what demographic conditions states decide to grant voting rights to non-citizens earlier. We then move to discuss the role of immigration policy regimes and consider the role of political partisanship on non-citizen enfranchisement. Next, while the effect of partisanship on non-citizen enfranchisement has been widely studied, the findings from earlier studies remain mixed which calls for further research attention (Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019; Toral 2015; Goenaga 2019). Distinct from existing work, we argue and empirically test whether partisanship and policy regime effects are mitigated by the actual share of the foreign-born population in the country. Our approach is closest to scholarly work that investigates national and international factors influencing voting rights reforms that specifically focus on the context of non-citizen enfranchisement with a temporal perspective and in a large-N comparative design (Earnest 2014, 2015; Toral 2015).

Theoretical framework and hypotheses

The role of foreign-born residents: Power in numbers or obstacle for enfranchisement?

In the context of non-citizen enfranchisement, the extant literature suggests two competing ways in which demographic composition may play a role in its timing. Evidence from single case studies, such as from the Netherlands and Belgium, provide support for the argument that higher shares of foreign-born residents may intensify pressures for promoting political rights for non-citizens (Seidle 2015; Jacobs 1999). On the contrary, large-N comparative studies find that higher ethnic heterogeneity delays electoral reforms enfranchising non-citizens (Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019; Toral 2015). Nevertheless, state receptivity to non-citizen rights can be understood as a function of organised societal interests such as unions, business organisations, civil liberty groups, and ethnic community organisations (Pedroza 2019, 166). Thus, if foreign-born residents make up a large share of the host population, civil society organisations and immigrant groups promoting political rights for non-citizens may have stronger influence on political actors given higher stakes and more support they can mobilise (Jacobs 1999). For instance, such dynamics have played a great deal of role in advancement of enfranchisement reforms in the Netherlands and Sweden (Seidle 2015; Goenaga 2019; Jacobs 1998).

Likewise, enfranchisement can be thought as a measure of appealing to this disenfranchised population through an interest in preserving and promoting social cohesion, particularly if immigrants make up a considerable part of the population (Toral 2015). In contexts with higher shares of disenfranchised residents, the democratic legitimacy of electoral institutions can be put to question. Moreover, the vote-seeking incentives of political parties competing to expand their electoral base may play a role in earlier enfranchisement efforts if foreign-born residents are a non-negligible share of the electorate. Indeed, a higher share of voters with an immigrant background positively correlates with more expansive citizenship rights (Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012). Therefore, it is plausible that higher shares of foreign-born residents relate also to earlier enfranchisement of non-citizens.

Hypothesis 1a: Countries with higher share of immigrant populations are expected to enfranchise non-citizen residents earlier.

However, such arguments are difficult to reconcile with observation that countries such as France, Germany, and Austria with larger shares of foreign-born residents have struggled to pass legislation earlier. In contrast, Northern European cases hosting much lower number of foreign-born residents at the timing of electoral reforms have been able to do so early on. In fact, in their recent work on Switzerland, Stutzer and Slotwinski (2019) report evidence for a power-dilution mechanism. The power-dilution mechanism suggests that the potential of sharing electoral power with immigrants increases unwillingness of natives to accept non-citizen enfranchisement and delays adopting of such rights. Put differently, higher demographic heterogeneity may obstruct rather than advance non-citizen voting rights legislation considering such responses from the native electorate. Subsequently, political parties may push back on these reforms to avoid triggering grievances amongst their own native electorate. Relatedly, from an electoral gain logic, heterogeneity of non-citizen residents in terms of education, income, and origin countries, and their divergence on ideological or socio-economic lines may further function as a countervailing pressure on their electoral relevance as a group. Moreover, research has already shown that even when enfranchised, those with immigration background are less likely to vote (Ruedin 2018). From the perspective of political parties, then, these lower turnout rates potentially reduce any potential vote gains to be achieved from these reforms. Therefore, contrary to the facilitation logic above, we formulate a competing hypothesis for the effect of demographic heterogeneity expecting that more heterogeneity would delay the timing of enfranchisement.

Hypothesis 1b: Countries with higher share of immigrant populations are expected to enfranchise non-citizen residents later.

Convergent or divergent logics between immigration policy regimes and voting rights?

Moving to policies mitigating future immigration, we theorise competing ways in which such governing rules may relate to the timing of non-citizen voting rights, i.e. through either convergent or divergent logics. To be sure, what we mean by a convergent logic implies a positive relationship between more permissive (or restrictive) immigration

regimes and earlier (or later) enfranchisement. Likewise, if there is a divergent logic between immigration policy regimes and the timing of voting rights, we would expect to see earlier enfranchisement legislation in contexts with less permissive rights and *vice versa*.

While there are relatively fewer studies concentrating on the relationship between immigration policy regimes and non-citizens enfranchisement, earlier work has already investigated political rights in the context of citizenship regimes (Earnest 2015; Toral 2015; Huddleston and Vink 2015). For instance, Huddleston and Vink reveal that immigrants have access to a wider variety of socio-cultural and political rights in host countries that also have more inclusive naturalisation policies (2015). In this vein, if we consider the institutional context of national immigration policymaking as a path-dependent and self-reinforcing mechanism of policy production (Mahoney 2000), then existing liberal norms and permissive governance rules may beget earlier enfranchisement of non-citizens. From a perspective of convergence, inclusive institutional contexts trigger similar institutional patterns of solidarity logics across social and immigration policy domains (Boräng 2015). In the same way, restrictive rules in admission regimes also have path-dependent effects in the rights domain (Martin-Perez and Moreno-Fuentos 2012). For instance, Japan, Italy, and Spain are typical examples where closure in both admission and rights operate as convergent outcomes and persistent restrictive logics. Therefore, we contend that more liberal immigration regimes are positively related to advancing enfranchisement of non-citizens.

Hypothesis 2a: The more liberal a country's immigration policy regime is, the sooner non-citizens are enfranchised.

From a different angle, Ruhs argues that there is a logic of trade-offs between generosity in immigration policies for middle and low skilled economic migrants and access to social rights (2013, 85; Ruhs and Martin 2008). In his analysis, Ruhs does not seem to find a systematic relationship between labour immigration policies and differences in political rights policies. And yet, considering the trade-offs argument (2013, 209 & 211), it is plausible to think of a divergent relationship between earlier non-citizen enfranchisement and permissive immigration policy regimes (not just for labour immigration policy). There is evidence suggesting that enfranchising non-citizens have redistributive and social spending consequences at the local level contributing to a potential trade-off logic (Vernby 2013). However, the trade-offs between admission and political rights regimes need not be only economic. As illustrative cases from liberal democracies show, the US and UK with relatively open admission policies fall quite behind in terms of rights they extend to non-citizens. When contrasted with the case of Ireland, who limits admission but has given inclusive political rights early on, liberal governance rules may be thought as contributing factors to delaying political rights. Particularly given the smaller scale of local politics, non-citizen suffrage may be managed with caution if permissive immigration regimes lead to more admission and longer stays in the country. This may incur political costs for incumbent governments, due to potential native discontent, who are revealed to be sensitive to such threats (Jacobs 1999). Therefore, in contrast to a convergent logic, we hypothesise a divergent logic between non-citizen enfranchisement and permissive immigration policy regimes.

Hypothesis 2b: The more liberal a country's immigration policy regime is, the later non-citizens are enfranchised.

Finally, whether immigration policy regimes will have important path-dependent or trade-off effects may be conditioned by the salience of non-citizen enfranchisement in the first place. Immigration policy regimes are governing rules related to determining future immigration. Therefore, the way in which such policy can influence the timing of enfranchisement may be mitigated by the actual demographic heterogeneity in the country. In other words, the extent to which either logic influences the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement may depend on the consequentiality of such rights. Thus, be it the path-dependent logic of convergence or the trade-off logic between numbers and rights, the demographic conditions can influence them. Therefore, we expect that under different demographic contexts, the effect of immigration policy regime may be distinct in altering the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement.

Hypothesis 2c: The effect of immigration policy regime on the timing of enfranchisement of non-citizen residents is conditional on the demographic context.

Political partisanship and non-citizen enfranchisement

While it is clear that non-citizen voting rights are promoted by left-wing parties and are challenged by right-wing parties (Pedroza 2019; Jacobs 1998; Triandafyllidou 2015), comparative evidence regarding the role of left-wing parties in advancing non-citizen voting rights seems to be varied (Koopmans, Michalowski, and Waibel 2012; Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019; Toral 2015). Still, it is well-documented that left-wing parties adopt more inclusive positions on immigration policies and immigrant rights. They approach legislative debates on non-citizen enfranchisement through positive frames of integration, inclusiveness, fairness, and equality (Goenaga 2019). In addition, from an electoral gain perspective, enfranchising non-citizens can indeed boost the electoral potential of the left-wing parties since voters with an immigration background tend to vote left-wing (Bergh and Bjorklund 2011). This can further motivate left-wing parties in government to push for these reforms earlier. Therefore, we expect that if there is stronger left-wing influence in the government, states are more likely to extend suffrage to non-citizens earlier.

Hypothesis 3a: Non-citizen residents are enfranchised earlier in countries where left-wing parties have a stronger influence in government.

Moving to the other end of the political spectrum, evidence from various European cases reveal that in the context of non-citizen enfranchisement right-wing parties obstruct rather than facilitate the debates over these reforms (Goenaga 2019; Jacobs 1999; Jacobs 1998; Howard 2010). Instead of engaging positively to gain foreign-born voters, right-wing political parties often take a tougher stance on immigrant policies signalling nativism targeted to improving their electoral potential within native voters (Downes and Loveless 2018). Indeed, it is plausible to think that the constituency of the right-wing parties are more likely to have a stronger negative reaction to electoral reforms enfranchising non-citizens (Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019). Thus, we can expect that non-citizen enfranchisement will be delayed when right-wing parties are stronger in government.

Hypothesis 3b: Non-citizen residents are enfranchised later in countries where right-wing parties have a stronger influence in government.

Notwithstanding these expected relationships, it is unrealistic to assume that partisanship will play out homogeneously across all national contexts. The extent to which left-wing parties may actively promote these reforms could depend on the relevance of these potential electoral returns and the positive attitudes they can garner from their own electorate. Furthermore, taking a tough political stance towards immigrants and immigration is not an exclusive strategy of the right-wing parties within the scope of party competition but can also be used by the left-wing under certain conditions (Alonso and da Fonseca 2011). This may inevitably be linked to the number of persons affected by enfranchisement efforts. In a similar vein, vote gains from non-citizens may not necessarily just be relevant for the left-wing but also for right-wing parties since there is significant variation of electoral choices amongst foreign-born voters on ideological and socio-demographic grounds (Cho 1999). This can dampen the delaying effect of right-wing partisanship when there is higher demographic heterogeneity. Conversely, the delaying effect of right-wing partisanship may be stronger, if the size of foreign-born population is large enough for the topic to be salient and relevant for these parties to push against. Either way, we expect that the demographic conditions may mitigate the link between political partisanship and the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement.

Hypothesis 3c: The effect of government's political partisanship on the timing of enfranchisement of non-citizen residents is conditional on the demographic context.

Data and Methodology

Non-citizen enfranchisement in practice

In this paper, we are interested in the timing of state-wide non-discriminatory enfranchisement of non-citizens at local legislative elections and measure voting rights as a binary, i.e. all (1) or nothing (0), concept distinct from the extant literature (Toral 2015; Earnest 2015; Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017). This conceptualisation of enfranchisement allows us to maximise internal validity and emphasise our focus on timing (*when*) over cross-sectional variation (*how* or *if*). For each positive case, we take the initial year of adoption of the enfranchisement law as the timing of suffrage.² Empirically, we distinguish our conceptualisation of non-citizen enfranchisement in terms of *depth*, *level*, and *scope* with regards to earlier work on the subject.

Regarding *depth*, we only focus on the right to vote (passive suffrage), which is the dominant form of enfranchisement practice for non-citizens, rather than the right to stand for election. In terms of *level*, we concentrate on voting rights at local elections that are legislated at the national level and applicable countrywide. We choose to focus on voting rights in local, i.e. municipal legislative elections, because, when and if states enfranchise non-citizens, they limit these rights to sub-national level, with few exceptions such as New Zealand and Chile amongst OECD members and such as Malawi, Uruguay, and Ecuador amongst non-OECD countries (Pedroza 2019, 56). While out of the theoretical scope of this paper, in fact, there are several countries in South America that have inclusive political rights for non-citizens at both local and national levels which are

explored in the literature (Escobar 2015). Next, we distinguish our coding as referring only to national legislation because assuming homogenous explanatory frameworks between nationally or locally legislated enfranchisement reforms can misattribute local conditions as national level explanations and *vice versa*. Since we are interested in state-wide enfranchisement, we code Switzerland, Germany, USA, and Canada who have (or had) legislations at the municipal level only in certain federal units as 0 in our analysis.

For *scope*, we study state-wide enfranchisement of third-country nationals encompassing all long-term immigrants that fulfil the residence requirements (Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017). Long-term resident non-citizens refer to all individuals understood as settled in the country of destination (Earnest 2015). We consider a country’s legislation as a positive case of enfranchisement only if the scope of reforms covers all third-country national residents everywhere in the country. We relax this rule only for three cases: in Spain, Portugal, and United Kingdom where electoral reforms have made it possible for some non-citizens other than EU member state citizens, i.e. third-country nationals, to also vote in local legislative elections. However, we check the sensitivity of our results to these borderline cases by alternating our coding. As the basis of our coding, we use a reliable and widely used database of national constitutions and local legislative electoral rules from Conditions of Electoral Rights (CER) data compiled by the EUI-GLOBALCIT (Arrighi et al. 2019). We ensure that our coding of these regulations is externally valid by comparing our data to earlier empirical studies such as the ELECLAW/VOTLAW indicators developed as part of the GLOBALCIT program (Schmid, Piccoli, and Arrighi 2019) and other notable work on the topic (Pedroza 2019; Earnest 2015). Further details on coding, data, and measurement validity are in the appendix pp. 11–18.

While local non-citizen enfranchisement exists widely, our theoretical scope is limited to established advanced liberal democracies. Based on this, we have economic and institutional rules for inclusion or exclusion of cases to our sample in line with existing research on the topic (Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017; Toral 2015; Earnest 2014). First, we study developed economies to ensure comparability across our cases in terms of immigration, macro-economic dynamics, and engagement with globalisation. In this regard, we limit our sample to OECD member countries. Second, we only include uninterrupted highly established democratic countries with stable and liberal electoral and political institutions ensuring comparability across the relevance of non-citizen voting rights. In this respect, we include EU member states such as Estonia, Czech Republic, and Hungary only from the period of their democratisation, i.e. first independent national legislative elections and exclude cases that do not fit these criteria within our observation period. Further details on our case selection is available in the appendix pp. 12–14. Overall, our analysis includes 28 industrialised mostly Western established democracies.³ Table 1 presents the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement for third-country nationals across our sample.

Table 1. Local non-citizen voting rights for third country nationals in advanced democracies.	
Pre- 1980	New Zealand (1875), United Kingdom (1972), Ireland (1963), Sweden (1975)
1980–1989	Denmark (1981), Norway (1983), Netherlands (1985)
1990–1999	Hungary (1990), Finland (1991), Estonia (1993), Spain (1995), Portugal (1996), Iceland (1998)
2000–2010	Czech Republic (2001), Slovakia (2002), Luxembourg (2003), Belgium (2004), Greece (2010)

Our temporal scope covers 31 years from 1980 to 2010. Theoretically, non-citizen suffrage has become an important phenomenon after democratisation and globalisation waves and increasing volumes of immigrant flows. From the 1980s onwards, it has become common wisdom that resident non-citizens are now permanent members of host societies different from earlier waves of immigration (Ruhs and Martin 2008). More pragmatically, our temporal scope is limited due to the data availability on our key explanatory variables of interest. In terms of the implications of this scope, only four of our cases are left-censored meaning that they have extended political rights to non-citizens pre-1980. We continue to observe these cases, United Kingdom, Ireland, New Zealand, and Sweden and do not see any reversals within or beyond the scope of our temporal framework. Likewise, none of our country cases have passed legislation outside of our temporal scope, after 2010, with exception of Greece which reversed its 2010 enfranchisement reform in 2013 (Triandafyllidou 2015). Thus, concerns about bias due to censoring are alleviated. Moreover, we also adopt an estimation strategy that considers such issues due to the censoring in data which we detail below.

As presented in Table 1, between 1980 and 2010 there is a steady increase in enfranchisement efforts from 1980 to 1985 and 1990–2005, see also the base hazard function of non-citizen enfranchisement in Figure A6. Non-citizen suffrage particularly takes off from 2000 until 2005, due in part to the expansion of these rights in the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries.⁴ Between 1985 and 1995 and after 2005, we observe a relative stagnation in passing of these legislations. Before moving on, it is also worth mentioning the conditions of entitlement to these rights, since there is some variation – particularly based on residence requirements. And yet, in most cases legislations require long-term (about 3–5 years) and/or permanent residency status for all non-citizens to be eligible to vote, see Table A7. Notable exceptions are New Zealand (1-year), Finland (2-years), and Ireland (immediate after 1985) which have more facilitated access to the right to vote.

Measurement of independent variables

We measure demographic composition using longitudinal comparative data from the World Bank (2019) as the *share of foreign-born residents* in the host country. This international immigrant stock variable is calculated as the share percentage of foreign-born residents within the total population in each country. To the best of our knowledge, this foreign-born stock indicator is the widest coverage comparative data on demographic heterogeneity. Nevertheless, it should be underlined that this measure does not only represent the non-citizen immigrant population. Therefore, we also collect data on the inflows of immigrants each year into countries as a more precise measure of non-citizens (OECD 2019) and replicate our findings, see Table A27. We find that the immigrant flows strongly correlate with the stock variable ($r=0.7442$) in the period we study here (1980–2010), see also Figure A14.

Next, *political partisanship* for both right-wing and left-wing parties are measured using government seat share of right-wing (or left-wing) parties weighted by the days in government seats using data from the Comparative Political Data Set (CPDS) (Armingeon et al. 2017). We alternate this measure with the seat share in the cabinet and the seat share in the parliament for each party family ensuring that our results are not dependent on our

operationalisation, see Table A20. We measure the *immigration policy regime* using the IMPIC dataset in three alternative ways (Helbling et al. 2017). First, we aggregate three IMPIC indicators, i.e. family, labour, and asylum seeker and refugee policies. Each policy indicator is further composed of two dimensions. The first is the external policy rules focusing admission and selection (such as application fees, financial requirements) and eligibility (such as age limits, quotas). The second is internal regulations of immediate rights associated with permits (such as permit flexibility) and security of status (such as permit validity). It should be underlined that IMPIC's internal regulation indicators reflect neither on the generosity of socio-economic rights nor citizenship and integration policies. Since we are interested in immigration policy regime, we combine both external and internal dimensions of labour, family, and asylum policies. However, we isolate the external, i.e. pre-arrival admission and selection rules and internal, i.e. security of status, dimensions and evaluate their effects separately. In the appendix, pp. 20–25, we provide more detailed accounts of why we choose this strategy and potential alternatives. For a more intuitive interpretation of the coefficients, we rescale the immigration policy regime indicators based on empirically observed data varying from 0 to 1, higher values indicating more restrictive policies and present as such in Table 2.

Measurement of alternative explanations

We control for a series of alternative explanations related to the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement. First, we add relevant indicators of domestic factors in our models in line with existing work (Earnest 2015). Related to electoral and political institutions, we control for *proportionality* and *judiciary power*. Using data from CPDS, we include a measure of proportional representation in electoral institutions with three levels (0–2), where 0 indicates single-member, simple plurality, 1 indicates modified/mixed proportionality, and 2 indicates proportional representation.⁵ Next, we measure the judicial review power of high courts capturing the strength of the rule of law and checks and balances using a binary variable. Positive cases indicate that there is an independent body deciding whether laws conform to the constitution.

To account for extra-territorial and transnational pressures, we control for whether the country has a *colonial legacy* and add a binary control variable on *EU membership*. To capture embeddedness of the country in international organisations, i.e. *political globalisation*, we use data from the KOF Globalisation Index (Dreher 2006). The index provides indicators of globalisation covering economic, social, and political dimensions: such as the number of international organisations (IOs) each country is a member of, the number of international agreements and treaties that a country signed, the number of time that a country has participated in UN Security Council missions, and the number of embassies located in a country as part of the measure. The KOF globalisation scores range from 1 to 100, with higher values indicating more international engagement.⁶ To capture a country's dependency to international exchanges as an indicator of economic globalisation, i.e. *economic openness*, we use the ratio of total imports and exports of each country as share of their GDP. Lastly, we also alternate our model specifications by accounting for *years left in current governments' term*, *direct democracy*, *real GDP growth*, *population*, and *international non-governmental organisation (INGO) networks* as part of our robustness

checks, see pp. 33–39 in the appendix. Summary of all variables we use are available in Table A1.

Estimation strategy

To estimate the relationship between the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement and our theorised predictors, we are using event history analysis also known as survival analysis. We choose this methodological approach over a binary logistic because the dependent variable we construct captures extension of rights with a temporal element, i.e. timing, instead of whether the event occurs or not. We use a non-parametric Cox hazards regression, which can handle potential bias due to censoring and is an estimation method that avoids underlying assumptions about the shape of the relationships we study (Box-Steffensmeier and Zorn 2001). We are interested in evaluating the extent to which our hypothesised relationships predict the timing of the extension of voting rights. Therefore we estimate the coefficients for our variables of interest, adjusting for other alternative factors, regarding how they alter the hazard ratios (Cleves et al. 2010):

$$h(t|x_j) = h_0(t) \exp(x_j b) = h_0(t) \exp(b_1 x_{1j} + b_2 x_{2j} + \dots + b_k x_{kj}) \quad (1)$$

$$b = (b_1, b_2, \dots, b_k) \quad (2)$$

Hazard ratios $h(t)$ reflect the risk of changing from one state to another, which in our case means changing from the absence of non-citizen enfranchisement to the extension of these rights to non-citizens given their absence up to time t . Essentially, we are estimating our covariates, b , on whether they predict the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement within our sample. We use a Breslow approximation of exact marginal method for ties in our estimations. For sensitivity checks, we replicate our models using a parametric Weibull estimation, see Table A25. As one of the core assumptions of the Cox regression, we test for proportional-hazards based on Schoenfeld residuals and reveal that all models satisfy this assumption (Grambsch and Therneau 1994). While our models jointly pass, political globalisation and partisanship variables indicate a violation of this assumption meaning their coefficients change over time, see Table A14. Put simply, we treat the direct effects of these variables as time-varying covariates, i.e. exponentiated by time, generalising the model to allow monotonically increasing (or decreasing) hazard shape using a generalised Cox regression. This means that the effects of partisanship and political globalisation on the hazard changes are not instant but are rather experienced with a delay developing over time. Particularly regarding partisanship effects, this makes theoretical sense. Since in these cases of electoral reforms which often require wide consensus, immediate timing of legislations may be less so the product of a direct partisanship at a given time point but rather how cumulative effects of partisanship develops over time altering the timing of voting rights. Finally, all models pass the *linktest* diagnostic for misspecification of the survival models.⁷

Empirical findings and discussion

We first focus on hypotheses related to direct effects and then mediated effects with the share of foreign-born population. Table 2 presents the hazard ratio estimations which

Table 2. Models estimating the timing of local voting rights to non-citizens, Cox regressions.

	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6
Foreign-born share (%)	0.904** (0.033)	0.895* (0.042)	0.889* (0.043)	0.900* (0.039)	0.885** (0.035)	0.884** (0.037)
EU member state	3.050* (1.551)	3.189* (1.755)	3.246* (1.811)	3.162* (1.742)	2.177 (1.311)	2.837* (1.418)
Colonial power	0.431 (0.261)	0.422 (0.231)	0.421 (0.225)	0.423 (0.238)	0.597 (0.405)	0.452 (0.271)
Economic openness	1.011t (0.007)	1.015t (0.009)	1.016t (0.008)	1.014 (0.009)	1.017* (0.008)	1.014* (0.007)
Political globalisation	0.997* (0.001)	0.998t (0.001)	0.998t (0.001)	0.997 (0.002)	0.996** (0.001)	0.996** (0.001)
Proportionality	0.637 (0.345)	0.547 (0.326)	0.543 (0.303)	0.556 (0.369)	0.450t (0.218)	0.562 (0.293)
Judicial review	0.523 (0.329)	0.525 (0.347)	0.526 (0.351)	0.534 (0.337)	0.540 (0.348)	0.545 (0.342)
Immigration policy regime		3.097 (4.434)				
Imm. policy regime (<i>external</i>)			4.965 (6.326)			
Imm. policy regime (<i>internal</i>)				2.182 (3.570)		
Left-wing share in gov't (%)					1.001* (0.000)	
Right-wing share in gov't. (%)						0.999t (0.000)
BIC	135.69	141.16	140.51	141.54	136.97	140.02
Log likelihood	-46.24	-45.88	-45.56	-46.08	-43.79	-45.32

Note: Number of failures: 18; Number of observations 480; Number of cases: 28 Country-clustered standard errors in parentheses. Political globalisation and political partisanship variables are treated as time-varying coefficients. *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, t $p < 0.1$.

stands for the probability of failure, i.e. extension of voting rights to non-citizens.⁸ While a hazard ratio of less than 1 means a decreasing probability of failure, a ratio greater than 1 indicates a positive effect on the likelihood of enfranchisement. In all models, we use robust country clustered estimator for standard errors accounting for within unit correlations. We add each indicator of interest in a stepwise manner to leverage our statistical power. Our results in Table 2 reveal robust evidence for the statistically significant and negative direct effect of the share of foreign-born population on the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement. Across the board, we find that one percentage increase in share of foreign-born decreases the hazard of political enfranchisement by about *at least* 10 per cent [$(1-0.90) \times 100$]. Substantively, this means that higher share of foreign-born residents obstructs rather than facilitates earlier expansion of political rights to non-citizens in line with our hypothesis 1b.

To visualise this relationship, Figure 1 plots the predicted hazard ratios, i.e. predicted likelihood of non-citizen enfranchisement, over four different levels of foreign-born share conditions. The likelihood of non-citizen voting rights is the highest over our period of observation for contexts with the lowest share of foreign-born population. Hazard for countries with lower shares of foreign-born population is markedly higher and experience a bigger increase over time, such as in 1995–2005, compared to other contexts. While our findings reveal a robust negative relationship between demographic heterogeneity and earlier chances of enfranchisement, since we are interested in enfranchisement reforms applicable non-discriminately, we believe it is worth discussing the countries of origin of the foreign-born population in cases we study. We investigate

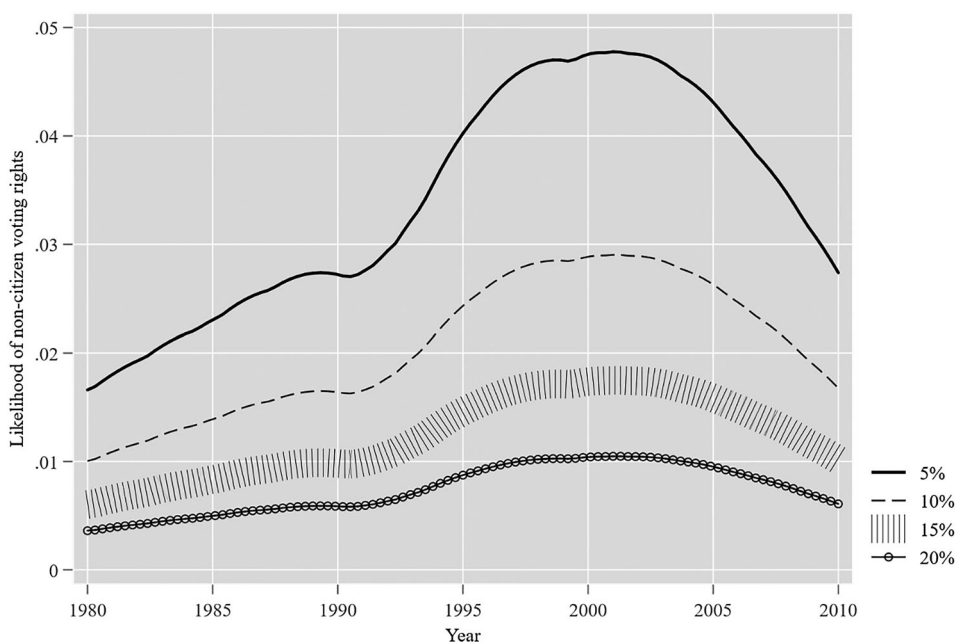


Figure 1. Hazard function estimates of non-citizen voting rights for different contexts of demographic composition, 1980–2010.

countries of origin of the foreign-born population in two ways; as share % of OECD member nationals related to the economic status of the country of origin and as share % of EEA member nationals since majority of our cases are from the European region (23 out of 28).

By and large, inspecting our positive and negative enfranchisement cases from Western, Southern, and Northern Europe and traditional settler countries reveal that there is no systematic pattern of the foreign-born composition which may alter the negative effect of demographic heterogeneity on earlier enfranchisement. Countries who enfranchise earlier are indeed states with lower shares of foreign-born, and *vice versa*. However, there is no observed trend of having disproportionately European origin or OECD member state nationals amongst foreign-born residents at the timing of enfranchisement that could potentially reverse such a relationship.⁹ An exception to this are the enfranchisement reforms in CEE countries. For instance, the share percentage of foreign-born residents are 3.94% in Hungary and 2.16% in Slovakia. However, at the time of enfranchisement, in both cases, about 75%–80% of these non-citizens were from a European country. Therefore, it is plausible to link their enfranchisement efforts to both Europeanisation and democratisation processes even though these reforms are applicable to all non-citizens. Estonia is a unique case in this region as it has about 17.83 per cent share of foreigners in its population of which the majority are not from the EU member states but co-ethnic migrants from Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus. Another interesting case is Luxembourg which hosted a large share of foreign-born residents (32.55%) at the time of enfranchisement where those who came from EU member states constituted an overwhelming majority (about 83%).

Next, related to the set of hypotheses pertaining to the effect of immigration policy regimes, models 2 - 4 test the effects of aggregate, external, and internal immigration policy regimes respectively. In our sample, there are cases such as Finland, Netherlands, and Sweden which enfranchised non-citizens at a time of relatively open immigration regimes. Conversely, CEE countries, Ireland, Portugal, and Spain have had comparatively more restrictive immigration policy regimes at the time of their non-citizen enfranchisement reforms. Our results suggest that across all three measures, moving from more permissive immigration policy regimes to more restrictive increases the likelihood on enfranchisement. However, while more restrictiveness on average seems to be indicative of higher chances of enfranchisement, such differences of timing across immigration policy regimes are not statistically significant.

Moving on to assess the effect of political partisanship in models 5 and 6, we find that, over time, higher right-wing seat share in the government delays whereas more left-wing seats in the government advances chances of non-citizen enfranchisement as expected. In cases such as Netherlands, Hungary, and Belgium, right-wing political parties have had substantial shares of seats in the government at the time of electoral reforms. On the contrary, the Czech, Danish, and Greek enfranchisement efforts came at a time of legislative stronghold of left-wing parties. Our findings indicate that countervailing pressures of political partisanship alter the timing of enfranchisement effects cumulating over time and in the expected directions. Overall, we interpret our results as suggesting a systematic partisanship effect on non-citizen enfranchisement reforms.¹⁰

As for alternative explanations, we find that none of the other domestic territorial factors are significant predictors of enfranchisement timing. Being an EU member state has a positive effect on advancing voting rights. This supports the argument for a Europeanisation spill-over effect in the post-Maastricht context on the basis of normalising non-citizen enfranchisement (Pedroza 2019) and EU membership acting as a safeguard to guarantee a minimum level of migrant inclusion (Blatter, Schmid, and Blättler 2017). In this respect, CEE countries are remarkable cases where non-citizen residents were granted right to vote in addition to EU nationals. In line with existing work, we explain this as in great part related to the motivation of political elites to be seen as part of European democracies (Cianetti 2014). However, it should also be noted that late EU member states such as Croatia, Cyprus, and Poland and core EU member states such as France, Germany, and Austria have yet to enfranchise non-citizens at the local level. Therefore, while EU membership does indeed have a liberalising effect, it is dependent on other domestic factors.

The two extra-territorial factors seem to be related to the timing of enfranchisement. We find evidence indicating that economic openness, i.e. higher ratio of imports and exports as part of the GDP, advanced enfranchisement reforms. We interpret this as suggesting that countries with more trade dependency may choose to enfranchise earlier to either be an attractive economic partner respecting the rights of non-citizens, such as in the CEE states and Northern European countries and/or to attract desirable international immigrants, arguably in the cases such as Ireland and Luxembourg. Conversely, higher political globalisation seems to be negatively related to encouraging state-wide third-country national enfranchisement. This suggests that specific dimensions of internationalisation should be studied separately in the context of immigrant policies. Although *p*-values reach above conventional levels of significance in several models, the hazard ratio

of political globalisation is consistently less than 1. We make sense of this negative relationship as being related to the absence of enfranchisement in large countries with greater international influence. The slowing effect of political globalisation on enfranchisement is not surprising given that major European powers such as France and Germany and highly internationalised states such as the USA and Canada do not have state-wide non-citizen enfranchisement. Instead, cases with the lowest political globalisation scores such as Iceland, Luxembourg, Slovakia, and Hungary have enfranchised non-citizen residents earlier.

Interaction hypotheses

Our results reveal statistically significant interaction effects between immigration policy regime, across all three measurement strategies, and foreign-born stock ($p < 0.05$ level) and between right-wing partisanship and foreign-born stock ($p < 0.05$ level), see Table A12 for results. We find that the immediate effect of left-wing political partisanship is not mitigated by the foreign-born share. To interpret these interaction effects substantively, we visualise the hazard functions under different combinations of these factors. Each figure plots the hazard function of non-citizen enfranchisement at different values of foreign-born and immigration policy regime (in Figure 2) or right-wing partisanship (in Figure 3) at their 25th (low) or 75th (high) percentile values.

Figure 2 has three important insights for the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement. First, there are higher chances of enfranchisement as we go from high (13.2%) to low (3.7%) share of foreign-born populations and from liberal (0.27) to more restrictive (0.37) immigration policy regimes (IMPIC's original scale), see also Figure A7 for external

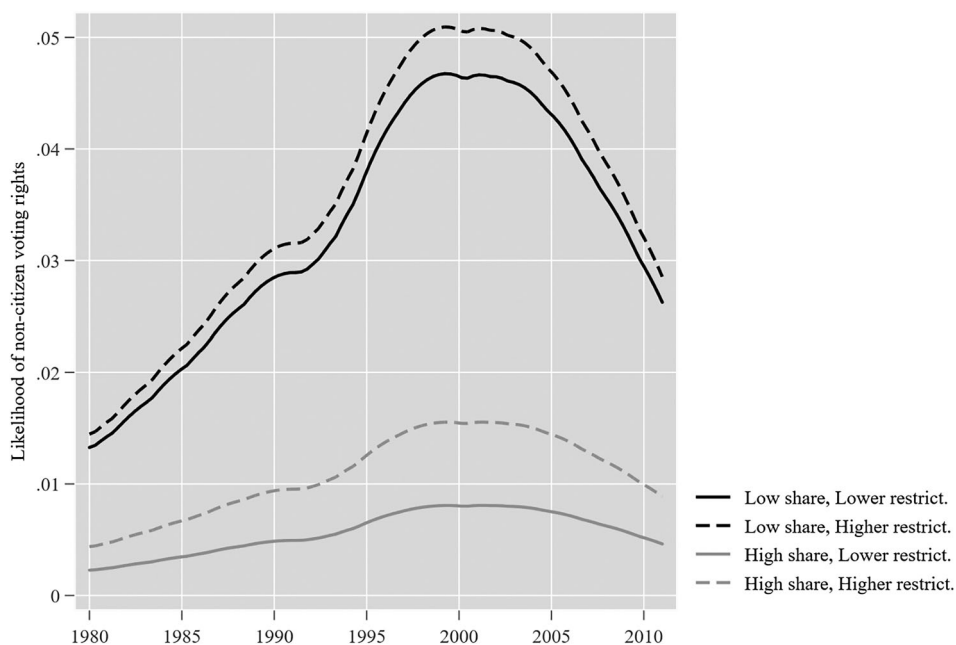


Figure 2. Hazard of enfranchisement by immigration policy regime and foreign-born stock share.

and Figure A8 for internal dimensions. Moreover, there is a substantial gap between low and high share conditions and a steep increase of enfranchisement between 1990 and 2000 only for low foreign-born share condition. Second, across the two demographic conditions, more restrictive contexts have higher chances of enfranchising non-citizens sooner. At high foreign-born stock condition, restrictive immigration policy still leads to sooner non-citizen enfranchisement. An illustrative example of this case is Greece enfranchising non-citizens at a time of high foreign-born population but restrictive immigration policy regime. Third, differences across policy regimes become more important in favour of more restrictive contexts having markedly more chances of earlier enfranchisement at more demographically heterogeneous conditions, see also Figure A9.

We note that, over time, almost all countries move towards more liberal immigration policies, see Figures A3 and A4. Indeed, very few cases have either extremely liberal or very restrictive immigration policy regimes in the scope of our study. The immigration policy regime indicator oscillates between 0.19 and 0.58 at the end of our observation period (2010), see Figure A5. Therefore, we interpret these results as higher chances of earlier enfranchisement in *less* liberal cases and not suggesting that non-citizen enfranchisement is likely only for restrictive conditions of immigration policy. Overall, we find that there is evidence supporting the divergence hypothesis between permissive immigration policy and earlier expansion of non-citizen rights for both high and low demographic heterogeneity conditions. Fewer immigrants and less liberal immigration policies seem to have been most likely to yield earlier enfranchisement while more liberal policies and higher volumes of foreign-born residents delayed enfranchisement the most.

Next, Figure 3 visualises how specific conditions of partisanship and demographic factors operate at the timing of non-citizen enfranchisement. Here, we present right-

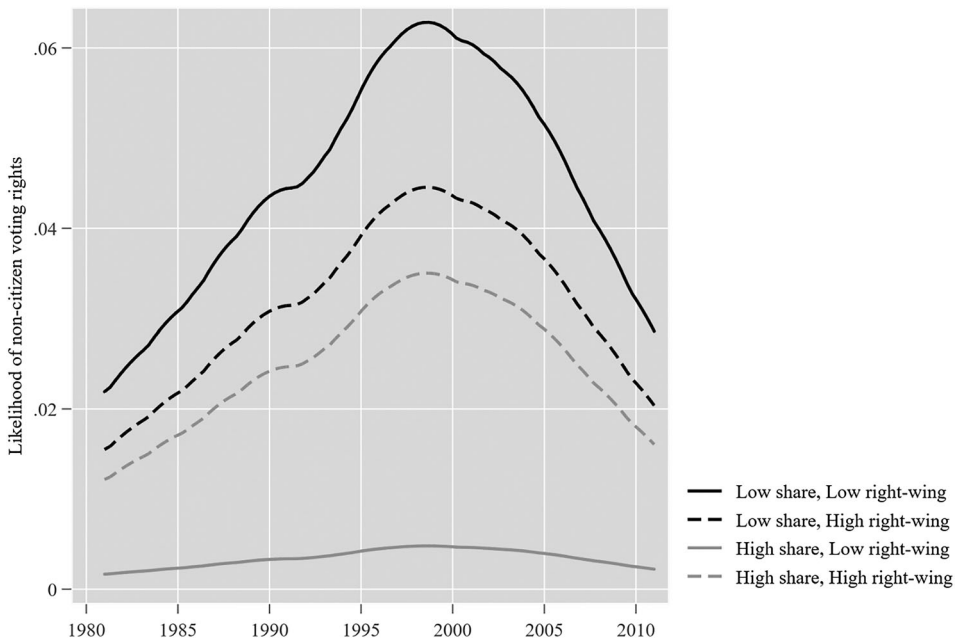


Figure 3. Hazard of enfranchisement by right-wing partisanship and foreign-born stock share.

wing partisanship's immediate effect on the timing of enfranchisement as we are interested in how it interacts with demographic conditions. Most crucially, we confirm that differences based on right-wing partisanship are far less important than timing differences based on demographic heterogeneity. There are higher chances of expediting enfranchisement in conditions with the lower share of foreign-born residents regardless of partisanship. Next, under the condition of low heterogeneity, the highest chance of non-citizen enfranchisement is when there is low share of right-wing parties in the government in line with our earlier discussion and in the expected direction. This means that when there are fewer immigrants in the country, going from higher to lower shares of right-wing influence advances non-citizen enfranchisement. For instance, the cases of enfranchisement reforms in the Czech Republic, Denmark, and Sweden exemplify such a configuration of partisanship and demographic conditions. However, differences based on the strength of right-wing parties in government are in modest in size.

Lastly, under the condition of higher share of foreign-born residents, more right-wing seats in the government corresponds to higher chances of enfranchisement reforms – different from the low heterogeneity condition. Although variation in right-wing strength makes little immediate change, comparatively, in more heterogenous contexts higher right-wing seat shares in government does in fact have a more important effect on encouraging enfranchisement, see Figure A10. Lower demographic heterogeneity is indeed one of the key conditions in discerning earlier enfranchisement. Yet, in few cases of higher share of foreigners, governments have been able to pass legislation enfranchising non-citizens. We make sense of this as an indication that right-wing parties took part in coalitions advancing voting rights when the stock of foreign-born residents is high enough to constitute an electoral incentive in the cases such as Estonia and Luxembourg. This can be attributed, in most part, to the special composition of the immigrant stock in these countries. While co-ethnic foreign-born residents constitute an important majority in Estonia, the same goes for the EU free-mover immigrants in Luxembourg. This means that enfranchisement has been possible in these 'exceptional' cases of immigrant composition regardless of partisanship dynamics where right-wing parties have also been willing to pass legislation giving voting rights to these groups.

Conclusion

In this study, we investigated the conditions under which countries grant state-wide local voting rights to third-country nationals. Our findings make several contributions to the study of non-citizen voting rights and to the broader fields of migration and citizenship studies. First, lower demographic heterogeneity and earlier timing of enfranchisement seem to be linked. On the one hand, this is in line with the observations from the cases of Northern Europe with substantially lower share of immigrants at the time of enfranchisement reforms. On the other hand, it challenges the immigrant power resources and interest mobilisation arguments. Instead, our findings seem to be in line with the large-N work finding an obstruction mechanism (Toral 2015; Stutzer and Slotwinski 2019), as well as case studies revealing that there may be limited role for immigrant civil organisations in the voting rights reforms by national governments (Jacobs 1999). This helps us discern as to why serious considerations and discussions of non-citizen enfranchisement have yet to come to realisation in countries such as France, Germany, and Austria. We

argued that such delaying effects may be related electoral competitiveness at the citizen level and absence of electoral incentives from the perspective of political parties. Future research should focus on precisely uncovering what mechanisms may be operating, at both political elite and at the citizen levels, behind this negative relationship.

Second, we add to the ongoing academic debate on the complementarity or trade-offs between immigration policy regimes and immigrant rights policies. Even though most countries have over time liberalised their immigration policy regimes, such changes have not always corresponded to state-wide third-country national enfranchisement. While the evidence seems to suggest a divergence between more permissive policies and earlier non-citizen enfranchisement, our analysis highlights that the demographic conditions under which immigration policies operate need to be evaluated carefully. Indeed, established advanced democracies with more restrictive immigration rules, so far, have been more successful in enfranchising their non-citizen residents, particularly important for high demographic heterogeneity conditions in line with a divergence logic. In our sample, we focused on advanced democracies with at least two decades of immigration history. As a next step, it would be enlightening to investigate whether the trade-off logic between immigration policy regimes and non-citizen enfranchisement hold in cases from a different geographical focus with variation in the number and the composition of foreign-born residents they host.

Third, although there has been a great deal of research on the relevance of political partisanship on non-citizen enfranchisement (Goenaga 2019; Jacobs 1998; Pedroza 2019; Toral 2015), there is little theoretical discussion of how such partisanship effects may be different in the short vs. long run and may be distinct in different demographic conditions. In line with a dynamic approach to the study of politics of non-citizen enfranchisement (Pedroza 2019), we add to existing work by revealing that partisanship effects develop over time in advancing or obstructing the timing of enfranchisement. As expected, strength of left-wing in our period of study is positively related to expediting enfranchisement, while the opposite holds true for right-wing parties. Even though we do not focus on citizen level factors here, such cumulating effects of partisanship can also be understood from the perspective of the ideological preferences of the electorate and how the demand-side of these policies relates to enfranchisement reforms.

Taken together, we demonstrate that earlier non-citizen enfranchisement reforms have been most likely in contexts where there is higher left-wing influence in government over time, fewer foreign-born residents, and less permissive immigration policies. Our results suggest that even though extra-territorial factors of Europeanisation and internationalisation do matter, there are decisive differences in enfranchisement practices on the basis of resident population characteristics, immigration policy regimes, and political partisanship.

Notes

1. Other arguments of transnationally driven policy convergence are international norm diffusion and 'parallel path development' or policies (Cook-Martin and FitzGerald 2019; Turcu and Urbatsch 2014). While there is little evidence supporting such dynamics for non-citizen voting rights, they are found to be relevant in emigrant voting rights and (dual) citizenship policies.

2. We are aware that the year of legislation may not necessarily correspond to the implementation year in the next relevant election. However, we contend that legislation year is the necessary indicator of reform timing when studying conditions of such policymaking.
3. Figure A1 visualises the cases in our observation period.
4. Hazard life table in the Table A2 further illustrates these trends.
5. We alternate our strategy and construct a dummy variable by collapsing the former two options, see Table A26.
6. KOF index correlates strongly ($r=0.7867$) with a simpler measurement of memberships to international organisations.
7. We also check for influential cases, see Figures A11–A13.
8. See Table A11 for raw coefficients.
9. For a detailed discussion and data see pp. 7–10 in the appendix.
10. While substantive effects remain the same, the *p-value* of right-wing partisanship is sensitive to our coding of border cases, see Table A22 and A23. However, this difference is arguably in great part due to the changes in the number of failures and subsequent loss of statistical power.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

ORCID

Elif Naz Kayran  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-5804-0625>

Merve Erdilmen  <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3929-8388>

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