



A New Citizenship Bargain for the Age of Mobility? Citizenship Requirements in Europe and North America

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Introduction

Citizenship has multiple meanings. For some (Hansen and Weil 2001), it requires the possession of a national passport. For others (Bosniak 2006), it is a “practice” involving multiple forms of political participation: street protests, mail-in campaigns, and other forms of direct action that demand the recognition of particular interests. For still others (Carens 2000; Kymlicka 2001), it is a normative question of how people should acquire citizenship and what it should give them. If there is a danger in the current scholarly literature, it is palpably not that there is too little interest in citizenship; rather, that there is too much, and the content of the concept will be stretched to the point where it is almost meaningless.¹

For the purposes of this overview, citizenship is understood in a restricted legal sense: the acquisition of a national passport and therefore the full range of rights that are available only to citizens. On this narrower question, there is much less scholarly work (Gordon 2007; Hansen and Weil 2002; Howard 2006: 443–455; IPSO REID/Dominion Institute 2007; Wilcox 2004). This policy brief will not attempt to provide a comprehensive account of the causes of recent changes in citizenship policy. Nor will it directly address overly abstract questions of what citizenship should look like according to theories of justice. Rather, it will look at how different citizenship policies produce different integration outcomes. The appropriate policy, therefore, depends directly on what policymakers want to achieve.

In this policy brief, integration is understood in civic and socioeconomic rather than cultural terms. Integration, in our definition, has three pillars:

1. Eliminating the gap between an immigrant/ethnic minority population’s economic and educational outcomes and those of the overall population.
2. Ensuring that all migrant groups respect a common legal framework.
3. Ensuring that the segregation of such groups in any particular sphere is voluntary rather than coerced.

When all three conditions are met, people are integrated. Understood this way, integration is consistent with both a high and a low degree of cultural difference. People may retain their cultural background, trade it in for that of the host country, or (most commonly) create a synthesis of the two, as they wish.

The policy brief will proceed in three steps. First, it will provide a brief empirical overview of citizenship policy in major European and North American states. Second, it will summarize recent changes in citizenship policy for a key set of countries. Finally, it will provide policy-relevant conclusions on the likely effects of particular policy changes. (An appendix on future research questions is also included.)

The policy brief argues that recent pan-European changes to citizenship policy — the introduction of ceremonies and citizenship and language tests — can make a small but observable difference in integration outcomes. However, only a broader set of integration policies will lead to improved socioeconomic outcomes among minority groups in Europe. These policies include measures designed to ensure that first-generation immigrants acquire

¹ For instance, global citizenship, ecological citizenship, cultural citizenship, diasporic citizenship, local citizenship, and sexual citizenship. On this, see Brubaker 2004.

the language at or after settlement, and education policies that ensure full language acquisition by the second generation.

Empirical Overview

There are two key elements to this empirical overview. The first is a comparison of citizenship acquisition in Europe and North America, namely what the principal elements are and how they differ. The second explores how rates of naturalization differ from country to country.

Citizenship Acquisition

Many authors distinguish between countries according to whether they have ethnic or political citizenship, whether it is *jus sanguinis* (citizenship by descent) or *jus soli* (citizenship by birth) (Brubaker 1992).

This is a false dichotomy. All liberal democratic states allow citizenship by descent, and most have at least some provisions for citizenship by residence (Howard 2006: 443–455). The relevant questions are not merely whether a country distinguishes by descent or by birth but are rather the following:

1. How do the descent and residence requirements operate? For those born in the country, do they secure citizenship automatically by being born in the territory or are there other criteria in addition to place of birth (pure vs. conditional *jus soli*)?
2. How many years of residence are required to acquire citizenship?
3. What other requirements are attached to the naturalization process (language, good conduct, etc.)?
4. Are individuals required to relinquish other nationalities or is dual citizenship tolerated?

These four questions result in very different answers for different countries.

Table 1. Citizenship Policy in Europe, North America, and Australia

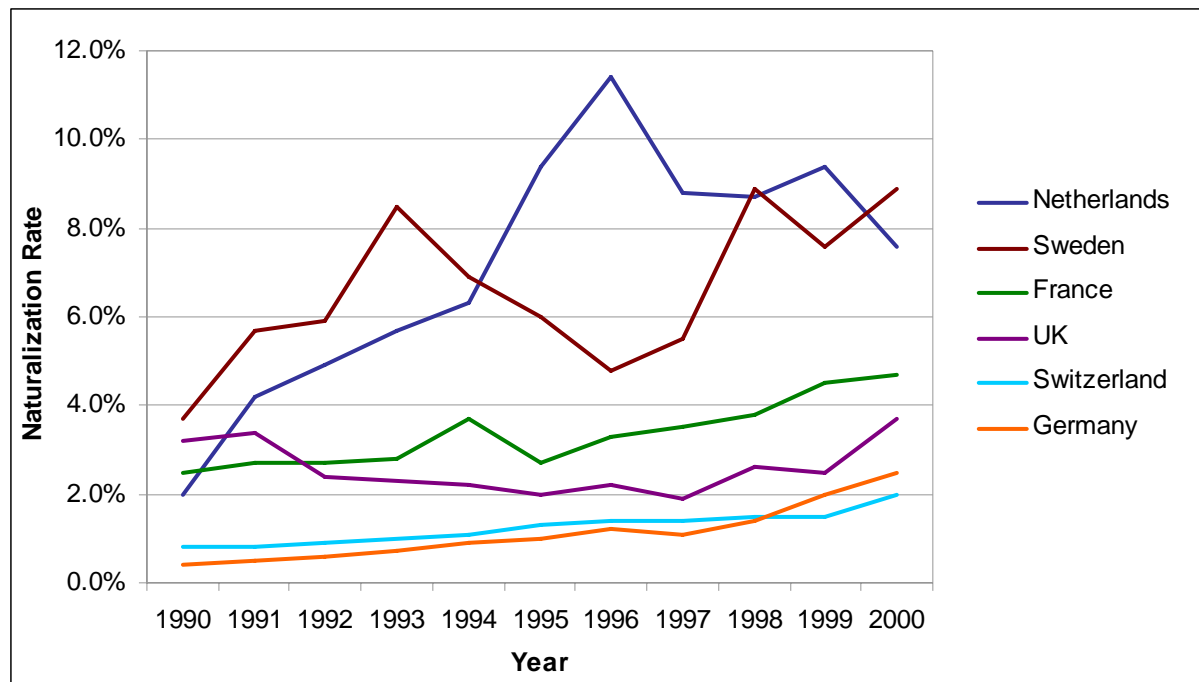
	Australia	Britain	Canada	France	Germany	Netherlands	US
Years of residence ¹	4	6	3	5	8	5	5
Good conduct requirement ²	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Language requirement	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Citizenship test	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Values test	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	No
Dual citizenship ³	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No (with exemptions)	No (with exemptions)	Yes
Automatic right for the 2nd generation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes ⁴

- 1 Across the European Union, residency requirements range from three years (Belgium) to ten years (Austria, Greece, Italy, Portugal, and Spain) (Waldrauch n.d.: 37).
- 2 Such rules exist in all EU states, though they can be (as in Italy, Portugal, and Spain) very vague (Waldrauch n.d.: 42).
- 3 Looking at other EU countries, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Portugal, and Sweden also tolerate dual citizenship. Austria, Denmark, and Luxembourg do not (Waldrauch n.d.: 39).
- z Only Greece, Austria, and Spain do not provide for an automatic right (declaration) to citizenship, relying on discretionary naturalization or the ‘option’ model. See Harald Waldrauch, Acquisition of Nationality.

Naturalization Rates

The rate of naturalization is the second empirical element of note. The key point is that the major receiving countries have sharply varying naturalization rates, from a low rate in Germany to higher rates in the Netherlands and Sweden. Figure 1 lays out the naturalization rates for six of the key European countries.

Figure 1. Naturalization Rates, 1990 to 2000



Source: Waldrauch and Çinar 2003.

Recent Changes in Citizenship Policies

Since 1989, citizenship policies — understood as the conditions under which individuals acquire national citizenship — have changed in Europe and in North America. Residency requirements (the number of years that people may live in a country before acquiring citizenship) have been decreased in some countries (Belgium, Germany) and increased in others (Greece, Spain, Italy, Britain); social rights have been made conditional on citizenship (the United States); and prohibitions on dual citizenship have been generally eased. Among these changes, the most significant were the following:

- *Germany's* adoption of a comprehensive citizenship law in 2000, which reduced its residency requirement for new (first-generation) immigrants from 15 years to eight and gave automatic citizenship to those born in Germany to permanent residents.
- *Ireland's* abandonment of pure *jus soli* in favor of the British (and now German) practice of granting citizenship to those born to permanent residents.
- *Italy and Greece's* doubling of the residency requirement for new immigrants from five to ten years.

Policy Changes Since 2000

Most of the above changes were enacted in the 1990s. Since the millennium, reforms in citizenship policy have focused on secondary requirements for naturalization: language tests, citizenship exams, and naturalization ceremonies.

Britain, France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark have all adopted some or all of these policies. The United States and Canada have had them for some time. The following three tables summarize these policies.²

Table 2. Language Tests in Europe, North America, and Australia (2002 figures)

	Australia	Britain	Canada	France	Germany	Netherlands	US
For residence	Indirect	Yes	Indirect	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
For citizenship	Combined with civics test	Yes	Combined with civics test	Yes	Yes	Yes	Combined with civics test)
Level*	Modest	Intermediate	Modest	Related to one's job	Intermediate (B1)	Modest (A2)	Intermediate
Costs¹	AUD 280 (for naturalization)	GBP 34	Naturalization fee: CAD 200	Free	EUR 55 residence Naturalization fee EUR 255	EUR 350 + 65 for the DVD Naturalization fee: EUR 229–344 (depending on income)	Naturalization fee: USD 595

* Where rankings (B1) are included, they refer to the six proficiency levels specified by the Common European Framework of Reference. There are 3 broad levels (A–C, with A the lowest), with two sublevels in each (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2). Level 1 is lower than Level 2. More information available online: www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/cadre_EN.asp
¹ Naturalization fees vary greatly across the EU, from nothing in France, Belgium, Italy, and Spain to Euro 1,470 in Greece (Waldrauch n.d.: 33).

² Note that in a number of cases, the civics/citizenship test serves as the language test.

Table 3. Citizenship/Civics Tests in Europe, North America, and Australia

	Australia	Britain	Canada	France	Germany	Netherlands	US
Test	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Discussing	Yes	Yes
Content	Responsibilities and privileges of citizenship, values, history, government	Migration to Britain, role women/family, population/regions, religion/tolerance, customs/traditions	Voting procedures, history and geography, rights and responsibilities of citizenship			Knowledge of Dutch society, history, politics, law, work, education, and health care	Government and history. Test covers concepts of US democracy, basic US history, and rights and responsibilities of citizenship
Cost	AUD 280 (naturalization)	GBP 34 UK, naturalization fee GBP 655	CAD 200 (naturalization)			EUR 350	USD 400
Pass rate	92.90%	67.40%	90%			90%	84%

In some cases, new language requirements are supported by language classes. Table 4 summarizes language training in select European countries, North America, and Australia.

The tables provide a cross-section of the various secondary requirements now necessary for naturalization across the transatlantic space. This policy brief now turns to in-depth case studies of several key countries, first in Europe and then in North America.

It is important to note that although language and citizenship tests are new to Europe, they have a long history in the traditional settler countries of North America. Indeed, many of the requirements that are viewed as inherently anti-immigrant in Europe have long been maintained in Canada and the United States, as well as in Australia.

United Kingdom

The United Kingdom first introduced changes to its citizenship policy in response to two events in 2001 — the Asian-White riots in northern England and the September 11 attacks — and British political scientist Bernard Crick’s report on citizenship published in 2003. Following the London transit bombings of July 7, 2005, the citizenship policy was further reformed.

Citizenship Ceremonies

Since 2004, naturalizing Britons have had to take part in a citizenship ceremony during which they swear allegiance to Queen Elizabeth II (as Head of State) and sing the national anthem. They also pledge to respect the United Kingdom’s basic rights and freedoms and uphold its democratic values. The overall naturalization fee (GBP 655) covers the citizenship ceremony, including the salaries of officials and the lunch provided (in 2004, this component was GBP 68).

Table 4. Language Training in Europe, North America, and Australia

	UK	France	Germany	Netherlands	Australia	Canada	US
Hours	Varies	400 + 1 day civics	600–900 + 45 civics	600 (average)	400	Varies, but often six weeks	Varies; much occurs within schools
Who Pays	Candidate (state pays for refugees and longstanding residents)	State	Federal government	Participant (if successful, they recover 70% of costs)	State	State, provinces, cities	Federal government and states
Compulsory	No	Yes, if determined by interview	Yes (those resident in Germany can volunteer)	Yes	No	No	No
Funding				EUR 270 million		CAD 284 million	USD 1 billion

Citizenship and Language Tests: the “Life in the UK Test”

As of 2005, the citizenship ceremonies were supplemented with citizenship (or “civics”) tests. They serve as a test of both language and citizenship; if applicants can take and pass the citizenship test, it is taken as evidence of their fluency in English (or Gaelic). Those who are not sufficiently fluent may instead take combined English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL) and citizenship classes. If applicants are uncertain of their English-language level, they may go to a “learn direct center” (centers providing information on jobs) for assessment. After taking the test, applicants may apply for naturalization. In 2007, the test became a requirement both for those wishing to naturalize and those wanting to become permanent residents.

The test is made up of 24 computer-based questions. Applicants must answer 18 out of 24 questions correctly (a score of 75 percent). Applicants are given 45 minutes to complete the test (more if they have a medical condition) and they may take a practice test before beginning. Most of the questions are about the United Kingdom in general, but there are also questions specific to the applicant’s place of residence. While the general areas cover some history, culture, and demographics, the emphasis is on political knowledge, education, and health. The cost of the test is GBP 34 with the fee likely to increase in the future.

France

Under President Jacques Chirac (1995 to 2007), the French government increased its emphasis on civic integration (which chiefly involves language) in addition to its interest in immigration reform. France has no citizenship ceremonies although current President Nicolas Sarkozy is in favor of them. There is an accelerated citizenship process for students who have graduated from a French university (a reduction of three years).

Language Tests and Integration Contracts

For residence: migrants admitted to France for the first time and who wish to reside in the country must sign a “reception and integration” contract. Since 2003, all new migrants to France must take a one-day civics class and — unless they are native French speakers (estimated to be one-third of the some 150,000 migrants who arrive in France each year) — 400 hours of French language instruction (Joppke 2007). In addition, those wishing to obtain a ten-year residence permit (the chief means to citizenship for first-generation immigrants) need to fulfill three requirements:

1. Commit to abide by the principles and laws governing the French Republic.
2. Show compliance with such principles and laws (evidenced by no criminal record).
3. Demonstrate knowledge of French suitable for their professional position.

For citizenship: Those wishing to naturalize must pass a language test. Applicants are summoned to their local police station for an interview within a few months of applying for citizenship. The interview is meant to ensure that the applicant understands and speaks fluent French, abides by French laws and principles, and still resides in France (if the applicant is requesting citizenship by marriage, the interview at the local police station must also ensure that the couple lives in the same household). The language test takes the form of a conversation with a police officer, who asks information about where the applicant lives, what he/she does, and so on.

Upon becoming president in 2007, Sarkozy created a Ministry of Immigration, Integration, National Identity, and Co-development. While thus far it has kept a low profile, further changes to citizenship policy may yet be forthcoming.

The Netherlands

The Netherlands turned away from a policy of multiculturalism and toward more proactive integration after a series of events from 2000 onward. The first was an essay published in 2000 that opened the door to public debates on the failures of multiculturalism. The second was the murder in 2002 of politician Pim Fortuyn — who believed the Netherlands should integrate immigrants before allowing new ones to settle — and the subsequent success of his party in parliamentary elections. The third was the murder in 2004 of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, whom a dual Dutch-Moroccan citizen killed for collaborating on a film critical of Islam.

The centerpiece of Dutch policy is the “civic integration exam” required for nationals of most countries outside the European Union. All such nationals who want to be in the Netherlands for more than 90 days (for temporary or permanent residence or naturalization) must take the exam. Those naturalizing must also participate in a citizenship ceremony.

The Civic Integration Exam

The exam consists of two parts: knowledge of Dutch society and Dutch language skills. Knowledge of Dutch society is based on a film called *Coming to the Netherlands (Naar Nederland)*, which provides information about Dutch history, politics, law, work, education, and health care. The film also contains scenes of women sunbathing nude on the beach and men kissing (though these have been edited out for countries where such images are illegal).

The language examination tests whether an applicant for a temporary residence permit (known as an MVV, which permits entry to a person planning to remain in the Netherlands

for over three months) has attained a basic level of Dutch. The examination only tests speech and listening skills; there is no reading or writing requirement. Applicants must be able to repeat sentences, answer short questions, indicate opposites, and repeat two different short stories.

The test for those in the country is somewhat more demanding than the test for those from abroad. An applicant within the Netherlands must show that he/she “can understand sentences and frequently used expressions related to areas of most immediate relevance (e.g., very basic personal and family information, shopping, local geography, employment); can communicate in simple and routine tasks requiring a simple and direct exchange of information on familiar and routine matters; and can describe in simple terms aspects of his/her background or current environment and matters of urgency.” (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages 2001: 24)

The candidate must cover the cost of the lessons and the exam (EUR 350; loans are available). Successful applicants can claim as much as 70 percent of the total cost back. Municipalities offer free courses for select groups such as refugees, spiritual advisors, and specific groups of welfare recipients, including the elderly.

Naturalization

The integration exam officially replaced the naturalization test for non-EU citizens on January 1, 2007. Completion of the integration exam serves as a basic requirement for citizenship (Nana 2007).

Citizenship Ceremonies

Since October 2006, foreigners who pass the integration examination and fulfill naturalization requirements must take part in a naturalization ceremony. Officially, the test is meant to: (1) bestow a sense of pride on the part of those naturalizing; (2) give meaning to the naturalization process; (3) encourage applicants to think about the rights and duties of citizenship; and (4) link the new citizen to his or her local government (where the ceremony takes place). Municipalities must hold at least one naturalization ceremony per year and applicants must go through the ceremony within a year of qualifying for citizenship.

Germany

German law distinguishes between naturalizations by right (*Anspruchseinbürgerungen*) and naturalizations by discretion (*Ermessenseinbürgerungen*) (Green 2001). Until 1990, all naturalizations were discretionary. Naturalization policy is implemented by the German federal states (*Länder*) (leading to the curious outcome that it is easier to become German in Berlin than in Bavaria), but was until 2000 guided by federal naturalization guidelines. From 1990, those born and schooled in Germany could naturalize by right (or enjoyed a right to naturalization); from 2000, those born of people who have lived in Germany for eight years and hold a permanent residency permit are German at birth (Green 2004).

In the case of discretionary naturalizations, a number of conditions apply. Germany has language and citizenship requirements for those wishing to naturalize, as well as a language test for spouses from particular countries. The country also offers integration courses for new immigrants.

Integration Courses

The Immigration Act of January 2005 requires that non-EU immigrants and ethnic Germans take a federally administered integration course consisting of basic and intermediate German, as well as an orientation course to familiarize participants with Germany history, culture, and law. This involves up to 900 (originally 600) hours of language instruction plus 45 (originally 30) hours of civics training.

The language component is designed to provide participants with adequate proficiency, understood as the level that allows immigrants to deal with everyday situations on their own, to conduct conversations, and to express themselves in writing commensurate with their age and education.

All new immigrants to Germany must attend the courses, but those who are residents in Germany may do so voluntarily. The cost for the courses is nominal — one euro per hour of instruction — and is waived for individuals receiving social assistance (as first- and second-generation migrants do in disproportionate numbers).

The civics component is intended to give immigrants an understanding of the system of government and state administration in Germany, in particular the significance of free and democratic order, the party system, Germany's federalist structure, the welfare system, equal rights, tolerance, and religious freedom.

Successful participants can demonstrate their proficiency in the language examination leading to the *Zertifikat Deutsch*, an official language certificate developed by the Goethe Institute (B1 equivalent).

Finally, in 2007 the German government introduced a further language requirement: new spouses from countries for which visas are required to visit Germany (including Turkey) are required to pass a basic language test (amounting to several hundred words) *before* coming to Germany. The test is justified on the grounds that many spouses who do not work will not in practice take the integration courses, but the measure is also designed to discourage foreign brides.

Naturalization: Citizenship and Language Tests

On January 1, 2006, the German federal state of Baden-Württemberg instituted a citizenship test to be applied to applicants for naturalization from 57 Islamic countries (some 60 percent of all immigrants to Baden-Württemberg in 2004). The federal state of Hesse created a similar test. Other candidates for naturalization were subject to the procedure in exceptional cases (“New Rules for Muslims in German State Blasted” 2006).

The questions — which included topics such as attitudes towards domestic violence, Israel, and homosexuality — were widely viewed as targeting Muslims and provoked considerable controversy. In the Bundestag (Federal Parliament of Germany), the “Muslim tests” were met with widespread disdain from members of the Green Party, the Left Party, the Social Democrats, and the Free Democrats. There was also pressure for national standards. German integration commissioner Maria Böhmer said that “a person becomes a citizen of Germany, after all — not of a German state” (Corbett 2006).

On May 5, 2006, after months of political wrangling, the interior ministers of Germany's 16 federal states agreed on a set of common standards governing language and citizenship courses for migrants applying for a German passport. They agreed that all applicants in future will have to attend citizenship classes consisting of language and integration courses designed by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. The classes include learning about the basic values of the German constitution and state (Hawley 2006).

Canada

In Canada, immigrants can naturalize after three years of residence over four years — generous terms compared with other countries. Individuals may count time they spent in Canada before becoming permanent residents and, as long as the person's family is established in Canada, the individual may spend substantial time abroad during that three-year period.

Language Abilities

Immigrants are not tested directly for their language abilities before immigrating. That said, under the points system by which immigrants are admitted into Canada — for which there are currently proposals for reform before Parliament — applicants are given a maximum of 24 points (out of a required 67) for knowledge of both official languages (French and English), but 16 points for only one of them. Naturalization, by contrast, requires knowledge of one of the two official languages sufficient to be able “to communicate with people,” that is, to be able to understand and to make oneself understood.

To help prepare citizenship applicants for the test, the federal government — in cooperation with provincial governments, school boards, community colleges, and immigrant and community organizations — offers free language training across the country for adult permanent residents. In most provinces, the name of the program is “Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada” (LINC) (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2003). Provinces and (sometimes) cities also offer training courses, so in practice spending on language training is much higher than the LINC budget.

Citizenship Test

All naturalizing citizens under the age of 55 must demonstrate their language abilities and “knowledge of Canada” through a citizenship test (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007). It is usually a written test, but applicants can take oral tests in front of a citizenship judge if they cannot read or write English or French.

The exam is based on *A Look at Canada*, a free, government-issued booklet. Topics covered include rights and responsibilities of citizenship; social and cultural history (e.g., which three Aboriginal groups are recognized in the Constitution); Canadian politics; and both physical and political geography (e.g., how many provinces Canada has and the names of their capital cities).

Both the test and the applicant's interaction with the staff of Citizenship and Immigration Canada demonstrate language abilities. Applicants have to be able to understand simple spoken statements and questions, and they need to be able to communicate simple information.

Applicants who fail the test are asked to appear for a short interview (15 to 30 minutes) with a citizenship judge. At that interview, the judge asks them questions orally, giving them a second chance to meet the language and knowledge requirements.

Citizenship Ceremony

Applicants who pass the citizenship test are invited to attend a citizenship ceremony that requires them to swear an oath of citizenship (Citizenship and Immigration Canada 2007). Citizenship ceremonies take place across the country and throughout the year, with special ceremonies on Canada Day (July 1) and during Citizenship Week (third week of October). Community groups are often involved in hosting the ceremonies. Applicants who successfully complete the process are given a citizenship certificate.

United States

American naturalization requirements are specified by the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA). They include the following:

- a period of continuous residence and physical presence in the United States;
- residence in a particular district prior to filing;
- an ability to read, write, and speak English;
- a knowledge and understanding of US history and government;
- good moral character;
- an attachment to the principles of the US Constitution and form of government in the United States;
- an oath of allegiance to the United States.

All naturalization applicants must demonstrate good moral character, attachment to constitutional principles, and allegiance to the United States. The other naturalization requirements may be modified or waived for certain applicants, such as those serving in the military during a period of conflict which the president has specified with an executive order.

Residence and Physical Presence

Applicants are eligible to naturalize if they have been lawful permanent residents in the country for at least five years prior to filing; for spouses of US citizens the requirement is three years. There can be no single absence from the United States of more than one year and absences of more than six months may disrupt the applicant's continuity of residence.

Generally, an applicant must show that he or she has been a person of good moral character for at least the statutory period prior to filing for naturalization. Good moral character is judged according to the absence of a criminal conviction for an "aggravated felony" (as defined by the Immigration and Nationality Act) or of involvement in other criminal activity.³

Language

Applicants for naturalization must be able to read, write, speak, and understand words in ordinary usage in the English language. The requirement is waived for those over age 50

³ See INA 101(a)(43) for the full definition of crimes that constitute "aggravated felonies". See also U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, General Naturalization Requirements.

with 20 years residence in the United States. Although the language requirement is waived for this group, they must still take the civics portion of the naturalization exam. The federal government provides some funding for English as a Second Language (ESL) for adults but the need for high-value and high-quality English language and literacy instruction remains significant and unmet by the current system.⁴ For example, the Migration Policy Institute estimates that it will take 277 million hours of English language instruction a year, for six years, to bring current adult Lawful Permanent Residents to a level of English proficiency needed to pass the naturalization test for adults age 25 and older or to begin postsecondary education for youth age 17 to 24 (McHugh, Gelatt, and Fix 2007).

Citizenship Test

Applicants demonstrate that they have met the US requirements for citizenship by taking a naturalization test, which was recently changed following a five-year review. The new test, implemented in full beginning October 2008, aims to be “standardized, fair, and meaningful” (US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2007). The revised test further emphasizes the fundamental concepts of American democracy, basic US history, and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. However, its general format — a list of 100 questions from which ten are asked of the applicants — is still the same. It remains to be seen how, if at all, the new test will affect naturalization patterns in the United States.

As in Canada, the civics portion of the naturalization test provides an additional opportunity for naturalization applicants to demonstrate English language ability. Applicants must converse with the naturalization interviewer and read and/or write a simple statement in English.

Citizenship Ceremony

If the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) approves an applicant for naturalization, a Notice of Naturalization Oath Ceremony (Form N-445) will be sent via mail to notify the applicant of the time and date of his or her Naturalization Oath Ceremony. In some places, applicants can choose to take the oath on the same day as their citizenship test (US Citizenship and Immigration Services 2008).

Applicants who do not have the option of taking the oath on the same day as their interview must submit Form N-445 upon arriving at the Naturalization Oath Ceremony and must answer several questions on the form, including whether the applicant has traveled outside the United States since his or her interview with USCIS and whether he or she has claimed an exemption from military service. Applicants must also turn in their Permanent Resident Cards.

The main purpose of the citizenship ceremony is for an applicant to swear an oath of allegiance to the United States before a recognized official; this is the final requirement for naturalization. The text of the oath is as follows: “I hereby declare, on oath, that I absolutely and entirely renounce and abjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate,

⁴ Provision of high-quality adult English language instruction is inconsistent across the 50 states and has been criticized for “the unintegrated character of programs serving civics, workforce and family literacy needs; problems with teacher quality and professionalization; the system’s lack of emphasis on distance or ‘on-demand’ learning; and low retention and persistence rates” (McHugh, Gelatt and Fix 2007: 13).

state or sovereignty, of whom or which I have heretofore been a subject or citizen; that I will support and defend the Constitution and laws of the United States of America against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; that I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform noncombatant service in the armed forces of the United States when required by the law; that I will perform work of national importance under civilian direction when required by the law; and that I take this obligation freely without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; so help me God” (American Immigration Center 2004).

In certain instances, where the applicant establishes that he or she is opposed — on the basis of religious teaching or belief — to any type of service in armed forces, USCIS will permit these applicants to take a modified oath of allegiance. An applicant must also show that he or she is attached to the principles of the Constitution of the United States.

Upon completion of the oath, applicants receive their Certificate of Naturalization and may apply for a US passport at the ceremony.

Often the Naturalization Oath Ceremony includes nonessential, nonmandatory proceedings such as an address from the presiding official and the singing of the American national anthem.

The Effects of Policy Changes on Integration

As most citizenship requirements in Europe are new, it is difficult to measure their effect on integration. Nonetheless, there are some early indicators. Furthermore, North America’s long experience with all three requirements — language tests, civics tests, and citizenship ceremonies — may serve as a reliable proxy.

Language and Social Integration

Extensive research in North America has confirmed that in a service-based economy in which the majority of new jobs are created in nonindustrial sectors, mastery of the national language is key to economic success. In the mid-1990s, research commissioned by Human Resources and Social Development Canada showed that immigrants fluent in French or English (the two national languages) earned CAD 7,900 per year more on arrival. Over time, this income gap persists and actually increases slightly. Ten years after landing, immigrants who arrived with proficiency in either official language earn, on average, CAD 8,500 per year more than those who did not (1995 figures) (Human Resources and Social Development Canada 1996).

At the start of the millennium, Germany’s government-appointed independent commission on immigration and integration (known informally as the Süßmuth commission) emphasized the centrality of the German language in ensuring the labor market success of immigrants and permanent residents in Germany (Süßmuth 2001). A recent Urban Institute study on immigrants to the American state of Arkansas arrived at the same conclusion: poor language skills among many recent Latino immigrants have inhibited their economic integration. The only hope for their children is success through the educational system, which, in turn, requires fluency in English (Craft 2007). None of this should be particularly

surprising. In almost all professional and managerial positions, excellence in the national language is essential.

Language Tests

The French, German, and Dutch language tests have had a measurably positive impact on language acquisition. Even in the case of the least demanding test — for family immigrants to Germany — immigrants must understand several hundred words of German, itself a first step. More importantly, 600 to 900 hours of language instruction amounts to ten to 15 months of intensive German assuming three hours of class time per day, the equivalent of an intensive course at Germany's Goethe Institute.

There is no consensus in the literature about the time required to learn a foreign language; the only consensus is that the more time spent, the better (Otega and Iberr-Shea 2005). Institutes with a long history of language training can, however, provide rough guides. The Goethe Institute recommends 400 to 600 hours of language instruction before taking the B1 German certification, which is evidence that one can cope with any daily situation in German.⁵ Similarly, the Alliance Française estimates that it takes 400 to 480 hours of instruction to achieve an “intermediate” level of French, understood as the ability to cope with daily situations, follow complex French over a familiar topic and discuss one's areas of interest at length.⁶

In December 2006, the German Home Office hired a Danish consulting firm to report on the effects of the new integration courses. It concluded that the courses resulted in a “clear, qualitative improvement in German integration policy” (Evaluation der Integrationskurse nach dem Zuwanderungsgesetz 2006). Three-quarters of the participants took at least one official German-language test during their course (ibid.: 48). Of those that took a test after 300 hours, 69.8 percent secured the *Zertifikat Deutsch* (level B1) and 15.8 percent achieved one level higher (A1) (ibid.). On the downside, once those who did not take the test are factored in, it was clear that for 40 percent of all participants, 600 hours of German was not enough to reach the B1 level.

The tests can be administered before or after migrating. Administering them before departure gives migrants a greater incentive to study. For instance, since the German law was passed, prospective Turkish migrants have been scrambling to learn German (ibid.). Administering tests after arrival can, if they are taken seriously, lead to a better grasp of the national language as those preparing for them will have the opportunity to use it in everyday life. Naturally, this last advantage may not be achieved if immigrants move to predominantly foreign-language-speaking neighborhoods.

⁵More precisely, that those taking the exam “have a sufficient foundation in colloquial German to equip them to cope with all daily linguistic situations; that they have an extensive (wesentlichen) grasp of the grammatical structure and are able to lead and participate in conversations about daily life. They will also be able to express themselves in words or writing about simple events, as well as to read a texts on such events.” From the Goethe Institute, www.goethe.de/ins/de/ler/kst/enindex.htm.

⁶Specifically, to be able to “understand extended speech and follow complex lines of arguments provided the topic is reasonably familiar; interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible; present clear, detailed descriptions on a wide range of subjects related to my field of interest; and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue, giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.” From Alliance Francaise and Centre for French Teaching Documentation, www.frenchcentreenugu.org/programs.html#q2

However, language courses can only do so much on their own. They only concern the first generation, many of whom will only ever require a functional level of Dutch or German (English and French present special cases because of their international status and widespread use in former colonies).

Similarly, these requirements do not apply to EU nationals. In most cases, however, EU nationals travel from one country to another for purposes of work (OECD 2007: 11), which means that they either know enough of the national language (such as Polish laborers in the United Kingdom) or are able to work in another language. However, only 4 percent of Europeans have ever lived outside their country of citizenship and annual cross-border mobility amounts to 0.2 percent of the working-age European population (OECD 2007: 11). This figure compares with 1.5 percent in Canada and 3.5 percent in the United States.

The crucial generation for immigrant integration is the second: it is imperative that states do more to ensure they learn the national language. To do so, policymakers need to keep an open mind with respect to radical alternatives (bussing students to overcome neighborhood effects, ending or curtailing streaming) and study the best practices of countries such as Canada or Sweden, which manage high levels of immigration.

Civics/Citizenship Tests

Citizenship tests play a modest but measurable role in ensuring immigrant integration in that they create a more informed (new) citizenry. Content is crucial and can ensure that all naturalizing citizens have a basic knowledge of a country's institutions, history, and (possibly) basic moral commitments. They are no different than school (or driving) tests in that respect. In developing such tests, a number of points should be borne in mind.

- Content: test-takers are more likely to view tests on history and institutions as important, and such tests are more likely to gain consensus support in the broader society. Tests on geography (e.g., major mountain ranges), popular culture (e.g., rock stars) or values (e.g., attitudes on public nudity) are less so, and the last case may well be inconsistent with liberal democratic values. For example, opposing homosexuality, as long as it is distinct from discriminating against homosexuals, is not inconsistent with citizenship per se.
- Form: tests can be single answer, multiple-choice, or long answer. Canada recently moved from single/short answers to multiple choice tests. These have the advantage of being cheaper to administer and mark, but the migrants themselves view them as too easy and formalistic. In a similar vein, questions that ask for short, reflective answers (“Why is freedom of the press important?”) will lead to more considered and genuine responses. There is a tradeoff here: these questions produce more considered responses, but may be more difficult for immigrants with poorer language skills and less education.

In any policy area, implementation is as important as the formal policy itself. Literacy tests in particular have some heavy historical baggage: they were used throughout the southern United States to disenfranchise African Americans. In a similar way, language and citizenship could be made exceptionally difficult with the specific aim of deterring and blocking applications for citizenship. This is effectively what Latvia did when it linked social rights

and language acquisition with the specific aim of excluding the country's large Russian-speaking population (McNamara and Shohamy 2008).

Understood strictly in terms of the level of language required, the tests cannot be viewed as barriers. The cases studied here demand a minimum level of linguistic competence and in many cases are sensitive to the person's role in society. This is not, however, the only issue. Another central factor is whether or not the language test is linked with language training, as is the case in France, Germany, Britain, and the Netherlands (though not for family reunification in the last case).

Referring to the Netherlands, sociologist Christian Joppke concluded in a 2007 journal article that since "no Dutch education programs exist abroad[,] integration from abroad boils down to no integration at all." (Joppke 2007: 335) This is overstating the case — the burden of integration is shifted from the state to the applicant — but the requirement clearly raises significant hurdles that prospective immigrants must overcome. This is deliberate: the government wishes to ensure that those who do arrive speak at least rudimentary Dutch; better still, foreign residents in the Netherlands may look for spouses down the street rather than outside the country.

These are not the only potential barriers. Others include costs and scheduling. In some cases, such as the Netherlands and the United States, the costs are high (particularly so for those taking the test abroad). High costs will inevitably discourage applicants with fewer resources. Whether this barrier is unreasonable depends on one's point of view and on the type of immigration scheme about which one is speaking. If family immigration is viewed as a right, then the cost in these countries for family immigration seems unreasonably high. For others, the "prize" on offer — residence and eventually citizenship — is immense.

For those undertaking language training within the country, the scheduling of the classes can be as important as the costs. If they interfere with work and/or child care duties, then taking them may be practically impossible or pose undue strains on family life.

A further danger is that the policies will be framed as punitive and blocking when right-wing (and even far-right) parties support them and when the immigrant organizations define them as such. It is very important to emphasize that these requirements accompany a post-1990s openness to immigration in the major European receiving countries. This is not a subjective judgment. For the first time in 25 years, it is possible to immigrate — without family connections and outside the asylum system — to Britain, France, and Germany.

It is, to be sure, one thing to open the doors to immigrants and another to ensure that a country is attractive to them. In addition to opposing xenophobia (which all European governments do), official rhetoric should emphasize that immigrants are welcome as full members of society. Rhetoric costs little, but can produce positive results. In this context, it is noteworthy that although Germany has, for the first time in decades, the legislative framework for accommodating immigration, it receives in practice very few immigrants.

Citizenship Ceremonies

The effect of citizenship ceremonies on integration is small but positive. Clearly they can have little impact on language acquisition or long-term labor market outcomes. When properly conducted (meaning that those involved take them seriously and governments conduct them in attractive surroundings), they can imbue the citizenship process with more meaning than is gained from a purely bureaucratic process. Local studies of citizenship ceremonies in Britain showed that those taking part appreciated them and felt that they added to the experience (Rimmer 2007: 7–8). More broadly, comparative research sponsored by the Home Office showed that citizenship ceremonies are valued by both the immigrants and the local politicians involved, and that the ceremonies “promote the value of naturalization.” (Home Office 2001: 34)

The value of citizenship ceremonies depends on active participation in them. Their value, therefore, can be multiplied when more actors are involved. For example, a ceremony held in a school or community center can involve nonimmigrants, especially when members of the local community are encouraged to serve as volunteers. Mock citizenship ceremonies in schools, with no naturalizing citizens involved, would have the added value of increasing an understanding of their content and importance among the broader public.

In all cases, the way in which citizenship ceremonies are conducted is very important. Done badly, they can be cold and impersonal. Done well, they can be (mildly) transformative for naturalizing citizens and buy much goodwill for little cost in the broader community.

Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The available evidence from Europe and North America leads to two broad conclusions. First, intensive language training at the start of an immigrant’s stay in his new country can produce highly positive results for integration. Second, making civics tests, language tests, and citizenship ceremonies part of the naturalization process can have modest but positive effects on integration. However, as naturalization should ideally follow as well as contribute to integration, it is simply too late in the process to substantially affect labor market outcomes. From these points a number of recommendations follow:

1. Where immigration streams contain a large number of unskilled migrants, language requirements should be made a condition of settlement as well as of naturalization.
2. Funding should be provided for language courses and governments should make an effort to offer them on weekends and in the evenings and/or to provide day care facilities. If the government wishes to have the migrants contribute, this should be in the form of loans.
3. Classes should be compulsory and there should be fines or other penalties for nonattendance. Carrots (such as Germany’s offer of lower residency requirements for citizenship) as well as sticks should be used.
4. Family immigration raises difficult issues. It should be recognized as a right in the case of marriages that ensued before the immigrant moved to Europe. There is a distinction, in other words, between family immigration and family formation. As long as the ultimate right of family reunification is respected, the state may legitimately use policy to discourage foreign spouses.

5. Citizenship ceremonies should be maintained and a greater effort made to include as many members of the community as possible.
6. Mock and perhaps real ceremonies should be held in schools so as to introduce students to them and to their importance.
7. Civics tests are a reasonable and important requirement for acquiring a national passport and its advantages. They should focus on history and institutions rather than values.
8. It is perfectly legitimate for a state to shape values (as it does in the case of racism, discrimination, understandings of national history, and so on), but the naturalization test is not the appropriate forum. The work should be done in the schools and in national or regional advertising campaigns.

All these requirements should be emphasized as basic and fair given the prize (access to a rich state's society, economy, and citizenship), but they should be implemented with the goal of helping rather than penalizing immigrants, of providing them pathways rather than barriers and of emphasizing rather than downplaying the contribution they make to their new societies. The objective is integration, not exclusion.

Appendix: Future Research

The priorities for future research are clear. Particularly in Europe, citizenship ceremonies and language and citizenship tests are relatively new. It is important to explore in greater depth their role.

This has three components. First, public opinion research can now test the effect of the new requirements on the first cohort of test-takers as well as on the population as a whole. How positive was the experience? How much did they learn? Are they better able to cope in their new homes? Do they feel more British, German, French, or Dutch following the citizenship ceremony? Does the existence of the tests have positive knock-on effects for broader public attitudes toward immigrants and minorities?

Second, studies can be done in both North America and Europe of these students' experiences in the classes themselves. In particular, where there is adequate data, students' results on entrance, midterm, and final tests will provide a simple and clear quantitative measure of their progress.

Finally, over the medium term, research can explore the impact of these requirements on immigrant integration and the social trajectories of the migrants who fulfilled them. Do those who took the test secure better jobs or educational certificates? Is there any measurable effect on ethnic minority performance overall? Is the language instruction offered, above all at the outset, sufficient to encourage better integration outcomes?

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