

Non-Citizen Voting Rights, Naturalization and Integration

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Intensified by the recent arrivals of refugees and generally increasing levels of ethnic diversity, Swiss and European governments need to design of policies that catalyze the integration of immigrants and facilitate the social cohesion of host communities. Against this background, our goal is to evaluate the effectiveness of two policies, non-citizen voting rights and naturalization, to foster immigrant integration.

Specific research questions

	Determinants	Consequences
NCVR	❶ What are the instrumental and preference-based drivers of NCVR in Grisons and Zurich?	❷ Do NCVR catalyze the political and social integration of immigrants?
Migration-Mobility Nexus	Shift of regulation of democratic inclusion to local level (opting-in regime)	Foreigners' motivation to take over rights <i>and</i> obligations
	Power sharing	Integration
	Regulation of naturalization of 3 rd generation foreigners	Access to and exclusion from citizenship
Naturalization law	What are the forces of more or less strict naturalization requirements? - NCVR - Power dilution	❸ Can low-cost information campaigns encourage eligible immigrants to apply for citizenship? ❹ What are the barriers to citizenship and can nudges overcome them?

❷ How do NCVR affect naturalization in Sweden?

Institutional setting

- Sharp assignment rule of local and regional voting rights after 3 years of stay in the country.
- Immigrants become eligible to apply for naturalization after 4 years (refugees) or 5 years (others).

Theory

Participatory versus disincentive effect for pull and push migration.

Method: Difference-in-differences estimates exploiting local randomization (± 10 days) around the eligibility threshold.

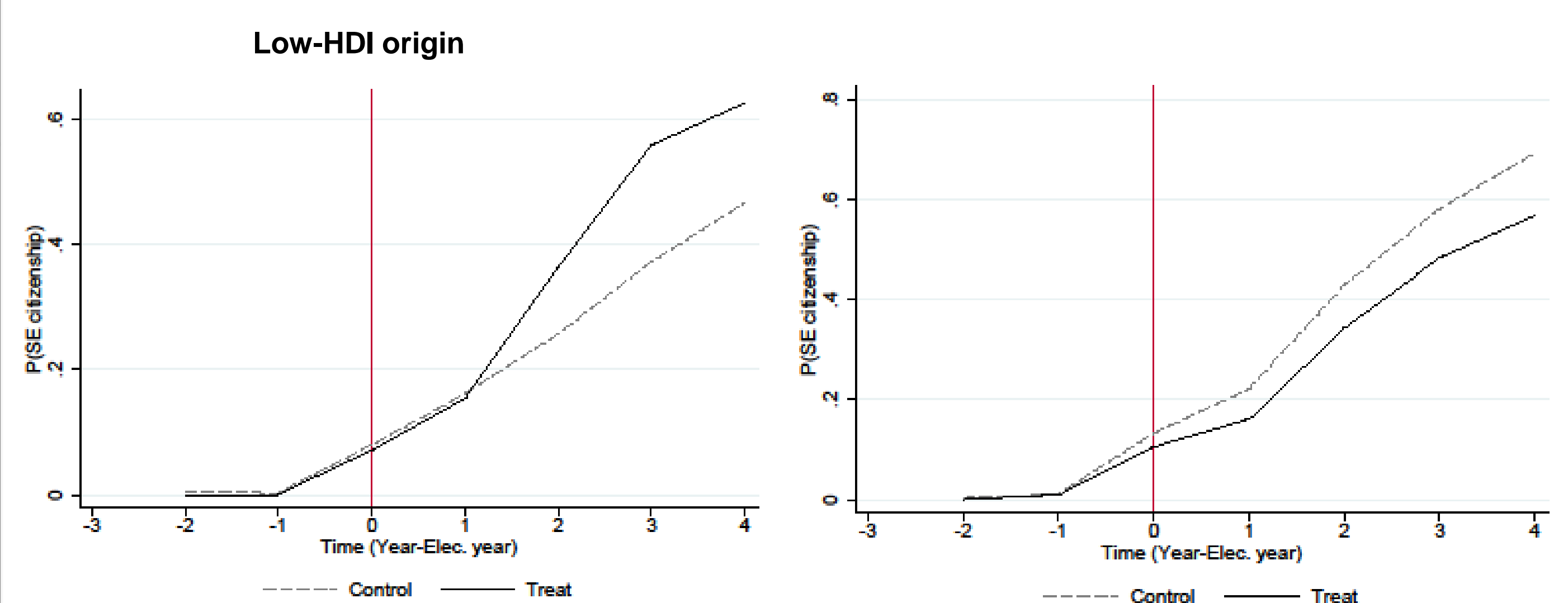


Figure 1: Probability of naturalization for treated and control groups for groups of immigrants based on the Human Development Index (HDI) in the country of origin.

Scientific output

- ❶ Stutzer, A. & M. Slotwinski (2021). Power Sharing at the Local Level: Evidence on Opting-In for Non-Citizen Voting Rights. *Constitutional Political Economy*, 32(1): 1-30.
- ❷ Slotwinski, M., A. Stutzer & P. Bevelander (2020). From Participants to Citizens? Democratic Voting Rights and Naturalization Behavior. ZEW DP No. 20-055. Mannheim
- ❸ Ward, D., J. Pianzola & D. Hangartner (2019). Large-Scale Information Campaigns Increase Naturalization Rates. Mimeo, ETH Zurich.
- ❹ Hangartner, D., S. Kurer, J. Pianzola, A. Stampi-Bombelli & D. Ward (2022): Identifying and Overcoming Barriers to Citizenship. Evidence from an RCT in Switzerland. Mimeo.
- ❺ Zimmermann, S. & A. Stutzer (2021). The Consequences of Hosting Asylum Seekers for Citizens' Policy Preferences. Forthcoming *European Journal of Political Economy*.

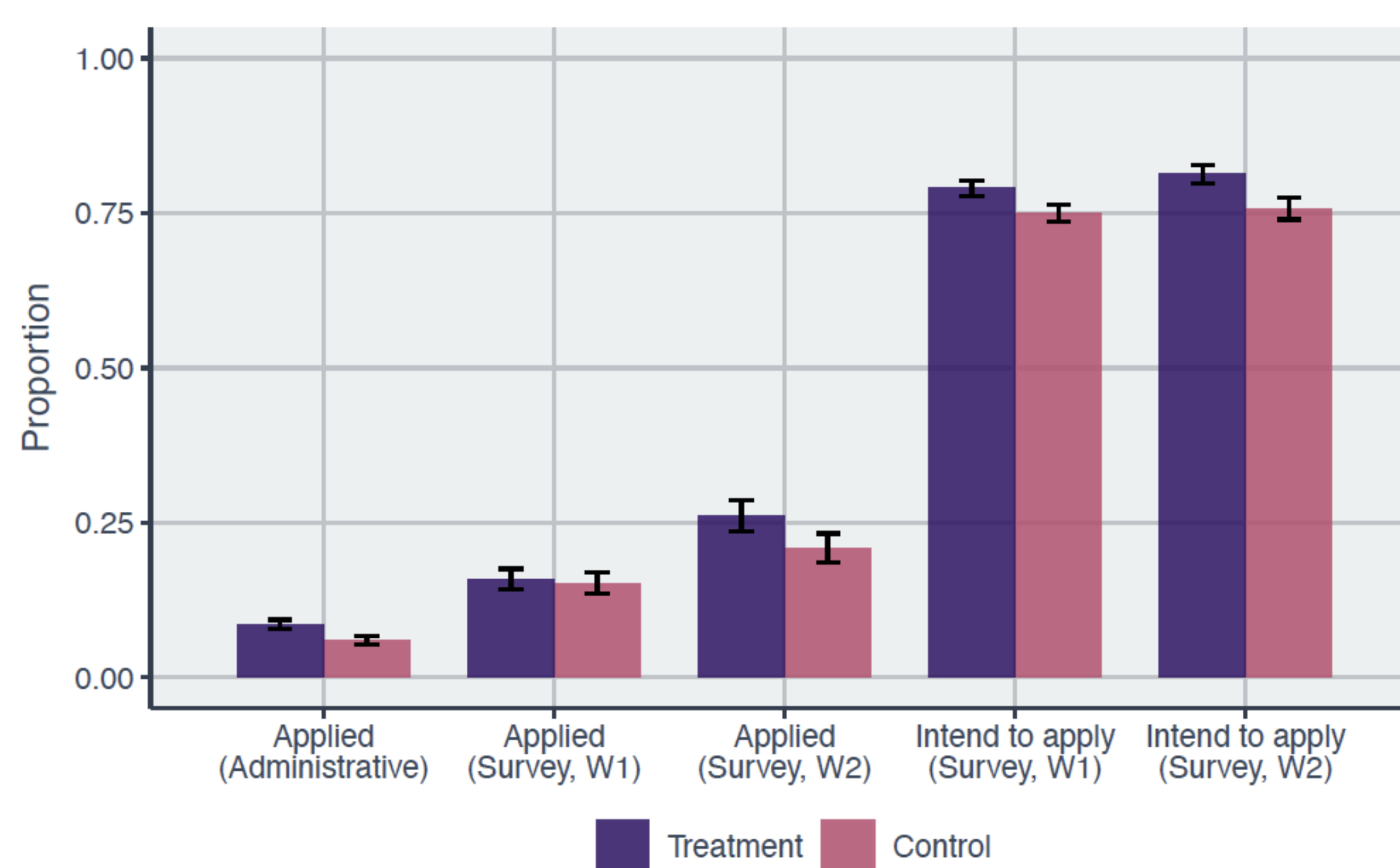
❸ Can large-scale information campaigns increase naturalization rates?

Institutional setting: The City of Zurich sent in 2019/20 letters to ~11,000 eligible immigrants encouraging them to apply for citizenship.

Theory: Identify and overcome barriers to citizenship using low-cost nudges.

Method: RCT that randomizes the timing of the letter.

Finding: 40% increase in application rate over control.



Main effect: 2.5 pp increase in application rate.

Figure 2: Estimates of the effect of informational letters on application intentions and behavior.

Plan

	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4
Sub-project 1		WP ❶	WP ❷ ❸	
Sub-project 2			WP ❹	WP ❺

Abbr.: Working paper (WP)

Interim conclusions

1. NCVR systematically affect the propensity to naturalize.
2. Low-cost informational campaigns can overcome barriers to citizenship.