

Alien Enfranchisement and External Political Efficacy in Diverse Democracies

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Abstract: Does a more inclusive enfranchisement regime relate to enhanced perceptions of citizens and non-citizens about their political influence? While previous studies have mainly concentrated on exploring policy preferences and political behavior, we still know relatively little about the antecedents of external efficacy in diverse societies and whether targeted policies can alter these perceptions. Notably, much of the earlier evidence of external efficacy comes from cross-sectional studies of native citizens. In contrast, little attention has been paid to the dynamics of changes in efficacy over time and research designs that concentrate on all resident populations – including non-citizens. In this paper, first, we argue that the local immigrant policy context in terms of electoral inclusiveness raises external efficacy among all non-citizens. More precisely, we put forward that alien enfranchisement, as a highly effective marker of immigrant-inclusivity and “right to politics”, enhances non-citizens’ sense of influence in politics. Next, considering potential push-back and spill-over effects of alien enfranchisement on citizens, we also test whether such an electoral expansion is associated with a subsequent decline in the external efficacy of citizens - both native and naturalized. Empirically, we focus on the Swiss case and exploit the sub-national and temporal variation in local electoral institutions using longitudinal data from the Swiss Household Panel from 1999 to 2014. The paper adds to earlier work by proposing that immigrants' political incorporation is not merely a function of individual characteristics but relates to the contexts in which they are received in the host democracies. Inclusive voting rights seem to have the ability to raise external efficacy perceptions among non-citizen residents without evidence of a backlash among citizens making it a useful policy tool for immigrant integration.

Keywords: External Efficacy; Immigration; Electoral Institutions; Political attitudes; Alien Enfranchisement; Voting Rights

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Introduction

To what extent do alien enfranchisement policies relate to external efficacy attitudes? Does alien enfranchisement improve non-citizen residents' perceptions of their political influence in host countries? Do these voting rights imply negative externalities of efficacy among citizens? Today, alien enfranchisement has become an increasingly debated policy in advanced democracies with large immigrant populations (Ferris, Hayduk, Richards, Strauss Schubert, & Acri, 2020; Kayran & Erdilmen, 2021). While often promoted as a tool to enhance democratic participation and the political incorporation of non-citizens (Blatter, Schmid, & Blättler, 2017), we still know little about the implications of alien enfranchisement on the perceived political efficacy of the individuals directly targeted by this policy, i.e., non-citizens. Moreover, research has not yet addressed whether non-citizen voting right policies entail externalities on citizens, i.e., individuals whose political rights are unaffected by these policies. In this paper, studying the link between alien enfranchisement and efficacy perceptions among non-citizens and citizens, we seek to make two main contributions.

First, we extend the study of the political consequences of alien enfranchisement to political attitudes, adding to the literature on representation and migration and citizenship studies which primarily focused on policy preferences and turnout. While some studies report that early enfranchisement of non-citizens had a positive effect on their integration in the long run (Ferwerda, Finseraas, & Bergh, 2020), others provide evidence revealing that non-citizen voting rights do not substantially improve political their integration in terms of either voting or naturalization propensities (Engdahl, Lindgren, & Rosenqvist, 2020; Ruedin, 2018; Slotwinski, Stutzer, & Bevelander, 2020). Thus, the question of what these policies substantially do in terms of integrating non-citizens remains disputed. Furthermore, despite a burgeoning literature in the past decade on the policy preferences, turnout, and democratic representation of immigrants (Bilodeau, 2009; Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013; Filindra & Manatschal, 2020; Just & Anderson, 2012; Maxwell, 2010; Simonsen, 2020), political attitudes, and more specifically, external efficacy attitudes, i.e. to what extent non-citizen residents feel politically influential, have not been at the center of empirical investigations - except for very few exceptions (Anduiza & San Martin, 2011; Helbling, Reeskens, Stark, Stolle, & Wright, 2016). It is still unclear whether, and if so which, policies can advance a stronger sense of representation and influence over politics among

immigrants. Thus, different from existing studies in the field, we shift the attention from behavioral outcomes to attitudes about perceived political representation by testing whether non-citizen enfranchisement policies play a role in altering external efficacy attitudes.

Second, we contribute to the broader political behavior and public opinion literatures by studying how external efficacy perceptions are shaped by contextual factors, i.e., electoral institutions enfranchising non-citizens. To be precise, political efficacy is a set of self-evaluated attitudes of individuals that are commonly understood in two dimensions (Anderson, 2010). In one dimension, external efficacy indicates an individual's self-perceived ability to influence political processes. In another, internal efficacy is how people perceive themselves as having the ability to make sense of politics (Acock, Clarke, & Stewart, 1985; Clarke & Acock, 1989). Here, we focus on investigating whether specific policy interventions may play a role in improving the *external* efficacy perceptions. Higher external efficacy is often characterized as a function of higher levels of education, age, better socio-economic status, being a member of a dominant group in the society (i.e., white, male, non-immigrant), and personality traits (Campbell, Guring, & Miller, 1954). Policy factors that can explain such differences across different local or national contexts have been widely debated without much consensus in the fields of public opinion and political behavior (Wolak 2018; Chamberlain 2012). In addition, we still know little about what explains non-citizens' efficacy perceptions since extant work has mostly concentrated on citizens only.

We contend that non-citizens living in contexts that extend voting rights to these groups will have enhanced material and symbolic resources, making them perceive that their voice matters in politics. While there seems to be a limited effect of alien enfranchisement on electoral participation among non-citizens (Engdahl et al., 2020; Ruedin, 2018), there is robust evidence demonstrating that more inclusive electoral institutions yield more active political environments (Hayduk, 2006) and that enfranchisement has a boosting impact on external efficacy even if individuals do not actively use such electoral rights and are not explicitly mobilized (Shineman, 2020). This means that alien enfranchisement as a marker of a more inclusive conception of the *demos* could play a role in boosting efficacy among non-citizens (Bauböck, 2009; Blatter et al., 2017). Therefore, there is reason to believe that alien enfranchisement may positively impact external efficacy attitudes among non-citizens. Next, considering the potential reactions among citizens given such inclusion of non-citizens in the electoral supply (Stutzer & Slotwinski, 2020),

we assess whether such expansion is associated with a subsequent decline in efficacy among citizens.

Empirically, since most studies in the political efficacy literature have concentrated on the North American context (Anderson, 2010; Mondak, 2010), we turn our attention to Europe. We focus on the Swiss case and exploit the sub-national variation in foreign enfranchisement policies, engaging in a within-case comparison. Breaking with earlier studies, we observe the impact of alien enfranchisement in the entire resident population combining immigrant and citizen samples. We employ a longitudinal research design using data from the Swiss Household Panel from 1999 to 2014, investigating the efficacy differences both within and across respondents due to variations in voting rights regulations. We find robust evidence that non-citizens living in municipalities with alien enfranchisement display higher external efficacy levels than those in contexts without such inclusive electoral policies. Moreover, our analysis does not reveal any evidence that citizens (either native or naturalized) perceive a decline in their level of external efficacy when alien enfranchisement extends the limits of formal political membership.

State of the Literature on External Political Efficacy in Diverse Democracies

While investigations of external efficacy that specifically concentrated on non-citizen populations and citizens with an immigration background have been scarce, there is a wealth of research in the fields of comparative politics and political behavior on individual and to a lesser extent on contextual antecedents of external efficacy among citizens (Abramson & Aldrich, 1982; Campbell et al., 1954; Clarke & Acock, 1989; Mondak, 2010). First, highlighting the socio-economic, demographic, and material resources, ample evidence exists to support that the feeling of perceived influence on politics tends to be lower for those with lower income, less education, women, ethnic minorities, immigrants, and youth (Campbell et al., 1954; Cohen, Vigode, & Samorly, 2001). Specific to the case of individuals with an immigration background, acquisition of citizenship and the country of origin makes a substantively large difference in how they engage with the host country's politics (Wass, Blais, Morin-Chassé, & Weide, 2015). Second, studies focusing on social capital emphasizing civic engagement, such as participation in religious and civic activities and

associational memberships, have revealed mixed findings for whether civic engagement boosts people's sense of political influence (Whiteley, 2011). This has also been corroborated from immigrant incorporation literature, advancing that associational engagement factors have less to do with reported evaluations of external efficacy (Anduiza & San Martin, 2011; Togeby, 1999).

The third approach concentrates on partisanship, social and institutional trust, and political attitudes (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006). Extant evidence suggests that political interest, political trust, and satisfaction with democracy correlate strongly with higher external efficacy – although the causal directions of these potentially endogenous factors are not well explored (Anderson, 2010; Caprara, Vecchione, Capanna, & Mebane, 2009). When thinking of non-citizen populations specifically, to the best of our knowledge, there has only been one earlier comparative large-N study of immigrants' external efficacy attitudes (Anduiza & San Martin, 2011). The findings from the analysis of Moroccan and Ecuadorian populations in four European cities show that neither socio-demographics, material resources (including duration of stay and permit type), or civic engagement factors predict efficacy differences. Instead, people's expressed interest in the politics of the host country, political and social trust explain efficacy differences. However, the research design lacks sufficient variation in non-citizen resident populations to gauge the material resources arguments and does not allow contextual factors to be assessed systematically, employing temporal, cross-national, or within-country comparisons.

Finally, we turn to the scholars who have highlighted the necessity of contextualizing external efficacy (Ainsworth, 2000; Finkel, 1985). Focusing mostly on electoral institutions, there is mixed evidence, showing that political diversity and representation of non-majority opinions is linked to better external efficacy (Bowler & Donovan, 2002; Dyck & Lascher, 2009). Likewise, there also seems to be modest effects for the use direct democracy tools such as referenda and ballot initiative (Schlozman & Yohai, 2008). On the whole, regarding this relatively understudied predictor of efficacy, studies suggest that it is unclear how, and if at all, people's external efficacy is influenced by existing policies and political dynamics (Catterberg & Moreno, 2006; Chamberlain, 2012). Paradoxically, however, place matters greatly when it comes to efficacy. It is generally agreed that there are substantial differences in efficacy attitudes between sub-national and regional units even when individual-level characteristics are controlled for – such as in the case of the US (Wolak, 2018). If we understand efficacy even to a small extent to be systematically

shaped by the policy conditions, such efficacy outcomes cannot be studied in isolation from the context – particularly at the local level (Ainsworth, 2000).

Notably, extant work focusing on the efficacy of underrepresented groups suggests enough justification to contest a solely individual-based view of the external efficacy (Wolak, 2018). For example, having more female legislators boosts female voters' external efficacy and heightens perceptions of political influence (Atkeson & Carrillo, 2007). Furthermore, there seems to be a positive link between descriptive representation and higher efficacy among ethnic minorities in the US (Jeong, 2013; Pantoja & Segura, 2003). Focusing on a sample of European countries from 2002 to 2008, Helbling and co-authors report that more inclusive integration policies seem to lower the differences of political attitudes in each country to a certain extent (2016). Notably, local conditions are increasingly demonstrated to matter extensively regarding political participation and integration outcomes (Gonzalez-Ferrer & Morales, 2013; Manatschal, Wisthaler, & Zuber, 2020). Yet, the implications of such evidence from the broader field of political science and migration studies rarely speak to each other. Most studies concentrate on citizens or non-citizens separately, unduly drawing boundaries between how we can explain the way individuals construct their views about external efficacy. Thus, more research is needed to concentrate on regional and local differences in efficacy which can go undetected when looking at national effects.

The Impact of Alien Enfranchisement on External Political Efficacy

Our argument starts with the idea that external efficacy is not merely an individual trait with little connection to the political environment (Wolak, 2018). Considering the inclusive nature of alien enfranchisement policies, we expect that non-citizens will feel more externally efficacious when they have political rights in their host country. Next, we advance that these policies may imply externalities on citizens even though they are not the target audience of such policies through spill-over effects that alter their political efficacy (Filindra and Manatschal 2020). Therefore, we theoretically and empirically evaluate the external efficacy responses among both citizens and non-citizens facing foreign enfranchisement policies.

Political efficacy of non-citizens in alien enfranchised contexts

There are objective and subjective potential channels through which non-citizen voting rights are arguably linked to higher external efficacy among non-citizens. First, political interest and the political knowledge of non-citizens are improved if they are given the right to vote and are members of the electorate (Hainmueller, Hangartner, & Pietrantuono, 2015). Importantly, the act of voting itself gives individuals the feeling of ability to influence government decisions and can cyclically lead to higher efficacy (Clarke & Acock, 1989; Finkel, 1985). However, non-naturalized immigrants often do not take advantage of the local voting rights they are attributed to, making this a less likely mechanism to understand why it may increase their efficacy (Ferris et al., 2020; Seidle, 2015). Yet, even without behavioral change, such a shift in formal membership and acquisition of voting rights can potentially enhance the (perceived) role of an individual as a political agent (Shineman, 2020). People who receive democratic rights see themselves as more politically relevant not just because of the knowledge that they are included in the electoral processes but also because of increasing targeting by political actors, improving their external efficacy (Mettler, 2002). The widely politicized and contentious process of alien enfranchisement reforms, media attention and party communications can improve non-citizens' view of their role in politics (Bilodeau, 2009; Nadler, 2021; Piccoli, 2021).

Next, policy feedback effects of alien enfranchisement that provide political membership to non-citizens can reciprocally improve how they perceive the political institutions of the host democracy and their place in it (Gundelach & Manatschal, 2017; Manatschal et al., 2020). If non-citizens feel addressed by the policy and politics in the host country, they are more likely to engage with the political affairs, improving their perceptions as political actors (Bevelander & Pendakur, 2009; Bloemraad, 2006; Cinalli & Giugni, 2011). Indeed, political inclusion is most likely to be achieved when immigrants are both attached and perceive themselves as accepted by the host community and individuals that have a high level of sense of community are likely to display higher levels of external efficacy (Bilodeau, White, Turgeon, & Henderson, 2020; Simonsen, 2020). Accordingly, alien enfranchisement has the power to boost the sense of belonging to the host community. This also relates to the idea of signaling to immigrants a sense of symbolic “right to politics” that can enhance their confidence as legitimate political actors boosting efficacy attitudes (Bloemraad & Schönwälder, 2013).

Political efficacy of citizens in alien enfranchised contexts

If our argument holds, then alien enfranchisement should be linked to more optimistic perceptions about their political place in society among non-citizens. So, thus far, our theoretical framework has characterized the introduction of alien enfranchisement as democracy and representation enhancing without many political risks (Ferris et al., 2020). However, this view of alien enfranchisement does not paint the complete picture of the dynamics of sharing rights with non-citizens from the citizens' perspective. One could also think that these policies may affect citizens even though they are not the target audience through spill-over effects. Recent literature shows, for example, that immigration and integration policy regimes, which are not targeted at citizens, seem to have an impact on the political participation of citizens with an immigration background (Filindra & Manatschal, 2020) and can mitigate the negative impact of increasing diversity on social trust among citizens (Gundelach & Manatschal, 2017). Notably, even in countries where non-citizens are enfranchised, these rights are gained through long and politicized processes of a series of often unsuccessful attempts that eventually lead to – often quite narrowly – successful adoption of such policies (Koukal, Schafer, & Eichenberger, 2021; Piccoli, 2021). Therefore, a considerable negative externality of alien enfranchisement could be that these policies reduce citizens' perceptions of their political influence.

It is well demonstrated that there is difficulty in passing alien enfranchisement laws when the number of immigrants is higher, making them more consequential as political actors (Kayran & Erdilmen, 2021; Stutzer & Slotwinski, 2020). For instance, in Greek and in several Swiss cantonal cases of enfranchisement attempts, citizen reactions against immigrant rights movements have been well documented (D'Amato, 2009, pp. 71-72; Triandafyllidou, 2015). This means that there may indeed be a paradoxical negative externality to enfranchising non-citizens (necessary for their integration), which can beget democratic grievances among citizens and fears over their own representation (Klarenbeek & Weide, 2020; Kundnani, 2012). Evidence suggesting the reality of this risk also comes from the US case. Comparing Anglo-Saxon and Hispanic residents in Texas, Rocha and co-authors find that immigration enforcement tougher on Hispanic immigrants correlates with higher efficacy among Anglo-Saxon voters (2015). Thus, one considerable political risk of alien enfranchisement is potential retention or decline in efficacy among citizens once non-citizens are accepted as political members. Therefore, here, we concentrate on the relationship

between alien enfranchisement and external efficacy by investigating a sample of non-citizens and by looking at its implications also among citizens, both with and without immigration background.

Method and Data

Data and the Case of Switzerland

To explore the relationship between external efficacy and alien enfranchisement, we use the Swiss Household Panel (SHP) data from 1999 to 2014. The SHP is a high-quality longitudinal panel study of households residing in Switzerland that surveys samples of native Swiss citizens and naturalized citizens and non-citizen immigrants.¹ We concentrate on the case of Switzerland because it allows us the best empirical leverage in testing the political consequences of alien enfranchisement reforms longitudinally while holding various country-level idiosyncrasies constant. Notably, the Swiss case is unique in allowing for multiple over time variations in the passing of these reforms and within sub-national unit (*canton*) variation across local residence areas. Overall, we concentrate on the variation of alien enfranchisement policy across time as well as between and within cantons.

In Switzerland, cantons and municipalities have the freedom to enfranchise non-citizens since the Swiss federal constitution leave legislation on electoral rules to the discretion of cantonal authorities. Importantly, if a canton passes laws making alien enfranchisement legal within the cantonal boundaries, then, in some cantons, certain municipalities have the freedom to opt-in or opt-out of these rules. This means, within Switzerland alone, there is variation both between cantons and, importantly, within cantons in addition to the temporal variation of alien enfranchisement rules. Notably, except for Jura, all enfranchisement reforms have been enacted within the observation period of our study, see Table A1. This research design allows us to precisely assess the impact of alien enfranchisement when important and potentially confounding national and regional level differences are held constant between respondents.

¹ Further details of the SHP sampling strategy, attrition rates, and the checks we conducted regarding the potential influence of such panel attrition is available on pp.31-34 in the appendix.

At the individual level, we include adult citizens and non-citizens residing in Switzerland (18+ years old). Considering the potential systematic differences of efficacy based on civic and ethnic status among resident populations (Helbling et al., 2016), we delineate the residential population in Switzerland into three categories. The first group refers to *native citizens*, i.e., Swiss citizens who acquired Swiss citizenship at birth through their parents. Next, we identify *naturalized citizens*, i.e., Swiss citizens who did not acquire Swiss citizenship by birth, meaning they went through the naturalization process and have an immigration background. Finally, our last group refers to immigrants who do not hold Swiss citizenship, i.e., *non-citizens* living in Switzerland.² We match our individual-level respondent data with information on households' residential location at the municipal level. Using these municipal level codes, we match SHP with our coding of Swiss municipalities as positive or negative cases of alien enfranchisement over time.

As of now, out of the twenty-six Swiss cantons, eight have adopted some degree of local alien enfranchisement policies, see Appendix A. This means that 599 municipalities in Switzerland out of 2205 currently have voting rights extended to non-citizen residents (see Figure A1 for a visualization). We code municipalities with alien enfranchisement at the year of implementation as “1” and “0” if the municipality has no non-citizen voting rights. We use this binary measurement of enfranchisement rules to indicate the presence or absence of such voting rights rather than focus on incremental differences indicative of the rules' conditions. To relax the assumptions regarding the exact date on which the effect of the legislation should be observed, we estimate the effect using a lagged ($t-1$) and a lead ($t+1$) impact of alien enfranchisement, revealing no change in our results (see Table G9). While there are ongoing comparative data collection efforts, there is no measurement to capture such differences at the municipal level (Arrighi & Piccoli, 2018). More importantly, here, we are not interested in distinguishing between the degrees of alien enfranchisement rules, which falls beyond the scope of the present study.

Switzerland is a good case for our study because if non-citizens are enfranchised, such rules apply to all immigrants non-discriminately regardless of their countries of origin – given that

² Considering the cell sizes, we do not further divide the sample of native Swiss citizens into Swiss citizens who are second generation immigrants (i.e., those with an immigration background in their family). However, we replicate our main findings applying such disaggregation in status and report that our results do not change, see Table G8.

the immigrants satisfy a specific set of residence duration conditions, see Table A1. Importantly, the Swiss case is fitting also because the introduction of alien enfranchisement policies was accompanied by widespread political campaigns, education efforts, and public information. Considering that adopting such policies entails a constitutional change and therefore requires a highly politicized popular referendum, residents in Switzerland are exposed to a series of instances where they are made aware of these reforms (Piccoli, 2021; Stutzer & Slotwinski, 2020). Many of the enfranchisement legislation has passed in most cases in the context of additional constitutional changes. Yet, inspecting the content of such constitutional revision reform packages, we argue that these other constitutional amendments were unlikely to be linked to an increase in external efficacy among residents – especially for non-citizens residents of each municipality, see Table A2 in the appendix.

Next, the constitutional referendums required to pass these reform proposals at the cantonal level were adopted by small margins, further illustrating the contentious nature of these proposals even in areas where alien enfranchisement is present. The recent referendums that enfranchised non-citizens in Geneva, Vaud, and Fribourg passed by 52%, 56%, and 58% of “yes” votes, respectively (Koukal et al., 2021). Thus, municipalities with alien enfranchisement are not unique in having an otherwise positively skewed environment of attitudes towards non-citizens in the socio-political context. Importantly, the canton-wide enfranchisement efforts occur in a top-to-bottom approach expanding suffrage across all municipalities within canton boundaries, which is grounds to consider them an exogenous quasi-random policy intervention (Ferwerda, 2021; Ferwerda et al., 2020; Vernby, 2013). Alien enfranchised municipalities themselves are not unique in having an otherwise skewed environment of attitudes towards non-citizens and/or political context. For instance, some relatively more immigrant inclusive cities and cantons such as Zürich and Basel-City have not yet been able to enfranchise non-citizens. Therefore, our research design allows us to isolate the relationship between such policies and efficacy.

Measurement of external efficacy

We measure the external efficacy attitudes of respondents using a question item available in the SHP for our observation period formulated as follows: “How much influence do you think someone like you can have on government policy?” The answer scale goes from 0 to 10, where higher values indicate stronger perceptions of political influence. The question item is asked every

wave within our observation period except for 2010, 2012, and 2013 and our analysis covers all SHP waves from 1999 to 2014. There is a significant gap in external efficacy in Switzerland if we compare non-citizens to citizens in Switzerland, see Figure D1 in the appendix. In contrast, naturalized citizens do not exhibit any particularly striking feeling of being politically left behind compared with native citizens. Crucially, Switzerland seems to be a particularly prominent case where the gaps are among the highest when looking at other European democracies in the region, see Figure H1.³ This makes the Swiss case *a most likely case* for a policy such as alien enfranchisement to impact such differences. If we do not find an external efficacy boost among non-citizens considering the large gap and the low baseline, it may be even more unlikely to observe such an effect elsewhere where gaps are already more modest.

Estimation strategy and sensitivity checks

In this paper, we are interested in the impact of alien enfranchisement reforms on non-citizen and citizen residents in host societies. Thus, first, we assess whether there is higher external efficacy reported among non-citizen groups living in municipalities with alien enfranchisement than those who do not. Next, we test whether the efficacy boost in alien enfranchised municipalities is indeed substantively greater among the target group of the policy, i.e., non-citizens, compared to citizen groups to observe its intended impact more precisely. Furthermore, following our theoretical discussion, we also investigate spill-over effects among native and naturalized citizens. Therefore, we use an interaction term between alien enfranchisement (binary variable) and the residential group status of the respondents (distinguished in three categories) to investigate the relationships that we are interested in. All our models are estimated with clustering standard errors by individuals to estimate robust standard errors due to potential disturbances of heteroskedasticity and autocorrelation because of our repeated observation data structure.

To estimate our key coefficients of interest, we first use a series of linear random-effects (RE) models with year and canton of residence fixed effects. This choice is based on several theoretical and empirical considerations. While we are interested in the effect of alien enfranchisement, it is empirically unhelpful to use two-way fixed-effects models taking away all

³ Using data from the last three waves of the European Social Survey (2014-2018), we plot weighted averages of external efficacy differences between European countries demonstrating this claim, see appendix H for further details.

between variation at the individual level. This is because our residential group categories are time-invariant for most of our respondents (except for non-citizens who naturalize within our observation period), which will not be estimated if all between-individual variation is dropped. All our models include time dummies to remove period effects and trends that may influence the efficacy attitudes that are systematically different throughout 1999 to 2014.

Yet, there are two critical sources of confounding that need to be considered when addressing our empirical question. The first is regarding the canton-level unobserved differences. To account for this, we add the canton fixed effects because there are systematic differences in the average efficacy between cantons and isolate the impact of living in an alien enfranchised municipality and the overtime change more narrowly (see Appendix B). Overall, this means that the coefficients reflect the effect of the policy reform for cantons that go from not having alien enfranchisement to having these rules (Vaud, Geneva, Fribourg, Graubünden) and from those cantons that have within canton variation between their municipalities (Appenzell-Ausserrhoden and Graubünden). The disadvantage of canton fixed effects is that while preserving the variation due to policy change within our sample, it removes much of the between-canton variation, increasing the risk of Type II error. Thus, we also report our coefficient of interest by removing the canton fixed effects reflecting longitudinal variation and between-person differences in alien enfranchisement.

Furthermore, one could also argue that a particular immigrant welcoming political climate in alien enfranchised municipalities may be driving the efficacy boost we reported. Regarding this issue, we control for two municipal level factors. First, while alien enfranchisement legislations pass with much contestation (Koukal et al., 2021; Piccoli, 2021; Stutzer & Slotwinski, 2020), it is nevertheless important to investigate whether much of what we observe in the relationship between non-citizen enfranchisement and non-citizens' higher efficacy comes from a more welcoming political environment. To account for this, we collect data on the vote share of the vocally xenophobic Swiss radical-right party, i.e. *Schweizerische Volkspartei* (SVP/UDC), from the Swiss Federal Statistical Office for each municipality in the federal legislative elections from 1999, 2003, 2007, and 2011 (OFS, 2019). We attribute the closest previous election result to the subsequent SHP waves where there was no election. Next, just as there are referendums at the cantonal level that enfranchise non-citizens, within our observation period, several referendums have failed to expand the voting rights of non-citizens (Adler et al., 2016), see Table G4. Experience of such

failed referendums at the local level can have a dampening role on non-citizens' efficacy attitudes which need to be accounted for. Overall, replicating our main results while considering these two contextual factors do not seem to substantively change our findings, see Table G5.

The second important source of confounding is related to the individual level. To address this issue, in our main analysis, we introduce three sets of control variables in our models to account for the alternative explanations of efficacy attitudes in the literature. In our RE models, we first control for age, sex, education level, household income, and employment status of the respondents as established material sources that seem to determine those who feel influential in politics systematically. Since the democratic institutions of the countries of origin and the extent to which respondents engage with the democratic processes in the sending country could matter for external efficacy, we also control for the place of origin for those respondents in our sample with an immigration background such as the non-citizens and the naturalized citizens.⁴ We add a second set of predictors of civic engagement, union membership and religious attendance as two of the most evidenced factors of external efficacy. Third, we also add political attitudes demonstrated as robust correlates of efficacy in terms of political interest, political trust, and partisanship (see Appendix C for details on the question items and Appendix D for summary statistics).

We also specify our models with a series of alternative estimations that control for a battery of important individual-level factors that are relevant to external efficacy such as the *duration of stay* in Switzerland for respondents with an immigration background, subjective reflections on one's *economic satisfaction*, measures of civic engagement and associational activity (such as *membership in a political party* or a *charitable organization*), *satisfaction with personal relationships in Switzerland*, *generalized social trust*, and *satisfaction with Swiss democratic institutions*. We have not included all these variables in our main models because they are not uniformly included in the SHP waves, and their inclusion reduces the sample size significantly. Overall, our results are remarkably robust to including these covariates (see tables G1-G3).

⁴ The level of disaggregation we use is based on SHP's post-coded variable that groups respondents' country of origin into 12 geographic regions. The different region clusters we consider are Northern, Eastern, Central, Western, South-West, Southern, and South-East Europe, Africa, Latin America, Northern America, Asia, and Oceania.

Even with a wide range of individual-level control factors, it is difficult to account for the time-invariant individual-level characteristics that correlate with municipality residence, meaning that individuals who are sensitive to electoral inclusiveness may be more likely to live in such places. Moreover, unobserved individual-level traits may be driving external efficacy differences that can't be attributed to the impact of non-citizen enfranchisement. To address this, we estimate two-way fixed-effects (FE) models both in the full sample and in three subsamples of native citizens, naturalized citizens, and non-citizens that take away all differences between persons and isolate only the over-time variation in efficacy attitudes predicted by alien enfranchisement reforms (see Appendix F). Furthermore, controlling for both individual and canton-level fixed effects, we inspect the external efficacy differences between non-citizen and citizen groups before and after the enfranchisement legislation in the short term (1-year pre and post the introduction of the voting rights), which we discuss in more detail below. Overall, alternative estimation strategies and sensitivity checks corroborate the findings we present here.

Finally, our strategies for dealing with individual and canton time-invariant characteristics only hold under the assumption that individuals do not self-select into an alien enfranchised municipality in our observation period. In our sample, when respondents' status changes from living in a non-alien enfranchisement to residing in an alien-enfranchisement municipality, it is in overwhelming majority due to the policy changes, see Table G6. Only less than one per cent of respondents' alien enfranchisement residential status change can be attributed to an actual move on the part of the respondents. Regardless, we re-estimate our models by removing respondents who have moved into a new municipality at t different from $t-1$, see Table G7, and report no substantive changes in our results.

Empirical Findings

We begin by presenting the results of our linear random-effects models predicting the relationship between alien enfranchisement and external efficacy. Table 1 reports the coefficients from six models, where Model 1 includes the first set of material resource controls, Model 2 adds civic engagement factors, and Model 3 is fully specified with political attitudes. We stepwise add our covariates of interest, as some of these control variables are missing in different waves. Thus, we

observe whether the effects we report are sensitive to such survey-year missingness. Next, to test the relationship between alien enfranchisement and external efficacy specifically for non-citizen respondents compared to others, we estimate an interaction term between the alien enfranchisement dummy and the three-category variable of the civic status of respondents. Model 4 includes this interaction term in a simple model specification (as in Model 1), and Model 5 presents the coefficient of this interaction effect on the fully specified model (as in Model 3). Model 6 uses the same specification as Model 5 but excludes canton fixed effects to estimate the results with the inclusion of between canton variation as well.

Does living in a municipality where all long-term non-citizen residents are enfranchised correlate with enhanced perceptions of political influence? Across the board, the results in Table 1 present strong support, suggesting that, on average, there are higher external efficacy perceptions among residents living in alien enfranchised municipalities. Considering that our dependent variable is on a 0 to 10 scale, alien enfranchisement seems to be associated with at least 0.11 points of higher efficacy at $p < 0.05$ level. Next, controlling for some of the most established alternative external efficacy explanations, our Swiss sample results show a strong external efficacy gap between non-citizens and native citizens. We find that when compared to a native citizen, being a non-citizen in Switzerland is correlated with lower efficacy by about 1.49 points on our dependent variable. Likewise, when compared to naturalized citizens, non-citizens in Switzerland are at least about 1.60 points lower in external efficacy (not shown here). It is important to note that differences between native citizens and naturalized immigrants are not statistically significant.

Concerning alternative explanations of efficacy discussed in earlier work, we also report that higher income and education positively correlate with higher efficacy. There is also evidence supporting the role of civic engagement, where both more frequent religious participation and active union membership are associated with higher efficacy. Lastly, while partisanship is unproductive of efficacy differences, unsurprisingly, people report higher levels of external efficacy if they have higher political trust and more political interest in line with earlier evidence in the field.

Table 1: Alien Enfranchisement and External Efficacy Attitudes, direct and interaction effects

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Alien enfranchisement (AE)	0.18*** (0.043)	0.16*** (0.046)	0.11* (0.048)	0.16*** (0.046)	0.08 (0.051)	-0.07t (0.040)
Ref: Native citizens						
<i>Naturalized citizens</i>	0.11t (0.065)	-0.55 (0.965)	-0.21 (0.884)	0.09 (0.070)	-0.21 (0.884)	-0.14 (0.886)
<i>Non-citizens</i>	-1.49*** (0.056)	-2.17* (0.966)	-1.83* (0.887)	-1.53*** (0.059)	-1.85* (0.886)	-1.76* (0.889)
Interaction term						
Ref: Native citizens *AE						
<i>Naturalized citizens *AE</i>				0.05 (0.101)	0.11 (0.132)	0.16 (0.132)
<i>Non-citizens*AE</i>				0.17t (0.098)	0.23* (0.113)	0.25* (0.113)
Age	-0.02*** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)	-0.02*** (0.001)
Woman	-0.10** (0.037)	-0.09* (0.040)	0.14*** (0.038)	-0.10** (0.037)	0.14*** (0.038)	0.14*** (0.038)
Education	0.06*** (0.005)	0.06*** (0.006)	0.02** (0.006)	0.06*** (0.005)	0.02** (0.006)	0.02** (0.006)
Income	0.03*** (0.004)	0.03*** (0.005)	0.01 (0.005)	0.03*** (0.004)	0.01 (0.005)	0.01* (0.005)
Ref: Employed						
<i>Unemployed</i>	-0.00 (0.066)	0.01 (0.074)	0.04 (0.078)	-0.00 (0.066)	0.04 (0.078)	0.04 (0.078)
<i>Not in labour force</i>	0.07** (0.027)	0.04 (0.031)	-0.06t (0.032)	0.07** (0.027)	-0.06* (0.032)	-0.07* (0.032)
Ref: Active union member						
<i>Passive member</i>		-0.19*** (0.048)	-0.15** (0.047)		-0.15** (0.047)	-0.15** (0.047)
<i>Not a member</i>		-0.27*** (0.045)	-0.23*** (0.044)		-0.23*** (0.044)	-0.23*** (0.044)
Religiosity		0.05*** (0.006)	0.03*** (0.006)		0.03*** (0.006)	0.03*** (0.006)
Left-right partisanship			0.01 (0.006)		0.01 (0.006)	0.01 (0.006)
Political trust			0.33*** (0.006)		0.33*** (0.006)	0.33*** (0.006)
Political interest			0.16*** (0.006)		0.16*** (0.006)	0.16*** (0.006)
Constant	3.45*** (0.104)	3.57*** (0.126)	1.47*** (0.129)	3.45*** (0.104)	1.48*** (0.129)	1.32*** (0.117)
Time FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Canton FE	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N
Country of Origin FE	N	Y	Y	N	Y	Y
Observations	67,625	53,303	46,943	67,625	46,943	46,943

Number of individuals	12,104	10,407	9,730	12,104	9,730	9,730
RMSE	1.845	1.843	1.764	1.845	1.764	1.764

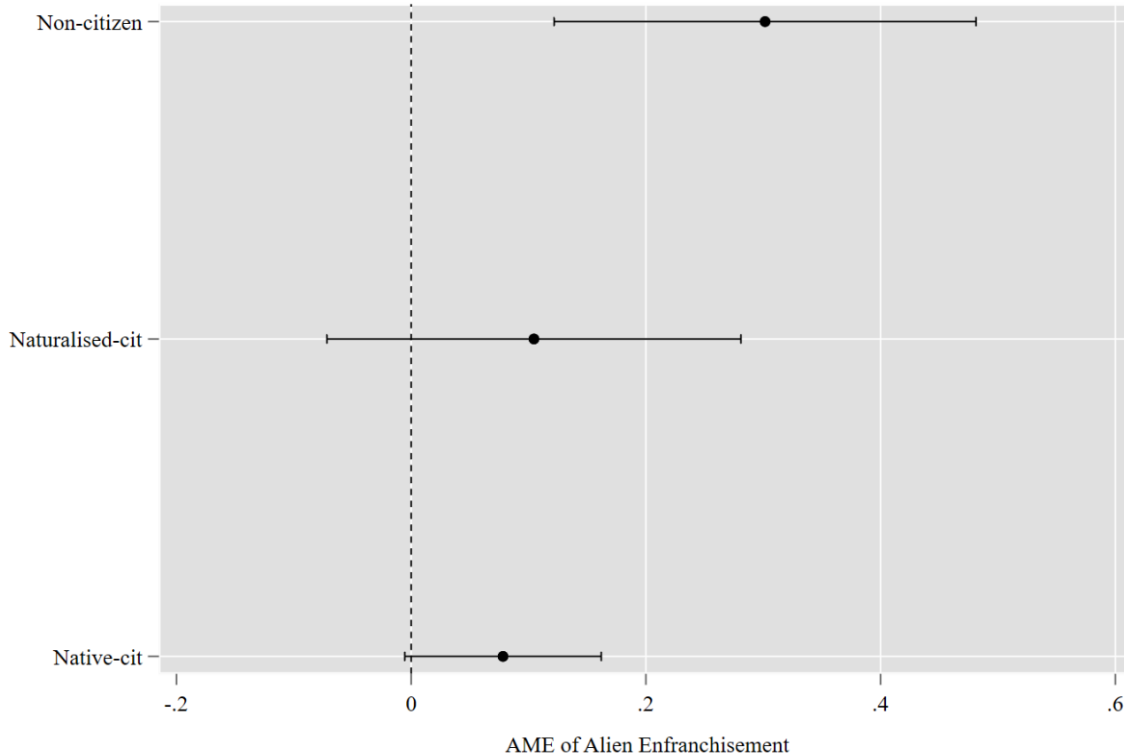
Note: All models except for M1 and M4 include region of origin dummies, which are not shown here, see Appendix E. Model 6 does not have canton dummies allowing between-canton variation in the models. Individual clustered standard errors in parentheses.

*** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$, t $p < 0.1$

Next, we test whether non-citizen voting rights have a stronger influence on their designated target group of immigrants and examine whether a negative externality effect exists on citizens using an interaction term. If we are right in suggesting that alien enfranchisement is correlated with improving external efficacy among non-citizens, Model 4 and Model 5 should return significant interaction terms between being a non-naturalized immigrant and living in an alien enfranchised municipality. The results presented in Table 1 seems to confirm just that. While living in a municipality with or without alien enfranchisement does not systematically predict efficacy differences between native and naturalized citizens, alien enfranchisement seems to be positively correlated with higher efficacy for non-citizens compared with citizens. This result appears to be robust to adding between canton differences in Model 6. To substantively interpret this interaction coefficient, Figure 1 plots the average marginal effect of alien enfranchisement on external efficacy for the three groups using Model 4.

Figure 1 shows that in line with our expectations, alien enfranchisement is strongly correlated with higher external efficacy attitudes among non-citizens. The average marginal effect predicted is about 0.3 points suggesting a modest but non-negligible influence on efficacy for non-citizen groups. Figure 1 also reveals that alien enfranchisement does not predict efficacy for naturalized citizens or native citizens at ($p < 0.1$ level). This latter result concerning citizens is crucial because we also suggested that, when investigating the efficacy impact of alien enfranchisement, it is key also to test whether this immigrant-inclusive policy is negatively related to external efficacy perceptions among citizens. Both Table 1 and Figure 1 show that while there is a substantively large positive relationship between immigrant-inclusive electoral rules and efficacy for non-citizens, at least from this analysis, there seems to be no evidence to suggest a negative backlash rooted decline in efficacy perceptions among citizens either.

Figure 1: Average marginal effects (AMEs) of alien enfranchisement on external efficacy



Note: Predicted using Model 4 in Table 1. Estimates are presented with 90% Confidence intervals.

Lastly, we use an alternative estimation strategy to look at differences in efficacy gaps between citizens and non-citizens due to alien enfranchisement. Considering the lack of substantively meaningful efficacy gaps between naturalized and native citizens either directly or mitigated by alien enfranchisement policy, we group them as Swiss citizens. We then interact this binary citizenship variable with our variable of alien enfranchisement and estimate two-way fixed effects models with year dummies taking away potential efficacy trends in our data (see Table F2 in the appendix). Figure 2 shows a robust and positive effect of alien enfranchisement on non-citizens (going from about 2.31 to 2.55 points). Notably, the difference of such an increase for non-citizens is larger and statistically significant than the difference alien enfranchisement makes for Swiss citizens (going from about 3.83 to 4.02). Hence, we conclude that, albeit small in effect size, alien enfranchisement significantly reduces the efficacy gap between citizens and non-citizens from 1.52 to 1.47 points, with an overall boost in efficaciousness across both groups and a statistically significant difference in such differences being about 0.05 points.

Figure 2: Linear predictions of the effect of external efficacy in Swiss and non-Swiss respondents



Note: Predicted using model 3 in Table F2. Estimates are presented with 90% Confidence intervals. AE: Alien Enfranchisement.

Discussion and Conclusion

The introduction of alien enfranchisement has long been debated as a potential policy tool for integrating immigrants in host democracies. While this is becoming an increasingly common and debated practice (Ferris et al., 2020; Kayran & Erdilmen, 2021), to date, little has been understood concerning this policies' political impact on non-citizens and potential externalities on citizens. In this paper we addressed this gap by examining the link between alien enfranchisement and external political efficacy, i.e., the perceived individual ability to influence the political processes, among immigrants. Our paper makes two main contributions to the fields of democratic representation, political integration of immigrants, and political attitudes.

First, our study is among the first to investigate external efficacy attitudes among non-citizen populations in democratic societies. We add to the literature in arguing and showing that the local context matters greatly in the political integration potential of non-citizens. Precisely, we provide evidence that immigrant-inclusive policies at the sub-national level, such as local alien enfranchisement, have a non-negligible positive influence on boosting non-citizens' perceived importance as political actors (Gonzalez-Ferrer & Morales, 2013; Manatschal et al., 2020). Thus, our paper serves as an important evaluation of the political influence of alien enfranchisement in diverse societies. This is crucial because extant work have documented that non-citizen voting rights have not yielded the desired enhanced political participation outcomes among non-citizens raising questions about its usefulness as a policy measure (Bevelander, 2015; Ruedin, 2018; Seidle, 2015). Yet, our results reveal that there is nevertheless a positive short-term impact of such inclusive electoral rules on non-citizens' reported external efficacy even without a strong turnout and electoral mobilization among the non-citizen electorate. This adds some credence to the arguments pointing the symbolic role of immigrant-inclusive policies in fostering democratic representation, integration, and sense of belonging of immigrants in host countries (Bilodeau et al., 2020; Gundelach & Manatschal, 2017). Importantly, our analysis reveals that there seems to be no negative effect of such inclusivity on citizens' perceived political influence – despite their politically contentious nature.

Second, most research related to political efficacy examined the role of individual-level factors in explaining variations in perceived efficacy. Our research adds to these debates by suggesting that local contextual factors, more precisely the degree of inclusiveness of the electoral system, can account for important cross-national and between-group variations of external efficacy. Therefore, our findings also point to the need for further research to expand our knowledge on the role of local electoral, and diversity-governing policies in mitigating external efficacy across diverse democracies. Notably, we have argued that the overall high gap of efficacy perceptions between citizens and non-citizens renders Switzerland a "most likely case" to study the potential of alien enfranchisement in reducing these differences in efficaciousness between distinct groups of residents. Our positive findings in this paper advance for expanding our research to studying how alien enfranchisement relates to efficacy in other European contexts and call for further research into such dynamics from a comparative perspective.

Despite these contributions, our paper also reveals the need for further research and highlights areas where comparative data is lacking. For instance, to test our theoretical arguments more precisely, it would be ideal to attribute whether non-citizens in our sample were in fact eligible for such voting rights immediately at the time of the reform or whether they have voted in the following local elections. Moreover, there is a dearth of data when it comes to measuring citizens' attitudes towards sharing political rights with non-citizens which would be necessary in capturing pre and post enfranchisement citizen reactions at the local level. However, while the SHP data we use in this paper is uniquely fitting for our research design, it does not provide survey question items that can capture such dimensions.

Another important aspect in reading our findings is also concerned with its temporality. Our paper focused on a narrow and short-term influence of alien enfranchisement on efficacy attitudes and provided first insight on the absence of a negative externality of alien enfranchisement on citizens' efficacy perceptions. Yet, there is evidence showing that the presence of alien enfranchisement boosts political parties' effort for descriptive representation of immigrant-origin populations (Nadler, 2021). Therefore, an increase in descriptive representation of residents with an immigration origin may lead to a negative backlash and lowered feeling of political influence and representation between native citizens, citizens with immigration background and non-citizens differently. As no comparative dataset on the descriptive representation of residents with an immigrant origin across most Swiss municipalities in our sample exists, our paper could not control for this aspect and data limitation impedes us again from observing changes in efficacy in the longer run after the introduction of alien enfranchisement policies. We believe this provides a fruitful further research avenue to investigate such links between alien enfranchisement, descriptive representation, and the political attitudes of citizens and non-citizen residents in diverse democracies.

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