



Disenfranchised minorities: Trust, definitions of citizenship, and noncitizen voting rights in developed democracies

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Abstract

Western societies show varying reactions to the challenges of immigration. This is especially true with regards to voting rights for immigrants. This article shows that previous research has neglected generalized trust as a powerful predictor for different degrees of inclusiveness in this policy area. Elections are the gateways to the political decision-making processes in all democracies. For members of the host society, extending voting rights to noncitizens means granting members of an ‘out-group’ direct influence on their own lives. This requires a ‘leap of faith’ that is only possible at higher levels of generalized trust.

Keywords

generalized trust, noncitizen voting, immigration, citizenship, political integration

Introduction

In many western societies, immigration is one of the most salient and hotly debated policy issues. Many countries in Europe and North America have experienced an influx of significant numbers of immigrants in the past few years, an influx that poses important challenges to those societies. The political integration of immigrants ranks among the most prominent challenges. Granting voting rights to noncitizens is one possible step toward the achievement of political integration. Interestingly, there is no uniform ‘western approach’ with regards to alien suffrage: some countries have adopted much more inclusive regulations in this policy area than others. Generally speaking, there are three main cleavages. The first runs between ‘national’ and ‘subnational’ voting rights. For example, some states allow noncitizen voting only in local elections, while other countries permit immigrants to vote during local and national elections. The second cleavage line runs

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between 'discriminatory' and 'nondiscriminatory' countries (Earnest 2006). The former extend voting rights to immigrants from certain states, whereas the latter do not make such a distinction and treat all immigrants the same. Lastly, divergence can be observed with regards to eligibility for office at the local level, since only some countries allow noncitizens to serve as elected representatives in their communities. What explains these varying degrees of inclusiveness with regards to noncitizen voting rights among developed democracies?

Answering this research question is a worthwhile endeavour because it helps us to understand why certain countries exclude a substantial number of individuals from the franchise. In 2010, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries were host to well in excess of 50 million noncitizen residents. Presently, immigrants constitute between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of the total population in several states (OECD, 2012). These numbers alone warrant a thorough analysis of this topic, especially since the debate about alien suffrage is a recurring phenomenon in a number of states (for an example, see Day, 2009).

Political science scholarship seems to have acknowledged the significance of this issue in the past few years. This is exemplified by the proliferation of studies on noncitizen voting rights (for example, Bauböck, 2005; Earnest, 2008; Shaw, 2007). Most of the existing literature on this topic focuses on a particular country and tries to explain local conditions or policy. Broad quantitative analyses of this topic are rare. Exceptions to this rule are the studies conducted by David Earnest (2006, 2008). Even though his work constitutes an invaluable contribution to the literature and an excellent assessment of several explanatory factors, it leaves out a crucial variable: generalized trust.

The right to participate in elections is the gateway to the political decision-making process in all democracies. For the members of the host society, extending voting rights to noncitizens therefore means granting members of an 'out-group' direct influence on their own lives. Since the citizens of a country are usually ignorant about the policy preferences of the state's immigrant population, this step requires a leap of faith that is only possible at higher levels of generalized trust. This does not mean that public attitudes 'drive' the policy-making process with regards to alien suffrage. Instead, I argue that a host society's trust level is important since it fundamentally influences how much freedom of action a government has in this issue area.

The argument put forward in this article builds on earlier work by Hooghe et al. (2007), who found an empirical relationship between generalized trust and noncitizen voting rights. However, in contrast to their research, I argue explicitly that the causal arrow goes from trust to the political integration of noncitizens. The remainder of this article has five sections. In the first, I discuss previous work on voting rights for immigrants. In the second, I present the theory in more detail. In the third section, I operationalize the variables and note some potential alternative explanations. In the fourth section, I test my hypothesis with ordered logistic regression analysis and discuss the results. In the fifth and final section, I conclude with some practical implications of my analysis and areas for future research.

Previous findings on voting rights for immigrants

The literature on noncitizen voting rights is part of a much larger research agenda on immigrant-integration policies. However, since previous scholarship has shown that not all arguments brought forward in the area of integration policies also apply to the issue of alien suffrage, the following discussion only focuses on research that directly relates to the topic of this article.¹ Previous work on noncitizen voting rights can be divided into four broad categories.

The first category is largely descriptive and includes exploratory research that gives an overview of the existing regulations in different countries (Blais et al., 2001; Kondo, 2001; Waldrach,

2005). This work is extremely important as a data source for future research, but it does not provide an explanation for the empirical puzzle of this article.

The second group of authors argues that different ideas about political community explain the variation in noncitizen voting rights. For example, Bauböck (2005: 685) states that in some cases, 'the political integration of immigrants who do not qualify yet for, or may not be interested in, naturalization' is the driving motive for the extension of voting rights to noncitizen residents. Brubaker (1992) and Hammar (1990) argue that the way in which the host society defines citizenship has a major impact on the incorporation of immigrants into the existing political structure. Earnest (2006) suggests that host societies that define citizenship as membership of the nation are less likely to establish alien suffrage than host societies that define citizenship as membership of the state.

The third strand of research analyses immigrant voting through the lens of constitutional politics. The arguments that fall into this category are quite diverse, probably because much of this work is based on case studies. Rodríguez (2010: 30) analyses regulations in Ireland, New Zealand, and the USA and concludes that 'whether a society adopts alien suffrage ... reflect[s] that regime's particular constitutional values and structures'. Joppke (1998) and Neuman (1992) both point to the role of the courts and their influence on countries' immigration policies. The former argues that judiciaries tend to protect and expand the rights of immigrants, while the latter argues the opposite.

The fourth category includes studies that argue that alien suffrage is primarily a function of party politics. In his case study about the Netherlands, Jacobs (1998) finds that centre-right parties usually oppose enfranchisement, while leftist parties are more open to noncitizen voting rights. This general assessment is shared by Hammar (1990) and Rath (1990). Earnest's quantitative study (2006), by contrast, finds that rightist parties are actually more likely to grant alien suffrage.

Despite the fact that all of these analyses provide valuable insights, most of the studies that were mentioned above do not empirically test their own arguments against the explanatory power of rival hypotheses. Furthermore, an overwhelming majority of previous research in this area has used case-study approaches as its methodological basis. While this provided the scholarly community with analytical depth, only a few researchers have attempted to use quantitative methods in order to identify general patterns that are valid across cases. An exception to this is seen in the abovementioned studies by Earnest (2006, 2008), who, as argued in the introduction, does not consider trust as a potentially powerful explanatory variable.

Political scientists have devoted a considerable amount of attention to the concept of generalized trust over the course of the past two decades. Scholars have looked at trust both as a dependent and as an independent variable. The empirical literature on the creation of trust can be divided into four major schools of thought, each of them focusing on a different explanation for cross-national variations: civic associations, ethnic homogeneity, culture, and institutions. Recent research tends to provide more evidence for cultural and institutional variables than for the other two explanations.

Putnam's idea (1993) that in-group trust, developed within civic associations, can spill over into trust in strangers, receives only weak support from quantitative studies (Nannestad, 2008: 423). Similarly, the claim that increasing diversity leads us to stick with our 'in-group' and makes us less trusting is mostly confirmed within US contexts. This focus on a single country therefore neglects the potentially powerful impact of political institutions which can mediate the impact of ethnic diversity on trust (Kesler and Bloemraad, 2010).

In contrast, several cross-national quantitative studies provide strong support for cultural and institutional explanations. Freitag and Bühlmann (2009: 1556) analyse survey data from 58 countries and find that the presence of 'fair, nonpartisan, incorruptible, universalistic, and power-sharing/consensual institutions' in a country is conducive to the creation of trust at the individual

level. Similarly, Crepez (2008: 147) shows that universal welfare regimes avoid stigmatization of individual welfare recipients and create a sense of equality which finds expression in higher levels of generalized trust. Eric Uslaner can be seen as the most prominent proponent of the view that trust is primarily a function of cultural values – specifically, a general sense of optimism that individuals learn from their parents and the degree of egalitarianism present in a society (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005; Uslaner, 2002). Institutional and cultural theories of trust should not be seen as mutually exclusive. A more fruitful way to think about these approaches is to consider them as complementary to each other. Therefore, even though we are still far away from having a general theory of trust (Nannestad, 2008: 422), a complete understanding of its creation should consider both a society's institutional and its cultural context.

Meanwhile, the consequences of trust are currently better understood than its causes. A wide variety of empirical studies has shown that trust has positive effects on individuals and societies. Knack and Keefer (1997) as well as Knack and Zak (2001) find that more trusting societies are characterized by higher economic growth rates, and higher trust levels are strongly correlated with more open economic policies and less crime and corruption (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005). Fukuyama (1995: 7) even argues that 'a nation's well-being, as well as its ability to compete, is conditioned by a single, pervasive cultural characteristic: the level of trust in society'. Furthermore, trust seems to result in the higher performance of domestic political institutions (Putnam, 1993; Rice and Sumberg, 1997). This article adds to the literature linking trust to public attitudes toward immigration. Crepez (2008) uncovers an indirect relationship between those two variables. He shows that trust mediates the negative effects of nativist resentment on the welfare state. Herreros and Criado (2009) directly examine the influence of trust on attitudes toward immigration and find that trusting individuals feel generally more positively about immigrants than their non-trusting counterparts. This article builds on these arguments by showing that more trusting societies have more inclusive noncitizen voting rights regimes. The next section explains the causal mechanism leading to this outcome in greater detail.

Voting rights and generalized trust

As developed democracies face the challenge of immigration, they also face growing numbers of what Tomas Hammar (1990) called 'denizens' – foreign nationals with only limited formal political rights. This by-product of contemporary immigration puts substantial pressure on the receiving countries. According to Christian Joppke (1998: 28), 'denizenship is ... detested' by immigrants. Even though post-nationalists such as Soysal (1998) implicitly disagree, a cursory Internet search reveals a considerable number of lobby groups advocating in favour of alien suffrage.²

As mentioned earlier, not all states react identically to immigration. I argue that different levels of trust are a major explanatory variable for the variation in voting rights granted to noncitizens in different countries. More specifically, levels of generalized trust influence the practices with which developed democracies respond to contemporary immigration-induced pressures.

Generalized trust refers to an individual's or a society's general assessment of the trustworthiness of strangers and is usually measured by a standardized survey question in which respondents are asked if they believe that 'most people can be trusted.'

A more formal definition is provided by Rothstein and Uslaner (2005). According to these authors, 'generalized trust links us to people who are different from ourselves. It stands in contrast to particularized trust, where people have faith only in their in-group. Generalized trust reflects a bond that people share across a society and across economic and ethnic groups, religions, and races' (Rothstein and Uslaner, 2005: 45). Put differently, general trusters do not only trust members of their 'in-group', they also give members of an 'out-group' the benefit of the doubt. Given that

immigrants are not naturally members of the receiving country's 'in-group', I expect generalized trust to influence a society's behaviour toward immigrants: a host society that does not bond with people who are viewed as different will have markedly different interactions with newcomers than will 'trusting' societies.

The right to participate in elections can be considered as the door to the legislative process in all democratic states. Both at the national and subnational level, parliaments are the institutions that make crucial decisions that affect all individuals residing within the polity. These decisions range from laws concerning the distribution of welfare and cultural matters (such as the right to wear the Muslim headscarf in public spaces) to the conduct of foreign policy toward certain countries. Participating in elections is ultimately a question about influencing policy and extending voting rights to noncitizens, therefore means granting members of an 'out-group' direct influence on the lives of the individuals of the host society.

There are two general explanations for why a person or a group would permit another person to make decisions that affect them: they know with certainty that the latter individual's decisions will be beneficial; or because they simply trust that person. This logic can be applied to host societies and immigrant suffrage. One reason why a state would extend voting rights to immigrants is that the host society knows and approves the policy preferences of the country's immigrant population (at least at a very basic level). This explanation for alien suffrage, however, assumes that citizens are well informed of the political opinions of the state's immigrants, which is unlikely and not backed by empirical evidence. A few cases of this type do exist. Voting rights for Commonwealth citizens in Great Britain might not only be a way to honour 'a shared imperial past' (Bauböck, 2005: 685), but also result from a certain kind of familiarity that British citizens feel with regards to their former fellow subjects.

However, generally more useful is the second theoretical alternative: members of the host society do not know the policy preferences of the immigrants in their country, but (depending on their level of generalized trust) they assume that the positions of the noncitizens around them are not too far from their own policy preferences. In Herrerros and Criado's words, 'truster[s] ... can simply give the "benefit of the doubt" to someone from another cultural background' (2009: 340). Fukuyama (1995: 26) explains this logic more formally:

Trust is the expectation that arises within a community of regular, honest, and cooperative behavior, based on common shared norms, on the part of the other members of that community. These norms can be about deep 'value' questions like the nature of God or justice, but they also encompass secular norms like professional standards and codes of behavior.

Previous research on immigration policies has convincingly shown that attitudes and opinions held by the general population do not 'drive' the decisions of national governments (Freeman, 1995; Statham and Geddes, 2006). The argument presented above does not challenge this view. However, in the aggregate, public attitudes can constrain a government's freedom of action in this policy field to such an extent that the passage of a certain subset of laws is rendered politically infeasible. In this sense, trust levels of the general population do matter since they crucially influence which policies can be adopted and which ones would only hurt leaders' chances of re-election. As mentioned earlier, developed democracies face considerable pressures to integrate noncitizens politically. These pressures are met with public suspicion and negative sentiments in low-trust societies and with acceptance in high-trust ones. It is therefore harder for decision-makers in low-trust countries to act on the basis of immigration-induced pressures and enfranchise resident aliens. For example, this logic explains why the Dutch government's decision to introduce a very inclusive form of alien suffrage was not met with resistance by the high-trusting Dutch public, whereas the

comparatively low-trusting Belgian public has reacted a lot more sceptically to initiatives such as this in the past (Rath, 1990).

In sum, countries are expected to extend voting rights to noncitizens because members of host societies know or assume that the political participation of immigrants will not negatively affect their own lives. Since knowledge about the policy preferences of immigrants is usually not very high, the ‘capacity to trust those not in the in-group’ (Crepaz, 2008: 103) should be important in explaining a country’s inclusiveness with regards to alien suffrage. I therefore formulate the following hypothesis: *the higher the proportion of general trusters in a certain country, the more inclusive the noncitizen voting rights regime in that state.*

Some people might object that the argument presented in this article should not only apply to voting rights regimes, but even more so to naturalization policies in general. I argue that this is not the case. Changing citizenship policies (that is, how hard it is to become a citizen in a given country) does not only have an influence on the number of people who have the right to participate in the political process. Such a decision also has profound economic and social consequences for a country’s population since citizenship entitles individuals to a wide range of rights such as social welfare and full access to the labour market. Furthermore, naturalization policies are deeply ingrained in a country’s political culture and the legal traditions on which they are based are often part of a population’s national identity. Changes in naturalization policies are therefore usually associated with the need to overcome high transaction costs. For these reasons, social trust should have no influence on political developments in this issue area.³

Variables and alternative explanations

The dependent variable: voting rights variations

As mentioned earlier, noncitizen voting rights vary along three different fault lines. The first one separates states that allow only immigrants from certain countries to participate in the political process from states that grant voting rights to all noncitizens. The second fault line differentiates countries that grant voting rights in all elections and those that do so only at the subnational level. The final and third fault line runs between countries that allow their noncitizen populations to run for office at the local level, and those states without this regulation.

The goal here is to ascertain why certain states have more inclusive noncitizen voting rights regimes than others. There are several quantitative measures available that could be used as a basis for this empirical investigation (Earnest, 2008; Hooghe et al., 2007). This analysis relies on a variable constructed on the basis of the Migration Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), developed by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group. Even though this database has not been used in the academic literature on noncitizen voting rights so far, it has the advantage of covering variation across all three fault lines outlined above and it therefore accurately reflects the diversity of contemporary democracies in this policy area.

MIPEX assigns values to countries according to their performance with regards to three indicators:⁴ (1) noncitizen voting rights in national elections, (2) noncitizen voting rights in local elections, and (3) rights for noncitizens to run for office in local elections. On each of those three indicators, states can receive a score of 0 if noncitizens do not have any electoral rights and 100 if all immigrants have the same rights as a country’s citizens after a maximum of five years of residence. A score of 50 is awarded in intermediate cases in which electoral rights are extended to immigrants, but only on a discriminatory basis. There are several different versions of this practice. First, in some places (for example, the Swiss canton of Jura), up to 10 years of residence are required before an individual gets the right to vote. Similarly, in Estonia, Lithuania, and Slovenia

only long-term residents are locally enfranchised by the government. Second, some states such as Portugal (at the national level) and Spain (at the local level) only extend voting rights to citizens of countries that have signed agreements stipulating reciprocity in this policy area. Lastly, in some countries such as Switzerland and Canada, even local voting rights are limited to certain localities (Huddleston, 2009: 19).

A summary of the MIPEX coding rules is provided in Appendix Table A1. A country's total score can range from 0 (in cases in which there are no voting rights for immigrants) to 300 (full voting rights on all three dimensions), with increments of 50 points. I use this total score in order to construct an ordinal dependent variable with three categories. The specific procedure is relatively straightforward. The lowest category is populated by states that do not offer any form of immigrant voting. In order to be placed in the highest category (hereafter referred to as 'expansive voting rights') a country has to offer full voting rights to its noncitizen population on at least two indicators. In other words, its aggregate score needs to be 200, 250, or 300.⁵ This is a reasonable classification since states that fit this description give noncitizens a considerable degree of influence in the political decision-making process and therefore can be seen as the vanguard for noncitizen enfranchisement. An example of this practice is found in New Zealand, which grants noncitizen residents both local and national voting rights after only one year of residency. Lastly, the middle category of my dependent variable (hereafter referred to as 'limited voting rights') is filled with states that offer only a limited form of noncitizen voting and receive scores of 50, 100, or 150. This means that they either do not grant full voting rights on any dimension or they grant them on one dimension only (usually active voting rights at the local level) while being very restrictive on the other two. The country with the most immigrant-friendly regulations in this category is the United Kingdom. Here, residents of all other 53 Commonwealth countries can both vote and run for office at the local and national level. However, while it is true that Commonwealth citizens represent the majority of third-country national residents in the UK, the British voting rights regime is still 'limited' compared with the aforementioned example of New Zealand in which all residents are enfranchised after a short time period.

The focus of this study is on 'developed democracies' since the domain of my theory is limited by both regime type and relative human development. Not all democracies face pressures generated by immigration. Issues related to this topic are probably less salient in states at the low end of the human development spectrum due to very low numbers of immigrants and the primacy of economic and social issues in the policy-making process. Likewise, not all states with high levels of human development are democracies, and politics in autocratic states is by definition very different from politics in regimes that are accountable to broad audiences. For these reasons, countries meeting the following two criteria qualify for inclusion in my data set.

1. The country's score in the Polity IV index has to equal or exceed +8 in the year 2012.⁶
2. The country needs to have achieved 'very high' or 'high' human development according to the United Nations Development Programme's 2012 Human Development Index.

These case selection criteria allow me to hold relative development and regime type constant while at the same time ensuring widespread data availability for my two main independent variables.

The necessary data were obtainable for a total of 45 countries that met the requirements outlined above. MIPEX provides information for 34 of those countries. I cross-validated the values for each state with the help of existing academic research on this topic (Blais et al., 2001; Earnest, 2008). In several instances, I assigned different values to countries from those assigned by MIPEX. Most importantly, the latter codes EU member states according to their regulations for non-EU, third-country nationals. However, the EU's Amsterdam and Maastricht treaties have established

mandatory voting rights for EU citizens at the local level. Following the original MIPEX coding procedure would make the comparison of countries unbalanced since some non-EU members, such as Norway and Iceland, also have special reciprocal arrangements with other countries. Therefore, Article 22 of the EU Treaty is best interpreted as a reciprocal agreement between several countries. This is also the viewpoint adopted in earlier research on noncitizen voting rights (Earnest, 2008).⁷ In practice, this means that all EU member states receive at least a score of 50 with regards to local voting rights and local eligibility. A final difference between the MIPEX scores and my coding procedure exists with regards to national voting rights in Portugal and Ireland. The index assigns a value of 0 to both countries. I argue that a value of 50 is more appropriate since both states grant electoral rights to immigrants from certain countries. Brazilian citizens are allowed to vote in national elections in Portugal and citizens of the United Kingdom influence the composition of the Irish Dáil.

For the 11 states not covered by MIPEX (Albania, Chile, Croatia, Iceland, Israel, Macedonia, Montenegro, New Zealand, South Korea, Turkey, and Uruguay), I used online resources (that is, government websites) and conducted phone interviews with embassies in order to generate scores according to the MIPEX coding criteria. These, in turn, allowed me to put the countries into one of the three categories of my dependent variable. Table 1 shows the states included in the data set and the extent to which they enfranchise noncitizens.

The main independent variable: generalized trust

For the measurement of generalized trust, this article follows Uslaner (2002: 27), who argues that this particular concept is accurately captured by the standard World Values Survey (WVS) question that asks ‘Generally speaking, would you say that most people can be trusted or that you can’t be too careful in dealing with people?’ Although the WVS only asked this question in a few countries during its third and fourth wave, there are sufficient observations to construct a variable for the following statistical analysis. ‘Trust in people doesn’t ebb and flow with the tides of people’s sentiments about political figures or the state of the economy, as confidence in government does. It is a core value that people hold and is quite stable over time’ (Uslaner, 2001: 574). This finding by Uslaner is also supported by Crepaz (2008) and justifies the combination of the data points of the third and fourth waves of the WVS into a single variable. The latter is an aggregate-level score and consists of the proportion of people in each country who demonstrated a ‘trusting’ attitude. If data is available for both waves, the average of both values is included in the data set. The raw correlation between these data points is very high ($r = .85$), which demonstrates the validity of Uslaner’s argument about the stability of trust.

Alternative explanations and control variables

There are several other possible explanations for the variation in the dependent variable of this article. This subsection presents these alternative causal mechanisms as well as the important control variables.

Conceptions about citizenship. Earnest (2006) suggests that a host society’s understanding about the nature of citizenship is a powerful explanatory variable for the variation in noncitizen voting rights. The breadth of the definition of citizenship changes from country to country. In some states, it is understood in a very narrow sense and refers to membership of a particular nation. These countries are often classical nation-states with deep historical roots. At the other end of the spectrum are very multicultural societies with a strong history of migration. These states usually have a broad definition of political community, and citizenship is often understood as membership of the state.

Table 1. Noncitizen Voting Rights (VR) in Developed Democracies.

Country	Local VR	Local eligibility	National VR	Σ	Category	Country	Local VR	Local eligibility	National VR	Σ	Category
Albania	0	0	0	0	No voting	Lithuania	50	50	0	100	Limited
Australia	50	0	0	50	Limited	Luxembourg	100	50	0	150	Limited
Austria	50	50	0	100	Limited	Macedonia	0	0	0	0	No voting
Belgium	50	50	0	100	Limited	Malta	50	50	0	100	Limited
Bulgaria	50	50	0	100	Limited	Montenegro	0	0	0	0	No voting
Canada	50	0	0	50	Limited	Netherlands	100	100	0	200	Expansive
Chile	100	0	100	200	Expansive	New Zealand	100	0	100	200	Expansive
Croatia	50	50	0	100	Limited	Norway	100	100	0	200	Expansive
Cyprus	50	50	0	100	Limited	Poland	50	50	0	100	Limited
Czech Repub.	50	50	0	100	Limited	Portugal	50	50	50	150	Limited
Denmark	100	100	0	200	Expansive	Romania	50	50	0	100	Limited
Estonia	50	50	0	100	Limited	Serbia	0	0	0	0	No voting
Finland	100	100	0	200	Expansive	Slovakia	50	50	0	100	Limited
France	50	50	0	100	Limited	Slovenia	50	50	0	100	Limited
Germany	50	50	0	100	Limited	South Korea	100	0	0	100	Limited
Greece	50	50	0	100	Limited	Spain	50	50	0	100	Limited
Hungary	50	50	0	100	Limited	Sweden	100	100	0	200	Expansive
Iceland	50	50	0	100	Limited	Switzerland	50	50	0	100	Limited
Ireland	100	100	50	250	Expansive	Turkey	0	0	0	0	No voting
Israel	50	50	0	100	Limited	UK	50	50	50	150	Limited
Italy	50	50	0	100	Limited	Uruguay	50	50	100	200	Expansive
Japan	0	0	0	0	No voting	USA	50	0	0	50	Limited
Latvia	50	50	0	100	Limited	N = 45					

The right to cast a ballot is seen by many as the 'core of democratic citizenship' (Bauböck, 2005: 683). Host societies that define citizenship as being part of a common 'nation' based on shared ancestry and history should be less likely to extend the fundamental element of citizenship to those who are 'different' from themselves. In these countries, in-group and out-group are clearly defined on the basis of ethnic and cultural ties. In countries in which citizenship is understood as membership of the state, this definition is different and based on what Germans call *politische Schicksalsgemeinschaft* ('a common political destiny'). This other kind of 'in-group' is more amenable to ideational reconstruction and the host societies in these countries should be used to extending access to the decision-making processes of the polity to newcomers. Therefore, these countries could be more likely to give in to immigration-induced pressures than countries at the other end of the spectrum. This alternative and the main argument of this article are basically two sides of the same coin. The former states that different definitions of in-group and out-group explain the variation in voting rights. The latter assumes that the nature of the in-group and out-group is less important than the strength and pervasiveness of 'bridging bonds' which are created by generalized trust.

In order to test this hypothesis about different conceptions of citizenship, the following analysis uses an approach that is different from the one applied by Earnest (2006), who used a dichotomous variable that measured whether a country followed the legal tradition of *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli*. I argue that using this proxy as a predictor for voting rights is not analytically satisfying. Explaining one set of policies with another one overlooks the more interesting question about the sources of both. Granted, it may well be that citizenship policies do reflect attitudes of the general population. However, equally possible is that these legal regulations are the result of a host of other factors that are part of the political culture of a country. In order to account for this potential spuriousness, this study uses survey data to measure accurately the host societies' definitions of citizenship. Luckily, two surveys that have been conducted in the past couple of years allow me to do this. Both the European Values Study (EVS) and the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) asked questions that address this dimension. The ISSP's 2003 wave on national identity included the following item: 'Some people say that the following things are important for being truly [NATIONALITY]. Others say they are not important. How important do you think each of the following is[?]: To have [COUNTRY NATIONALITY] ancestry' (ISSP, 2003). Respondents could answer with 'very important', 'fairly important', 'not very important', and 'not important at all'. The European Values Study of 2008 included the same question with slightly different response categories. Instead of 'fairly important' and 'not very important', the EVS offered 'quite important' and 'not important'. The first and fourth categories remained the same (EVS, 2008).

The responses to this question should represent conceptions about citizenship. If individuals think that citizenship means membership of a nation, then ancestral relationships are crucial for prospective newcomers. If membership is understood as belonging to the state, this issue should be much less important.

This study constructs a unified aggregate-level variable from the ISSP and EVS, which is appropriate for two reasons. First, the general public's attitude toward what makes a 'true citizen' should not change much over time and especially not within just five years. Second, since the items from both surveys are so similar to each other, there is no methodological reason to object to this procedure. The raw correlation between the data points of those countries that were surveyed in both the ISSP and the EVS is relatively high ($r = .82$), which also justifies this approach.

Judicial politics. Several scholars argue that the presence of active and independent judiciaries has a substantial effect on how developed democracies treat immigrants. While Joppke (1998) argues that judiciaries tend to extend rights for immigrants, other authors such as Neuman (1992) suggest the opposite. Earnest's empirical analysis (2006) concludes that the courts do indeed have a

negative impact on the extent to which countries enfranchise noncitizens. Since this article uses a slightly different set of countries as the basis of its analysis, it is necessary to verify this finding. I use a binary indicator which is coded as 1 if a state's political system allows for judicial review and 0 if this is not the case.⁸ Data are drawn from the Comparative Political Data Set (CPDS) project (Armingeon et al., 2012).

Economic wealth. A society's economic situation might also be causally related to the enfranchisement of noncitizens. Alien suffrage could be the result of the spread of post-materialist values in wealthy countries. As Inglehart explains, post-materialists tend to be relatively open toward social change (Inglehart, 1981) and give high priority to the idea of freedom of choice (Inglehart and Welzel, 2005). These characteristics could create an environment that is very conducive to the passage of inclusive laws. In order to measure economic wealth, I use World Bank data on GDP per capita in 2011.

Size of the immigrant population. Lastly, it may be that countries with smaller numbers of immigrants do not feel the same pressure to enfranchise noncitizens. Therefore, the total size of a state's immigrant population has to be taken into account. In the following analysis, this article uses the percentage of immigrants in the total population in 2011. Numbers were obtained from the United Nations (2013).

Control variables. As mentioned earlier, the EU treaties of Amsterdam and Maastricht established mandatory voting rights for EU citizens at the local level (Waldrach, 2005),⁹ and to control for this, an 'EU dummy' is included in the model. Similarly, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Iceland are associated via the Nordic Passport Agreement (NPA), which allows citizens of these countries to travel and live in other Nordic states without a residence permit. This fact also needs to be taken into consideration. If most immigrants in these countries are from other Nordic neighbours, this may well explain why they have very inclusive franchise policies.¹⁰ I therefore add a control variable for the Nordic Passport Union to the model. It is coded as 1 for members of this group of countries and as 0 otherwise. Lastly, states that share a colonial past sometimes extend voting rights to the citizens of their former colonies or of their colonizer. A good example of this practice is the United Kingdom, where Irish and Commonwealth citizens have the right to vote in national elections (Bauböck, 2005: 685). The colonial past variable is coded as 1 if a state has some kind of colonial past (either as a colony or a colonizer) and as 0 otherwise.

Findings and discussion

Due to the categorical nature of my dependent variable, I estimated a series of ordered logistic regression models in order to analyse the data. In a first step, I estimated a 'base model' with only the dependent variable and my main independent variable (that is, generalized trust). In an incremental procedure, I then estimated seven additional models and successively added every other variable described above. This approach was chosen in order to investigate the robustness of the regression results. In order to save space, Table 2 only shows the base model (Model 1), the model with five independent variables (Model 2), and the full model with all independent variables (Model 3). Models 1, 2, and 3, as well as the other models that were estimated (but are not shown), demonstrate that the results of the analysis are robust to model specification. The following discussion will therefore centre on the results in Model 3.

The main finding of my statistical analysis is that there is a lot of evidence in support of the theory that generalized trust is an important predictor of noncitizen voting rights. The coefficient

Table 2. Ordered Logistic Regression Results for Noncitizen Voting Rights.

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3	
	β	SE	β	SE	β	SE
Generalized trust	0.107**	0.031	0.140**	0.046	0.113**	0.053
Judicial review			-2.041*	1.162	-2.617*	1.365
Conceptions about citizenship			0.024	0.035	0.031	0.068
GDP per capita			0.001	0.001	0.001	0.001
European Union			2.364**	0.920	2.489**	0.971
Immigrant population					0.032	0.068
Colonial ties					0.627	1.276
NPA					3.581	2.456
Cut point 1	0.831	0.843	3.001	3.306	3.196	3.761
Cut point 2	5.072**	1.120	8.090**	3.649	8.446**	4.061
Model statistics						
Log-likelihood	-30.28		-24.89		-23.75	
Prob. > χ^2	0.001		0.001		0.001	
Number of countries	45		45		45	

Notes: Standard error (SE). * $p < .10$; ** $p < .05$.

for this variable is positive and significant in every single model. The substantive effect is considerable. Using the software package Clarify (King et al., 2000), I calculated the predicted probabilities for being in each category of the dependent variable at different levels of generalized trust. Since an ordered logit is a nonlinear model, the effect of a variable is contingent on the values of the other variables in the data set. It is therefore necessary to choose a baseline specification in order to compare predicted probabilities. The most uncontroversial way to do this is to create a 'typical case' and set all variables in the data set to their median values. Specifically, this means that I compared predicted probabilities for (1) an EU member state (2) outside of Scandinavia (3) with a colonial past, (4) judicial review, (5) a per capita GDP of US\$30,670, and (6) an immigrant population of 7.4 per cent. Furthermore, (7) 69.7 per cent of the population in this hypothetical state believe that ancestry is an important criterion in order to be a 'true' citizen.

I graph the predicted probabilities for this 'typical case' across different values of generalized trust. Each curve represents the probability of being in one of the three categories of the dependent variable. The probability of having *no* voting rights for noncitizens starts out relatively high (above 50 percent) as the most likely outcome for the typical case described above. The probability then (per cent) and decreases constantly as societies become more trusting. At about 25 per cent generalized trust (that is, when 25 per cent of a country's host society self-identify as 'trustees'), the probability of granting no voting rights to noncitizens becomes the least likely outcome. Conversely, the predicted probability of having *limited* voting rights increases first and peaks at 83 per cent when roughly a quarter of the country's population is trusting. After this point, the probability of being in the middle category of the dependent variable becomes constantly smaller and at roughly 60 percent of per cent trusting individuals in a country, the predicted probability of granting a limited form of voting rights drops below 30 per cent. This inverted u-shape is in line with the theory of this article, which predicts lower probabilities of granting limited voting rights for countries with very high and very low trust values.

The probability of having *expansive* voting rights is very slim (close to 0 per cent) in untrusting countries. However, at increasing values of this variable, the predicted probability of having very

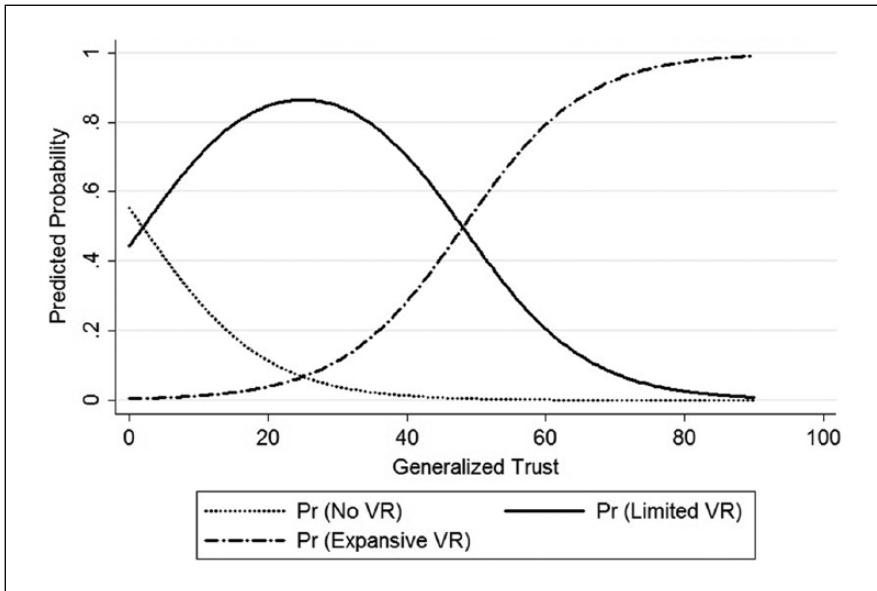


Figure 1. Predicted Probabilities for Noncitizen Voting Rights.

immigrant-friendly regulations rises markedly. At 48 per cent trust, expansive voting rights become the most likely outcome for a state, and at 60 per cent the predicted probability of granting expansive voting rights to immigrants crosses the 70 per cent threshold. The data presented above should be interpreted as strong evidence for the theory of this article: as countries become more trusting, they are more likely to move up in the dependent variable of this analysis and offer more inclusive voting rights to their noncitizen residents.

Another way to look at the substantive impact of the main independent variable in this article is to calculate predicted probabilities for one real case in the data set. I decided to choose Turkey since it is a country with a comparatively low level of generalized trust (11 per cent) and not a member state of the European Union. These two factors combined make the country a good basis for a comparison of changes in predicted probabilities. The software package Clarify allows me to set all independent variables to the actual values for Turkey, which is identified as a non-EU country outside of Scandinavia with judicial review, a colonial past, a per capita GDP of US\$10,524, and an immigrant population of 1.8 per cent. Furthermore, 11.1 per cent of the population self-identifies as trusting and 86.8 per cent of respondents believe that ancestry is important in order to be a 'true' Turkish citizen. These values produce predicted probabilities of 71 per cent for no immigrant voting rights, 28 per cent for limited voting rights, and 1 per cent for expansive voting rights. Holding all other variables at their observed values and just changing the value for generalized trust produces interesting results. At a trust value of 21, the most likely outcome changes from 'no voting rights' to 'limited voting rights' and at 66 per cent trust, 'expansive voting rights' become the most likely category. These calculations therefore corroborate the findings presented in Figure 1 and provide even more support for the theory that trust is an important predictor of noncitizen voting rights.

In order to ensure that the results are not driven by outliers, I dropped the two countries with the highest trust values (Denmark and Norway) from the data set and re-estimated Model 3. The results

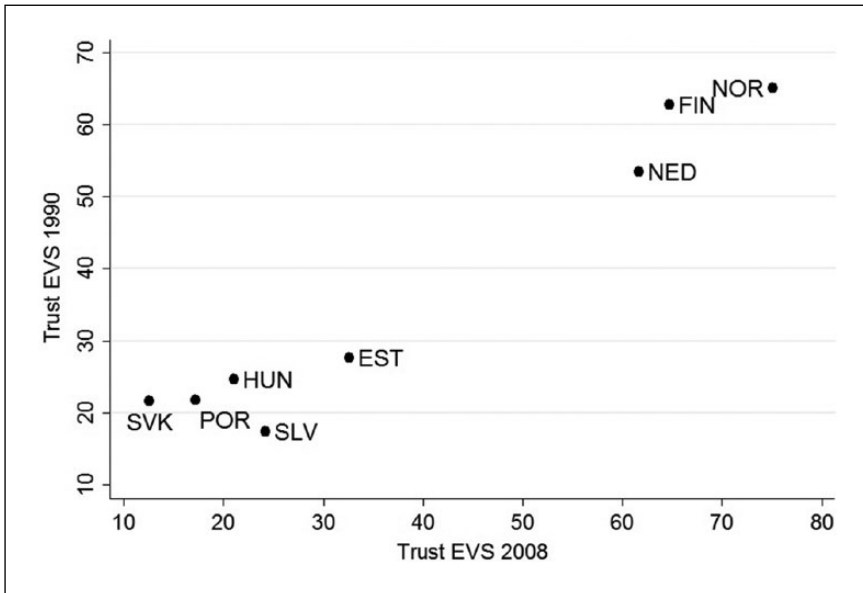


Figure 2. Levels of Generalized Trust in Eight European Countries.

(not shown) provide further evidence for the robustness of the findings: the size of the coefficient remains stable at 0.11 and it is still statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

As mentioned earlier, Hooghe et al. (2007) found that generalized trust and voting rights for immigrants are associated. The authors admit that they ‘do not have any evidence for the causal direction of this relationship’ (Hooghe et al., 2007: 16), however, they seem to favour the argument that liberal voting rights cause generalized trust. This would be an alternative explanation for the observed robust statistical relationship between voting rights and trust. For that reason, a closer inspection of the direction of the causal mechanism is in order.

This can be done with the help of the trust question in the EVS that is identical to that in the WVS. The EVS provides data for the trust levels in a relatively clearly defined group of countries, which allows researchers to track the changes of those levels over time. The purpose of Figure 2 is to investigate whether noncitizen voting rights can ‘bring people together’ and increase levels of generalized trust. Seven of the eight countries in this scatter plot introduced some form of noncitizen voting between the European Values Study’s second wave (in 1990) and fourth wave (in 2008). Furthermore, the Netherlands allowed noncitizen voting in 1985. If the decision to implement alien suffrage increased the trust levels in this country, it would not be reflected in the second wave, since any potential effect of alien suffrage on trust probably unfolds slowly.

If Hooghe et al. (2007) are correct, we should observe a clear increase in the trust levels of the eight countries in Figure 2. However, as the scatter plot demonstrates, this is not the case. Trust levels in these eight states are remarkably stable. There is an almost perfect correlation between data points ($r = .97$), and no clear upward trend becomes apparent as we would expect if the ‘trust-building hypothesis’ were true. This provides evidence *against* the interpretation that noncitizen voting generates trust by ‘bringing people together’ and *indirectly supports* my claim that trust leads to more inclusive voting rights.

Of the control variables and alternative explanations, only two are statistically significant: EU members are more likely to have expansive voting rights for noncitizens than non-EU countries,

Table 3. Predicted Probabilities for Changes in Binary Explanatory Variables.

	Pr (no VR)	Pr (limited VR)	Pr (expansive VR)
EU membership	7.4%**	83.0%**	9.6%**
No EU membership	44.7%**	54.0%**	1.3%**
Change	+37.3%**	-29.0%*	-8.3%**
Judicial review	7.4%**	83.0%**	9.6%**
No judicial review	1.4%**	46.0%**	52.6%**
Change	-6.0%*	-37.0%*	+43.0%*

Notes: All other variables are at their median values. * $p < .10$ ** $p < .05$. VR = voting rights.

and states with judicial review tend to have more restrictive voting rights for immigrants than states without judicial review ($p < 0.06$). The substantive effect of these two variables is considerable, as a calculation of predicted probabilities reveals. The ‘typical case’ described above is defined as an EU country with judicial review. It has a 7.4 per cent probability of granting no voting rights to noncitizens, an 83.0 per cent probability of granting limited voting rights, and a 9.6 per cent probability of granting expansive voting rights. Holding all other variables constant and just changing the value of the EU membership variable to 0 increases the probability of having no immigrant voting rights by about 37 per cent and decreases the probability of having very immigrant-friendly regulations by about 8 per cent. As the summary in Table 3 shows, the middle category of limited voting rights is still the most likely outcome, but the predicted probability for non-EU members drops markedly by 29 per cent. A change of the judicial review variable from 1 to 0 has a similarly strong (but reverse) effect. The probability of being in the highest category (that is, of granting expansive voting rights) increases substantially by 43 per cent, while the probability of offering no or limited voting rights decreases by 6 per cent and 37 per cent, respectively. This means that my model predicts limited voting rights as the most likely outcome for a ‘typical’ country with judicial review and expansive voting rights for a ‘typical’ country without judicial review.

These findings are hardly surprising. Out of the 45 states in the data set, more than half (that is, 28) are members of the European Union. Article 22 of the EU Treaty, which establishes mandatory voting rights for EU citizens at the local level, therefore clearly influences the statistical results.¹¹ Similarly, the fact that countries without judicial review tend to have more immigrant-friendly regulations is also not a new discovery and merely confirms the results obtained in previous analyses (Earnest, 2008). It has to be noted, however, that the concrete causal mechanism behind the relationship between these two variables is not entirely clear. It may well be that judges curtail voting rights for noncitizens or that they simply never consider the issue. A closer look at the histories of the countries in the data set provides some examples that lend support to the former interpretation: in the year 1990, the German constitutional court struck down a law in one of the country’s Bundesländer that established a form of local voting rights for long-term noncitizen residents. The court’s reasoning was that alien suffrage violated the principle of popular sovereignty (Bauer, 2008: 8). Similar decisions occurred in Austria (2002) and Japan (1995). However, this is hardly enough evidence to make a definite statement about the causal mechanism, and more in-depth research is necessary to investigate this relationship.

The results with regards to conceptions about citizenship constitute the final interesting finding of this article. Earlier research used the legal traditions of *jus sanguinis* or *jus soli* as their basis for measurement and concluded that ‘democratic majorities that view the nation as a multicultural community appear to be more likely to enfranchise resident aliens than states whose citizens view the nation as an ethnic community’ (Earnest, 2006: 263). I argue that the measure used in this

article should actually capture the host societies' feelings more accurately. The results are rather surprising. The data analysis suggests that conceptions about citizenship do not influence the degree of political inclusion of immigrants. In none of the models I estimated did the conceptions-about-citizenship variable reach statistical significance. More survey research is needed to help disentangle the relationship between noncitizen voting rights and host societies' conceptions about citizenship.

In sum, this article casts doubt on one argument that has been suggested by previous scholarship and provides evidence that generalized trust is an important explanatory factor for cross-national variation with regards to alien suffrage. It has to be noted, however, that some other potentially relevant explanatory variables cannot be included in this cross-sectional research design since they would require a time-series analysis. The most prominent example regarding this is the role of political parties (Earnest, 2006). The exclusion of this variable from the analysis is a necessity, however, since the data on trust are only available for a few years per polity and survey data on conceptions about citizenship only allow me to construct one observation per country.

Conclusion

This study has two major practical implications. First, as trust is a relatively constant trait and a strong predictor for immigrant voting rights, it is unlikely that all western democracies are going to converge on a common model of noncitizen enfranchisement anytime in the near future. It seems likely that frequent debates about this issue in many countries will not produce any substantial policy changes. Second, in the long term, this picture could (and probably will) change. It may be that host societies will become accustomed to their immigrant populations and will learn to integrate them into their 'in-group', thus making generalized trust a less necessary precondition for the extension of voting rights.

The political integration of immigrants remains an interesting and surprisingly under-studied field for future research. Participation in the electoral process is only one of many different aspects of political life in developed democracies. Others include participation in political parties, turnout, and the right of association. Quite similar to voting rights, there is a considerable amount of cross-national variation. Lastly, future research should focus on the legal traditions of *jus soli* and *jus sanguinis*. Since the general public's preferences about the nature of citizenship do not necessarily predict a state's policies in that realm, it would be interesting to see which factors determine the latter.

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Notes

1. For a good review of the literature on migration policies, see Boswell (2007).
2. One example may be found at <http://www.immigrantvoting.org/ivp/>.
3. In order to provide empirical evidence for the claim that naturalization policies are unaffected by generalized trust, I correlated the trust scores for the countries in this study with an indicator measuring their naturalization policies. Trust is measured as the proportion of people in each country who demonstrated a 'trusting' attitude in the World Values Survey. Data for naturalization policies are drawn from the MIPEX database developed by the British Council and the Migration Policy Group. Within a range of 0–100 higher scores indicate 'easier' access to citizenship for immigrants. The raw correlation between these two variables is very low ($r = .30$), which serves as empirical support for the theoretical expectation that generalized trust does not influence states' naturalization policies.
4. MIPEX also provides an indicator measuring a country's inclusiveness with regards to regional voting rights. However, since not all states in my data set hold regional elections, I decided to disregard this dimension for the construction of my dependent variable.
5. This coding rule leaves open the possibility that a state reaches a score of 200 by offering full voting rights on one dimension and discriminatory rights on the other two. These cases will be coded as having expansive voting rights since their regulations with regards to noncitizen enfranchisement rank well above the mean for contemporary developed democracies. In practice, this coding decision is not of particular importance. As Table 1 shows, only one country in the data set of this study meets this criterion (Uruguay). The findings of my statistical analysis are robust to an alternative specification in which Uruguay is categorized as having 'limited voting rights'.
6. The cutoff point of +8 was chosen in order to exclude young, unstable, or illiberal democracies.
7. According to the EU Treaty, European citizens living abroad also have the right to vote and to stand as a candidate in elections to the European Parliament. However, in accordance with previous research on this topic, voting rights to the European Parliament are not considered to be an aspect of national voting rights. Keeping in mind the low salience of elections to the European Parliament among EU citizens, this decision does not seem to be very problematic.
8. This binary indicator does not allow me to examine differences between countries with judicial review. As previous research has shown, some courts tend to be more 'activist' than others. However, the available direct measures of judicial activism (Lijphart, 1999) are only available for a small proportion of the countries covered in this analysis.
9. It is worth noting that my theory captures both the dynamics about EU treaties and the more general legislative process. EU treaties require both unanimity at the European level and ratification by all national legislatures. Decision-makers from a particular country therefore have several possibilities to prevent the passage of a policy proposal that is unacceptable to their general population. According to my argument, if a society is lacking in generalized trust, it will oppose the adoption of expansive noncitizen voting rights and a country's political leadership will comply since decision-makers do not want to hurt their chances of getting re-elected.
10. I would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the necessity to control for NPA status.
11. The large proportion of EU members in the data set poses the potential problem that the findings obtained in the analysis might apply only to this group of countries. In order to test for this possibility, I estimated an additional model (not shown) with an interaction term between the EU dummy and generalized trust. This interaction term is statistically insignificant, which suggests that the theory applies to all developed democracies and not just EU member states.

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Appendix

Table A1. Coding Rules for Noncitizen Voting Rights in Liberal Democracies (Based on MIPEX).

Score	Rule
Local voting rights	
0	No local voting rights.
50	Requirement of more than five years of residence, reciprocity, or other special conditions or special registration procedure, or only in certain municipalities.
100	Equal rights as nationals or requirement of less than or equal to five years of residence.
Local eligibility	
0	No local eligibility.
50	Requirement of more than five years of residence, reciprocity, or other special conditions or special registration procedure, or only in certain municipalities.
100	Equal rights as nationals or requirement of less than or equal to five years of residence.
National voting rights	
0	No national voting rights.
50	Reciprocity or other special conditions for certain nationalities.
100	Equal rights as nationals after a certain period of residence.