Chapter 9.
Naturalisation and Social Inclusion

Pieter Bevelander,
Associate professor and researcher at the Malmö Institute for Studies of Migration, Diversity and Welfare, Malmö University, Sweden

This chapter highlights the consequences of naturalisation for the social inclusion of immigrants in three areas: socio-economic, political and social. It focuses in particular on political integration by evaluating results of naturalisation and voting in Sweden – where non-citizens are allowed to vote in regional and local elections – as indicators of social inclusion.

Introduction

In today's globalised world, international migration and integration continue to be important issues. Related to this is the fact that most EU and OECD countries have seen increasing numbers of annual naturalisations. This suggests that alongside the continuous issue of managing international migration, including who and how many, the issue of integration into the host society is increasingly important. If we view integration as a continuous process, then naturalisation cannot be seen as the final product. Rather, naturalisation is one step in the integration process towards the creation of a socially cohesive society.

This is why, in recent decades, citizenship, *i.e*. naturalisation, or its acquisition by migrants as part of the integration process, has emerged as an important and contested issue on the political agenda of many EU and OECD countries. A number of countries have reformed their rules and regulations of citizenship acquisition as a way of favouring conditions for the inclusion of migrants. Allowing or retaining dual citizenship, as well as the introduction of tests and ceremonies, and changing the number of residence years are the most prominent changes in naturalisation policies.

In view of the large number of naturalisations in EU and OECD countries and concerns about poor inclusion of migrants, the consequences of the acquisition of citizenship are of major importance. So far scientific knowledge is limited and limited to certain scientific areas and disciplines, which means that the questions and general areas of interest are different.

In this chapter, the consequences of naturalisation are linked to the social inclusion or integration of individuals in three areas: socio-economic, political and social. In particular, it focuses on political integration by evaluating results of naturalisation and voting in Sweden as indicators of social inclusion.

9.1. Social inclusion

The concept of social inclusion is a somewhat elusive term and there seems to be little consensus as to what it actually means. However, in their review of social inclusion literature, Toye and Infanti (2004) argue that social inclusion is both an outcome and a process. It can be argued that social inclusion is a powerful normative concept that can serve as a framework and an ideal in policy-making and community-building. The social inclusion literature states that a basic goal of society is to enable its members to participate as valued, respected and contributing members (see Toye and Infanti, 2004; Laidlaw Foundation, 2002; European Union, 2001). The European Union defines social inclusion as:

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

The concept of inclusion is also linked to that of exclusion, since both are concerned with access to societal resources (whether these are tangible, like financial resources, or intangible, such as decision-making powers).

Much of the social inclusion literature focuses on tangible and required activities like working or access to a dwelling. These are non-negotiable, however. People need somewhere to live and families generally require an income from some kind of employment. Such measures might therefore not reflect actual inclusion and belonging. On the other hand, voluntary involvement in broad societal activities, like the membership of organisations, charitable activity and voting, should thus also be included as markers of inclusion. In the context of the European Union definition of social inclusion, for example, the act of casting a ballot in elections can be viewed as an indicator of inclusion, in that it is both a measure of participation and is ultimately connected to the decision-making process (European Commission, 2005).

Multidimensionality is a key attribute of inclusion theory. Being integrated in one social sphere (*i.e.* the labour force) and not another (*i.e.* social participation) does not result in inclusion. Instead, and in its broadest sense, inclusion requires a striving for full access in every social realm. In essence, then, social inclusion is seen as a prerequisite to well-being and as contributing to the achievement of it.

In the context of inclusion in its broadest sense of socio-economic integration, political participation and social integration, the situations in which minorities have much lower rates of inclusion than majority members become problematic, since this may indicate a lower degree of social inclusion or barriers to integration. Thus, measuring the independent effect of immigrant status on voting, after controlling for demographic and socio-economic factors, could indicate the degree to which minorities are included in society. We view citizenship is a form of social inclusion. As such, citizenship acquisition have a real impact on people's willingness to settle in a country, buy or rent a house or get involved in societal decisions, such as voting.

9.2. Consequences of naturalisation

If we assume that acquiring another nationality is mainly based on rational calculations, knowing the advantages and disadvantages of naturalisation and fully understanding the phenomenon are central. Although the immigrant's loss of his/her original nationality is often regarded as the primary cost of naturalisation, this can be offset by obtaining a passport of another country, *e.g.* Sweden, that facilitates travel within the European Union. The second positive consequence of naturalisation is the right to vote in elections – national and EU-related – in the new country.[1] Naturalisation also means increased employment possibilities in areas like the civil service, the police, the justice system and the military, since these are often open only to nationals.

Even though an individual cost/benefit-analysis gives an interesting slant to the naturalisation decision, Yang (1994) argues that this is not the point of departure of most studies on naturalisation. Existing research often focuses on the degree of immigrant integration as a determinant of naturalisation. In this context, Yang distinguishes two research traditions: one that emphasises the role of socio-economic achievements in the naturalisation process and another that stresses the importance of the immigrants' cultural adaptation to the host society and how their demographic characteristics affect the naturalisation decision. Despite the differences in the two traditions, Yang notes that they both use immigrants'

characteristics as *predictors* of the probability of naturalisation and view naturalisation as a result of immigrants' successful integration into the receiving country.

The omission of a cost/benefit-analysis to predict naturalisation is a shortcoming of both traditions. As already stated, costs could be related to loss of citizenship status in the country of origin. This might mean losing the right to re-migrate (a return premium) and may also imply the loss of a claim on inheritance or property in the country of origin. Furthermore, costs may include investing time and money in language courses and tests that prepare the immigrant for the naturalisation process. If we look at the direct benefits of naturalisation, and especially in relation to the labour market, we could turn the causal relation between socio-economic status and naturalisation around, so that instead of being the result of immigrants' socio-economic integration, naturalisation might be the cause of it.

In this regard, the socio-economic consequences of acquiring nationality are defined as changes in the economic situation of individuals due to naturalisation. For example, having a better legal position through naturalisation can mean unlimited access to the labour market or welfare benefits. In this respect, the consequences of citizenship acquisition are dependent on the legal regulations of each country (Bevelander and DeVoretz, 2008). In terms of political participation and the consequences of citizenship, non-citizens can neither vote nor stand for office in national elections.

Finally, citizenship acquisition may have social implications in various areas of social life that are difficult to identify. This includes subjective factors that relate to motivation and to things like feelings of belonging, security, discrimination and social contacts. An attempt was made by Bevelander and Veenman (2006) to link naturalisation and social/cultural integration using survey data for the Netherlands. Their general results indicated low connection between the two. Controlling for demographic factors and educational level, proxies for cultural integration, (self-identification, modernisation and having contacts with Dutch natives) showed that differences between the sexes become prominent in the likelihood of obtaining Dutch citizenship. Turkish and Moroccan women who score high on the "modernisation" scale have a significantly higher probability to naturalise.

Data on the social consequences of naturalisation are lacking in Europe. Anecdotal evidence suggests however that non-nationals are often subjected to cumbersome and long administrative procedures, such as when renewing residence and work permits, arranging visas for travel etc. Naturalisation could thus make social life considerably easier (Reichel, 2010).

9.3. Migrant voting: earlier studies

A number of studies have tried to identify factors that affect the likelihood and nature of the population's voting behaviour. Studies that include an analysis of the voting behaviour of immigrants and their descendants are far less frequent, however, partly due to a lack of data and partly because immigrants do not generally have voting privileges at national level until citizenship has been granted. This means that relatively few studies focus exclusively on voting and immigrant status, and even fewer include foreign citizens.

Three general themes have emerged in the literature: *i)* immigrants vote less than native-born; *ii)* the factors that result in the decision to vote differ according to immigrant status and country of birth; *iii)* there is often an overlap between the socio-economic

factors that impact voting and those of immigrants, *i.e.* attributes that characterise low voting probabilities (*e.g.* low education, young, low income) are often shared by immigrant populations.

Many studies have found that, compared to native-born citizens, immigrants are less likely to vote (Adman and Strömblad, 2000; Järnbert and Örhvall, 2003; Öhrvall, 2006; Oskarsson, 2003) for Sweden and for other countries Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001), Bass and Casper (2001), Chui *et al.* (1991), Cho (1999) and Lien (2004).

To what extent are these differences a product of socio-economic and demographic factors? Adman and Strömblad (2000) studied the electoral participation of immigrants in Sweden in local elections in which non-citizens are allowed to vote. Using a sample of 3 000 individuals from the 1998 election, they found that immigrants were less likely to vote – although a control for background factors caused these differences to disappear. They concluded that this was an indication of the effects of naturalisation (see also Bousetta, 1997; Oskarsson, 2003). Using a larger sample of 2002 Swedish election data, Öhrvall (2006) found a clear difference in participation between foreign-born citizens and non-citizens. However, after controlling for various background factors he found very little difference in electoral participation between foreign-born and Swedish-born children of immigrants. He argued that excluding immigrants from national elections reduced people's inclination to vote in municipal and provincial elections. He also argued that immigrants who were not socialised in the Swedish political system were the least interested in local elections (Öhrvall, 2006; see also Bäck and Soininen, 1994).

Likewise, using the Canadian Election Survey data White *et al.* (2006) found that immigrants in general have similar voting participation rates to native-born after controlling for education and income. Similarly, using the 2002 wave of the Equality Security Community Survey, Bevelander and Pendakur (2009) found that in general the combination of socio-demographic and social capital attributes overrides the impact of immigration and ethnicity and suggests that the minority attribute does not impact voting.

Looking specifically at those factors that impact voting behaviour, a survey of the literature and conducted studies show that different variables can affect an individual's voting probability positively, negatively or not at all. When looking at European minorities living in the United States, Tuckel and Meisel (1994) argued that demographic and socio-economic factors like age, education and labour force characteristics were dominant factors that explained voting probabilities (see also DeSipio, 1996; Bass and Casper, 2001; Verba *et al.*, 1995).

Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) extend the immigrant voting behaviour model by adding controls for generation, English language proficiency, length of stay, ethnic residential concentration and political socialisation in the home country. Across the generations they found different patterns of voting participation in the different racial/ethnic groups. With the exception of Black and Asian-American immigrants, a longer stay in the United States appeared to increase the voting probability. Coming from a repressive regime had a weak negative effect on voting participation. Language proficiency, here measured at state level by the presence of Spanish-language ballots and proximity to co-ethnics, did not have a strong effect on the voting probability.

The preceding review suggests that why immigrants have lower voting rates it is not totally clear. Evidence from the United States (see DeSipio, 1996; Bass and Casper, 2001; Verba *et al.*, 1995; Tuckel and Meisel, 1994) suggests that differences are largely a result of demographic and socio-economic factors, while evidence from Europe and Canada (see for

example Chui *et al.,* 1991; Öhrvall, 2006; Messina, 2006) points to factors associated with socialisation and integration. Similarly, White *et al.* (2006) found that when the length of residency increased the voting probability of immigrants also increased. Ramakrishnan and Espenshade (2001) challenged these claims, however, and argued that differences in voting probabilities could be reproduced from one generation to another.

9.4. Citizenship and voting

Another area of interest is the impact of citizenship acquisition on voter participation. The fact that non-citizens can vote in local elections in a number of European countries leads to discussions about the intrinsic value of citizenship as a measure of belonging and inclusion.

Empirical results of the 2002 election showed that immigrants who had Swedish citizenship had a higher voting probability than those who were non-citizens. Öhrvall (2006) suggests that it could be that immigrants who obtain Swedish citizenship are more committed to the country than non-citizens and, as a result, are more likely to vote. When comparing the voting results of citizens and non-citizens in a number of European countries in the most recent elections, Messina (2006), argued that obtaining citizenship and increased years of residency in the country were positively related to higher rates of electoral participation.

Matching Swedish electoral survey data with information from Swedish registers, Bevelander and Pendakur (2010) studied the voting behaviour of natives and immigrants. Moreover they assessed the correlates of voting of Swedish-born and immigrant residents by using instrumental variable regressions to estimate the impact of citizenship acquisition.

Their descriptive analysis showed that the overall rate of voting is high in Sweden. Eighty percent of the total population voted in the 2006 municipal election. However, their results suggest substantial differences by age, place of birth, income and level of schooling. As suggested by the literature, younger citizens are less likely to vote. Only 69% of those less than 25 years old voted in the municipal election as compared to 86% of 55- to 64-year-olds. People who are not married are also less likely to vote than those who are married. Having a partner who is Swedish makes a big difference: nine out of ten people with Swedish partners voted. As schooling increases, the proportion of people who vote also increases; however, obtaining the last level of schooling outside Sweden has a strong negative effect – only 61% of people in this category voted, as compared to 82% who were schooled in Sweden. Income makes a substantial difference: only about half of people with no income voted, whereas over 90%of people in the top quintile voted. Renters are less likely to vote than owners. Being born outside Sweden generally results in lower voting probabilities. Less than 60%of immigrants from Europe, Africa, the Middle East and East sia voted. However over 60%of immigrants from the Americas and South Asia voted. Non-citizens are less likely to vote – just over a third of non-citizens voted in the 2006 municipal election.

Their results indicate that the characteristics of the municipality of residence make a difference. The larger the city, the less likely people are to vote. However, the larger the immigrant population, the more likely people are to vote. The employment rate also makes a difference. However, having minorities on council does not make a significant difference in voting.

Summarising the results connected to indicators of inclusion – level of income and schooling, housing tenure, having a Swedish spouse and citizenship are all strong determinants of voting. What is interesting to note however, is that the soft measures – hose of citizenship acquisition and having a Swedish spouse are actually among the strongest in the model. Further, the contextual variables, which are also linked to inclusion, are very strong. Indeed, as the number of immigrants in a city increases, the probability of voting also increases (see table in the Annex 9.A1).

With the use of instrumental variable regression they ask the question: to what degree do contextual and individual characteristics override those of immigrant status? And how important is citizenship in determining voting propensities and enhancing social inclusion?

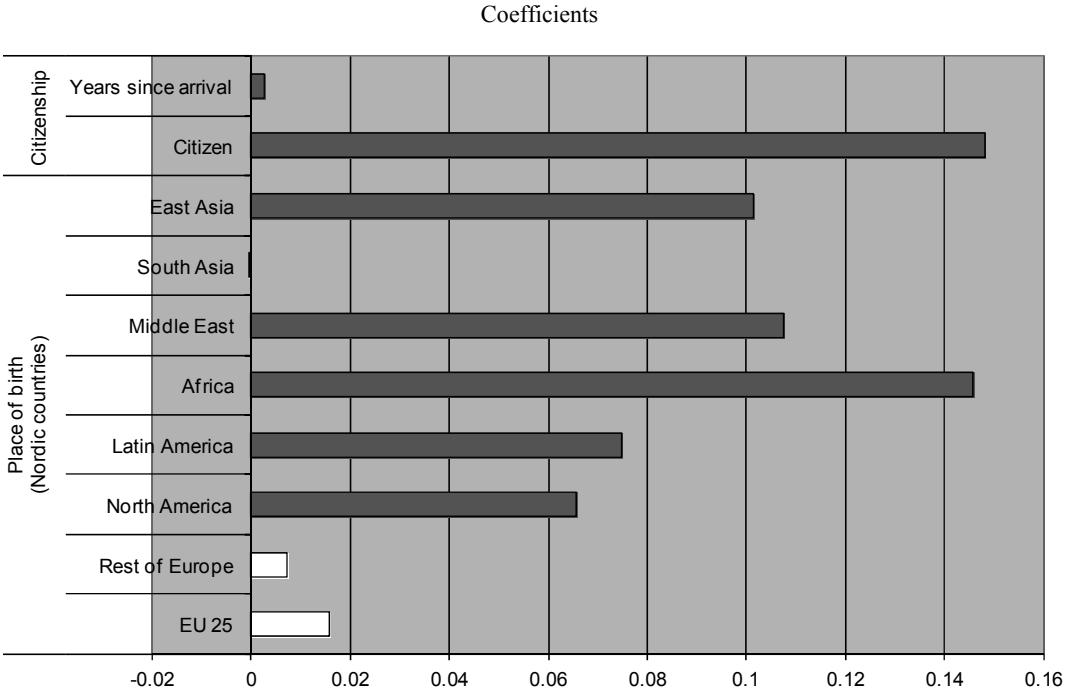
Results from regressions with just immigrants show that contextual variables in general, have only weakly significant results. For the immigrant population, as the size of the city goes up, voting goes down, and as the size of the immigrant population increases in a city, voting declines. Among the demographic variables, having a Swedish partner and having children have strong positive effects on voting. Males are less likely to vote as compared to females.

Higher levels of schooling are associated with higher voter participation. However there is no significant impact on attaining schooling outside Sweden. Thus, in terms of voting, if you are an immigrant, it does not appear to matter where you obtained your schooling. As is to be expected, the impact of income is strong and positive. Immigrants in the highest income quintile are much more likely to vote as compared to immigrants without any income.

Place of birth matters and citizenship matters (Figure 9.1). As compared to immigrants from Nordic countries, immigrants from Europe outside the European Union and South Asia are less likely to vote, and those from Africa, the Middle East and East Asia are more likely to vote after controlling for the other variables in the model. The impact of citizenship acquisition is very strong equal in strength to being in the top two income quintiles, having a Swedish partner or having the highest level of schooling.

It may be that the results for the total immigrant population are driven by a small number of country-of-birth groups. For example, if citizenship is strongly significant for a large group like Nordics it is possible that general results are just driven by the Nordic population since this is a large immigrant population in Sweden. Results across different countries show that citizenship acquisition appears to have a far greater impact for some groups as compared to others (Figure 9.2). Immigrants from Nordic countries, European countries outside the European Union, and immigrants from the Middle East and East Asia are all far more likely to vote if they have citizenship. What this suggests is that citizenship is far more important to participation for some groups than others. However at the same time, it should be recognised that roughly two-thirds of all immigrants come from these four regions.

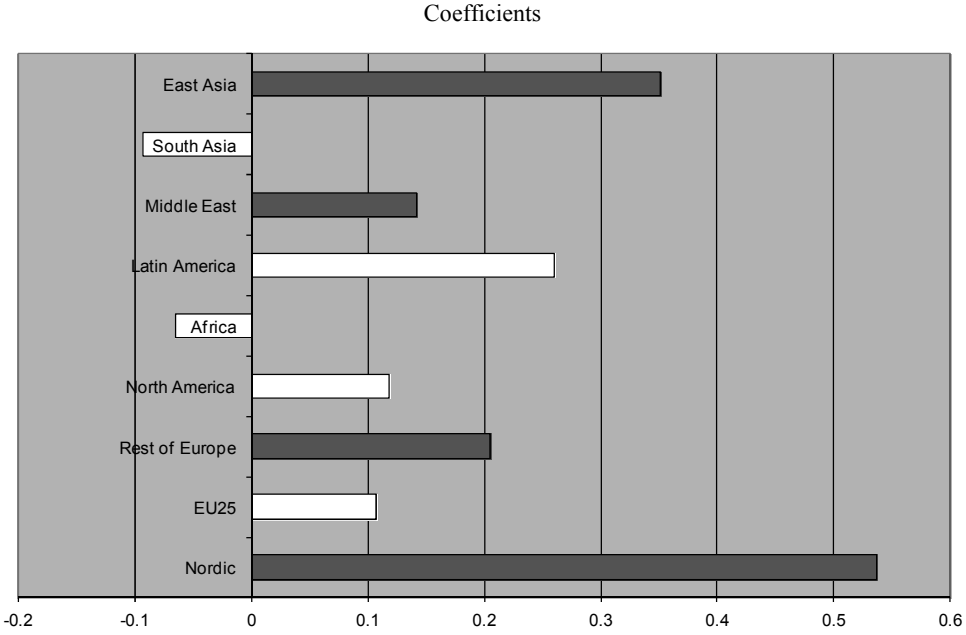
Figure 9.1. Influence of country of birth and citizenship on voter participation: results from instrumented regression controlling for demographic and social-economic characteristics



Note: Filled in bars are significant at 0.05.

Source: Bevelander and Pendakur (2010).

Figure 9.2. Impact of citizenship on voter participation: results from nine separate instrumented regressions (by geographical area)



Note: Filled in bars are significant at 0.05.

Source: Bevelander and Pendakur (2010).

9.5. Conclusions

This review of the consequences of naturalisation, with a specific focus on various dimensions of the social inclusion of immigrants found that, the socio-economic effects of naturalisation have been studied to some degree by, for example, Bevelander and DeVoretz (2008), who looked at several countries in both Europe and North-America, Mazzolari (2007) who focused on the United States, Steinhardt (2008) on Germany and Bratsberg, Ragan and Nasir (2002) on the United States. All these scholars have indicated that "naturalisation" has had positive effects on the employment situation and income levels of immigrants (OECD, 2010).

As for the extent to which naturalisation has consequences in other areas like political participation and more specific voting behaviour, very little is known. Research has mainly focused on migrant voting patterns rather than how they are affected by naturalisation. Bevelander and Pendakur (2010) are an exception, however, and have found that in Sweden citizenship acquisition is a prominent factor that explains how immigrants vote. In general, immigrants who naturalised were far more likely to vote than those who did not. They viewed voting as a "soft" measure of social inclusion that was related to a willingness to participate and to a sense of belonging.

Their analysis included a number of "hard" measures of social inclusion like housing, education and income. It was found that in most cases, immigrants who rented their homes were less likely to vote than immigrants who owned them. Being in one of the top income quintiles increased the voting probability, although immigrants in the bottom three-fifths of the income bracket tended to have a similar voting probability.

Soft indictors of social inclusion include having a Swedish spouse and the impact of citizenship acquisition. Both these variables were found to have a significant impact on the voting probability. Indeed, the impact of citizenship acquisition is significant enough to largely wipe out the effect of years in the country. In other words, citizenship as integration and inclusion, rather than the more traditional "time in the country", results in immigrants being motivated to vote. It is possible that citizenship offers people an opportunity to realise that they do have a stake in what is happening politically in the host country.

Like voting, citizenship acquisition is a symbolic act. It can be viewed as a measure of inclusion and belonging because it reflects an immigrant's willingness to be part of and take part in the host society. The cost of not taking up citizenship, especially in Sweden, is low. In spite of this, it would appear that citizenship has a tangible and significant impact on people's willingness to participate in the electoral process. Öhrvall (2006) contended that one possible reason for the lower voter participation rates of non-citizens in Sweden could be ineligibility to vote in national elections, despite municipal and provincial elections being held on the same day.

Many EU and OECD countries have witnessed a "hardening" of the rules pertaining to naturalisation. This is manifested in the introduction of more extensive citizenship tests, with questions about cultural and social integration and a more thorough language testing. However, as yet very little is known about the impact of these tests on the integration of newcomers. Using survey data for the Netherlands, Bevelander and Veenman (2008) test if integration courses have an effect on the probability to become a citizen. They found no effect however.

By way of conclusion, much more research is both necessary and recommended in a number of areas relating to social inclusion. Although research into socio-economic integration has begun, it is still in its early stages. Especially with the use of longitudinal data, the effect of naturalisation would be more effectively measured without the influence of other correlated factors of integration. When it comes to naturalisation and the effects on political integration and social/cultural integration, research has barely scratched the surface. As the availability of longitudinal data in these integration areas is very difficult to obtain, the instrumental variable (IV) method used in Bevelander and Pendakur 2010 could be a viable alternative when studying naturalisation effects with cross-sectional data.

Note

1. In many European countries (*e.g.* the Netherlands and Sweden) non-EU inhabitants are entitled to vote and seek office in municipal elections.

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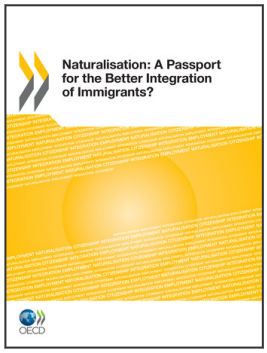
Annex 9.A1. Regression results on voting for Swedish residents

	Variable	Comparison		Coefficient	S.E.	Sig
Observations				70 871		
Prob>F				0		
R2				0.15		
Contextual variables			Log of city population	-0.02	0.01	**
			Log of immigrant pop.	0.02	0.01	***
			City employment rate	0.10	0.04	**
			% of minorities on council	0.00	0.00	
Demographic characteristics	Sex	(females)	Male	-0.04	0.00	***
	Age	(18-24)	25-34	-0.04	0.01	***
			35-44	-0.04	0.01	***
			45-54	-0.01	0.01	
			55-64	0.03	0.01	***
			65+	0.07	0.01	***
Socio-economic characteristics	Marital Status	(single)	Married	0.01	0.01	
			Separated/divorced	-0.01	0.01	*
			Widowed	0.01	0.01	
	Background of spouse	(not Swedish)	Partner is Swedish	0.07	0.01	***
	Presence of children	(no children)	With children	0.03	0.00	***
	Schooling		Lower secondary	0.05	0.01	***
			Upper secondary	0.06	0.01	***
			Lower university	0.13	0.01	***
			Upper university	0.14	0.01	***
			Last level outside Sweden	-0.03	0.01	*
			Lower secondary	-0.01	0.02	
			Upper secondary	0.02	0.02	
			Lower university	0.00	0.02	
			Upper university	0.02	0.02	
	Housing tenure	(own house)	Own apartment	-0.03	0.00	***
			Rent	-0.06	0.00	***
	Income quintile	(no income)	Quintile 1	0.04	0.01	***
			Quintile 2	0.07	0.01	***
			Quintile 3	0.11	0.01	***
			Quintile 4	0.14	0.01	***
			Quintile 5	0.15	0.01	***
Immigrant status	Country of birth	(Sweden, two Swedish parents)	Nordic	-0.15	0.02	***
			EU 25	-0.16	0.02	***
			Rest of Europe	-0.22	0.02	***
			N. America	-0.17	0.02	***
			Latin Amer.	-0.11	0.03	***
			Africa	-0.08	0.02	***
			Middle East	-0.13	0.02	***
			S. Asia	-0.21	0.02	***
			E. Asia	-0.12	0.03	***
			Sweden (two imm. parents)	-0.08	0.01	***
			Sweden (one imm. parent)	-0.03	0.01	***
	Citizenship	(not Swedish)	Citizen	0.25	0.01	***
			Years since arrival	0.00	0.00	***

*/**/***: significant at the 10%/5%/1% level, respectively.

Source: Bevelander and Pendakur (2010).



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