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Citizenship Studies: Policy Causes and Consequences

Sara Wallace Goodman

Department of Political Science, University of California, Irvine, California, USA; email: s.goodman@uci.edu

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Keywords

citizenship, naturalization, Western Europe, immigration, integration

Abstract

This article reviews the field of citizenship studies, with attention to the causes and consequences of policy. It summarizes key findings and points of consensus across three research domains: the determinants of citizenship policy, the consequences of citizenship policy, and the consequences of citizenship, i.e., the utility of obtaining citizenship for immigrant integration. After identifying strengths and weaknesses of each, I propose new directions in research that widen the field in terms of cases and generalizable theory while also deepening the field through serious attention to approaches that center the immigrant experience.

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INTRODUCTION

The field of citizenship studies has flourished in political science, as scholars examine questions of who gets citizenship, why, and to what effect. Located at the intersection of the immigration and nationalism literatures, citizenship formally inserts the state into the member-making process, both as a legal designation of status and as a form of social membership in the national political community. And because citizenship is a core political concept—critical to understanding legitimacy, national identity, rights, social control, etc.—research crosses subfield boundaries. For instance, as comparativists (and sociologists) study the political and historical determinants of citizenship policy (Howard 2009, Koopmans et al. 2012), international relations scholars look at the effect of those policies on labor mobility (Ruhs 2013) or the flow of remittances (Leblang 2015). Meanwhile, theorists consider the normative implications of policy design (Cohen 2009, Shachar 2009), often drawing on the US case (Shklar 1995; Smith 1999, 2022). Since 2012, there has even been a dedicated "Migration and Citizenship" section of the American Political Science Association. Citizenship studies is now a robust and integrated field within political science, with strong links to related literatures in sociology, economics, and law.

This recent and energetic growth has two sources. The first is real world policy change in Europe. Rapid alterations to citizenship laws began in the 1990s, as former Soviet Union states began to write new constitutions and traditionally restrictive countries in Western Europe began to liberalize access to citizenship (Hansen & Weil 2001, Howard 2009). Citizenship policies trended in a direction of increasing inclusion until the early 2000s, at which point occurred both stagnation and the emergence of a new restrictive tide composed of cultural integration requirements, including language requirements and country knowledge tests (Odmalm 2007, Goodman 2010), which were tightened further in the 2010s (Goodman 2014). So while early insights in citizenship studies draw significantly on the US case (Smith 1999, Bloemraad 2006, Pickus 2007), the location of this rapid change grounded the study of citizenship policy and politics in Europe, building important theoretical insights from data-rich cases and comparative research designs. The cost of this regional focus, however, has been the perpetuation of regional blind spots, saturation, and limited theoretical scope.

The second source of field development is methodological. As political science began to integrate tools of experimental design and causal inference (borrowing from fields such as applied microeconomics, marketing studies, and psychology) into its analytical toolkit, a new set of research questions emerged. In addition to studying institutions and policy determinants (i.e., politics), citizenship scholars could now also study policy implementation and policy outcomes, including the effects of citizenship on immigrant integration (e.g., Hainmueller et al. 2017, Peters et al. 2020). The substantive evolution of research topics in the field has followed the adoption of empirical methodologies in political science more generally. This trend, too, has produced invaluable insights from data-rich cases in Europe but not without limitations, namely external validity and generalizability.

This article reviews the field of citizenship studies, with attention to the causes and consequences of policy. It summarizes key findings and points of consensus across three research domains: the determinants of citizenship policy, the consequences of citizenship policy, and the consequences of citizenship, i.e., the utility of obtaining citizenship for immigrant integration. In doing so, it makes three main points. First, each research domain is distinct, but they meaningfully complement each other. From studying the determinants of citizenship policies, we can learn what types of institutions and politics lead to inclusionary and exclusionary citizenship policy outcomes. From studying citizenship acquisition, we learn how individuals interact with those policy contexts. And from studying the causal effects of citizenship, we learn more about the utility and enduring importance of citizenship.

Second, to maintain a generative research agenda, these research domains should forge more linkages. Preserving cross-domain connections is vital, as weaknesses in one domain may be complemented by strengths of another. For instance, recent quantitative work, particularly design-based inference and field experiments, tell us *if* citizenship matters, but not why. Do civic orientation courses improve integration because they promote knowledge or because they facilitate socialization? Does citizenship raise wages because it increases human capital or because immigrants self-select into citizenship? These answers require a variety of methodologies for data collection and analysis, which are costly in both labor and time, and rest outside of certain disciplinary incentives.

Third, there is still much to learn. The limitations of each research domain should be seen not as drawbacks but as starting points. Citizenship studies scholars, particularly those using quantitative methodologies, have been resistant to traversing to cases beyond where rich data are readily available. This reluctance reinforces Eurocentrism in the field of citizenship policy studies, risking case saturation and limiting theoretical and conceptual innovation. Put another way, our theories about how citizenship works—or even what citizenship is—may not travel (see, for instance, Naujoks 2020). But this is a testable proposition. In the final section, I point to new directions in research that widen the field in terms of cases and generalizable theory while also deepening the field through serious attention to approaches that center the immigrant experience.

CITIZENSHIP AS BOUNDARY MAINTENANCE

Although citizenship is one of the most widely used concepts in political science, scholars often use it to refer to different things. Citizenship can be a status, a set of rights, an identity, and even a set of norms and competences for participating in systems of democratic governance (Dalton 2013, Goodman 2022). But citizenship *policy* specifically entails the legal rules and practices that establish formal belonging in a national political community. This usage of "citizenship"—as a nationality—dates to the eighteenth century and the consolidation of the modern nation-state. Distinguishable from the citizenship of the Greek *polis* or the city-states of the Renaissance, the emergence of nationalism as a prevailing ideology in modern states meant citizenship did not merely designate obligations or rights but also group belonging. As Heater (1999, p. 97) observes of this period, "No longer were citizenship, patriotism, and nationhood separate ideas."

Applied to a membership category, citizenship rules serve as an "instrument and objective of social closure" (Brubaker 1992, p. 31). In other words, citizenship establishes and preserves social boundaries. These boundaries are concurrently hard—that is, legal status strictly distinguishes citizens from noncitizens—and soft, where citizenship is a membership category and individuals either belong or do not belong to the national political community. Bosniak (2006, p. 119) writes that this "hard-on-the-outside, soft-on-the-inside model. . .is the prevailing and commonsense normative account."

First, as a hard boundary, citizenship confers status. This status is experienced in the possession of a nation-state's passport and the benefits and rights of a community conveyed through that status. The vast majority of individuals obtain citizenship (or pass this hard boundary) at birth—as a function of territorial location (*jus soli*) or descent (*jus sanguinis*). These are not mutually exclusive, and many states apply a mixture of rules. In most of the world, it is rare for states to offer citizenship by *jus soli*; the United States, as well as countries of Central and South America, is an exception (see **Figure 1**). Instead, most individuals get citizenship by inheriting the citizenship of their parents. Shachar (2009, p. 4) refers to birth-based modalities in general as creating a "birthright lottery," in which individuals seeking mobility are "trapped" due to the contingence or "accident of birth."

For individuals who migrate—from economic migrants to family members to refugees—access to citizenship is obtained by undergoing a process of naturalization. It is a typically discretionary

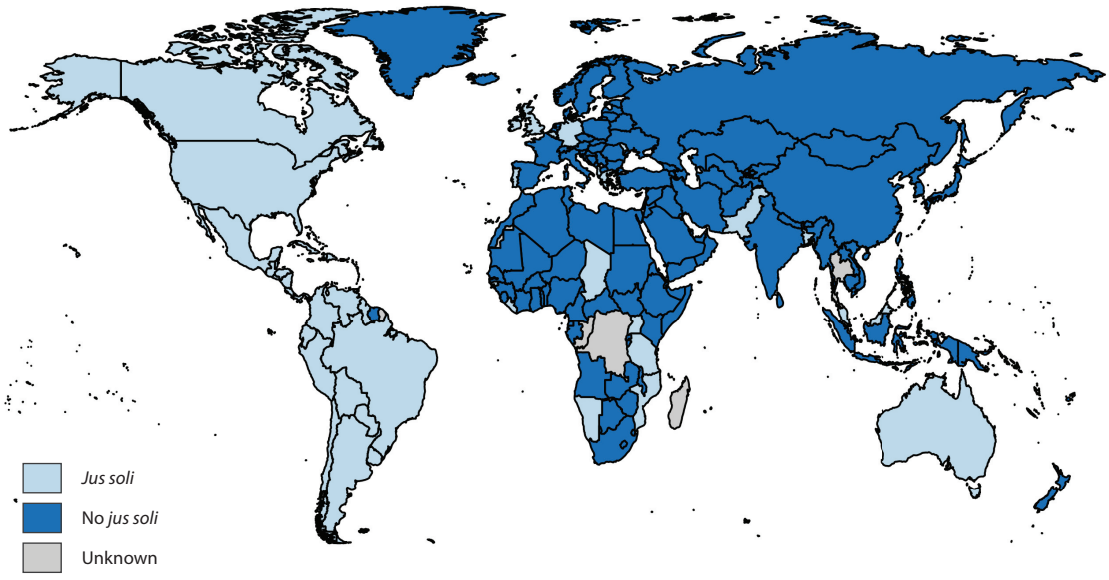


Figure 1

Global *jus soli* policies, 2020. Germany is marked as "allowance" because citizenship is given to a person born in Germany to a noncitizen, so long as the parent has been a resident for 8 years. Data from Vink et al. (2021b), variable: birth in country (A02a).

procedure, in which eligible immigrants apply to become citizens by fulfilling a series of arbitrary requirements. These include, but are not limited to, residency, language proficiency, country knowledge, dual citizenship allowance (or renunciation), and other evidence of integration, as well as health conditions and various material conditions (e.g., fees, welfare independence). The settings of these policies can range enormously, from short residency periods (globally, the modal residency requirement is 5 years) and cost-free applications (e.g., Belgium) to lengthy periods (e.g., Switzerland is 10 years at a minimum, where permanent residence is a prerequisite) and exorbitant application fees (the price to submit a naturalization application in the United Kingdom in 2022 is £1,330, or $1,740). Some states may offer shortened routes to citizenship—such as for those with cultural or family connections (e.g., a grandparent born in Ireland) or through investor citizenship (Džankic 2019). Others might not offer a genuine route to citizenship at all; in some states, naturalization requirements are insurmountable (e.g., Gulf states) or permanently inaccessible (e.g., for undocumented migrants in the United States). We refer to these many designs and routes to citizenship (birth-based and naturalization) together as citizenship policy.[1]

But naturalization—"to make natural"—is not just the political transformation of an immigrant into a citizen, whereby they are a legal equal of a native-born citizen. It is also—theoretically—a social transformation from a national outsider to insider. Naturalization can mean crossing a soft boundary, in which citizenship represents not only full legal status that binds immigrants to the state, but also an identity connoting belonging to or assimilation in the national group. This is citizenship as group belonging and not, to invoke a second meaning of "soft," as a set of weak or informal citizenship practices. As a group membership, citizenship establishes both vertical ties to the polity and horizonal ties to other members of the national political community.

[1] Vink & Bauböck (2013) use the formulation "national citizenship regimes," which includes both acquisition and loss of citizenship, the latter of which is beyond the scope of this review.

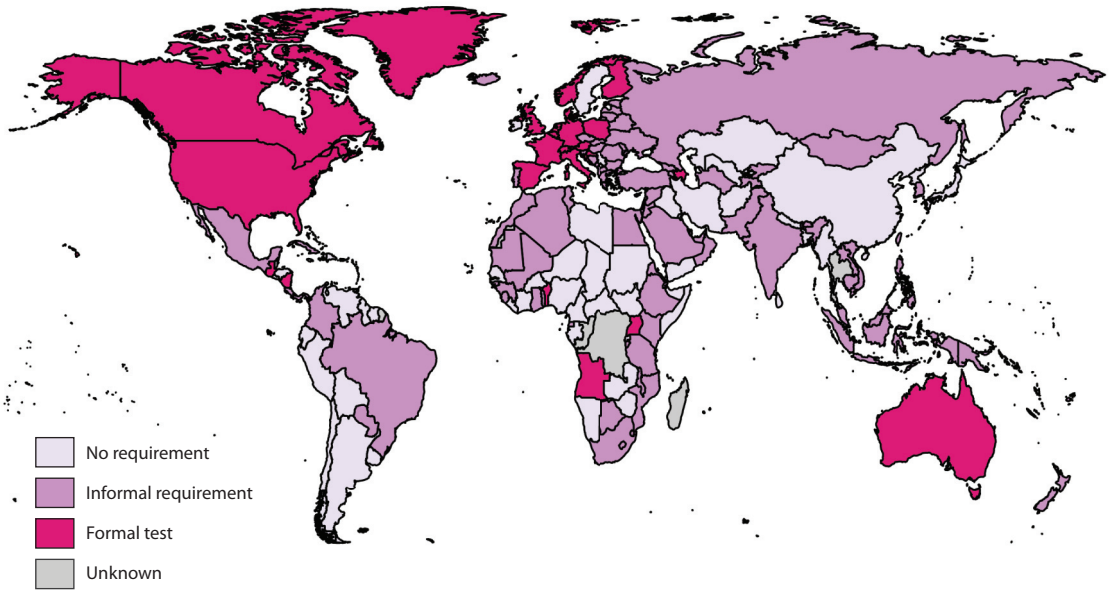


Figure 2

Global language requirements for citizenship, 2020. Data from Vink et al. (2021b), variable: residence-based acquisition (A06c).

This is also where state policies serve as important interventions. Naturalization does not merely assign membership, it can be a process of immigrant integration. As an instrument of integration, it might produce a citizen who resembles native-born citizens on a variety of outcomes, including economic, cultural and social measures (e.g., Goodman & Wright 2015).[2] In fact, the philosophy behind the concept of civic integration—a term which also refers to a set of policies that require immigrants to demonstrate country knowledge and language proficiency as part of the naturalization process (Goodman 2014)—is that an immigrant can thrive and function independently like native-born citizens.

By making this knowledge and proficiency a requirement of citizenship (and sometimes permanent settlement and even entry), European states are also prioritizing and formalizing steps of immigrant integration as a precondition for status acquisition. The past two decades have been described as a prolific era for new, formal language requirements (**Figure 2**) in Europe as part of a twenty-first-century assimilationist turn and rejection of multiculturalism (Brubaker 2001). Zooming out, a global comparative perspective reveals this policy innovation in context, wherein formalized European practices align with those of immigrant-receiving states like the United States, Canada, and Australia but are quite distinct from global practices. It is also through this global perspective that we see the limited generalizability of studies on this type of state intervention and, potentially, naturalization studies more generally.

Language proficiency requirements comprise just one example of how policies vary (others include country knowledge assessment, residence duration, and dual citizenship acceptance). Civic integration represents a shift in citizenship from a rights-based orientation to a duty-based emphasis on contribution and obligation. This may not be the case globally, as different historical contexts

[2]Harder et al. (2018), for instance, define six categories of immigrant integration: psychological, economic, political, social, linguistic, and navigational.

lead to different starting points of obligation (e.g., some countries have compulsory military service). Moreover, the extent to which these types of state policies help or hinder the integration process is a function of several factors, ranging from state priorities and receiving society context to individual-level characteristics like education or family structure. This is where the large field of citizenship studies capitalizes on its interdisciplinary and cross-subfield scope; it is well-poised to combine insights to study the dynamic process whereby individual and contextual attributes interact to affect citizenship outcomes. We can sort work by political scientists as falling into three categories of questions: (*a*) determinants of policy: What are the factors that determine citizenship rules?, (*b*) consequences of policy: Who gets citizenship? What determines who successfully naturalizes?, and (*c*) consequences of citizenship: What does citizenship do? What is its utility? I review each category of research in turn, identifying areas of consensus as well as limitations.

Determinants of Citizenship Policy

The first domain of citizenship studies research is the categorization and explanation of citizenship policy. Only by describing the citizenship policy landscape—both cross-nationally and over time—are scholars then able to explain patterns of policy variation and similarity. The key finding of this research cluster is that there is significant variation in citizenship law policies across otherwise similar systems. In developing and testing theories that account for this variation, political scientists have largely contributed evidence on institutional policy factors and the political dimensions of citizenship. But this focus originated in sociology, with Brubaker (1992).

Brubaker's *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992) not only provided a definition of citizenship as a legal mechanism for social closure, it also proved foundational in the study for citizenship policy by establishing a heuristic for identifying and analyzing clusters of citizenship policies as national ideal types. France maintained a self-understanding of the nation as a civic, territorial community, and therefore practiced *jus soli* with easy naturalization rules, whereas Germany kept *jus sanguinis* and difficult naturalization procedures because Germans saw themselves as an ethnic, *Volk*-based national group—a community of descent. While Brubaker himself would later disavow these "Manichean" national ideal types (1999), *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* seeded a general practice of interpreting citizenship policy as a reflection of cultural priorities, as opposed to democratic, market, or legal logics. An additional—if perhaps unintended—consequence of its influence is that the study of citizenship would largely stay in European nation-state contexts, as citizenship scholars sought to test and extend Brubaker's (1992) influential argument.

Some of this work would challenge how we interpret policies. For instance, Brubaker identifies *jus soli* as inclusive, but Weil (2008) documents its exclusionary character in the case of France almost a century earlier. Likewise, Shevel (2017) shows how *jus sanguinis* can be an inclusive tool, illustrated by the "right to return" for Latvian citizens following the collapse of the Soviet Union. And one need only look at the vast literature on American identity to observe "multiple traditions" at work simultaneously (Smith 1999; see also Schildkraut 2005, Goodman 2020). Bloemraad (2006) even shows how two civic types—the United States and Canada—can work in different ways, depending on how buttressing institutions like civic society help or hinder the ostensibly inclusive naturalization process. The policies themselves are neutral; their inclusive or exclusive outcomes depend on what context they are applied in, how they are practiced, and who is subject to them.

By the early 2000s, scholars were already pushing beyond the static ideal-types approach by applying a comparative lens to citizenship policies in more cases (Waldrauch & Hofinger 1997, Weil 2001). At the end of the decade, there was a vibrant research community undertaking systematic work to characterize, categorize, and compare citizenship policy. For example, Howard (2009)

and Janoski (2010) both constructed novel measures of citizenship policy for immigrants while extending categorization to an increasing number of cases and years. These inductively derived classification schemes created a rich descriptive picture of patterns of similarity and variation.

From this point, a veritable cottage industry of citizenship policy indexing began to take shape. The GLOBALCIT (previously named EUDO Citizenship) academic network developed a comprehensive categorization of citizenship policy across 28 different modes of acquisition—from birthright to investor citizenship practices—and 15 modes of loss, quantified in the CITLAW (previously NATAC) database (GLOBALCIT 2017, Vink et al. 2021b). The Migration Policy Group (2011) produced the Migrant Integration Policy Index (MIPEX), a measure that includes citizenship as well as adjacent policies like family unification and health rights access.

As these endeavors pushed to identify policy, they also produced an important byproduct for the field of citizenship studies. In constructing nuanced pictures of how citizenship regimes vary, they also made qualitative data legible and suitable for quantitative analysis. Converting policy typologies into indices, scholars could employ statistical regression models to study not only the determinants of citizenship policy, as discussed above, but also the average and generalized effects of citizenship policy settings on immigrant integration more generally (Goodman & Wright 2015) and naturalization rates specifically (e.g., Dronkers & Vink 2012). These are only some of the indices for measuring and comparing citizenship policy (see also Koopmans et al. 2012, DEMIG 2015, Schmid 2021b), and none are without their limitations or problems (Ruedin 2015; Goodman 2012, 2015).

But with a systemized understanding of policy variation in place, scholars proceeded with the equally important task of identifying determinants of citizenship policy. What shapes similarities and differences in citizenship policy? Whereas Brubaker's (1992) account was largely historical ("France and Germany continue to define their citizenries in fundamentally different ways because they have been doing so for more than a century," p. 186),[3] later scholars would pivot to contemporary politics. The consensus is that political parties of the left pursued inclusion whereas parties of the right pursued restriction (Joppke 1999, Howard 2009, Janoski 2010, Koopmans et al. 2012, Goodman & Howard 2013, Hansen & Clemens 2019, Schmid 2021a).[4]

The logic behind this pattern is succinctly described by political sociologist Christian Joppke (2005): When it comes to national group politics, the left—owing to a "universalist vocation"—participates in de-ethnicization while the right advocates re-ethnicization (though, it should be said, this logic problematically reifies the national ethnic/civic ideal types).[5] Howard (2009) provides an explanation that focuses on the far right, and whether they are able to mobilize to block liberalization or not, though a leftist government is a necessary condition for liberalization. Sredanovic (2015) finds an "intelligible link" between the direction of citizenship policy change (inclusive versus restrictive) and left–right positioning (determined by EU Parliament group affiliation) but only for the EU-15; a pattern was not detected among post-1995 member states. And in their analysis of birthright citizenship policies, Solodoch & Sommer (2020) show a relationship linking nativist parties with restriction and left parties with liberalization.

But, as Goodman (2014, p. 66) points out, "[citizenship] policy is not made in a vacuum." It is not only the ideological orientation of government but also the institutional context that shapes

[3]Smith (1999) and FitzGerald & Cook-Martín (2014) provide further examples of historical institutional accounts.

[4]The same cannot be said for *immigration* policy, where expansionary pressure comes from the left (Abou-Chadi 2016) and right (Peters 2017).

[5]Joppke (2005) does not, however, provide an explanation for politics where ethnicity is not a salient cleavage, such as countries of Latin America (Yashar 2005).

the potential for policy change. These include colonial and legal history, which plays an important explanatory role in both cross-national and temporal change (Weil 2001, Howard 2009, Janoski 2010, FitzGerald et al. 2018, Sadiq & Tsourapas 2021), as well as related factors, like the growth of domestic immigrant electorates on citizenship rights expansion (Koopmans et al. 2012). Geopolitics (Shevel 2009) and the international diffusion of norms (Checkel 1999) are also influential factors. Last, citizenship policy has been shown to react endogenously; for example, "countries with a jus soli regime tend to restrict their legislation [in response to immigration], whereas countries with a jus sanguinis regime resist innovation" (Bertocchi & Strozzi 2010).

The strength of this first research domain is its descriptive and analytic utility. Categorizing and comparing citizenship policies establish the groundwork from which we can identify patterns of variation, and this work centrally locates the study of citizenship in politics. Citizenship is not an organic part of a social community, nor is it a set of uncontested boundaries. Citizenship is like any political resource: Stakeholders and competing parties argue over who gets what, when, and how. This first domain of research establishes the stakes of citizenship. It is an essential prerequisite for causal inference, thus allowing us to understand why citizenship may have the effects that it has. And while we have reached a degree of saturation—in cases, theory testing, and indexing policy configurations—there is still a lot we do not know, including how politics affects policy decisions beyond Europe and sites of democratic politics, as well as public attitudes about these decisions more generally.

Consequences of Policy: Who Gets Citizenship?

The second body of research on citizenship policy is oriented toward studying the consequences of policies for individuals. As Vink et al. (2013) phrase it: "Policy matters, but to whom?" Here, the dependent variable shifts from policy design to policy consequence: acquisition of citizenship. This is not an evolutionary story like the first research domain, which established a toehold for the study of citizenship in political science. Instead, it reflects the contemporaneous adoption of new statistical methods and interdisciplinary insights for studying micro-level outcomes. The consensus view is that both individual and contextual factors matter in determining who gets citizenship. Moreover, state policy plays an important role in deciding who attains citizenship, in terms of both eligibility criteria and immigration rules, which determine who gets to move in the first place.

Contextual factors in both origin and destination states affect citizenship acquisition. Beginning with origin states, factors found to influence citizenship acquisition include level of economic development, political stability, and citizenship policy (Bueker 2005, Vink et al. 2013, Peters et al. 2016, Alarian 2017), especially dual citizenship allowance (Chiswick & Miller 2009, Mazzolari 2009). Origin states are aware of the persistence of these effects, as citizenship acquired in destination states increases transnational activity like remittances (Leblang 2015) and mobility (Gilbertson & Singer 2003, Alarian & Goodman 2017), especially for those from poorer or less democratic countries (Harpaz 2015).

For the destination country, citizenship policy rules are the primary legal framework for determining eligibility for naturalization. Dronkers & Vink (2012), in one of the earliest cross-national studies of policy effects, state that "favorable citizenship policies positively affect naturalization rates," especially for immigrants from less developed countries (see also Vink et al. 2013), though they argue "it matters much more where an immigrant comes from than where he or she is going" (Dronkers & Vink 2012, p. 408). Strict host society citizenship requirements, including economic conditions (Stadlmair 2018), renunciation of dual citizenship in Germany (Weinmann 2021), language requirements (Jensen et al. 2021), and citizenship tests (Peters et al. 2016) make it less likely that someone is able to obtain citizenship (Neureiter 2019, Vink et al. 2021a).

Beyond citizenship policy, social and community life also affect citizenship outcomes. Research on the United States has particularly highlighted the role of coethnic social and political communities in encouraging and facilitating naturalization (Logan et al. 2012, Abascal 2017). Last, public attitudes in the host society can create an environment conducive (Van Hook et al. 2006) or hostile to naturalization. Hostility, in particular, is felt through the process of othering, which has been found to discourage naturalization in France (Carrillo 2015) and Germany (Kahanec & Tosun 2009). Public attitudes can even be shaped by policy directly, in that norms of national belonging (Wright 2011) as well as discriminatory behaviors (Simonsen 2016) reflect restrictive policy.

Individual factors that determine citizenship acquisition include years of residence, marital status, education, and language proficiency. The field of economics has been especially influential in this line of research. Beginning with Yang (1994), immigrant naturalization is explained using a rational choice model, in which citizenship acquisition is the product of an individual cost–benefit calculation. In this account, "net of the contextual factors" between origin and destination state, "common-sense" determinants of naturalization include successful cultural assimilation (Yang 1994, p. 472), as well as all demographic predictors. For instance, Yang (1994, p. 455) argues that age is curvilinear for first-generation migrants: "When immigrants arrive at early ages, they do not understand the value of citizenship and therefore have low propensity to naturalize. . . . However, for immigrants who are growing older at the time of entry, enthusiasm for citizenship probably fades because the length they can possibly enjoy citizenship benefits is shorter and the difficulties in meeting the language and education requirements are greater." In their study of naturalization among second-generation migrants in Europe, Dronkers & Vink (2012, p. 404) find a linear relationship: "the older the immigrant, the more likely he or she is to naturalize."

Income is almost always a positive predictor of naturalization (Peters et al. 2016), as are level of education (Aptekar 2014), length of residence (Vink et al. 2013, p. 11), speaking the language of the destination country (Dronkers & Vink 2012), and, in the case of refugees in the United States, living in urban areas among co-nationals (Mossaad et al. 2018). An immigrant's identification with the host society is also a positive factor for naturalization (Diehl & Blohm 2003). Last, family context influences citizenship seeking (Street 2014, Helgertz & Bevelander 2017); citizenship has significant implications for childhood well-being and second-generation integration (Dronkers & Fleischmann 2010, Labussiere et al. 2021).

Of course, in the end, contextual and individual factors often work together. As Peters et al. (2016) show in the case of the Netherlands, migrants from less developed or politically unstable countries of origin are more likely to naturalize, as they seek security of status and lack opportunities to hold dual citizenship, but they are also more likely to be impeded by restrictive citizenship policy. Elsewhere, a comparative study by Vink et al. (2021a) shows that new language requirements and integration tests in the Netherlands and Denmark slow down naturalization, but especially for migrants with lower levels of education. Likewise, dual citizenship allowance increases acquisition rates, but especially for already-mobile migrants from the European Union.

For scholars and practitioners concerned about immigrant integration, the most worrisome combination of individual and contextual factors is observed where immigrants come from disadvantaged educational or economic backgrounds and confront further barriers in the shape of restrictive citizenship policies. For these groups, the exclusionary effects of citizenship rules are amplified, producing discriminatory results (van Oers 2013, Vink et al. 2021a). Also, in taking eligibility as a precondition, we inherently exclude from analysis immigrant populations that would benefit from citizenship but are disqualified, though as Sadiq (2009) illustrates, in the case of India, individuals can sometimes strategically obtain documents illegally to pass as citizens.

As evident in this discussion, whereas the study of policy determinants was overwhelmingly cross-national, acquisition studies are typically limited to one or two countries. This is necessarily

the case, as this research relies on individual-level data over time. Such data are maintained by government statistical bureaus and ministries and often are selectively accessible. This means that generalizability may be limited, with inference restricted to precisely specified scope conditions. But this limitation also presents ripe opportunities for subgroup analysis. Research already points to significant moderators of citizenship acquisition, including education level and conditions of an immigrant's origin country. More work could be done in this area, most importantly by reinserting politics into the analysis of why certain groups get citizenship and others do not.

Consequences of Citizenship: What Does Citizenship Do?

This third and final research domain asks, "What is the utility of citizenship?" or "What does citizenship do?" Research on such questions frequently takes the form of policy evaluation. There is overwhelming consensus that having citizenship has positive effects on immigrant political and economic integration, while evidence that citizenship causes social–cultural integration is more mixed. Intuitively, this stands to reason; it is harder for policy to uniformly permeate the soft boundary of citizenship and "deliver" on objectives like national belonging. So, while the stakes of getting citizenship and the politics that make citizenship available (or not) are immensely consequential for economic and political outcomes, we see the tenuous nature of belonging through the contingent relationship between bearing a passport and social inclusion.

Economic integration is measured through wages, occupational status, or labor market mobility. Research from the Netherlands shows a positive effect of citizenship on employment (Peters et al. 2018, p. 1055), even that the probability of employment increases leading up to citizenship ("anticipating naturalisation"). Other research shows that effects of citizenship are asymmetrical, influencing occupational status for immigrant men only (Hoxhaj et al. 2020), though faster access to citizenship improves economic integration for women (Gathmann & Keller 2018). A gendered effect of citizenship is also corroborated by longitudinal data on income from Germany (Steinhardt 2012). From the United States, we learn that opportunities to retain dual citizenship of Latin American origin countries increase employment and earnings gains and lead to lower levels of welfare dependency (Mazzolari 2009). From a quasi-random assignment in Switzerland, where individual citizenship decisions used to be made by referenda at the municipal level, Hainmueller et al. (2019) find that "winning" citizenship leads to higher earnings over time for marginalized immigrants (see also Steinhardt & Wedemeier 2012).

Political integration is measured by participation, efficacy, and political knowledge. This is not to be confused with legal integration, which is formal status acquisition, though naturalization is certainly a political process. In fact, we know these are distinct because evidence from both the United States (Bueker 2021) and France (Carrillo 2015) shows that the desire to participate politically is often what motivates immigrants to naturalize. In a study from Sweden, where municipal and provincial voting rights are not tied to citizenship, Bevelander & Pendakur (2011) observe higher levels of voting participation from naturalized citizens compared to foreign nationals. From Switzerland, causal evidence on naturalization shows that immigrants are more likely to vote and exhibit higher levels of political efficacy over time (Hainmueller et al. 2015).

Last, social integration is a broad category that may range from connection to the national group to social contacts to language proficiency, the latter of which has been shown in the German case to positively influence national identification (Hochman & Davidov 2014). It is in this dimension of integration that we sometimes observe no effect of citizenship acquisition on outcomes of interest. This mixed picture reflects the soft side of citizenship as membership in a political community, where one may be a member by law but not in practice. For instance, Ersanilli & Koopmans (2010, p. 773) find that "naturalisation is positively associated with socio-cultural integration only in those countries—France and Germany—that have traditionally required a certain

degree of cultural assimilation from their new citizens," a finding corroborated by evidence from the early-twentieth-century United States (Fouka 2019). Kolbe & Crepaz (2016) find an "incorporation effect" for citizenship by examining attitudinal convergence between the foreign born and native born on welfare chauvinism in Europe. Despite studies finding a positive relationship between naturalization and national identification in Germany (Fick 2016), the United Kingdom (Bartram 2021), and Switzerland, especially for marginalized immigrant groups (Hainmueller et al. 2017), qualitative findings from Denmark show that despite extensive connections in the host society, language proficiency, and sharing in core Danish values, the "bright lines" of belonging hinder inclusion, and can even strengthen minority identity (Simonsen 2018).

What we specifically learn about the effect of citizenship is that it helps in general but is particularly beneficial for certain marginalized groups in certain contexts. Although this careful work excels in identifying the precise average effects of policy on integration outcomes, it lacks external validity. This is problematic insofar as these studies are used as policy models or lessons for other countries. Policies that increase inclusion in one case may be nonviable or politically impossible in another case. This raises a second point: Where are the politics? Who designs policies that produce observed outcomes? To what other political pressures are policy implementers responding? This set of questions, in turn, leads us to a general concern about the mechanisms that link status to belonging. What is it about citizenship—versus the social networks one cultivates over time—that increases national identification or feelings of belonging? Where are the voices that tell us this is the case? Pairing policy analysis with qualitative research would not only improve policy design but also support interpretation of quantitative results and generate grounded theory.

It may be normatively good that more immigrants obtain citizenship, from a democratic or rights-based perspective, but interventions that seek to increase citizenship are costly in terms of financial incentives and can create thorny ethical dilemmas. For instance, Badenhoop (2021, p. 564) describes the naturalization process as a "subject-formation regime that encourages naturalized citizens to transform themselves into political, economic and cultural assets to the nation-state," which she terms "Super Citizens." By interviewing naturalizing immigrants in Germany and the United Kingdom, she finds that this process is not deterministic, can yield disaffection, and inevitably produces new social hierarchies. This is an important point. To understand a policy effect, we need to not only look at measured observables and policy outcomes but also ask about the policy *experience*, which may reveal unanticipated negative externalities.

TOWARD A PROGRESSIVE RESEARCH AGENDA

It should be evident through the discussion so far how each research domain—determinants of citizenship policy, consequences of citizenship policy, and consequences of citizenship—can be strengthened through collaboration with scholars working on related issues across the social sciences. Research on policy determinants tells us why policies look the way they do. They give us the politics of citizenship policy, which can complement the literature on the consequences of citizenship, which in turn tells us how policies matter and to whom. The evaluation literatures give us the "so what," revealing why citizenship matters, potentially unearthing policy consequences that were unforeseen in initial descriptive exercises or policy determinant studies. Together, these different research groups tell a powerful story about how state policy shapes national political communities.

Where do we go from here? Philosopher of science Imre Lakatos (1968, p. 168) defined the ideal research program as generative. It is progressive in that it builds theories on the content of its predecessor and produces new empirical findings and insights based on its theoretical core. The path forward for a progressive research program in citizenship studies is clear, despite disciplinary

incentives that reward quantitative over qualitative research. Pushing against the grain, we can widen to new cases and we can deepen in theory.

First, we know a lot about citizenship in specific national contexts, but little of this knowledge is generalizable across countries or even across policy domains within countries. This is either because most of our cases are based on rich (and data-rich) countries or because the pivot to experimental and design-based inference prioritizes internal validity. To use one case as illustration, Switzerland's use of citizen assemblies and referenda to assign citizenship, while suitable for the quasi-random conditions necessary to estimate causal effects, does not speak to how most democracies assign citizenship. Switzerland's regional cantons also play a decisive role in immigrant integration (Bennour 2020, Manatschal et al. 2020), elevating the meso level of authority in a way that differs dramatically from most federal and certainly unitary states. Moreover, the gap between the rights of citizens (who participate in direct democracy, voting for officeholders and referenda) and noncitizens is wide. This makes the political effect sizes inherently larger and is an extreme case of the rights gap compared to other cases. It is clearly important to study the determinants of naturalization and effects of citizenship policy where micro-level data are available, but these exercises have limited analytical leverage.

In particular, resource-rich states of Western Europe tell us little about citizenship in low- and middle-income states, to say nothing about nondemocratic states, or immigrant receiving countries in Latin America, East Asia, and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Pan (2021), for instance, documents how Mainland Chinese immigrants choose "strategic noncitizenship" in Australia, while Frost (2020) finds "intentional ambiguity" in citizenship in Jordan. Norman (2020) and Lori (2019) both see institutionalized precarity as a top-down process, in MENA and Gulf states, respectively. We lack a theory of citizenship that suggests it travels cross-regionally or should work similarly cross-nationally, especially as a mechanism for immigrant integration, so it behooves researchers to remain responsibly circumspect in their generalizations from a small subset of a very specific sample of the world's countries. This is an invitation to widen the scope of study and to take a more inductive approach to theory building that recognizes the different historical and contextual circumstances of the Global South and the postcolonial world.

Clearly, the most progress can be made by moving beyond Europe to building and testing theories of how and why states around the world create and maintain the political communities that they do. Do theories about citizenship utility or political determinants of policy hold outside of Western Europe? In illiberal contexts? In autocracies? What kind of theory building can take place in moving beyond the narrow work of measuring policy effects in a handful of European cases, and Western citizenship more generally, which is definitionally linked to the cultural logic of the nation-state? As Chung (2017, p. 431) puts it: "Rather than begin with the assumption that citizenship is universal, democratic, and inclusive, research in [non-Western contexts] highlights how citizenship—as a legal status, symbol of national and/or ethnic identity, institution, and practice—is contingent." Sadiq (2017) make a point that Western models of citizenship can be applied to postcolonial contexts like India and Malaysia, but with extra attention to welfare provisions. What about instances where migration is high, but citizenship is not a politically urgent issue, such as cases in Latin America? In short, we may be close to saturation in studies of Western Europe, but there is likely more theoretical and conceptual work to be done in zooming out.

Fortunately, new research has begun moving beyond the typical Western European or Anglo models, from expatriate voting rights in sub-Saharan Africa (Wellman 2021) and cross-national studies in diasporic participation (Pogonyi 2019), to household registration systems in China (Chung et al. 2020) and Southeast Asia (Cheesman 2017), to rights-based statuses in Latin America (Mayka 2019) and Africa (Manby 2018). Several research teams have taken a global perspective in their work (Boucher & Gest 2018, Vink et al. 2021b). The next phase of citizenship theorization is

exploring and establishing scope conditions, expanding to other economies, regions, geopolitical conflicts, regime types, and communities of administration and belonging.

A call to widen the field of study is simultaneously a call to deepen our knowledge of how citizenship works. Even within a subset of European cases, there is a lot that we still do not know. When does citizenship facilitate social or cultural integration? How do native-born citizens' views of integration align with what immigrants participate in and ultimately achieve? Do the native born perceive costs of immigrant integration that are not borne out in status acquisition, like decline in civic trust? Moreover, immigrants are not merely a unit of analysis; they have voices, agency, and heterogeneous experiences that inform the naturalization process. Centering migrants in our analysis would sharpen integration theories by elucidating mechanisms, thereby providing key insights on state interactions that could lead to new theory, particularly through their experiences with "street level bureaucrats," e.g., those who facilitate integration classes and adjudicate citizenship cases (Sredanovic 2022). Immigrants might even prove meaningful interlocutors for triangulating between government priorities and potentially countervailing bureaucratic pressures.

Centering immigrant experiences and investigating causal mechanisms require a more ecumenical methodological approach. Design-based inference and experiments can yield insights about average or conditional causal effects, but we still lack systematic descriptive information about immigrant experiences with naturalization. Participant observation, interviews, and ethnography are critical tools for accessing vulnerable populations, for developing and testing theories, and for identifying causal mechanisms. These tools are widely embraced in adjacent fields like sociology (Beaman 2017, Duquette-Rury 2020). The challenge for the political science research community is to listen and integrate this multimethod work into our own.

Although this review focused on national citizenship, it is also imperative to recognize the ways in which political communities and civic norms are changing outside of citizenship policy. National citizenship has proved resilient even as globalization has threatened to decouple rights and identity. It has also proven sturdy against civic integration, which some suggest only reflects cosmetic national differences between states, preserving instead a shared, even neoliberal core (Joppke 2017). But what are the empirical implications of an increasingly restrictive citizenship in a time when identity and immigration politics are central in national debates? What happens when rights previously associated with citizenship, such as local voting and social provisions, become increasingly available to resident foreign nationals (Pedroza 2019)? Early evidence shows these changes do not devalue or hollow-out citizenship—in fact, they increase citizenship acquisition (Alarian 2021). But scholars must remember that citizenship is not merely an institution, but also a site of politics, subject to ongoing influence, reinterpretation, use, and strategy. In fact, in the interdisciplinary space of citizenship studies, it is in the study of politics that political science has the most to say. Citizenship policy—and therefore the politics of citizenship—remains core to key political concepts like legitimacy, sovereignty, national identity, ethnicity, and state power. The more we understand about citizenship, the more we understand about politics.

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