

# **Voting Participation of Natives and Immigrants in Sweden – a Cohort Analysis of the 2002, 2006 and 2010 Elections**

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# Motivation

- Sweden extended local and provincial voting rights to immigrants with resident status in the 1970s.
- Policy rationale:
  - increase political influence, interest and self-esteem among foreign citizens.
- Citizenship acquisition:
  - Nordics – after 2 years
  - Refugees – after 4 years
  - All other immigrants – after 5 years



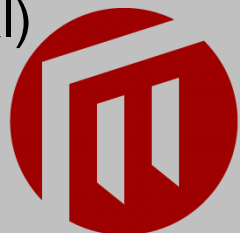
# Idea

To what extent do differences in voting participation across immigrant (foreign citizens and naturalised) categories exist?

- are they explained by
  - Personal characteristics:
    - Demographic
    - socio-economic
    - human capital attributes and
  - immigration related factors

Is citizenship an important factor in determining voter participation?

Is voting participation increasing over time? Integration (political)



# Previous research

- Human capital attributes are key drivers of voting behaviour
  - Age, education and labour market characteristics are powerful determinants in explaining voting behaviour (DeSipio 1996; Bass & Casper 2001)
- Less research done on voter turnout and minority status.
  - Minorities have lower voting participation rates. Not always reduced over generations (Ramakrishnan & Espenshade 2001)
  - Asians are less likely to vote than native-born (Bass & Casper 2001; Lien 2004)
  - Immigrants vote less. Canadian-born minorities display similar voting rates to majority Canadian-born (CES) (Chiu, et al 1994) Using ESCS 2002, social capital important for voting outcomes of immigrants and ethnic minorities in Canada (Bevelander & Pendakur 2009)
  - Sweden – Immigrants vote less, naturalised have higher participation (Bevelander & Pendakur 2011)

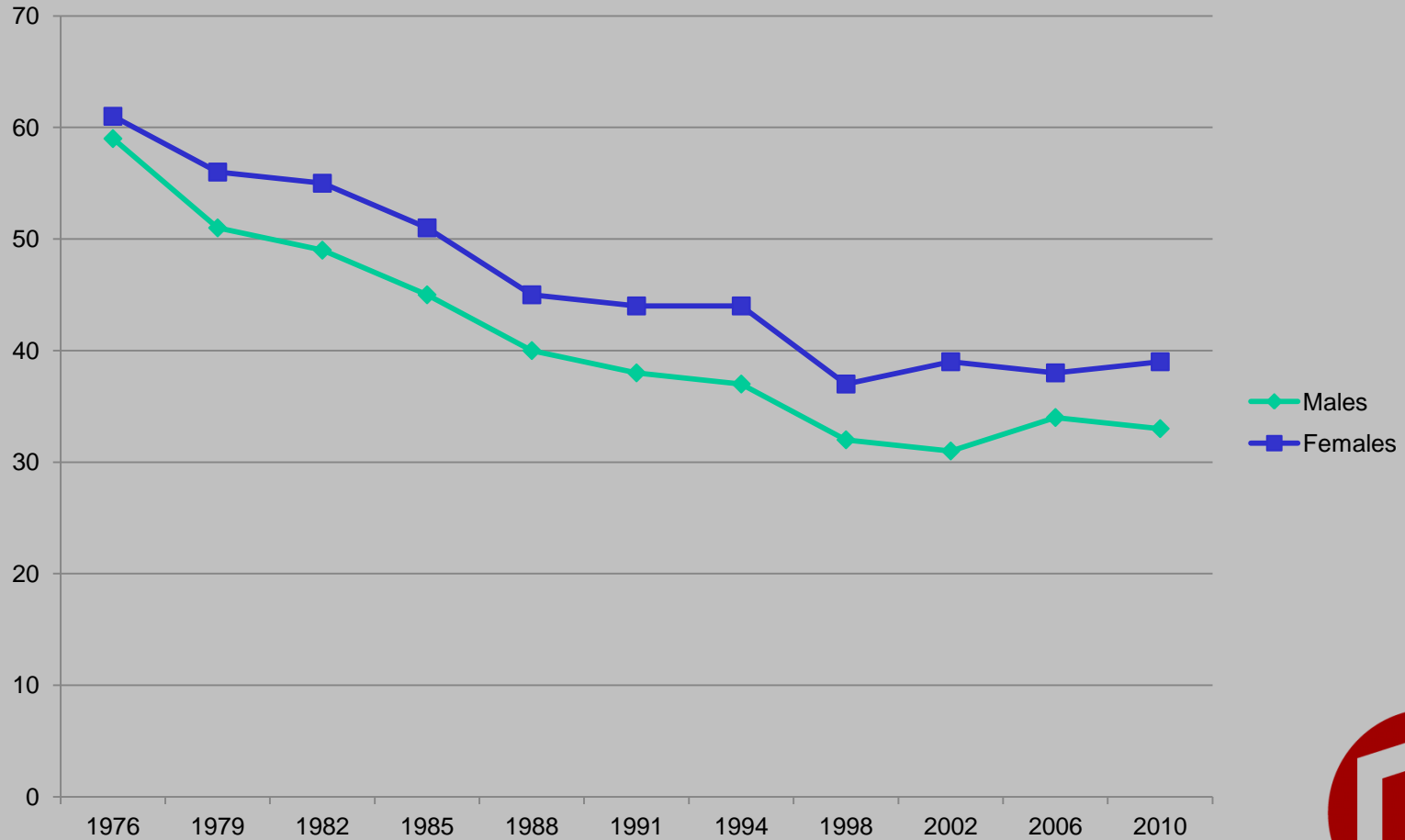


# Data and Method

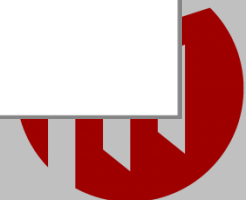
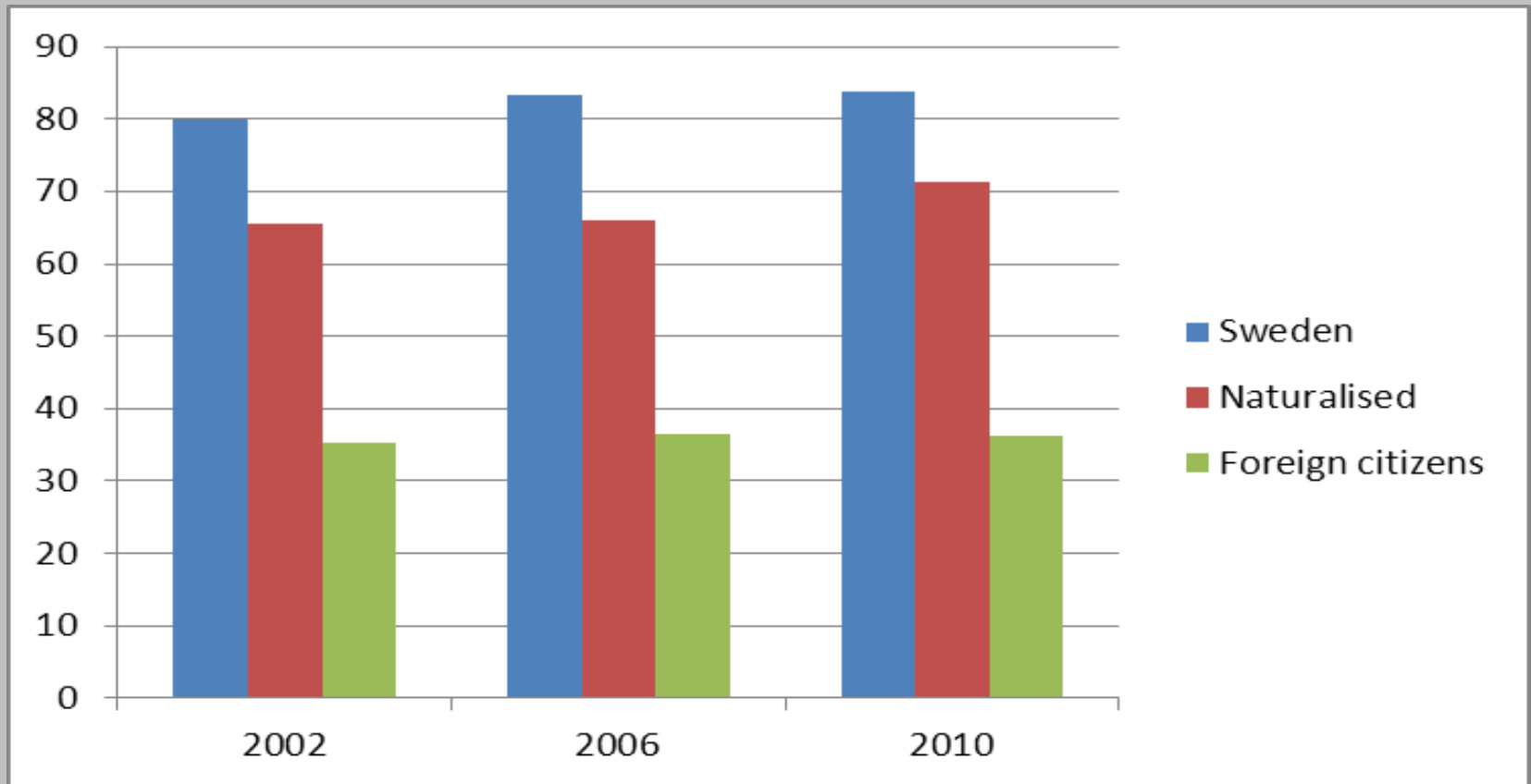
- Swedish 2002, 2006 & 2010 electoral survey
  - contains information on individual electoral participation for all those eligible to vote in national, provincial and municipal elections.
- Matched to:
  - Registry data from Statistics Sweden, which contains information for every Swedish resident.
  - Municipal level data from census
- Sample:
  - 2\* 70.000 & 1\* 110.000 residents in Sweden = 250.000
    - About a third are immigrants (75.000).
    - More than half of the immigrants (50.000) are not citizens but have the right to vote in municipal and provincial elections.
- Synthetic Cohort analysis



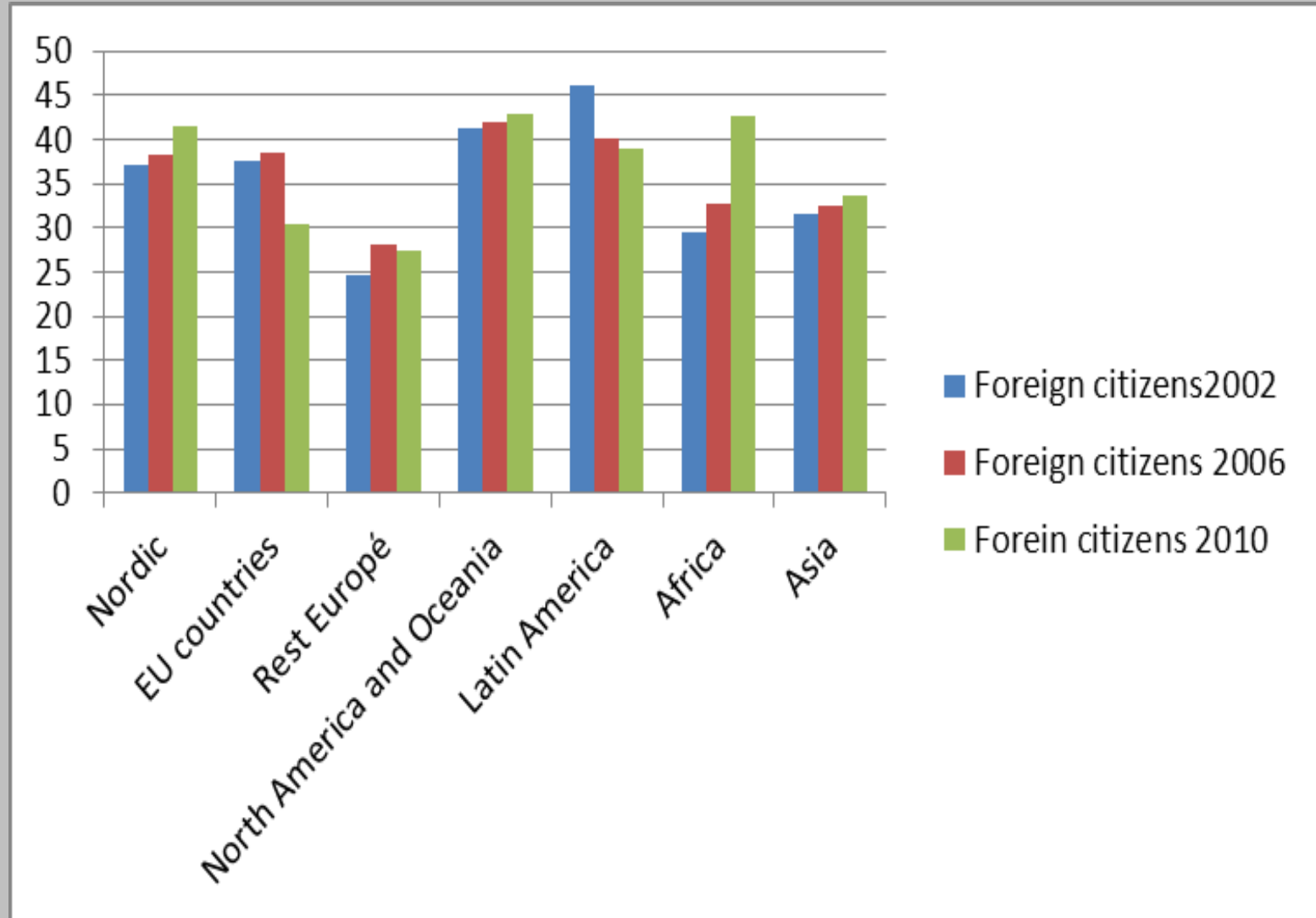
# Voting participation of foreign citizens 1976-2010



# Voting participation of foreign born (foreign citizens and naturalised)

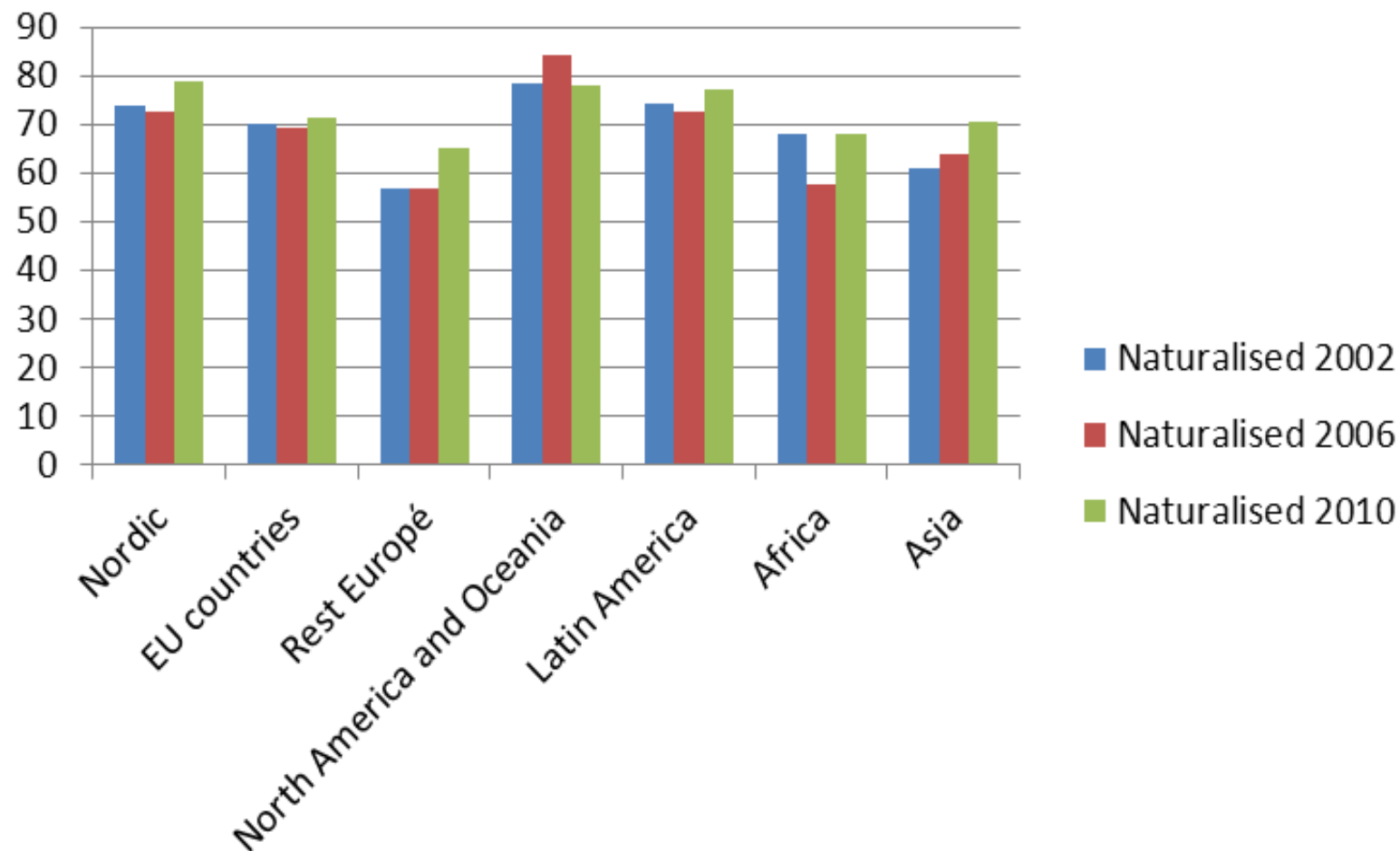


# Voting participation by group

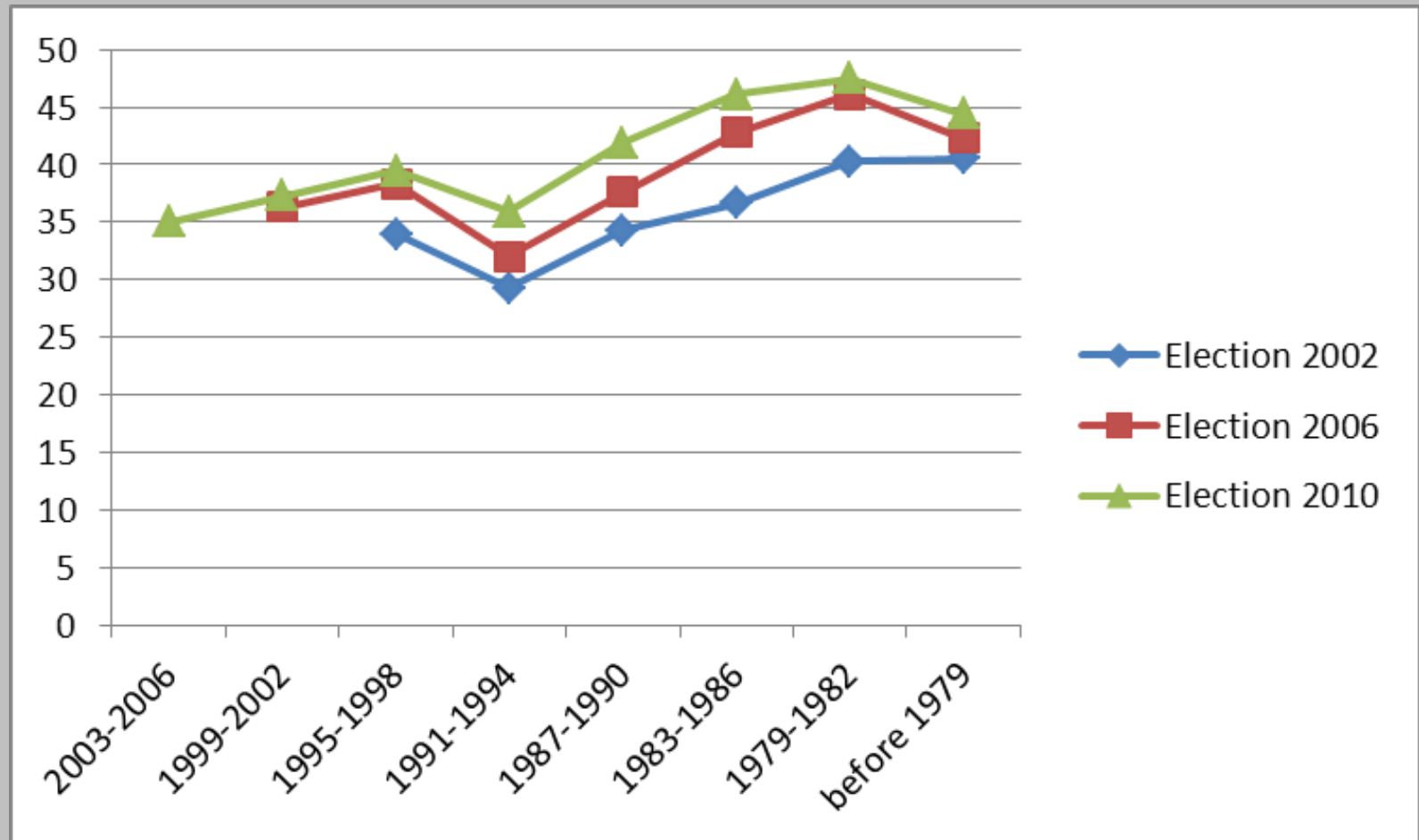




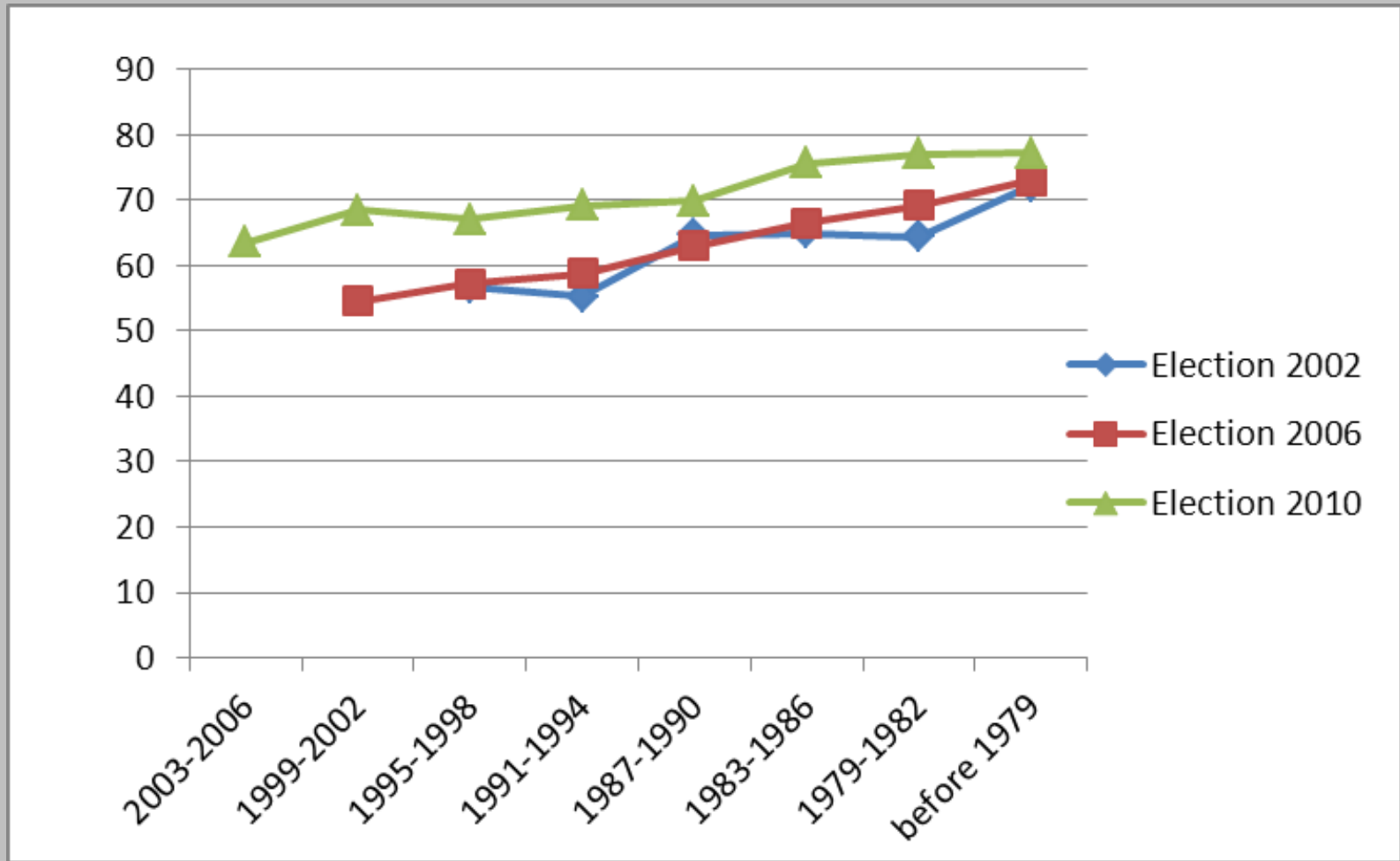
# Voting participation by group



# Voting participation by cohort



# Voting Participation by Cohort



# Regression analysis

As in earlier studies:

- Women vote more
- married vote more
- Older vote more
- Higher income vote more
- Higher education vote more
- More years in the country vote more
- Naturalised vote more
- Differences by country of birth
  
- Stable over time



# Cohort analysis

- Pooling 2002 and 2010 data in order to analyse if cohort of immigrants arriving 1991-1998 have increasing voting participation?
- Foreign citizens no integration effect
- Naturalised have integration effect – vote more in subsequent election



# Conclusion

- After controlling for demographic and socio-economic characteristics, both demographic and socioeconomic factors make a difference to the probability of voting.
- Place of birth is important, Non-Eu Europeans, Asians and Europeans are not likely to vote.
- Citizenship makes a real difference to the probability of voting
- Years of residency is also really important. Confirmed by the cohort analysis:
  - Participation takes time – long term immigrants are more likely to participate as compared to short term immigrants who may not have the same stake in Sweden.
- If we want to encourage inclusion/integration policies for immigrants we should be really careful about changes to citizenship policy and inform not citizens that they are allowed to vote in local/regional elections

