

ICMPD Working Paper No. 4

**Regulating Political
Incorporation of Immigrants –
Naturalisation Rates in Europe**

David Reichel

December 2012

About ICMPD

The International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), established in 1993 by Austria and Switzerland, is an international organisation that works in migration-related fields. Although ICMPD has a European basis, it carries out its activities throughout the world, including in Europe, Africa, Central Asia and the Middle East. Through its six Competence Centres, ICMPD provides its 15 Member States and numerous partners with in-depth knowledge and expertise in dealing with the phenomena of migration. It does so through using a holistic 3-pillar approach: research, capacity building and migration dialogues.

ICMPD's Research Unit aims to further knowledge on migration-related issues, to facilitate cooperation and synergy within and beyond the research community and to respond to an increased demand for a more policy-relevant research. It has built a reputation for research on international migration trends, patterns and policies in the wider European context based on comparative analysis. This work is policy-oriented and empirical with an interdisciplinary and international approach.

Acknowledgements

This paper was prepared in the framework of the project “European indicators of migrant integration” funded by the European Commission and implemented by the Migration Policy Group in partnership with European Service Network, Free University Brussels and ICMPD.

The author thanks Bernhard Perchinig and Maegan Hendow for helpful comments. The author remains responsible for any errors. The conclusions and views expressed in the paper reflect those of the author.

International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD)

Gonzagagasse 1

A-1010 Vienna

Austria

www.icmpd.org

International Centre for Migration Policy Development

Vienna, Austria

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission of the copyright owners.

The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the author.

ICMPD Working Paper 4

Regulating Political Incorporation of Immigrants – Naturalisation Rates in Europe

David Reichel

Abstract

This paper describes and analyses the usefulness of naturalisation rates as an indicator for political incorporation of migrants in Europe. This paper was developed in light of the production of indicators of migrant integration across Europe by the European Commission, endorsed by the Ministerial Conference in Zaragoza in 2010. One such indicator is generally defined as the “share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship”. The paper provides an overview of naturalisation rates in Europe by analysing existing data since 1998, discussing and examining different ways of calculating naturalisation rates, as well as seeking to explain differences in naturalisation rates across time and space. In addition, a case study on naturalisation rates in Austria is included, to further elaborate naturalisation rates. The paper shows that naturalisation rates – calculated as the percentage of annual acquisitions of citizenship to the total number of foreign citizens at the beginning of the year – are influenced by a variety of factors, including naturalisation policies and demographic developments. They, however, serve as a good general indicator for political incorporation of immigrants in European countries.

Keywords: Citizenship Acquisition, Naturalisation Rate, Citizenship Policy, Nationality, Integration

Contents

1 Introduction	3
2 Definitions and methodological aspects	4
3 Naturalisation rates in Europe – an overview	6
3.1 Number of citizenship acquisitions	6
3.2 Naturalisation rates	7
3.3 Stocks of naturalised immigrants	9
4 Explaining naturalisation rates through policies	15
5 Case study Austria	18
6 Conclusions	22
References	23

1 Introduction

It remains a personal decision whether or not to apply for citizenship of a country. However, access to citizenship continues to be regulated at the national level in European countries since it is the normative right of nation states to grant access to national citizenship. The number most often used for indicating naturalisation practices is the naturalisation rate. This demographic indicator has been used as a tool to describe changes in the composition of national populations as well as an indicator of how accessible citizenship of a given country is, and therefore the practice of political incorporation of foreign citizens.

Most recently some discussions about the usefulness of the naturalisation rate as a demographic indicator have arisen, which partly question the usefulness and validity of naturalisation rates (see Bauböck/ Helbling 2011). This paper investigates naturalisation rates in Member States of the European Union in order to obtain a better understanding of which information this particular indicator conveys.

In addition, the Zaragoza indicators of migrant integration include the indicator “share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship” in the area of active citizenship. However, due to absence of data, the naturalisation rate was defined as the number of naturalisations during a year as a percentage of all foreign citizens at the beginning of the year (Eurostat 2011: 244). In this paper, I will argue that this was a good decision, because annual naturalisation rates better reflect current citizenship policies compared to the number of stocks of naturalised immigrants.

The main questions posed in this paper are: To what extent is there a difference in the practices of political incorporation of immigrants in European countries as indicated by (different) naturalisation rates? What is the influence of citizenship policies on naturalisation rates?

Following a section elaborating the definitions of different types of naturalisation rates, a comprehensive overview of naturalisation rates in Europe will be given based on data from Eurostat. Next, the section will investigate the impact of citizenship policies, indicated by the MIPEX Nationality, on naturalisation rates in Europe. The paper ends with a special case study of naturalisation rates in Austria.

2 Definitions and methodological aspects

Since there is no 'official' definition of naturalisation rate, several approaches and ways of calculating naturalisation rates can be found. Typically, the naturalisation rate is defined as the number of naturalisations during a given year as the percentage of the total number of foreign citizens residing in the same geographical entity in the same year (at the beginning of the year).

Naturalisation rates thus indicate how many persons out of all potential candidates actually do naturalise (not counting potential naturalisations abroad). It is therefore an annual number of changes in the population structure according to nationality. The indicators can be further refined according to types of naturalisations and citizenship acquisitions, the lengths of residence of immigrants and further demographic information of the target group, such as age, gender, country of birth, and many more. The paper does not go into detail of this discussion, because the main aim of the paper is to examine the usefulness of general naturalisation rates, where only general differentiations will be made. It is however important to be aware that there are different types of citizenship acquisitions after birth¹ (cf. Waldrauch 2006). Some scholars even prefer to include citizenship acquisitions at birth of children of non-nationals to account for different policies across countries (Janoski 2010).

This paper uses data from Eurostat which provides data on citizenship acquisitions, defined as *grants of citizenship awarded by the reporting country to persons who were previously citizens of another country or stateless*.² The foreign population is defined as the *usually resident population* without the citizenship of the country of residence as recorded on 1 January of the reference year.³

Another way of defining naturalisation rate could be the *percentage of immigrants who were foreign nationals at the time of immigration and have acquired nationality of their country of residence*. This indicator represents the stocks of immigrants who have acquired citizenship, contrary to the usual naturalisation rate, which indicates flows of changes in the national population. Data on this indicator is not easily available and relies on survey statistics, since many countries do not keep track of naturalised immigrants in their population registers.

¹ In addition to ordinary naturalisation, acquisitions of citizenship can be differentiated by the legal basis for acquisitions, such as based on *ius soli* or *ius sanguinis* regulations, spousal extension of citizenship acquisition, or reacquisition of citizenship, to mention a few (see <http://www.eudo-citizenship.eu/databases/modes-of-acquisition>).

² Eurostat (2010): Acquisition and Loss of Citizenship. Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure. Last update 12 April 2010. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/migr_acqn_esms.htm.

³ Cf. Eurostat (2010): Population by citizenship and by country of birth. Reference Metadata in Euro SDMX Metadata Structure (ESMS). Last update 12 April 2010. http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/cache/ITY_SDDS/EN/migr_stock_esms.htm. *Usual residence* is defined as *the place at which a person normally spends the daily period of rest, regardless of temporary absences for purposes of recreation, holiday, visits to friends and relatives, business, medical treatment or religious pilgrimage or, in default, the place of legal or registered residence* (cf. EC Regulation 862/2007) and is often indicated by an actual or expected length of residence of 12 months.

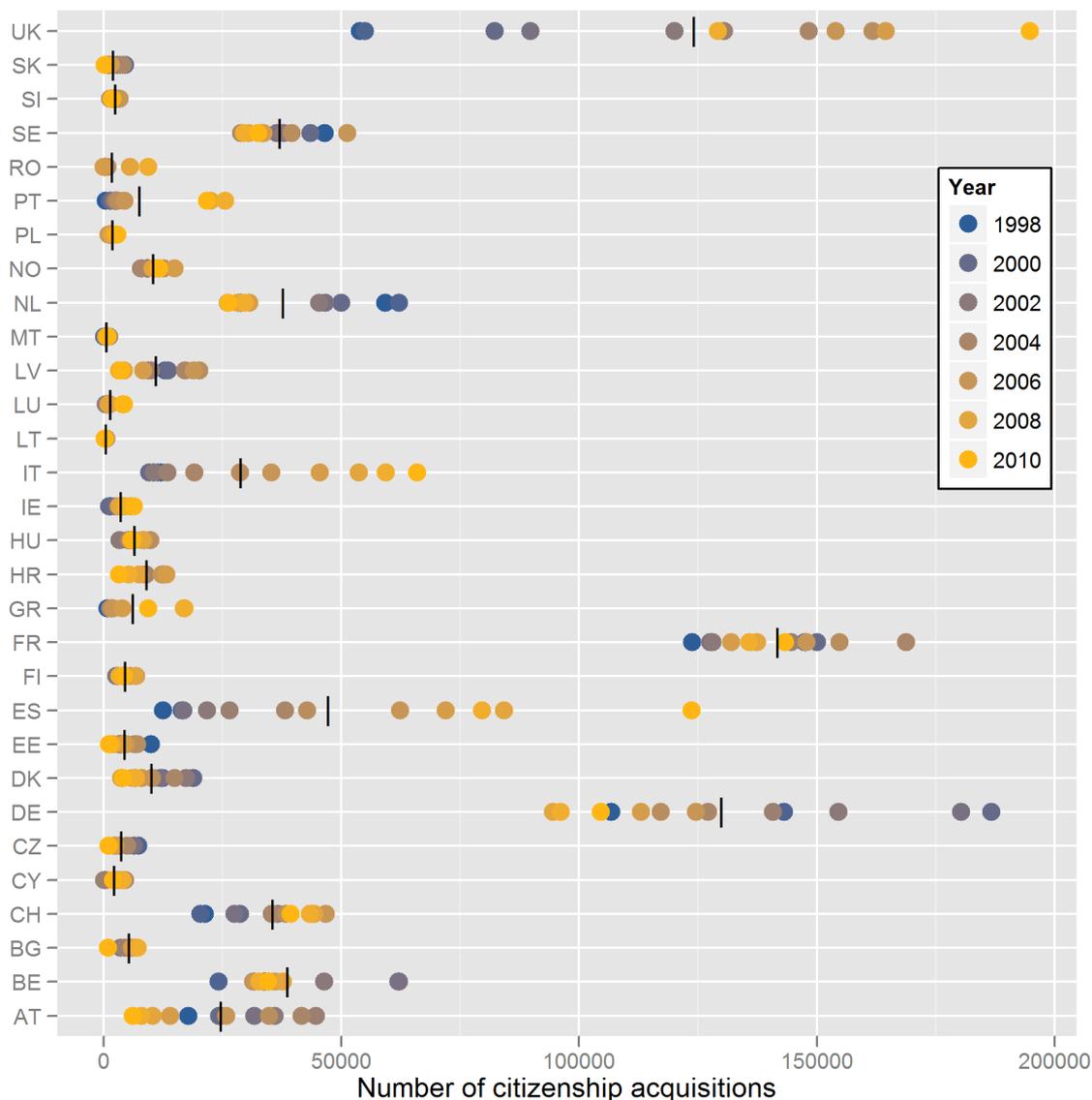
The question of what forms of citizenship acquisitions should be included or covered most obviously depends on the issues to be investigated. If the overall political incorporation of immigrants is investigated, the stocks of immigrants who have naturalised are of interest. Equally, if monitoring the practices of nation states is under question, the inclusion of *ius soli* births into naturalisation rates might be useful as well. In case the general likelihood of immigrants to naturalise is to be answered, naturalisation rates might be more interesting. However, in order to explain citizenship acquisition, advanced statistical methods based on individual micro data need to be made. In particular, the use of multi-level regression analysis allows for controlling and investigating the influences at a national level, the individual characteristics of potential naturalisation candidates, and – very importantly – the situation and policies in the country of origin. For a discussion of different factors influencing citizenship acquisitions and naturalisation rates, see for instance Waldrauch/Cinar 2003 or Reichel 2011 (in German), and for multi-level analysis of the likelihood to naturalise Dronkers/Vink 2012 and Vink/Prokic-Breuer/Dronkers 2012. Since estimating multi-level models is challenging from a methodological point of view and also demands specific data sources, it is important to investigate the potential of common naturalisation rates, which are more simply and quickly elaborated than comprehensive statistical analysis.

3 Naturalisation rates in Europe – an overview

3.1 Number of citizenship acquisitions

First I begin with looking at the total numbers of citizenship acquisitions reported by Eurostat from 1998 to 2010. Over these 13 years, Eurostat reports some 9.5 million acquisitions of citizenship in the EU-27 countries, Norway and Switzerland, as well as in Croatia since 2003. Most acquisitions of citizenship took place in France (1.84 million), Germany (1.69 million) and the UK (1.61 million). The mean annual number of naturalisations range from 430 in Lithuania to 140,000 in France.

Figure 1: Numbers of citizenship acquisitions in Europe 1998 to 2010



Note: vertical lines indicate the average annual number from 1998 to 2010

Source: Eurostat database, table migr_acq.

Across the EU (plus NO, CH and HR), the numbers have increased over the years. In 2010, there was an increase to 8.57 million from some 7.6 million in 2009 (with the number from Romania still missing for 2010). The number of citizenship acquisitions varies significantly over the years within countries (see Figure 1, above). While the numbers in France were comparably stable over the past decade, there is general increase in citizenship acquisitions observable in the UK and a decreasing trend in Germany. Strong increases in the number of citizenship acquisitions are found in Spain, Italy, and Portugal, while the numbers tend to decrease in the Netherlands and Austria.

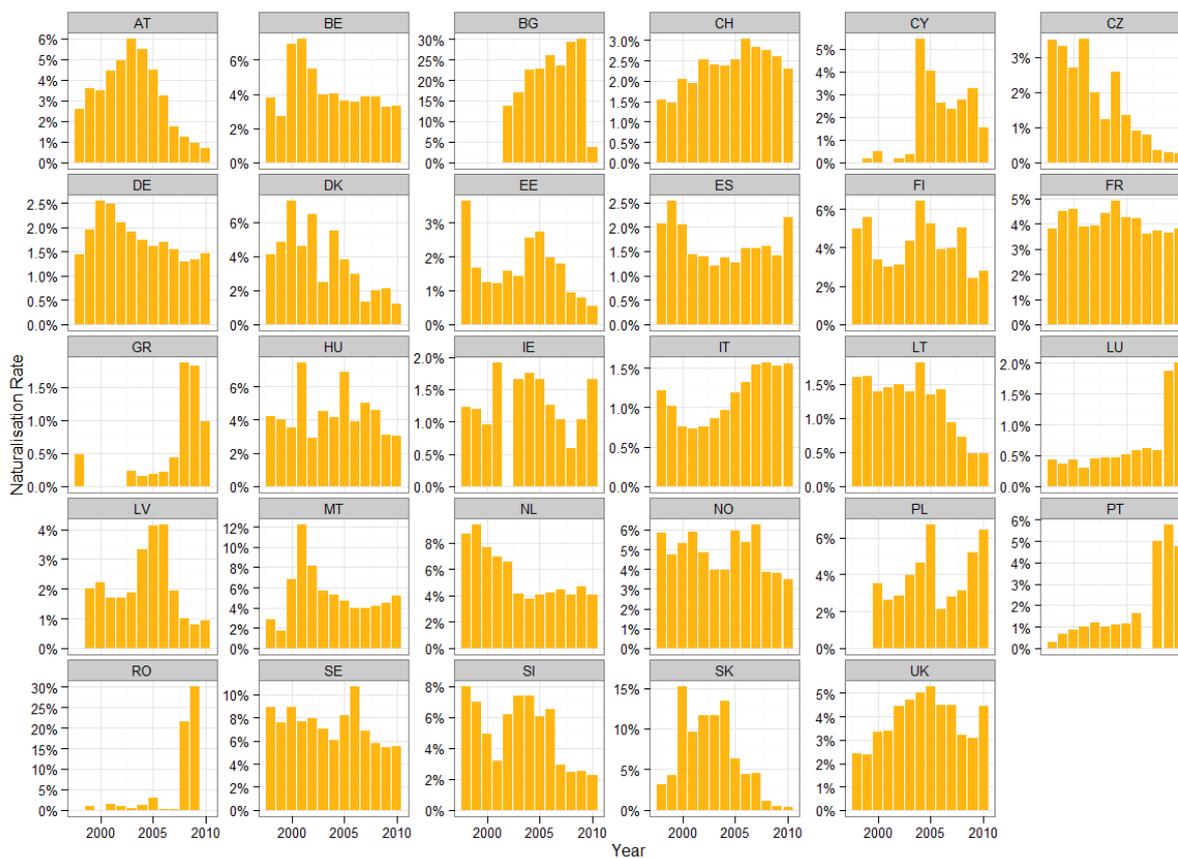
3.2 Naturalisation rates

Figure 2, below shows the naturalisation rates in all countries from 1998 to 2010. Decreasing annual national naturalisation rates can be found in Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, Latvia, Sweden, Slovenia and Slovakia. Naturalisation rates have increased in recent years in Spain (only in 2010), Greece (except for a drop in 2010), Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, Poland, Portugal and the UK (in 2010).⁴ The strong increase in Luxembourg can be explained by the liberalisation of the naturalisation law in 2008 (cf. Reichel 2011: 15). Belgium, France, Malta and the Netherlands show rather stable naturalisation rates over the past five years. The scale of naturalisation rates differs considerably across the EU countries. By far the highest naturalisation rates are found in Bulgaria and Romania in 2008 and 2009, reaching up to 30 percent. This might also be related to the types of naturalisations included in the numbers provided (i.e. naturalisations abroad) together with a potential underestimation of the foreign population (cf. Eurostat 2011: 244). The average naturalisation rate reported for Bulgaria is 20.9 percent. Excluding Bulgaria, the highest average naturalisation rates between 1998 and 2010 are observed in Sweden (7.4%), Slovakia (6.6%), Romania (6%), the Netherlands, Malta, Slovenia and Norway (each around 5%). The lowest average naturalisation rates can be found in Luxembourg and Greece (0.7 percent, respectively) as well as in Italy, Lithuania and Ireland (between 1.2 and 1.3 percent). The mean naturalisation rate across all countries is 3.9 percent.

In the EU, the breakdown between former EU nationals and formerly third country nationals is especially interesting as the two groups have varying propensities to naturalise (e.g. Dronkers/ Vink 2012, Reichel 2011b), which also affects the extent of the annual increase of the total number of EU citizens due to acquisitions of citizenship after birth.

⁴ It is important to note that changes in naturalisation rates can also be attributed to changes in the foreign population and in the way the foreign population is measured.

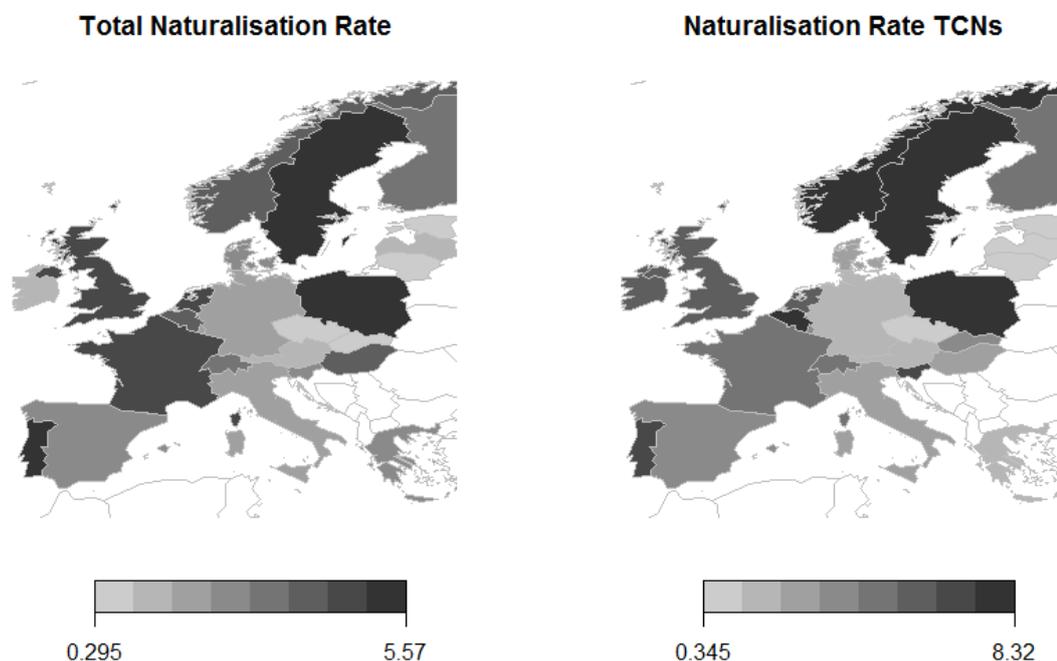
Figure 2: Naturalisation rates 1998 to 2010 in the EU-27, Norway and Switzerland



Source: Eurostat database, own calculations based on tables migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz. Empty spaces are due to missing data. Note that the scales of the naturalisation rates are different in the graphs for each country.

From 2008 to 2010, the annual number of citizenship acquisitions by (formerly) third-country nationals in the EU-25 increased by 19 percent from 597,955 to 712,621 (611,635 in 2009). Map 1, below, shows the average naturalisation rates in the years 2008 to 2010 for the total foreign population and for third country nationals. Third country nationals show higher average naturalisation rates over the three years, with an unweighted mean of 3.98, ranging from 0.34 in the Czech Republic to 8.32 in Belgium. This is clearly higher than the mean of the total naturalisation rates over the same time period of 2.56, ranging from 0.3 in the Czech Republic to 5.57 in Sweden. The mean naturalisation rate of third country nationals was highest in 2009 (at 4.4) compared to 2008 (3.6) and 2010 (3.85). The total mean naturalisation rate in the EU remained rather stable over the three years.

Map 1: Average annual naturalisation rates 2008 to 2010, total and third country nationals



Source: own presentation based on data from Eurostat, tables migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz.

3.3 Stocks of naturalised immigrants

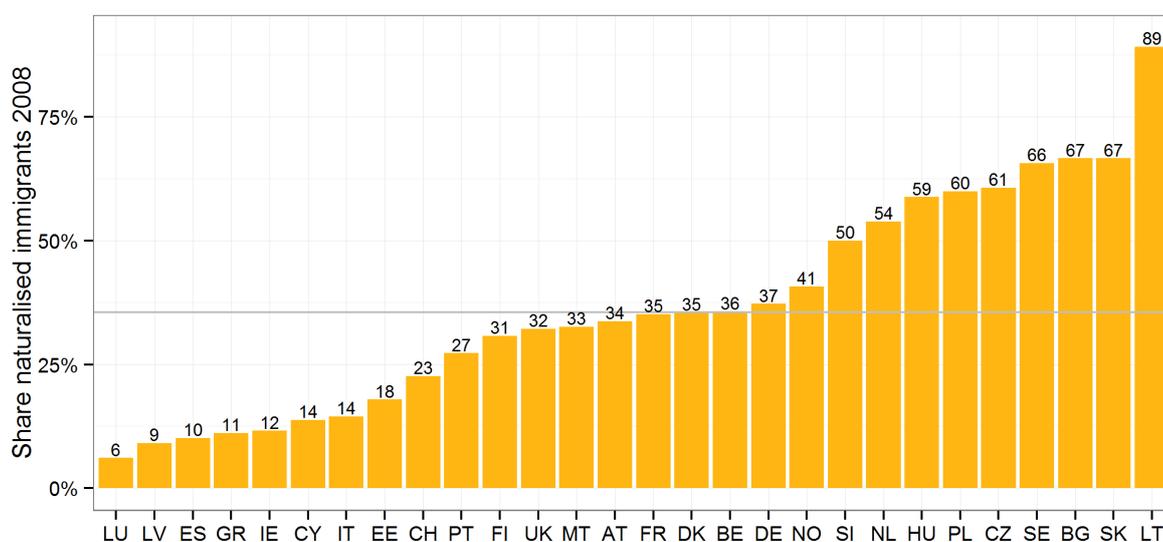
Measuring the stocks of naturalised immigrants is more difficult due to a lack of data from registers in most of the countries. The stocks of naturalised immigrants can be estimated from survey data, with the European Labour Force Survey (LFS) being the most robust data source.

In the 2008 ad hoc module of the LFS on the situation of migrants and their descendents on the labour market, there was a question on citizenship acquisition after birth for migrants. Although there are questions concerning the reliability of the data due to small sample sizes in some countries, the percentages of immigrants who obtained nationality of their country of residence after birth remains the best available source for estimating the stocks of naturalised immigrants in Europe. Thus for countries with lower numbers of immigrants the uncertainty of the estimates is higher.

The highest stocks of naturalised immigrants are found in Lithuania at almost 90 percent of all foreign born who did not acquire citizenship at birth. Other countries with estimated higher stocks of naturalised immigrants are Slovakia, Bulgaria, Sweden, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary and the Netherlands (in descending order). Germany and France show similar numbers of 37 and 35 percent (respectively) of immigrants who obtained citizenship, which is near to the unweighted average of all countries at 35 percent. Countries with significantly lower stocks of naturalised immigrants are Italy, Cyprus, Ireland,

Greece, Spain, Latvia and Luxembourg (in descending order). One explanation of the low shares of naturalised immigrants in these countries could be the strict naturalisation policies (e.g. Luxembourg, Latvia, Estonia, see analysis below) and because some countries only recently became major destination countries of immigrants, which means that many immigrants have not resided in the countries for longer time periods, and thus are potentially not yet eligible for citizenship (e.g. Italy, Ireland, Spain).

Figure 3: Estimated stocks of naturalised immigrants in 2008



Source: Drawn from Eurostat (2010: 11). The percentage of foreign born who naturalised (acquired citizenship after birth), as a percentage of all foreign born naturalised plus foreign born non-citizens from the ad hoc module 2008. The horizontal line indicates the unweighted mean.

There are several reasons why the length of residence influences the likelihood of immigrants to take up the citizenship of the destination country. First of all the length of residence is a requirement for being eligible to naturalise in all EU countries, with the required lengths of residence varying from 3 to 12 years (Goodman 2010: 7). Secondly, the length of residence also influences the likelihood to naturalise because immigrants might decide only at a later stage not to return to their country of origin and only then decide to naturalise.

The stocks of immigrants who naturalised by length of residence is roughly estimated from the Labour Force Survey 2009, whereas the number of immigrants is broken down by periods of immigration and citizenship status (national vs. non-national). This estimate includes immigrants who immigrated as nationals, which has to be taken into account when interpreting the data. Out of some 35.56 million immigrants residing in the EU-27 (except Germany and Finland), Norway and Switzerland, 40 percent or

14.52 million hold the citizenship of their country of residence.⁵ The data prove the increasing likelihood of naturalisation as the length of residence increases. Across the 27 countries shown in Figure 4, over 80 percent of those who reside in the country for 50 years or more hold citizenship of their country of residence. These figures decrease over descending periods of time: 73 percent of those with residence between 40 and 49 years, 69 percent of immigrants residing in the country between 30 and 39 years, 61 percent with length of residence between 20 and 29 years and 40 percent of persons residing in the country between 10 and 19 years. Among the more recent immigrants residing in the country less than ten years, the percentage of those holding citizenship is only 13 percent. This latter group of recent immigrants, however, constitutes the largest group of immigrants, making up 60 percent of all immigrants across the 27 countries.

The shares of naturalised by length of residence clearly show different patterns across the countries (Figure 4, below). In many countries, more than 95 percent of immigrants – thus virtually all immigrants – hold citizenship of the country of residence after 50 years of residence, including Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Slovenia and Slovakia as well as Lithuania (94%). Exceptionally low shares of immigrants holding citizenship after 50 years of residence are found in Belgium (59%), Luxembourg (57%), Latvia (37%), Malta (54%) and in the UK (66%). This might partly be explained by larger shares of EU citizens living in those countries (especially LU and MT), but perhaps also due to difficult access to citizenship in some countries (e.g. LV).

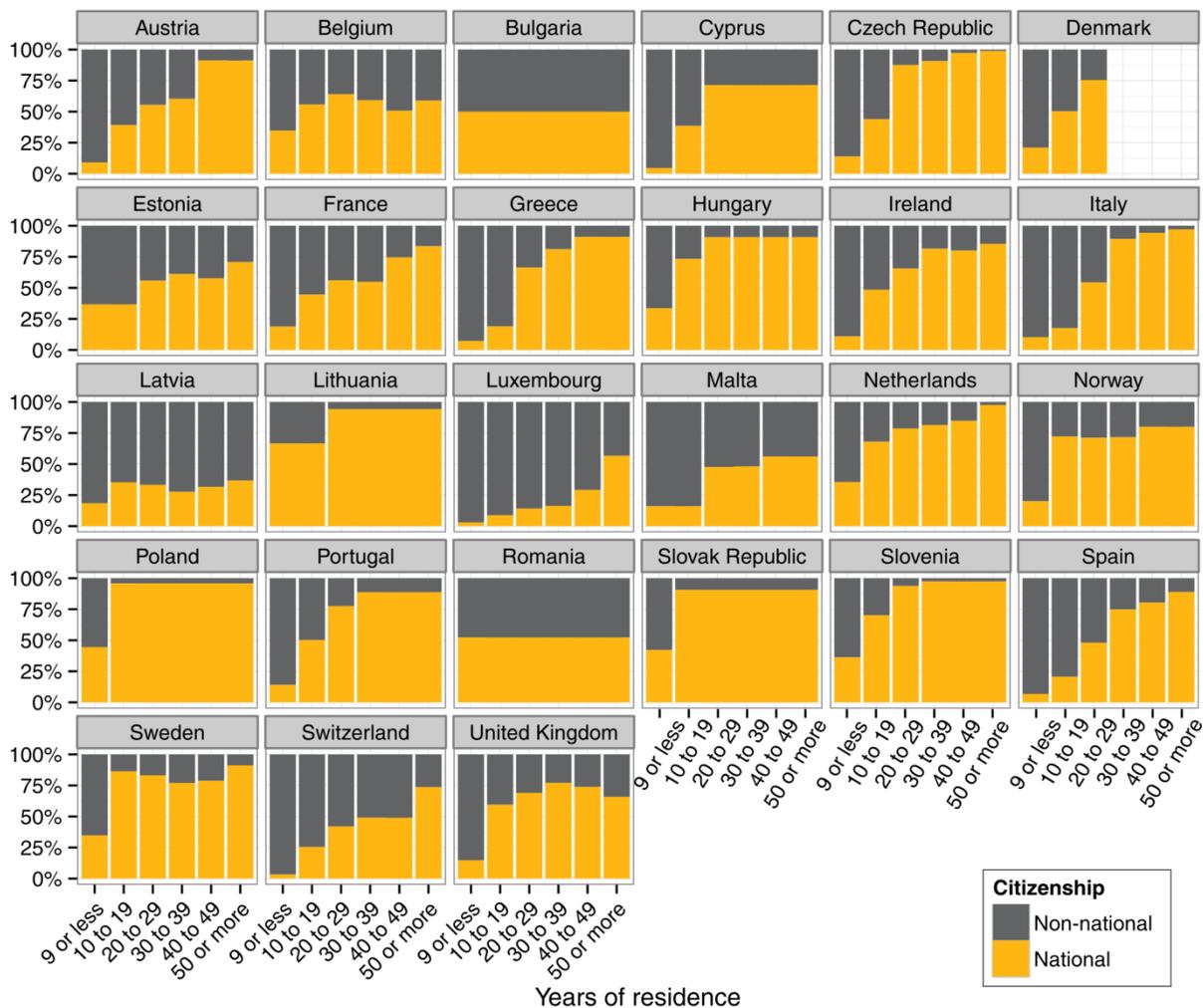
In most countries, increasing length of residence also implies increasing numbers of naturalised immigrants, for instance in Austria, Spain, France, Luxembourg (at a much lower level), where the patterns shown in Figure 4 resemble steps. Other countries show sharp increases of naturalised immigrants after a certain period and remain rather stable thereafter (e.g. Estonia, Norway, Sweden, UK), where the patterns in Figure 4 resemble blocks. In almost all countries there is a clear increase in the percentages of naturalised after ten years (most probably already earlier depending on the required length of residence for naturalisation) and only in Greece and Malta the percentages considerably increase only after 20 years of residence.⁶

These patterns are clearly not only related to lengths of residence but also to specific kinds of immigration waves over the past decades, which are shaped by different countries of origin as well as different policies. While I will not go into much detail of this discussion, there is clearly a need for more research explaining the different patterns of naturalisation by length of residence.

⁵ This estimated percentage of naturalised immigrants is higher than the 35 percent estimated based on the LFS 2008 ad hoc module, above, because it also includes foreign born nationals, who immigrated to their country of citizenship, because Germany is excluded and because the 35 percent give the unweighted mean.

⁶ The observation of patterns was made based on small sample sizes for some countries. Data shown in Figure 4 are based on minimum reliability limits.

Figure 4: Shares of nationals among immigrants by lengths of residence in 2009



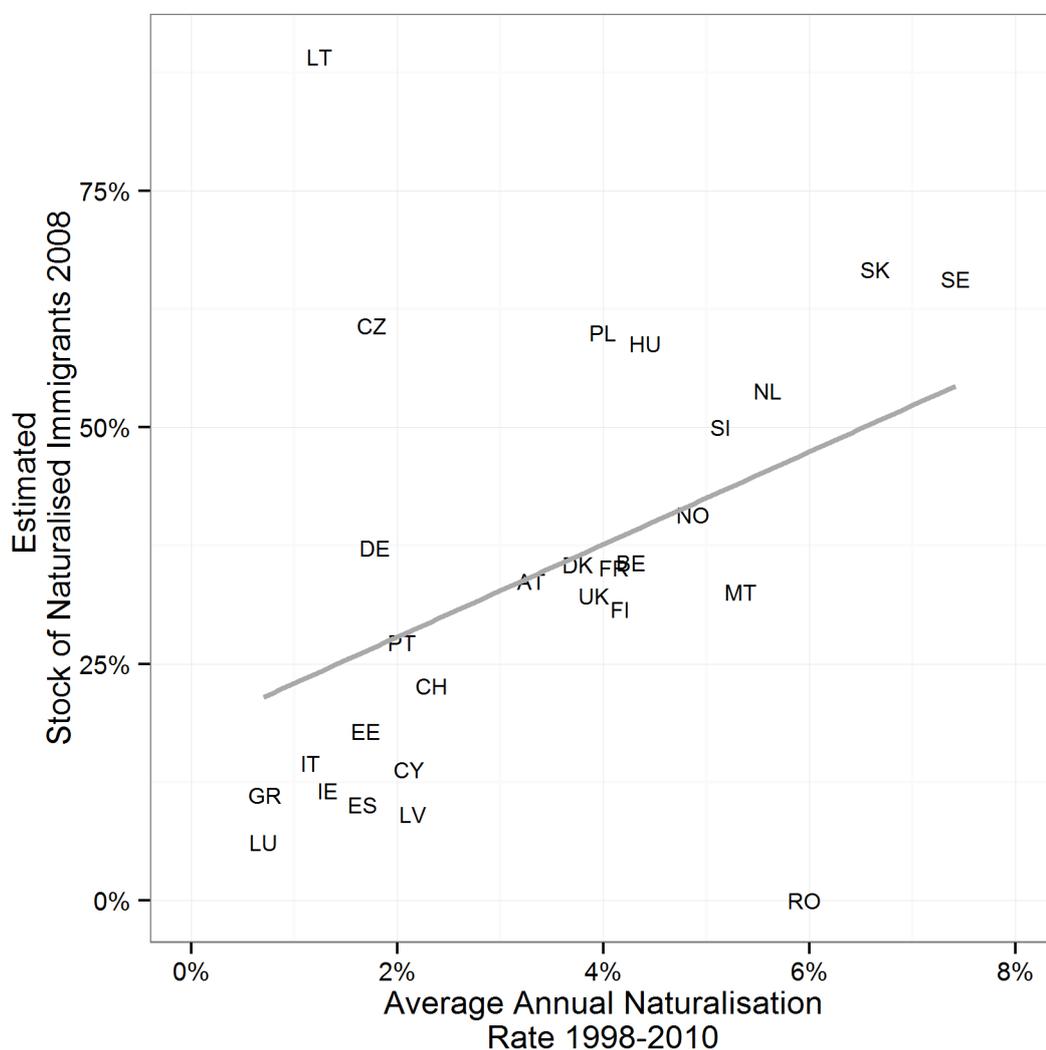
Source and notes: European Commission, Eurostat, European Union Labour Force Survey annual averages 2009, authors calculations (note: data for Germany and Finland were not made available). Categories of years of residence were lumped together in case of too small sample sizes in order to satisfy Eurostat’s data publication policy. Estimates for the Czech Republic (30 years of residence or more), Spain (50 or more), Greece (40 or more), Lithuania, Malta (20 or more), the Netherlands (50 or more), Norway (40 or more), Poland, Romania and Slovenia are based on numbers with limited reliability. Eurostat has no responsibility for the results or conclusions made on the basis of the data analysis.

As a last step in this section, I will examine to what extent annual naturalisation rates explain the stocks of immigrants holding citizenship of their country of residence. Figure 5 below shows the estimated stocks of naturalised immigrants compared to the average naturalisation rate of the years 1998 to 2010. There is a clear correlation observable between the stocks of naturalised immigrants in 2008 and the average naturalisation rates in the years 1998 to 2010. Including all 29 countries (all countries shown in Figure 5 plus Bulgaria), the two indicators show a correlation coefficient of 0.43. For all 29 countries, an increase of 1 percentage point in the average naturalisation rate in the years 1998 to 2010 leads to an average increase in the stocks of naturalised of 2.6 percentage points. Aside from Bulgaria, which shows

exceptionally high naturalisation rates but also an above average share of naturalised immigrants, there are two other countries that strongly deviate from the trends in the other countries, namely Lithuania and Romania. In Lithuania a very low naturalisation rate is observed at the same time as an extremely high percentage of immigrants with citizenship. The second outlier is Romania, showing high average naturalisation rates but low numbers of immigrants holding citizenship. The case of Romania can be explained by the fact that for two years extremely high naturalisation rates were reported and for several other years the data are missing (cf. Figure 2 above).

If these special cases are excluded (BG, RO and LT), the correlation coefficient increases enormously to 0.77. The average naturalisation rates for 13 years explain some 58 percent in the variation of stocks of immigrants holding citizenship. An increase in the average naturalisation rates by 1 percentage point is associated with an average increase of almost 8 percentage points in the stocks of immigrants holding citizenship in the country of origin. Consequently, the annual naturalisation rate is a good indicator for explaining political incorporation of immigrants. In the following sections I seek to explain differences in annual naturalisation rates through naturalisation policies.

Figure 5: Estimated stocks of immigrants in 2008 plotted against the average annual naturalisation rates through the years 1998 to 2010



Source: Data from Eurostat database, tables migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz and Eurostat 2011: 11. Bulgaria was excluded due to being an outlier concerning the average naturalisation rate and thus making the graph unreadable.

4 Explaining naturalisation rates through policies

The easier the access to citizenship, the more people naturalise is an obvious relationship, which can be shown by comparing an index for measuring the openness of naturalisation laws, the MIPEX Nationality, and naturalisation rates of different countries. The relationship between citizenship laws and naturalisation rates has already been demonstrated by several scholars and publications including Janoski 2010, Sartori 2011, Reichel 2011, Dronkers/ Vink 2012, and Vink/ Prokic-Breuer/ Dronkers 2012.

Figure 6 shows the relationship between legal regulations for accessing citizenship, measured through the MIPEX Nationality 2007 (see Huddleston et al. 2011), and naturalisation rates for the years 2008 to 2010.⁷ The upper panel of Figure 6 presents the relationship between MIPEX and the total naturalisation rate (2008-2010). On average, higher MIPEX scores correspond to higher naturalisation rates, where an increase in the MIPEX by ten points leads to an average increase in the naturalisation rates of 0.45 (percentage points), which can be interpreted as a modest statistical relationship. The two indicators correlate by 0.56 and the regression shows an adjusted R-squared of 0.29, meaning that the MIPEX scores explain about 29 percent in the variation of the naturalisation rates.

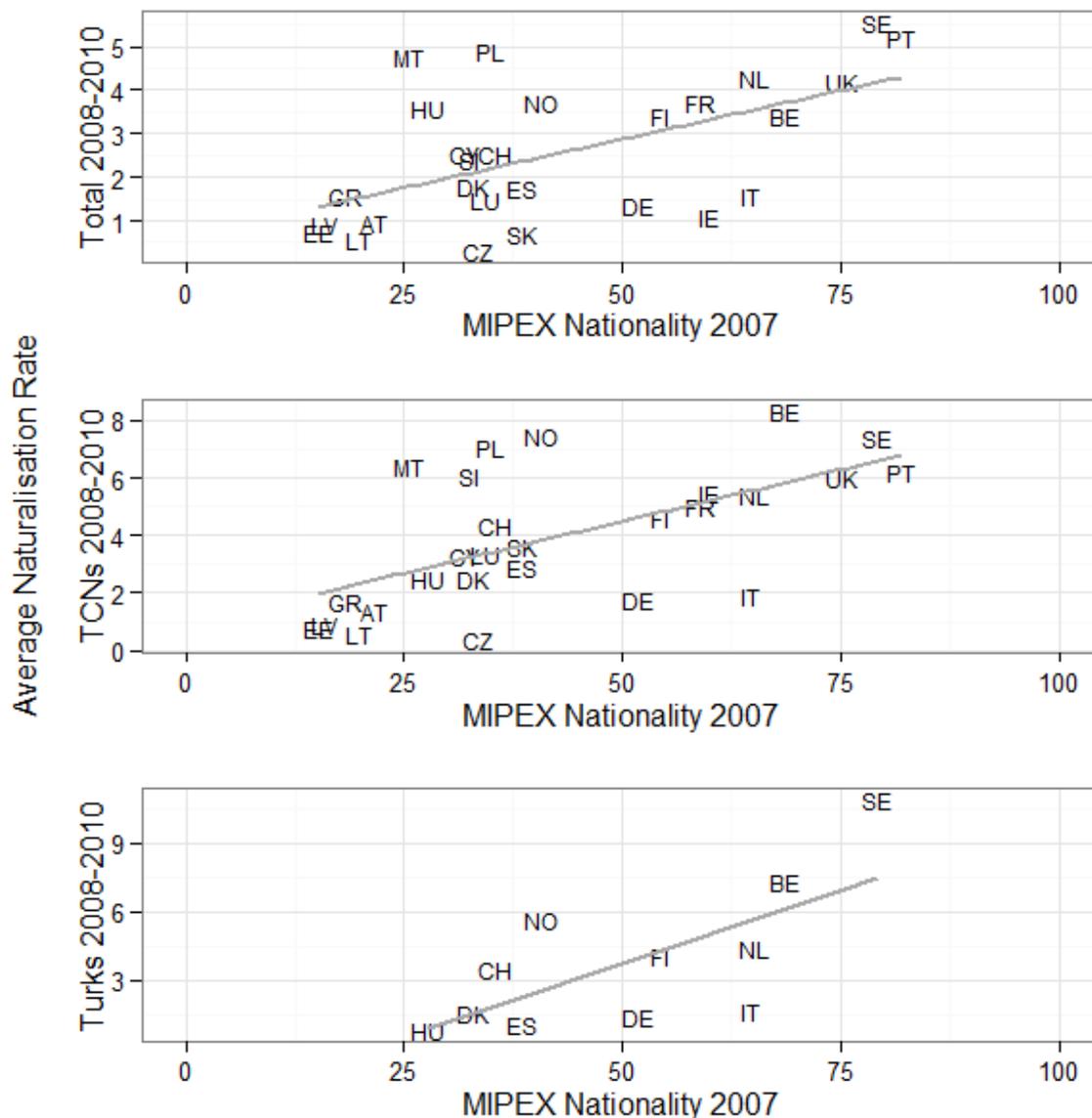
Naturalisation rates of third country nationals are actually better explained by the MIPEX ($r=0.56$ and adj. $R^2=0.34$), where an increase in the MIPEX by ten points corresponds to an average increase in the naturalisation rates of third country nationals by 0.72 (percentage points). Finally, the third panel of Figure 6 shows the influence of the MIPEX on naturalisation rates of (former) Turks in selected European countries. Here – in spite of the low numbers of countries/observations – the MIPEX explains some 43 percent of the variation in the rates ($r=0.7$). Increasing the MIPEX by 10 points leads to a predicted average increase in the naturalisation rates of Turks of 1.29.

There are some countries which do not follow the trends of other countries, most notably Malta, Norway and Poland, which have higher rates than expected based on their MIPEX scores. Germany and Italy show lower naturalisation rates than predicted based on the MIPEX scores. Most interestingly, there are no significant differences in the naturalisation rates between the EU-15 countries and the EU-10 countries (accessed the EU in 2004 or 2007, respectively) after controlling for the naturalisation legislation through the MIPEX 2007 (there are slightly higher naturalisation rates in the EU10, which is statistically not significant for both total rates and rates of third country nationals).

⁷ There is also the MIPEX Nationality 2010. However, the MIPEX 2007 better explains the variation in the naturalisation rates 2008 to 2010. This is partly because the MIPEX 2010 includes recent changes which are not yet reflected in the naturalisation rates.

It is furthermore assumed that the numbers of naturalisations are influenced by whether or not there are regulations for second generation immigrants, or *ius soli* regulations. This issue will be taken up in the case study Austria in the next section of the paper.

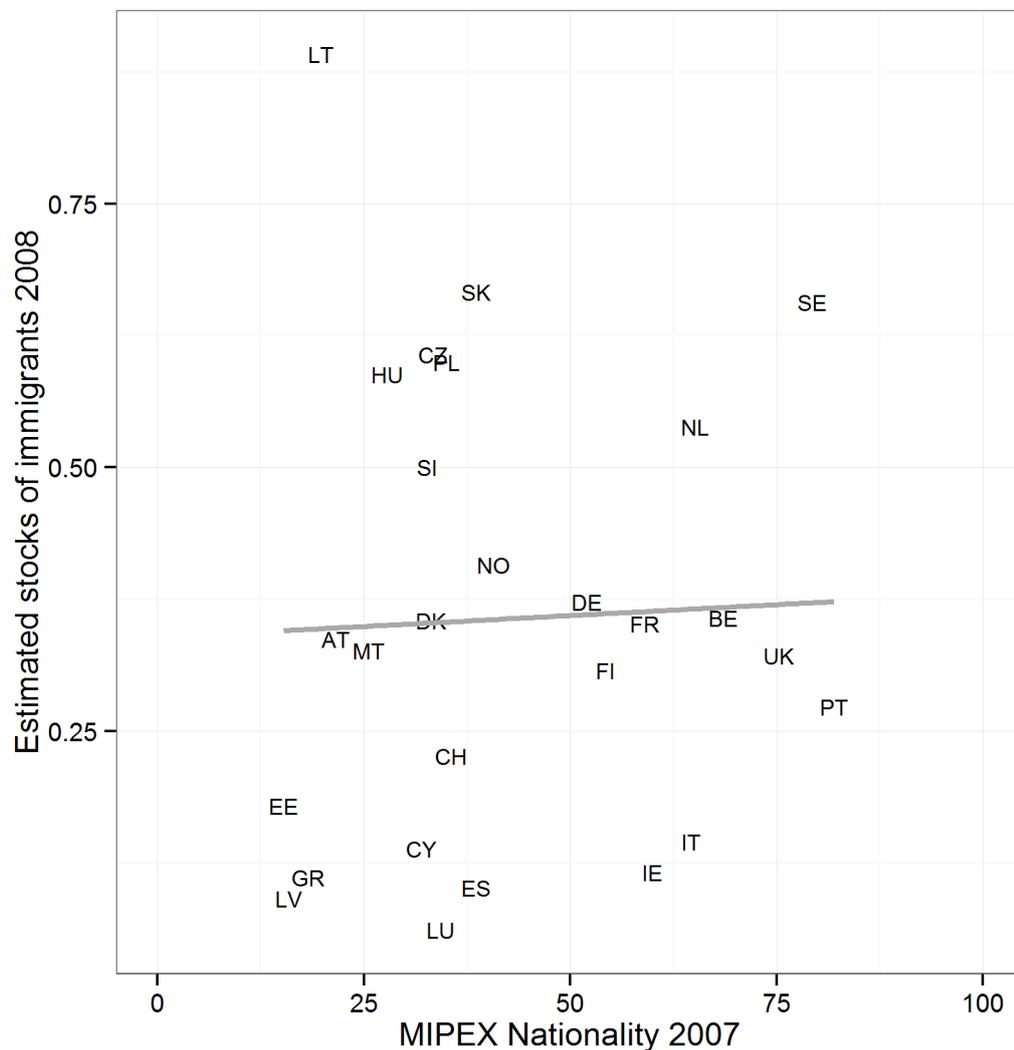
Figure 6: Average naturalisation rates for the total population, third country nationals and Turks 2008 to 2010 plotted against MIPEX Nationality 2007



Source: own calculations based on www.mipex.eu and Eurostat database tables migr_acq and migr_pop1ctz. Bulgaria and Romania were excluded.

Legal regulations influence the magnitude of annual naturalisation rates. However, current legal regulations, measured through the MIPEX, do not show a significant impact on the estimated stocks of naturalised immigrants, as shown in Figure 7.

Figure 7: MIPEX Nationality 2007 compared to estimated stocks of naturalised immigrants in 2008



Source: www.mipex.eu and Eurostat 2011: 11

5 Case study Austria

Austria is an especially interesting case when it comes to naturalisation rates. Austria has long been known for a comparatively strict naturalisation policy, where the two years of 2006 and 2009 brought most recent changes and restrictions. The naturalisation requirements in Austria are characterised by comparably long waiting periods for immigrants (generally 10 years, but 6 years for specific groups, including EU citizens, non-citizens born in Austria and refugees), general rejection of multiple citizenship (with certain exceptions), income requirements (increased in 2009) and high administrative fees (cf. Reichel 2011b). Despite the comparably difficult access to citizenship in Austria, high naturalisation rates can be observed around the year 2000. After the peak of the naturalisation rate in 2003, the rate dropped starkly from around 6 percent to below 1 percent in 2010. The development of naturalisation numbers and rates in Austria can be explained through various factors including the influence of national policies, policies at the sub-national level, and demographic developments, as well as political developments in the countries of origin of immigrants in Austria. Figure 8 plots the naturalisation rates in Austria by its nine *Bundesländer* in the years 1991 to 2011. The graphical display of the development clearly shows the influence of the legislative changes in 2006, which led to a harmonisation of naturalisation rates due to limitations placed on authorities for implementing national naturalisation laws, whereas before there was greater leeway. The city of Vienna (at the same time one of the nine *Bundesländer*) is of major importance for this development because it hosts the majority of immigrants in Austria and within the framework of national laws a rather liberal naturalisation policy can be observed.⁸ The easier access to citizenship in Vienna can be seen in Figure 8, where, especially in the 1990s, higher naturalisation rates are reported. The increase in the naturalisation rates at the end of the 1990s in all *Bundesländer* can be explained through a variety of reasons. First of all, there was the introduction of the so called “pink card” in Turkey, which allows former Turkish citizens to retain important rights in Turkey (Cinar 2006). This was especially important for Austria because Turkish migrants are one of the largest groups of immigrants and Austrian law requires renunciation of citizenship prior to granting of Austrian citizenship (with few exceptions). Thus the introduction of the “pink card” led to more applications for Austrian citizenship by Turkish immigrants, as Turks would be able to maintain rights in Turkey while gaining rights in Austria. In addition, it is reported that by the end of the 1990s, Turkish administration managed to finalise many backlog requests to renounce citizenship at once, which led to an immediate increase in the rates in Austria (Waldrauch/ Cinar 2003: 276-277). Finally, the case of Vienna shows that naturalisation is a politicised issue in Austria. Until 2001 there are two major breaks in the series (in 1995 and 2000) with significantly lower rates in Vienna. It can be considered not a coincidence that these lower rates occurred in the years prior to elections in Vienna in 1996 and 2001.

⁸ Naturalisation legislation is a matter of the federal parliament, but the laws are implemented at the level of the *Bundesländer*.

Apparently the Viennese authorities consider high naturalisation rates as a negative sign for potential right wing voters, which could be the reason why the rate was kept low in the years preceding elections.

Figure 8: Naturalisation rates at level of *Bundesländer* in Austria 1991 to 2011



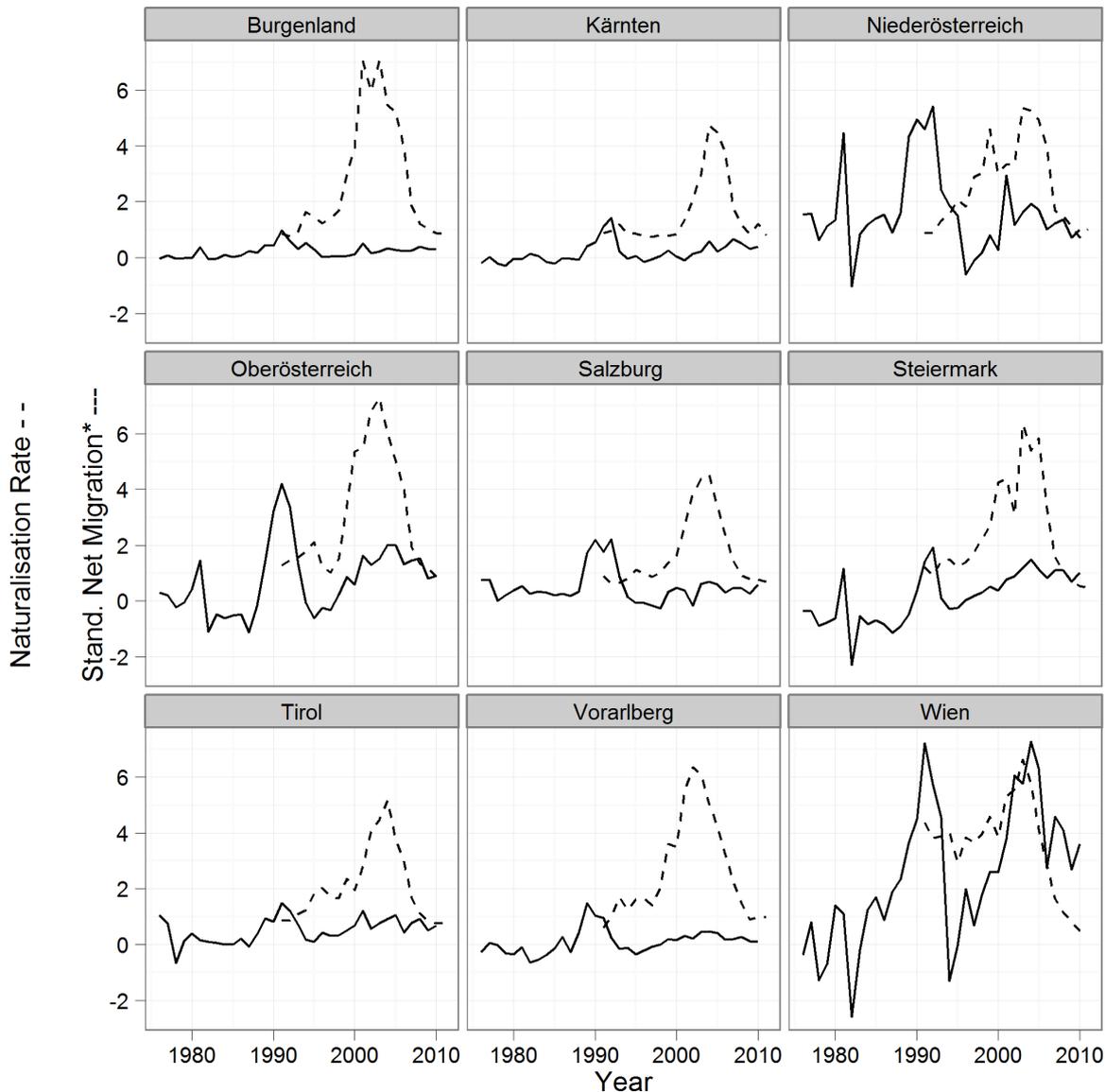
Source: Statistics Austria, the vertical line indicates the change in the citizenship laws in 2006

Figure 8 shows the impact of restricting the leeway of authorities to implement naturalisation policies after the restrictions in March 2006. From 2006 onwards, the rates in all nine *Bundesländer* converge. However, for all years of observation, only Vienna shows above average naturalisation rates. In contrast, the Bundesland Carinthia shows below average naturalisation rates, potentially indicating the restrictive use of leeway for access to citizenship.⁹ Two more issues are of importance for influencing naturalisation rates in Austria. It is well known that net migration influences naturalisation rates, but with a time lag between the arrival of higher waves of immigration and the higher naturalisation rates. For Austria, where a waiting period of minimum 10 years for immigrants from third countries is applied (with some exceptions), the net migration around ten years prior to the naturalisation rates is assumed to strongly influence the magnitude of the naturalisation rate. Observing the naturalisation rates in the nine *Bundesländer*, it appears that a time lag of twelve years between net migration and naturalisation rates can best explain the variation in the rates from 1991 to 2011 by about 30 percent (in a regression controlling for *Bundesländer*).¹⁰ Figure 9 shows the development of the naturalisation rates compared to the net migration. In all nine *Bundesländer* a peak in the standardised net migration leads to a peak in the naturalisation rates slightly more than ten years later. Considering the peak of net migration in Vienna in the years 2002 to 2005, a strong increase in the naturalisation rates in the coming years (around 2014) can be expected.

⁹ Carinthia is governed by an Austrian right wing party, FPOE (and currently its faction FPK), led through the 1990s by Jörg Haider. The party is well known for its anti-immigrant sentiment.

¹⁰ Time lags of 4 to 15 years were tested in the regression.

Figure 9: Naturalisation rates in Austrian Bundesländer and standardised net migration, 1980 to 2010



* Standardised Net Migration means that the maximum value of net migration of all Bundesländer was set to the maximum value of the naturalisation rates of all Bundesländer in the years of observation. The calculations were done in order to make the two figures comparable at the same scale.

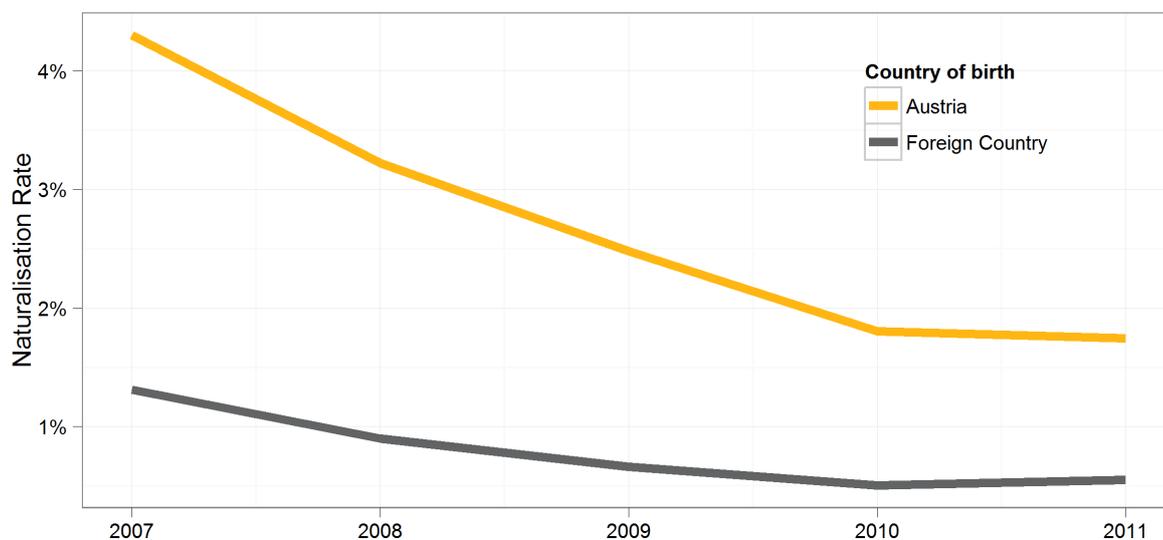
Source: Own calculations based on data from Statistics Austria (www.statistik.at)¹¹

Finally, there is another point which has not been considered so far. Naturalisation rates in Austria include naturalisations of persons born in Austria. Children born to foreign parents in Austria do not acquire Austrian citizenship at birth. Foreign citizens born in Austria have easier access to citizenship and the likelihood to naturalise is much higher for these persons than for immigrants. Since 1981, 30 percent of all naturalisations did not concern immigrants but foreign citizens born in Austria. The

¹¹ For net migration: „Wanderungsbilanz Österreichs und der Bundesländer mit dem Ausland seit 1961“ based on „STATISTIK AUSTRIA, Bevölkerungsfortschreibung 1961-1995, ab 1996 Wanderungsstatistik. Erstellt am: 19.05.2011.“

percentage of native born in the total number of naturalisations has increased considerably in the years since 2005 to over 38 percent in 2009. Figure 10 shows the naturalisation rates by country of birth in the years 2007 to 2011 in Austria. From 2007 to 2011, the rates of Austrian born are much higher, with an average rate of 2.7 compared to the average naturalisation rate of immigrants of 0.78 in the same years.

Figure 10: Naturalisation rates in Austria by country of birth 2007 to 2011



Source: Statistics Austria¹²

Consequently, countries allowing for *ius soli* regulations should show lower naturalisation rates because native born foreign citizens, who are much more likely to naturalise, do not need to naturalise if they acquire citizenship at birth. Moreover, parents might decide against naturalisation if their children are already citizens of the country of residence, as the wish to naturalise by immigrants is often triggered by the fact that their children should become citizens of the country in which they are residing (cf. Street 2011, and Reichel 2011: 115-139).

¹² Statistik des Bevölkerungsstandes. Erstellt am: 14.05.2012. and STATcube — Statistical Database of Statistics Austria, table on Naturalisations. Accessed 27 September 2012.

6 Conclusions

The share of immigrants that have acquired citizenship was selected as one of the 14 core indicators of immigrant integration in the EU (Zaragoza Declaration, Eurostat 2011: 10). This indicator was formulated rather generally and Eurostat decided to publish the naturalisation rate, defined as *the number of foreign citizens resident in each EU Member State who acquired citizenship of that Member State during the calendar year, as a share of the total number of resident foreigners at the beginning of the year* (Eurostat 2011: 244).

The present analysis shows that this indicator, representing flows from the foreign population to the national population, explains the size of the stocks of naturalised immigrants. However, it needs to be taken into account that naturalisation rates may include native born citizens as well. It is therefore not an indicator of immigrant integration but rather integration of foreign citizens, including those born in the country. The factor that *ius soli*-children do not have to naturalise could contribute to a lower general naturalisation rate of all foreign citizens. This could explain below-average naturalisation rates in Germany and Ireland due to *ius soli* regulations (although the assumption does not hold for Portugal and the UK).

There is an observable influence of national citizenship policies on naturalisation rates in the EU, although the magnitude and development of annual naturalisation rates are influenced by several other factors as well, most notably the amount of net migration as well as policies in the country of origin of immigrants.

Thus, it can be concluded that observing annual naturalisation rates is a valid indicator for the political integration of immigrants in Europe.

References

Bauböck Rainer / Helbling Marc (ed.) (2011): Which indicators are most useful for comparing citizenship policies? EUI Working Papers, RSCAS 2011/54.

Cinar Dilek (2006): The politics of external citizenship – the case of Turkey. Text Box 4. In: Bauböck Rainer (Ed): Migration and Citizenship. Legal Status, Rights and Political Participation. Amsterdam University Press.

Dronkers Jaap and Vink Maarten Peter (2012): Explaining Access to Citizenship in Europe: How Policies Affect Naturalisation Rates. In: European Union Politics 13(3) 390-412.

EUDO Citizenship (2008): The EUDO Glossary on Citizenship and Nationality. 09 March 2011: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/citizenship-glossary/>

Eurostat (2010): Report on the quality of the LFS ad hoc module 2008 on the labour market situation of migrants and their descendants. Draft report.

Eurostat (2011): Indicators of Immigrant Integration. A Pilot Study. 2011 edition. Eurostat Methodologies and Working papers.

Goodman Sara Wallace (2010): Naturalisation Policies in Europe: Exploring Patterns of Inclusion and Exclusion. EUDO Citizenship Comparative Reports. Available at: <http://eudo-citizenship.eu/comparative-analyses> (accessed in March 2011)

Huddleston Thomas et al. (2011): Migrant Integration Policy Index III. British Council, Migration Policy Group. Available at: www.mipex.eu (accessed in March 2011).

Janoski Thomas (2010): The Ironies of Citizenship: Naturalisation and Integration in Industrialized Countries. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press.

Reichel David (2011): Do Legal Regulation Hinder Naturalisation? Citizenship Policies and Naturalisation Rates in Europe. EUI Working Papers. RSCAS 2011/51.

Reichel David (2011b): Staatsbürgerschaft und Integration. Die Bedeutung der Einbürgerung für MigrantInnen. Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

Sartori Fabio (2011): Acquisitions of citizenship on the rise in 2009. Eurostat Statistics in focus, 24/2011.

Street Alex (2011): "Citizenship Begins at Home: How Families Shape Immigrant Incorporation." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley.

Vink Maarten/ Prokic-Breuer Tijana/ Dronkers Jaap (2012): Why Immigrants in Europe Naturalize: Motivation, Ability, Opportunity. Paper presented at ACIT Mid-Term Workshop, Comparing Citizenship across Europe: Laws, Implementation and Impact, Florence, 21-22 June 2012.

Waldrauch Harald (2006): Acquisition of nationality. In: Bauböck Rainer, Ersboll Eva, Groenendijk Kees & Waldrauch Harald (Eds): Acquisition and Loss of Nationality. Policies and Trends in 15 European States. Volume 1: Comparative Analyses. Amsterdam University Press, IMISCOE Research, 121-182.

Waldrauch Harald/ Cinar Dilek (2003): Staatsbürgerschaftspolitik und Einbürgerungspraxis in Österreich. In: Fassmann Heinz/ Stacher Irene (Eds): Österreichischer Migrations- und Integrationsbericht. Demographische Entwicklungen, sozioökonomische Strukturen, rechtliche Rahmenbedingungen. Klagenfurt: Drava Verlag, 261-283.