

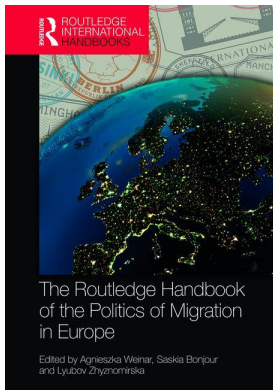
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THE CIVIC INTEGRATION TURN

Sara W. Goodman

Introduction

The definition of state belonging has undergone major transformation. At the dawn of the twenty-first century, several Western European states began to craft policies requiring immigrants to demonstrate host society knowledge, language proficiency and a commitment to national *qua* liberal-democratic values. Categorized as ‘civic integration’, these policies promoted active and productive participation by immigrants in society and the labour market through acquiring a set of ‘citizen-like’ skills. These include speaking the host country language, having knowledge about the country’s history, culture and rules, and understanding and ascribing to the values that underscore their new home. Civic integration policies advance these characteristics with new assessment tools such as integration tests, courses and contracts. Also new is the interjection of the state into the process of immigrant integration, exerting a heavy hand by making status acquisition conditional on completing tests, courses, etc. Finally, in addition to the newness of content, instruments and conditionality, civic requirements uniquely apply not only to naturalization but increasingly to non-traditional membership statuses, including long-term/permanent residence and entry.

Given these new hurdles, civic integration is significant from the perspective of the immigrant because it can be a decisive barrier to obtaining status and inclusion. Civic integration is also significant from the perspective of the state as it formally facilitates and mandates integration. By highlighting shared rules of society and concepts of belonging, states are articulating (some for the very first time) concrete and, in principle, accessible definitions of what it means to ‘be British’ or ‘Dutch’ or ‘German’. Here, civic integration represents the latest iteration of the ongoing project of nation-building (or, what Stokes-DuPass (2015) refers to as ‘manufacturing’). On the one hand, this change across most-different systems signifies convergence, where divergent tropes of belonging – from German ethno-differentialism to French civic republicanism to the multinational understanding of belonging in the UK – face re-examination. This shared change is unidirectional in the sense of states going from zero or informal requirements of membership to robust integration schemes at multiple stages of status. On the other hand, we can question whether states are changing into the same thing and for the same reason. In fact, the question of whether civic integration policies signify an ‘end to national models’ (Joppke, 2007a) in subsuming national differences to produce a ‘lite’ form of citizenship (Joppke, 2010) or not

(Goodman, 2012a, 2014) has emerged as one of the more central debates in the literature. In other words, are national definitions of belonging giving way to a convergent, post-national, liberal-democratic concept?

To answer this question, this chapter undertakes several tasks. First, it begins by identifying and comparing civic integration policies across Europe. It distinguishes between new practices in Western Europe and older practices in Former Soviet Eastern states, as well as national versus sub-national/regional practices. Upon identifying a cluster of robust civic integration adopters across the EU-15, it considers extant explanations for this robust ‘civic turn’ (Mouritsen, 2008). It then examines convergence and replacement theses, drawing on the now-vast civic integration literature. It concludes by considering the significance of mandatory integration in light of liberal parameters and points to fruitful avenues for new research.

Comparing civic integration policies across Europe

The speed and scope of civic integration policy adoption in Europe is matched only by the number of studies seeking to describe and explain it. Early studies provide rich, within-country detail, descriptively mapping policy patterns, content differences and variation across states and legal statuses (e.g. Guild *et al.*, 2009; Koopmans *et al.*, 2012, 2005; Migration Policy Group, 2011; Strik, Böcker, Luiten and van Oers, 2010). These studies build on political sociological observations presented by Christian Joppke across several works (2007a, 2007b, 2008, 2010). Interestingly, this research field developed entirely within the academic community in Europe, despite obvious parallels and early practices of civic integration and assessment in the United States (e.g. Wan, 2014), Canada (Bloemraad, 2006), Australia and elsewhere (FitzGerald and Cook-Martin, 2014). For example, the US has administered a literacy exam for citizenship since the early 1900s, and has maintained its civic exam since the 1980s. There are also numerous practices of language testing and assessment in Former Soviet countries, like Lithuania. These assessments are similar in format but distinct in purpose from the ‘civic turn’. In the case of Former Soviet Union (FSU) states, for instance, tests were adopted in the immediate dissolution period to distinguish native and Russian residents and rebuild national language (Laitin, 1998; Pried te, 2005). Thus, they remain generally excluded from large, cross-national studies of cultural requirements for immigrants (Cf. Goodman, 2010b).

There was a further lacuna to earlier studies. Despite the abundant empirical and case-based research on identifying civic practices, there remained a need to translate this rich content into systematic scores, to enable categorization and comparison across legal statuses (citizenship, permanent residence and entry), time and cases. In *Immigration and Membership Politics in Western Europe* (Goodman, 2014), I develop the Civic Integration Policy Index (CIVIX) – the first index to use an empirical rubric for scoring the comparative size and empirical configuration of civic integration policy (for earlier iterations, see Goodman, 2010a, 2012b).

To briefly present these findings, aggregate CIVIX scores in Figure 14.1 portray substantial change in civic integration policy between 1997 and 2014. The CIVIX scoring rules are as follows: obligatory civic requirements at entry, settlement and citizenship receive one point per criterion. Examples include and range from the ‘civic integration test from abroad’ in the Netherlands to civic orientation courses in Germany to the Austrian citizenship test. This represents a conservative approach as it is agnostic towards mechanism of assessment, whereby signing a contract is scored equally to obtaining certification or passing a test. Second, there are compounding factors, in which an additional half point is added if, for example, the migrant has to pay fees to participate in an integration course or if tests are assessed at a high language level (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, CEFR). Finally, there is an

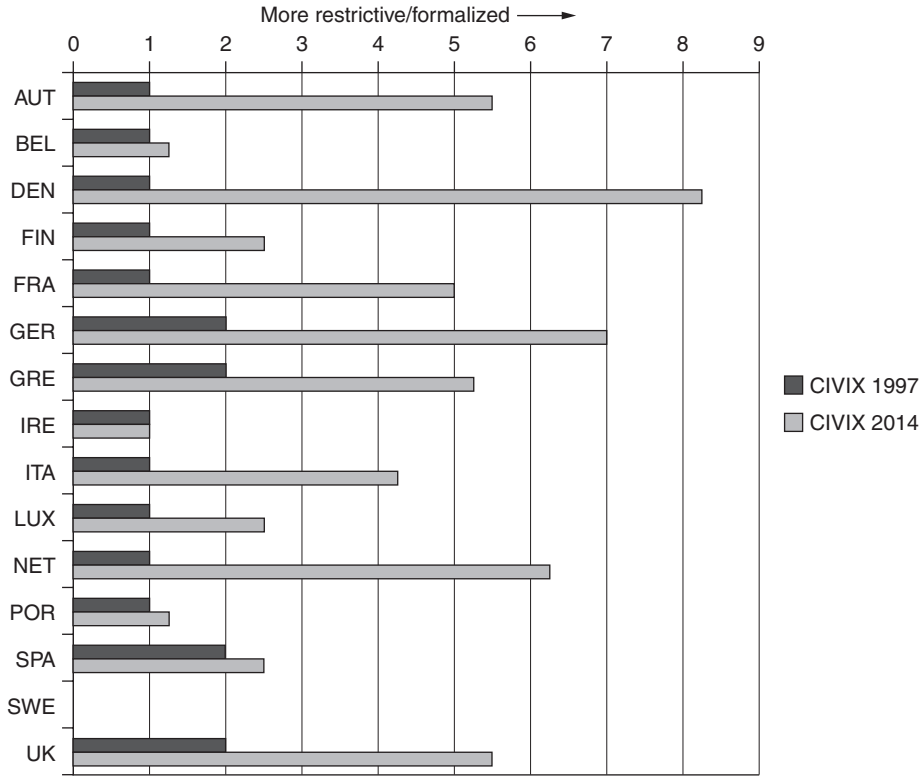


Figure 14.1 Civic Integration Index (CIVIX)

Note

A score of zero means no cultural conditions are required.

ameliorating factor in terms of design that can make the chain of requirements less arduous. If a requirement completed for permanent residence ‘double counts’ for citizenship, a deduction of one is given for each requirement (for more, see Goodman, 2014). In sum, higher scores represent more rigorous civic integration policies. In this snapshot period, we observe significant difference between maximal practitioners (Denmark, Germany), midrange practitioners (UK, Austria), and non-practitioners (Sweden).

The primary objective of developing CIVIX was to categorize and identify empirical variation, to understand the descriptive landscape, to investigate trends and, subsequently, why civic requirements were adopted. Since 2014, there have only been a few significant changes to these practices. Some of these changes include the merging of German residence and citizenship examinations, the formalization of language and civics tests in Spain, and the adoption of national language requirements in Belgium. This last case is particularly significant in that it harmonized divergent regional practices, where Wallonia and Flanders meaningfully differ in approaches to immigrant integration. There have also been several more indexing projects (Goodman, 2015), including more cases and procedural elements (e.g. Blatter *et al.*, 2016). For example, the EUDO-Citizenship research group (2012) scores language and civic knowledge testing as part of their Citizenship Law (CITLAW) index project for over thirty countries. Figure 14.2 portrays

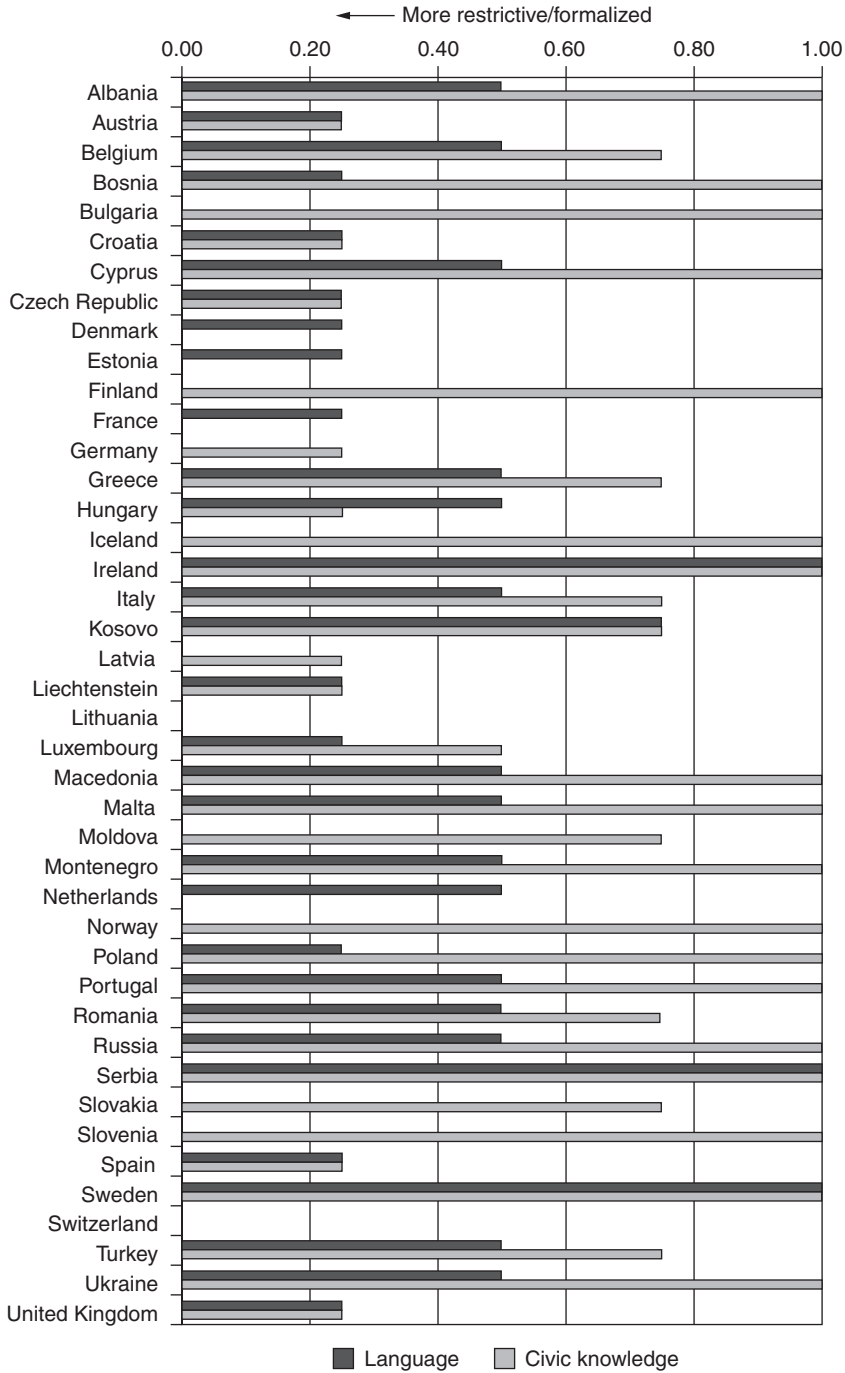


Figure 14.2 CITLAW scores of Language and Civic Knowledge Assessment, 2016

2016 scores for this expanded sample of countries. Scores for language (variable name: ANAT06c) range as follows: 0 (no requirement) to 1 (certification at a high language level, e.g. B2). Scores for civic knowledge and cultural assimilation (variable name: ANACT06d) range as follows: 0 (no naturalization test or cultural condition) to 1 (demanding formal naturalization test with limited study opportunities and no exemptions). In other words, the closer to zero the more difficult and highly-formalized the civic and language practice. While this data is not longitudinal and it is only limited to citizenship (i.e. excluding residence and entry), it shows both convergent and divergent trends in civic and cultural practices across the European continent in 2016.¹

This descriptive exercise in 'going wide' is useful for our inevitable narrowing to Western Europe to analyse the conditions and causes of cross-national adoption in the late-1990s/early-2000s. This wide lens reveals a prevalent use of civic instruments, e.g. language evaluation and cultural requirement assessment; but, given (1) timing of adoption and (2) historically contingent motives for language requirements in FSU countries, it suggests that accounts of adoption in Western states are bound by different theoretical scope conditions, with a different population (namely, under-skilled immigrants) in mind.

Explaining the civic turn: convergence, replacement, or national reinvention

Turning to the EU-15, we see a prolific adoption of civic integration policy. In 1998, the Netherlands introduced the Newcomers Integration Law (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*), obliging immigrants to take an integration course of language and civic content. Around the same time, France introduced a mandatory integration contract (*Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*), Britain a citizenship test, and integration courses and testing popped up in Germany, Austria and Denmark. Despite the similar time horizons of adoption, civic integration policies meaningfully differ in terms of criteria, cost, course difficulty and length, etc. For example, looking just at entry, the Dutch programme is far more stringent than the French design. In France, participants complete a one-day evaluation and civic course upon arrival, organized and financed by the state. Immigrants are assessed in French but are not required to demonstrate certain proficiency for legal status. By contrast, the Dutch government has made it a condition of entry to pass a test in the country of origin on entry-level speaking and reading comprehension of Dutch, as well as thirty questions on Dutch society. No preparatory courses are offered to pass this test, though a study guide is available for purchase. Once admitted to the Netherlands, immigrants are then expected to attend an integration course (*inburgeringscursus*).

Perhaps the only common denominator between the French and Dutch design is the general content, i.e. shared emphasis on knowledge of national language and familiarity with rights, rules, history, and institutions. It is this shared attribute that has informed a substantial debate in the civic integration literature. This debate pivots around two assertions: that civic integration policies (1) represent a European *convergence* and (2) signal the *replacement* and 'end of national models'. Regarding convergence, the literature presents two, oddly contradictory types of claims: denationalization and restrictive renationalization. In the former, citizenship moves from a series of entrenched, national practices to an instrumentalized, denationalized version of 'citizenship lite' (Joppke, 2010, 2012), in which the liberal norms and practices of citizenship become cross-nationally similar and largely agnostic towards otherwise procedural national flavours (e.g. citizens speak the national language, whether that is Dutch or German is beside the point). In fact, it becomes so denationalized that 'the spreading of such schemes' becomes a 'best-practice diffusion within the ambit of *all* Western states, not limited to Europe', suggesting the civic integration model could 'well become the standard approach of Western states for

dealing with immigrant diversity' (Joppke, 2007c: 272–273). Related to this version of convergence is the replacement hypothesis, with Joppke maintaining his place as its most senior proponent. Through a series of contributions, he claims civic integration policies represent a “reorientation” framed ‘by a new, post-national model philosophy of migrants’ “self-sufficiency” and “autonomy” ... according to which – paradoxically – the primary task of the state is to make migrants independent of the state’ (Joppke, 2007a: 4). And, as states are converging in this adoption, ‘the notion of national models no longer makes sense, if it ever did’ (Joppke, 2007a: 2).

A second variant of the convergence argument would agree with the aforementioned scope of change, but not the direction. It posits that instead of a denationalized, ‘lite’ citizenship, we are witnessing a cross-national move towards restriction and ethno-nationalism (Guild *et al.*, 2009; Kostakopoulou, 2010b; Triadafilopoulos, 2011; van Houdt, Suvarierol and Schinkel, 2011), where membership is becoming harder through more nationally-specific criteria (e.g. a citizenship test is not just recalling trivia but learning nationally-specific history, culture, and practices with consequence). Some maintain these restrictions are expressions of ‘illiberal liberalism’ insofar as a state mandate for individuals to be autonomous is inherently contradictory; Liav Orgad (2015) goes so far as to describe it as a type of liberal neo-assimilationism in ‘cultural defense of nations’. Far from post-national, this cross-national trend is interpreted as renationalization through new restrictions, in which integration becomes a condition for immigration/residence rights (Carrera, 2009; Kostakopoulou, 2010a, 2010b).

Moving to evaluation, the empirical snapshots of policy change seem to lend support to the convergence perspective, where states went from little to no civic integration practices to widespread practice. And several scholars have observed a change from lenient, rights-based approaches to more restrictive, performative ‘duty-based’ concepts (Böcker and Strik, 2011; Perchinig, 2012). As such, a plausible read on this simultaneity is a process of emulation and diffusion of norms, in which ‘government policy decisions in a given country are systematically conditioned by prior policy choices made in other countries’ (Simmons *et al.*, 2006: 787). Indeed, diffusion is quite evident for later iterations of policy adaptation and particularly in the field of family migration (Bonjour, 2014), where states benefit from the trial-and-error of others’ experiences. Yet, what is missing in convergence arguments that rely on snapshots and timelines (as well as evidence that states cite each other in parliament debates and green papers) is that states can adopt similar policies – and that adoption can be made more likely by decisions of neighbouring states – but for different reasons. And not only has change proven to be contested and by no means inevitable, some states like Sweden have resisted change altogether (Borevi, 2014). In another study, similarities in content and target groups are not products of a consistent process of convergence but rather of local introduction initiatives, where frames and financial resources vary (Caponio *et al.*, 2016). In sum, both motives and processes are significant and cannot be glossed over by focusing exclusively on outcomes. The content might be similar but the reasons for and mechanisms by which change occurs could vastly differ. In methodological parlance, this constitutes selection on the dependent variable and raises myriad concerns, including omitted variable bias and the potential of causal equifinality.

This leads us to closely consider Joppke’s second interpretation of the ‘civic turn’, namely that new policies are not merely convergent but have replaced existing national approaches to conferring membership and promoting integration. There is much evidence to challenge this reading (Borevi, 2014; Goodman, 2012a, 2014; Jacobs and Rea, 2007; Meer *et al.*, 2015; Mouritsen, 2011). One response to the replacement thesis suggests civic integration policies *buttress* instead of replace national practices, solving national problems through new, civic solutions (Goodman, 2012a). A related counter-argument is that new policies are *layered* on top of existing

ones. In this approach, civic programmes are not solutions for membership problems but co-exist in doing something different. This is what Keith Banting and Will Kymlicka conclude regarding civic integration and multiculturalism. In states that maintain multiculturalism, we see no evidence that civic integration has eroded multicultural policies (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013; Bloemraad and Wright, 2014). Multiculturalism offers rules and procedures that promote accommodation along group lines, ranging from home language instruction to funding for religious schools, while civic integration is individual-oriented (so much so that spouses, formerly included on family visas, are independently required to demonstrate language and country knowledge).

To fully investigate replacement, however, requires considering initial conditions and processes of civic integration policy adoption. What factors determine civic integration policy outcomes? One series of explanations for policy can be understood as institutional, ranging from electoral constraints to party ideology and issue ownership as defined by available party space. The most comprehensive account in this line of work is Goodman's (2014) six-country study of civic integration policies. Goodman identifies two significant conditions for determining why states adopt civic integration policy and what form that policy takes initially and over time. The first is policy context, specifically inherited citizenship policy. This policy – whether a state makes the acquisition of national membership inclusive or exclusive – is politically consequential for shaping how a political actor understands how political identity is already conferred and what the realm of possible or likely policy changes are. This institutional setting then provides a meaningful context for the second, more traditional explanation of membership policy change that focuses on preferences of the party in power, where right parties pursue restriction and left parties pursue liberalization (Howard, 2009; Joppke, 2005). This institutional frame is significant for interpreting both motive and process, as civic requirements in traditionally restrictive (exclusive) citizenship contexts necessarily address different problems – and produce different effects – than new civic requirements in traditionally liberal (inclusive) citizenship states. Of course, citizenship policy is not the only institution to structure the decision-making process. As Goodman (2014) shows in a comparison of the Netherlands to France, the Dutch proportional representation system incentivized coalition-building and consensus which made policies more 'sticky' over time and thus, difficult to reverse at the whim of a change in government (as exhibited in France). Saskia Bonjour (2010) focuses in her work on judicial constraints (with regard to family migration). We have also seen the European Union (EU) Court of Justice serve as an effective external check on national policy (e.g. reversing the requirement that Turkish immigrants to Netherlands take the Civic Integration from Abroad Exam as a violation of Turkey's preferential trade arrangements with the EU).

Within a variety of institutional contexts, we can identify any number of motives that political actors and parties use when pursuing civic integration policy. These are not uniform across- or within-cases and depending on what party is in power, by what means, and how powerful and mobilized the opposition is, etc., determines which motive is invoked to adopt cultural requirements. One explanation is symbolic gains: politicians pursue cultural and civic requirements to achieve any real, functional gains in immigrant integration but to address mass publics that are hostile to the real flow of more immigration (Goodman and Wright, 2015; Permoser, 2012). Symbolic gains are valuable; politicians often recognize they cannot achieve concrete migration control but they can enact symbolic ones that ameliorate public opposition. Symbolic gains also often translate into electoral gains. This accounts for the timing of several civic integration changes, as well as some of its primary proponents. The 'civic turn' is often contextualized as part of the rise of anti-immigrant, populist movements in Europe as far-right parties, like the Danish People's Party or the Dutch Freedom Party act as some of the more vocal advocates

for stringent cultural requirements and with centre parties acquiescing to these political provocations to compete for voters in the run-up to national elections. Another version of this explanation focuses on rhetorical cues. Here is where the multicultural debate is again relevant. Since the early 2000s, multiculturalism is consistently singled out as a chief cause and popular target of political ire.² Ending multiculturalism is rhetorically popular, as is ‘solving’ its problems with mandatory civic integration (this is where civic integration gets read as neo-assimilation). Yet, in practice, no multicultural policies have been replaced (Banting and Kymlicka, 2013; Bloemraad and Wright, 2014; Meer, Mouritsen, Faas and de Witte, 2015).

A second motive moves from symbolic gains to concrete, economic ones. It is widely acknowledged that a core mission of civic integration policies is to build individual skills for accessing the labour market. Often this mission was explicit. The earliest drafting of the Dutch civic integration involved developing proposals designed to improve the skills of immigrants entering the labour market, including ‘to organize mandatory language and social skills training for new arrivals’ (Entzinger, 2003: 76). In a later example, Danish amendments to their Integration Act were billed to achieve ‘better labour-market integration of immigrants’, which included improving skills, job training, etc. (Wiesbrock, 2009:303). Indeed, as we observe a larger shift in work-based welfare conditionality within advanced welfare states, access to social benefits becomes conditional on participation in the labour market and civic integration (Baldi and Goodman, 2015). This conditionality is a component of what Lawrence Mead (1997) describes as the ‘new paternalism’, whereby the government intervenes to alter behaviour of welfare recipients in the name of better political integration. New paternalism maintains unconditional access to social programs create dependency (a perpetual underclass) and reduces the likelihood of integration because it does not promote work, i.e. common civic behaviour. Hence, the government engages in ‘supervisory approaches’ to promote work and political participation.

The other side of this economic argument of improving labour market mobility – be it through skills promotion or benefit conditionality – is reducing state costs. This primarily includes structural dependency on income support, but also the price of providing mandatory integration. For example, in the Netherlands, the economic dimension of political party positions was most prominent in civic integration debates where parties sparred not over content or idea of civic integration but cost of financing and organizing courses (Bonjour, 2013). This plays out in a long, back-and-forth in Dutch policy over who pays for integration (the individual, the state, the municipality) and degree of subsidization.

In addition to economic motives for civic integration policies, there is the direct effect that promoting cultural requirements has as a filter for immigration. Considering specifically the introduction of mandatory civic and language requirements as a condition for temporary residency permits and entry, tests and language barriers can reduce immigration directly through low pass rates or indirectly by de-incentivizing immigration in the first place. Either way, it can be used as a novel device of immigration control (Bonjour, 2010; Goodman, 2011), especially geared towards the reduction of third-country nationals and family-based migration (i.e. non-skilled).

Finally, it would be cynical to dismiss the possibility that civic integration policies are adopted to have a functional, direct and positive effect on an immigrant’s integration and life chances in their host country. It may be that civic integration produces dual outcomes: mandatory integration can make status acquisition more difficult while also improving language proficiency and, therefore, social and economic mobility. Assessing the impact of integration policies on socio-political and cultural integration has largely proceeded through the use of individual interviews and focus groups (Strik *et al.*, 2010; van Oers, 2013), or based on small case studies (Ministry of Immigration, 2009) making it difficult to cross-nationally evaluate the policy effects of mandatory integration. One can look at pass rates to convey whether it is an effective barrier to status

acquisition (e.g. Goodman, 2014), but data limitations prohibit more systematic, cross-national analysis of effects on behaviour. In one study, Jutta Hoehne and Ines Michalowski (2016) observe positive long-term benefits of early language course participation. Elsewhere, Sara W. Goodman and Matthew Wright (2015: 18) ‘observe little evidence that immigrant integration is impacted by civic integration, either positively or negatively’. In other words, much more work can be done in this area.

To summarize, these motives – political, symbolic, economic, functional – all ground the study of civic integration in the domestic political arena, looking the interaction of institutions and interests to identify why states adopt and adapt civic integration policy. It provides a framework of analysis that leaves open the door to the possibility that states adopt similar policies for different reasons, to address different problems, to pursue different objectives, and which, inevitably, achieve different outcomes. This is one of the central insights of Goodman’s (2014) work, which argues that states fortify national citizenship as a national member-conferring institution (Goodman, 2012a), rather than abandoning it for some post-national, liberal machination (Hansen, 2009). It also, of course, provides a structure for comparing state incentives, recognizing that parallel timing could also portend shared motivations.

Conclusion

Civic integration policies show no signs of disappearing. If anything, they have only been strengthened and expanded in light of the 2015 Refugee Crisis. One of the unresolved issues related to these policies, however, is whether language and cultural requirements are liberal, though much has been said on this front (Bauböck and Joppke, 2010; Guild *et al.*, 2009; Orgad, 2010; Triadafilopoulos, 2011). In my view, the content of civic requirements present less cause for concern than the conditions of assessment. Knowledge is a matter of trivia. As I have stated elsewhere, ‘knowing national values and believing in them are two different things... The state can mandate knowledge and the professing of loyalty, but not morality or belief’ (Goodman, 2014: 33). To wit, I find burqa bans more pernicious as an affront to liberalism in constraining religious freedom than any hoop of civic integration. If an individual seeks membership, benefits and rights of citizenship, the conferring state has the right to set reasonable terms of that contract (Tilly, 1997).

So, where do researchers go from here? It seems the most pressing concern is obtaining better data for assessing effects of socialization, preparation, exposure and content of integration courses on individual behaviour, attitudes and performance – both immediately after-the-fact and over time. This requires new data, and with it come the obvious constraints of gathering costly, cross-national panel data, oversampling immigrants exposed to integration courses, or gaining access to a service provider to observe participants or facilitate focus groups and experimental designs. Another avenue is to expand on our understanding of state imputations of belonging and instrumental policymaking by looking beyond Western Europe, through more sustained comparisons to FSU countries or other practitioners, like Australia or the United States. Finally, interesting findings could emerge by drawing comparison between immigrant and refugee populations in terms of what is presented by the state as constituting necessary cultural orientation and relevant civic attributes, particularly in light of the 2015 Refugee Crisis.

Notes

- 1 According to CITLAW designers, ‘conditions must be treated non-accumulatively. There is one single deduction per country based on the least restrictive provision or most generous exception’ (Jeffers *et al.* 2012: 30). As such, I do not aggregate these conditions into a single score but report them independently.

- 2 In 2005, Trevor Phillips, then chair of the Commission for Racial Equality, intimated the practice of ‘politically correct’ multiculturalism had fostered fragmentation (‘parallel lives’), whereby Britain was ‘sleepwalking into segregation’. In Germany, Chancellor Angela Merkel labelling the multicultural project in 2010 as an ‘utter failure’ and—in the midst of the current refugee crisis—as a ‘grand delusion’. After the Paris terrorist attacks, former French President Nicolas Sarkozy decried ‘France is not a supermarket, it’s a whole.... There is no French identity, no happy identity in a multicultural society.’

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