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MAKING CITIZENS: THE RHETORIC, PRACTICE
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW UNITED STATES
NATURALIZATION EXAM

By

Ramona Maria Fruja

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# ABSTRACT

MAKING CITIZENS: THE RHETORIC, PRACTICE
AND EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THE NEW UNITED STATES
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Debates over how immigrants are to become citizens through naturalization—and what this entails for their preparation as successful participants in the new society— have resurfaced, prompted by the revision of the United States naturalization exam, implemented on October 1st, 2008. The result of a 6.5 million-dollar investment and several years of consulting with scholars, policy-makers and non-governmental organizations, the new set of civics and history questions is claimed to move away from memorization to prompting aspiring citizens to engage with the fundamental principles of American democracy. This dissertation study examines the new test's position within historically-established frameworks of immigrant scrutiny and integration, as well as assesses its formative claims at civic education.

The study addresses the exam as civic preparation from institutional, educational and comparative angles and integrates a series of analytic activities, data sources and disciplinary literatures. As a qualitative, interpretative study it focuses on documentary research that employs historical inquiry, qualitative content analysis as well as rhetorical and discourse analysis. An integrative review of the literature on immigrant naturalization history in the United States, contemporary immigrant incorporation in the United States and Western Europe, U.S. civic education, and citizenship theory is coupled with a review of naturalization examination media coverage in major U.S. newspapers. On this

interdisciplinary background, the study rhetorically examines primary sources relevant to the process of immigration testing as citizenship preparation—the old and new versions of the U.S. naturalization exams, selected historical and contemporary policy reports and naturalization documents, U.S. civic education frameworks and standards, the official governmental citizenship and naturalization websites of the United States, Germany, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, and Denmark, as well as the official statements and reports on the U.S. naturalization exam and its revision process provided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services.

In doing so, the study draws attention to broader socio-political structures—the history of naturalization in the U.S. and the current approaches to citizenship testing in the international arena—and thus delineates the wider parameters for the more detailed attention to the exam's function as civic education. Attention to those broader parameters aims to highlight the means by which such citizenship testing policy emerges, being both reactionary and continuous—it responds to current configurations and perceptions of immigration, but in doing so, it draws on historical socio-political contexts. In turn, the civic education afforded by the exam is assessed in light of current initiatives at citizen formation in schools, as it communicates ideals of desirable citizens to the nation's newest members.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## Introduction and Methodology

Debates over how immigrants are to become citizens through naturalization—and what this entails for their preparation as successful participants in the new society— have resurfaced, prompted by the revision of the United States naturalization exam implemented on October 1st, 2008. The result of a 6.5 million-dollar investment and consulting with scholars, policy-makers and non-governmental organizations over several years, the new set of civics and history questions is claimed to be more equitable and move away from memorization to prompting aspiring citizens to engage with the fundamental principles of American democracy. This dissertation study examines the new test's position within historically-established frameworks of immigrant scrutiny and integration as well as assesses its formative claims at civic education.

Based on documentary analysis of a range of primary and secondary sources surrounding naturalization testing, the study reassesses the importance of citizenship as status in an "post"-national environment and addresses the exam from institutional, educational and comparative angles. In doing so, it draws attention to broader socio-political structures—the history of naturalization in the U.S. and the current approaches to citizenship testing in the international arena—and thus delineates the wider parameters for a more detailed attention to the exam's function as civic education. Attention to those broader parameters aims to highlight the means by which such testing policy emerges, being both reactionary and continuous—it responds to current configurations and perceptions of immigration, but in doing so, it draws on historical socio-political contexts. In turn, the civic education afforded by the exam is assessed in light of current

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initiatives at citizen formation in schools, as it communicates ideals of desirable citizens to the nation's newest members.

The following questions have therefore guided the study:

- How could the current orientation and format of the exam be understood in an institutional, historical context?

- How do the exam's educational claims and potential compare with civic education visions and practices in public schools?

- What kind of citizen do the exam's content and rhetoric promote?

- What is the international citizenship-testing environment like and how does it contextualize the U.S. exam?

In this introduction, I begin with a reflection on my own place in the socio-political configurations of migration that contextualize this study, reflecting on how my experience has guided my thinking on these issues. I then move to elaborating, interdisciplinarily, on the continued importance of legal status citizenship and naturalization practices. As I justify the focus on the naturalization exam, I argue that even increased theorizing on the decline of nation-state autonomy and the rise of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism do not lessen the impact and implications that state structures and their afferent statuses have on actual lives, especially the experiences of immigrants. I then offer a brief background on the new naturalization exam as a requirement that unprecedented numbers of people have to fulfill and one that is continually infused with hopeful meaning by the official support. Finally, I turn to the study's analytical approaches and end by offering a roadmap for the remaining chapters.

# Citizenship and Naturalization: From the Personal to the Political

Anyone who has ever sat in the waiting room at an American Consulate in a foreign country, hoping to be granted a visa for access—to visit, study, work or immigrate—understands how, despite the unprecedented levels of international travel and migration, this travel can only happen within the institutional channels set up by the state and by relationships among states (Tropey, 2000). While most Americans take it for granted that they would be granted a visa to almost any nation they may wish to visit, the vast majority of non-Americans will never qualify for any kind of visa to the United States. Indeed, the socio-political implications of the consulate waiting room—marking those who can belong to the U.S. body politic and those who cannot—stand in sharp contrast with a dominant strand of contemporary scholarship which details the demise of the nation-state, asserts the increased irrelevance of national borders, and celebrates the wonders of transnational identities. At the same time, some of those claims make a lot of sense—I have experienced some of them myself, and if anyone should be convinced of the fluidity of borders and identities, I certainly could.

I am part of an Eastern European generation that witnessed the fall of Communism in our early teens, along with the dissolution of the seemingly stable Eastern Bloc and the subsequent flows of ideas, goods—and, yes, even people—outside the confines of that previously closed space. I had opportunities that my parents' generation could not have conceived of, just years before. I received an American liberal arts education both in the Balkans and the United States, pursued a doctoral degree at a U.S. research institution, and have lived long-term in four countries while also traveling to many more. I understand transnational and cross-cultural experiences first-hand.

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Throughout this process, however, I have also become painfully aware of my position as a citizen tied to a specific geo-political entity—a state which, in turn, because of its history and socio-political status in the world arena, was connected in particular ways with other nation-states.

My status as a citizen positioned me in the midst of these state relationships and structured my choices of movement and my rights in that process. When I crossed the border to present a paper at a conference in Canada or Greece, for instance, I was not a scholar who could contribute to the development of a field. Nor was I a woman whose identity was continually shaped by the multiple borders she had crossed and transitions she had experienced. I was, simply, a Romanian citizen—except for the fact that there was nothing quite simple about it. It was my legal status, clearly etched on the cover of my passport, that ushered me in the Border Control non-citizen line, and that same status difference drew questions from those passing through—this line, as we know, moves much more slowly than that of citizens.

The "problem" of my status, and that of others, continued to reemerge for me both in professional and personal experiences as I studied immigration along with its transitions and educational experiences. I encountered situations and collected anecdotes across a variety of contexts that sustained my initial perceptions of the complexities attached to citizenship and, especially, the powerful impact this "status" can have on possibilities and lives. Unsurprisingly, I bring these experiences with me in this study. As individuals, we filter history through our biographies, connecting our daily steps with the larger terrains on which we join others in their own biographies—we do all this despite

C. Wright Mills' (2000) pessimistic outlook on our abilities to make those connections, or the capacity for sociological imagination:

> Seldom aware of the intricate connection between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary men do not usually know what this connection means for the kinds of men they are becoming and for the kinds of history-making in which they might take part. They do not possess the quality of mind essential to grasp the interplay of man and society, of biography and history, of self and world. They cannot cope with their personal troubles in such ways as to control the structural transformations that usually lie behind them. (p. 3-4)

My position as a researcher, therefore, connects biography and history, as experiences have shaped my perceptions and prompted my attention to the processes by which outsiders become insiders, foreigners become citizens. I thus focus on citizenship as status—rather then other facets of the concept—and the "naturalizing," formative process by which the status is gained. However, this emphasis is not a unilateral, autobiographical quest. These experiences have indeed heightened my awareness of such issues—the self does remain a filtering instrument both in data collection and analysis (Rew, Bechtel & Sapp, 1993), as the selective eye of the researcher turns towards specific points of focus (Walcott, 1994).

Yet my focus in this study is not foundationless or merely self-gratifying. Rather, I have aimed at maintaining the researcher attributes necessary when embarking on a qualitative study like this—appropriateness, authenticity, credibility, intuitiveness, receptivity (Rew, Bechtel & Sapp, 1993) and critical self-reflection. As Kobayashi (2003) explains, personal experience must be connected to a wider purpose and agenda about

how the world should be, and how the world needs to change; researchers must consider what they are doing and how and why they are doing it, as well as reflect on who they are. Because of my particular experiences, I may be perceived as more susceptible to an optimistic view of global migration and of the flexibility of citizenship (Ong, 1999). At first glance, my story is indeed one of privilege and access which is not the dominant migration story. However, being also fully aware of the socio-political mechanisms that filter this alleged ease of access and experiencing socio-political constrains have also shaped my assumptions about citizenship and naturalization. As a result, I have continually assessed my own partiality to justifying the status of citizenship. To maintain balance and counter my leaning towards this position, the study does not ignore the wider context of citizenship scholarship and immigration. Rather, it dialogues with it, maintaining it in the background, even as my focus remains on naturalization and citizenship status. In turn, my own positionality that has filtered my approaches, shifts from a potential limitation to also being an asset, since it turns needed attention to areas with less visibility in the scholarship on immigration or citizenship.

### Object of Study and Reasserting the Importance of Citizenship as Status

While attention to the "basic" legal status of citizenship seems to have lost scholarly visibility, the concept has been widely appropriated to represent other levels of recognition, because characterizing social practices in the language of citizenship recognizes them as politically and socially consequential (Bosniak, 2000). Not surprisingly, we find the concept coupled with contemporary issues of concern— multicultural and flexible citizenship, social citizenship, corporate, sexual, imperial and global citizenships, among many others (Martiniello, 2000). Even in the classic uses of

the term, however, citizenship is already a multi-faceted concept that does not refer to legal status only—it describes multiple, discrete yet related phenomena surrounding the relationship between the individual and the polity (Rubenstein & Adler, 2000). Not only does it incorporate its liberal foundations of the rights-responsibilities duo associated with status, but also affective elements such as feelings of acceptance and membership (Rose, 1993) and active interpretations of civic participation (Bosniak, 2000). Some have even added the educational processes that are necessary to achieve the aims inherent in the other meanings, and this is going to be a focus in this study (Crick, 2004).

In this study I have explored a specific facet of the wider concept of citizenship—the link between immigration and citizenship through naturalization and, more specifically, through the U.S. Naturalization Exam. By examining the test from several angles—institutional, educational and comparative—this is a study that adds to the debates about *who* should belong as a citizen in the United States and *why*, by examining the equally relevant question of *how* one is to become a citizen through naturalization. When it comes to citizenship for immigrants, just as in the case of addressing the concept more generally, different points of focus exist—some emphasize attention to the legal dimensions of status (Menjivar, 2006), while others are interested in the rights that should be associated with simply belonging to a national community (Motomura, 2006) or the consequences of participation in the absence of legal status (Bosniak, 2000; Coutin, 2000). Still others are more concerned with the exclusionary practices embedded in the processes of granting citizenship and acceptance within the polity (Perera, 1998) and address the multiple means by which immigrants' multiple identities might be affirmed

and incorporated in frameworks of differentiated or multicultural citizenship (Appiah, 1998; Bloemraad, 2007; Banks, 2007).

In the midst of the revived interest in citizenship during the last twenty years, attention to legal status citizenship—and naturalization processes—has nevertheless remained marginal, especially when it comes to the use of citizenship exams. Yet, legal status carries enormous legitimizing functions and shapes the immigrants' membership in society and their own understandings of their place in it. Inclusion in the polity through naturalization—thus legal citizenship as an analytically distinct feature of participatory democracy—constitutes the focus of this study, recognizing that it determines the individual's most important status in relationship with the nation-state. Below I argue for the continued importance of legal status citizenship and naturalization practice and justify my focus on the naturalization exam. The reality and increased theorizing on the decline of nation-state autonomy and the concomitant rise of transnationalism and cosmopolitanism do not render irrelevant constraining realities that were boldly described two decades ago:

> Citizenship, as we have known it up till now, is time, place, and cultural bound. It is a scarce resource that can remain a resource only as long as certain boundaries are maintained. The price for effective standing and equality among citizens apparently is inequality between citizens and noncitizens, between insiders and outsiders. (Van Gusteren, 1988, p. 731)

At first glance, Van Gusteren's caution that "the local citizen perspective should not be repressed or merely accepted as a regrettable remnant of irrational loyalties" (p. 732) appears dated in light of statistics showing historically-high levels of migration and

search for work in countries where the migrants are not citizens—between 2000 and 2005, an average of nearly 1.4 million people per year left each of several areas such as Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean. In fact, most of today's migrant workers come from Asia, and demographic data suggest that by 2030, China and India will provide 40 percent of the global work force (IOM, 2008). These estimates confirm previous projections that twenty-five percent of those in modern industrial economies will eventually not be citizens of those countries (Hammar, 1990). It is not surprising, then that citizenship theorists urge that nation-bound conceptualizations of citizenship will become increasingly exclusionary, requiring that we give up the concept altogether "unless and until the concept is freed from its nationalist moorings" (Bosniak, 1998, p. 33). After all, the concept of citizenship loses some of its hopeful veneer when taking into consideration that it is "warm" on the inside and "cold" on the outside (Van Gunsteren, 1998)—the inclusion of some depends on the exclusion of others.

In the wake of such unprecedented and uneven flows of both people and capital, social theorists have been concerned with the tremendous disparities among people who, even when benefiting from nominal political membership through citizenship status, are left on the margins of meaningful participation and many become destitute. Saskia Sassen (1996), arguing from a sociological perspective informed by economic analysis, posited that since the nation-state is often no longer the main instrument to control the global economy that embeds these socio-economic disparities, there is room to consider economic citizenship that is supranational. The state, in this view, is no longer the only agent important in ensuring equity and accountability for its citizens.

Even apart from arguments supported by new economic developments, socio-cultural anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai (2003) insist that "primordial . . . have become globalized" and thus "sentiments whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political sentiment and turn locality into a staging ground for identity have become spread over vast and irregular spaces." (p. 228). He believes that even ethnicity, once contained by locality, "has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders" (p. 228). Yet while expansion in global transportation, migration, media and communications have led to increasingly hybrid identities for many, it is also true that a quarter of the world's population remains illiterate, only limitedly mobile, and culturally bound within traditional ethnic identities.

Some scholars who consider citizenship from a legal perspective claim that globalization has led increasingly to overlapping geographies of citizenship, in which the "us vs. them" distinction is fading. Legal scholar Peter Spiro (2008), for example, bases his suggestively-titled book *Beyond Citizenship* on the premise that U.S. citizenship is detaching from the organic communities it was originally meant to signify and thus the concept has become either overinclusive or underinclusive. In terms of birthright, for instance, citizenship is overinclusive in automatically conferring rights to those born on U.S. soil even if they may hardly have any connections to this country by virtue of growing up and living elsewhere. Of course, what Spiro describes here is a perennial American issue. Conversely, many who have vested interests in the polity may be denied the rights of citizenship because they do not fulfill other legal requirements, even when they are territorially present and contribute in economic terms. Spiro thus argues that the very concept of citizenship needs to be questioned on the background of American

identity approaches and in light of the current realities that counter the classic views that the state is the largest and most inclusive entity that demands the citizens' allegiance.

While scholars like Spiro—who, incidentally, wanted to call his book *The End of Citizenship*—place the classic concept of state-bound citizenship under a new siege, other prominent scholars in the legal study of citizenship, like Linda Bosniak, are not as quick to dismiss the construct. Bosniak (2006) contends that since the concept of citizenship perhaps attempts to cover too much terrain, debates should be conceptually organized around the notion of boundaries. Indeed, the categories of citizen and citizenship generate boundaries and are created within the framework of the nation-state delineating the rights to claiming membership (Bosniak, 2000). Despite the undisputable relevance of arguments made from economic, cultural and even some legal perspectives about the decline of the nation state and the changing nature of citizenship, an argument like Bosniak's functions as a reminder that Van Gusteren's insistence on maintaining the concept in the foreground of analysis is important—and more so in light of persistent trends at the national level.

Questions of citizenship generate new debates for this generation of Americans and the last fifteen years have witnessed a renewed interest in "the citizen" among scholars across the disciplines—including the establishment in 1997 of a new professional journal, *Citizenship Studies*. One reason may have to do with the fact that rapid local and global changes "pose very fundamental questions about the unifying values, cohesion and identity of liberal democratic states" (Favell, 2001, p. 1). Indeed, even if previously dominant models of membership such as unitary citizens in unified nation-states seem to become increasingly inadequate in diasporic and economically

transnational contexts, citizenship in its many facets is very far from becoming irrelevant (Scobey, 2001). Even if only taken from the legal perspective, legal status citizenship remains the most powerful instrument for claiming authority and its corresponding rights and responsibilities in a democratic state—and as such this status remains very important for meaningful immigrant incorporation in host societies.

At the same time, those who take a rights-centered approach to citizenship and enumerate the benefits of being an American citizen—in addition to the evident right to vote—run the risk of being considered utilitarian and opportunistic. Their critics—among whom, those who question the very construct of citizenship as Spiro (2008) does—seem to take a more ideological stance. In doing so, they argue that if the benefits attached to the status are the motivators for individuals to become citizens, then indeed the very concept of citizenship has declined, because it lost its original meanings of attachment to an allegedly "organic" community. These communities' very existence, needless to say, is questionable at best, given that nation-states have from their very inception been uneasy amalgams of diverse people.

Such critics, like Georgie Anne Geyer (1996) lament the "death of citizenship" and contrast current immigrants with an idyllic representations of previous waves who are portrayed as having been deeply committed to becoming Americans, while the older naturalization process is seen as a rigorous means of testing understanding and commitment to an uncontested notion of American identity. In a 2008 presentation on his work, Peter Spiro even made the connection between the very high numbers of naturalization applications that now back-log the system with the risen application fee that was implemented in July 2007. In other words, eligible immigrants who were

comfortable with their status as "resident aliens" spontaneously decided to apply for

citizenship in order to avoid the cost-increase. In fact, even the naturalization

examination itself seems to participate in the creation of instrumental visions of

citizenship. As Noah Pickus (1998) points out, some of the state-approved answers for

the civics exam contribute to this vision by stating only government jobs, travelling with

a U.S. passport and petitioning for family reunion as the answers to the old test's

questions on "benefits of being a U.S. citizen" (p. 122). Critics' skeptical commentary is

indeed reinforced by such comments found in public Internet forums like GoogleAnswers

(2004):

> I am a German permanent resident in the US and wonder if I should become a US
>
> Citizen. Reasons to become a citizen would be if I have disadvantages as a
>
> permanent resident which are: financial, or job-related (I am a Dermatologist and
>
> researcher), benefits to my family (my wife and children are US Citizens). Are
>
> there these kind of disadvantages and what are they? Please have specific
>
> examples. Thanks.

Placing such comments and the critics' skepticism on the background of

globalization and prevalent examples of transnational communities, it is easy to see why

there could be a trend towards a so-called post-citizenship era. Yet is it that simple? Let

us consider these rights:

- eligibility to vote
- ability to hold certain federal positions,
- public benefits
- security from anti-immigrant laws

- security from deportation

- the right to live outside the U.S. or take long trips most often without visa requirements

- special rights and protections when traveling outside the U.S.

- ease in returning to the U.S.

- increased ability to help family members immigrate for reunification

- differences in taxation under certain circumstances

Are these so-called utilitarian aspects of citizenship something to be trivialized? I believe not. Simply put, citizenship status, like many other social locations that provide privilege, is often taken for granted by those who already have such privileges. I argue, therefore, that citizenship and naturalization remain useful constructs to examine—here, through the perspective of the exam and its educational implications—because, regardless of how outdated it may be considered by some, it remains the most important status in relationship with the nation-state. In their review of normative and empirical debates over citizenship that bridges the informal divide between European and North American literatures, Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul (2008) also conclude that states continue to influence citizenship through the formal rules and rights of citizenship even if they discuss at length the challenges that international migration has brought to classical understandings of the concept. Citizenship status provides recognition and access unavailable to non-citizens and thus has implications and consequences for immigrant incorporation in the U.S. society.

Through media-publicized events and debates we receive frequent reminders that in the United States today, the differences between the insiders and the outsiders,

especially as they play out in the implications of citizenship as status, continue to be very important. President George W. Bush, for example, began his 2008 "State of the Union" Address by appealing to his "fellow citizens" in what might otherwise be a conventional rhetorical element in a speech of this kind. He later referred to "building a prosperous future for our citizens" immediately after he commented on the complications of illegal immigration—the juxtaposition of these categories points us once again in the direction of insider-outsider dualities.

Only a few months later, 2008 Republican presidential candidate John McCain had to defend his constitutional eligibility for office, proving that he was indeed a "natural born citizen" even if he was born in a U.S. territory to U.S. military personnel. The insider-outsider duality is important not only for those who experience it by location outside the legal boundaries of citizenship—and by attempts to cross these boundaries through naturalization—but also for the state, entrusted with the responsibility to protect and act in the interest of those whose loyalties it demands through the conferring of citizenship.

Nevertheless, naturalization—as the legal process to access citizenship status— has not been very visible in scholarly or even public debates. Louis DeSipio (1987), in a review of social science literature addressing naturalization, found that the attention to this area had been limited to date. In this literature, attention was given to naturalization rates and the factors that influenced them. Three main themes dominated the studies— those performed before 1945 dealt with the "Americanization" and integration potential of the post-1880 immigrants; a second category, with an approach that continues today (e.g., Duncan & Waldorf, 2009) comprised studies that used large data sets such as those

provided through the Census to evaluate across different groups length of residence before naturalization and assess which of the groups were positively included towards naturalization and which were not; and a third category included studies that relied on interviews with recently naturalized citizens to explore their attitudes towards naturalization.

Noah Pickus (1998) confirms the general lack of attention to the actual naturalization process, arguing that prior to the early 1990s the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), too, was much more preoccupied with immigration control than with the formation of citizens within the country's borders. The situation, however, has changed at the turn of the twenty-first century with the overall attempts of the Immigration Reform and the afferent "historic" (Pickus, 1998) revision of the test—in fact, this was the most widespread reconceptualization of immigration and citizenship policy since the first two decades of the 20th century.

This attention to the naturalization process has taken place on the background of naturalization trends that render a complex, and at times, troubling image of immigrant integration in U.S. society. From one angle, we know that the number of naturalized citizens has grown steadily, and concerns that today's eligible immigrants just do not naturalize appear statistically unfounded. The past fifty years have witnessed a tremendous growth in the number of persons choosing to become naturalized American citizens. The average annual number of naturalized citizens increased from less than 120,000 during the 1950s and 60s to 625,000 between 2000 and 2006 (Simanski, 2007). In 2006, 702,589 immigrants were naturalizing while in 2008, more than a million people

became U.S. citizens. This number was matched only in 1996, when the "Social Welfare Act" restricted access to certain public services and benefits to citizens only.

At the same time, despite rising naturalization rates, the pool of legal immigrants eligible to naturalize remains surprisingly large. The United States has few policies and initiatives that would actively promote naturalization (Bloemraad, 2002) and levels of education, as well as English proficiency levels have been associated with a lower tendency to naturalize (Fix et al. 2003; Duncan & Waldorf, 2009). While defenders of naturalization like to emphasize that 58% of those eligible to naturalize have chosen to do so as a sign of the importance of American citizenship, skeptics point to the percentage of those who still do not and perhaps cannot do so.

Natasha Duncan and Brigitte Waldorf's (2009) report on immigrant enclaves and likelihood of naturalization confirmed findings that location and immigrant characteristics substantially affect immigrants' propensities to have acquired U.S. citizenship. They point out that naturalization is unlikely for people who speak English poorly or not at all, are poorly educated, and have a low income. At the same time, living or being associated with well-established immigrant enclave enhances the chance of naturalization. Still, as Irene Bloemraad (2006) has shown in her analysis of naturalization gaps between the U.S. and Canada, naturalization rates should not be attributed to immigrant characteristics alone but also to the institutional configurations of state and non-governmental organizations which collaborate in the promotion of naturalization and integration. In that sense, the more recent attention to naturalization in U.S. immigration policy may be a welcome shift.

## The New Naturalization Exam

If dilemmas over *who* should belong to the nation and *why* are still relevant,

equally so are the debates over *how* one is to become a citizen through naturalization and

what that entails for one's preparation as a successful participant in the new society.

These debates have surfaced once more, prompted by the release in September 2007, of

the new civics and history component of the naturalization exam. The relevance of

citizenship testing procedures has never pleased unanimously across the political

spectrum, and occasional debates over its cartoonish promotion of citizenship—or even

injustice—have continued to this date. Most recently, in the midst of national controversy

over immigration laws, monitoring and the lack of standardization in the administration

of the naturalization exam, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has

implemented the new naturalization exam beginning with October 1st, 2008.

The result of a 6.5 million-dollar investment and six years of consulting with

scholars, policy-makers and non-governmental organizations serving immigrants and

refugees, the new set of questions is claimed to move away from the memorization of

facts to prompting aspiring citizens to engage with the fundamental principles of the

American democracy. Among the questions that have been removed are those about the

50th state added to the union, the name of the ship that carried the "Pilgrims" to

Massachusetts, the author of the national anthem lyrics or of the famous Patrick Henry,

American Revolution era line "Give me liberty or give me death." The exam now focuses

more on the Constitution and implications for a democratic government, on the division

of powers and roles among its various branches and agencies—applicants have to be

familiar with all of the one hundred questions, and during the naturalization interview they are asked ten. To pass, they have to answer correctly only six.

In evaluating the new test, USCIS director, Emilio Gonzalez, told the press that "[i]t's no longer a test about how many stars are on the flag or how many stripes, it's a test that genuinely talks about those things that make America what it is" (Dinan, 2007). Moreover, the officials endorsing the test hope that the process will not be simply a technical exercise in a bureaucratic requirement. Instead, Alfonso Aguilar, then chief of the Office of Citizenship within USCIS hoped that "as [immigrants] study the fundamentals of our history and civics, they will also identify with them and become attached to our country" (Dinan, 2007). In this formulation, the purpose of the test as a means of becoming an American does not differ from what has historically been expected of the process, beginning with the late 18th century when about 80 percent of the population was deemed of British descent: "To be or become an American . . . all [one] had to do was to commit himself to the political ideology centered on the abstract ideals of liberty, equality and republicanism" (Gleason, 1980, p. 32).

Despite the hopeful tone of current endorsers who show that 92 percent of those who took the pilot test passed at the first attempt (as opposed to the 84 percent first-attempt passing rate on the previous test version), vehement critics claim that in our current diverse social context the new test—including the much higher naturalization fee that was increased in July 2007—will only make the process more difficult for those immigrants with lower levels of income and education (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2007).

## Methodological Approach

In the sphere of qualitative, interpretative inquiry (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), my work here is heavily text-based, documentary research that employs historical inquiry, qualitative content analysis (Krippendorff, 2004) as well as rhetorical and discourse analysis. As techniques for making valid inferences from texts to the contexts of their use, these approaches proved useful for a study whose concern was to understand the phenomenon of naturalization testing as citizenship preparation in both its historical and contemporary occurrences. This understanding is mediated through official documents, both historical and current, secondary accounts, media representations, as well as existing scholarship that addresses these issues from relevant angles. Qualitative content analysis, with its attention to both wider and focused textual angles allowed the grasp of predominant themes and thus understanding of the overall background narrative of naturalization testing. Meanwhile, rhetorical and discourse analysis allowed for insight into language use, representations and rhetorical positions whose role is essential in any work concerned both with the wider contextualization of a social phenomenon and with how its focus, power relationships and generation of particular meanings are mediated through language.

A foundational premise I employ here and one that warrants documentary research is that language is not only transparent or reflective of information, but also referential and constitutive—that is, while transmitting information, it also is itself the site where meanings are created and changed (Taylor, 2001). Simply put, discourses function as a "societal flow of knowledge through time" (Jager, 2001) and are systems of signs and signifiers—words and images and what they connote—that establish the

boundaries for making sense of the world and promote an entire system of perceiving, thinking and speaking. Discourses are historical and contextually situated, so seemingly logical civic deliberations are often reflections of the wider narratives available in society—for instance, ideals about what a citizen is or what citizenship should mean are tied down with emotion-laden interpretations of words and historically-generated stories. As Fairclough (1992) emphasizes, these discourses emerge out of a combination of other discourses and in relationship with them, be they contemporary or historical.

Because of the large scope of such contexts—with some scholars questioning if a broad-sense "discourse" analysis is even possible—there are multiple approaches representing graduated levels of engagement with the discursive material. These range from small-scale, almost molecular verbal interaction analysis to more global patterns. Focus on the language itself can thus shift to the interaction that employs it, or to socio-cultural contexts, rather than its specific situations. Taking the scope even further, more global approaches aim to identify patterns of language and related practices, showing how these constitute societal practices and are thus especially appropriate for the study of official documents (Taylor, 2001). This is the level of analysis I am particularly interested in here, as one that employs text but is not primarily a textually-oriented, micro-analysis that emphasizes the use of linguistic analytic instruments. Text-oriented critical discourse analysis was combined with a more sociological perspective which also considered how power, identity, and ideology are communicated by the text.

While sections of text were revealing through detailed analysis, the more global approaches were included to identify patterns of representation and the crafting of a relationship between the involved parties—the prospective citizen and the state—as they

emerge through official policy language. All the while, attention to the wider backgrounds of these representations has also been essential. Texts thus form "systems of documentary reality" (Atkinson & Coffey, 1997), as they do not simply stand for something else but also create their own realities and representations. In a governmental context, these discourses create their own acceptable formulations of problems and solutions. As Stenson and Watt point out regarding analysis of official texts,

> "[d]iscourses create, inter alia, a cast list of political and economic agents which government must consider, objects of concern, agendas for action, preferred narratives for making sense of the origins of current situations, conceptual and geographical spaces within which problems of government are made recognisable. They also create a series of absent agendas, agents, objects of concerns and counter-narratives, which are mobilised out of the discursive picture" (Stenson & Watt, 1999)

These "preferred narratives for making sense of current situations," along with their "cast lists" and "objects of concern" are revealing parts of the official state discourses on naturalization.

In trying to understand the phenomenon of naturalization civic testing as citizenship preparation, I resorted to a range of primary and secondary documentary data. Primary data included:

- The old and new versions of the U.S. naturalization exams, namely the one in use until October 2008, and the revised version which replaced it since then

- Selected historical and contemporary policy reports and naturalization documents, such as records of congressional hearings, transcripts of naturalization-related court trials, personal naturalization certificates, and official naturalization policy recommendation documents such as *The Taskforce on New Americans*

- U.S. civic education frameworks and standards, such as those offered by the National Council for the Social Studies

- The official governmental citizenship and naturalization websites of The United States, Germany, The Netherlands, The United Kingdom, and Denmark

- The official statements and reports on the U.S. naturalization exam and its revision process provided by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) on their website.

In turn, secondary data included major national newspaper coverage of the revision process in *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, between 1997 and 2008—from the revision initiation to the exam's implementation. This data was selected through the LexisNexis Academic service for researching news, business, and legal topics. The database offers the possibility of advanced topic searches of U.S. and international newspapers, and allowed for a combined search of "naturalization and exam" and "naturalization and test" over a specified period. The results of the two searches formulated in this manner generated similar results—with most articles overlapping—but also insured that some articles were not overlooked, since both the term "exam" and "test" are used in references to naturalization testing.

Given the purposes of these articles in this dissertation study, the results of the database search did not need to be as exact as when the articles represented the main interest of the study—as would be the case of a study focused specifically on representations of naturalization in the media in a certain period of time. In this study, however, the articles were used as background information for the revision process, as they offered useful information about the parties involved, connections with other national events and policy initiatives, as well as some analysis of the steps taken towards the revision and information on the parties involved in the process. As such, articles were not counted or analyzed systematically for particular themes, word uses or media rhetoric, but provides an insightful background to the overall narrative of the naturalization exam revisions.

A second set of secondary data comprised relevant literature from multiple disciplinary perspectives, since the issues I raised in this study regarding naturalization testing could be illuminated interdisciplinarily through the integrative application of several major areas. I thus reviewed and integrated literature on the history of immigrant naturalization in the United States, contemporary immigrant incorporation in the United States and Western Europe, U.S. civic education, and citizenship theory. In doing so, I pursued the potential for such interdisciplinary scholarship to be fruitful in advancing understanding of immigrant integration, in a manner similar to that of sociologist Adrian Favell (2001) and his *Philosophies of integration:* Immigration and the Idea of Citizenship in France and Britain. He writes about his study:

> This is determinedly an interdisciplinary study. In its appropriation of theoretical tools for the comparative study of public policies in this field, I range across

questions often considered in very different ways by social and political theorists, sociologists, or political scientists. . . . I draw upon the work of influential intellectuals and academics, high-level political discussion and formulation, legal jurisprudence and, where appropriate, the reflection of these arguments in public discourse. (p. 4).

Similarly, I incorporated historical, conceptual and empirical components from the primary and secondary data to address the driving questions of the study. While the secondary data from newspaper coverage and relevant literature review, synthesis and integration provided an important background, working with the primary sources, I followed foundational steps of qualitative content inquiry—this included to "sample text, in the sense of selecting what is relevant; unitize text, in the sense of distinguishing words or propositions and using quotes or examples; contextualize [the] reading in light of . . . the circumstances surrounding the texts; and have specific research questions in mind" (Krippendorf, 2004, p. 87). This process thus involved broader, thematic analysis that recognized the holistic qualities (Krippendorf, 2004) of the primary texts mentioned above, as well as micro-analysis on specifically chosen sections of texts. When relevant, I included those brief sections verbatim in the chapters, to exemplify the particular uses of language related to the exam and how they function within the broader parameters of naturalization rhetoric. In doing so, I aimed to show "how much is packed into small bits of data" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 65) even if not every piece of data necessitated the same manner of analysis in order to address its major contributions to the overall narrative.

The process of micro-analysis involving key words and looking for their "situational meaning" in the data was attuned to the context in which the data occurred (Gee, 2005). Identifying logical and important examples, themes, and patterns in the data also involved keeping in mind that they had to be understood contextually, as the libretto of an opera cannot be understood without the context provided by the rest of the performance (Prior, 2003). This understanding has been especially important in this study focused on the naturalization exam, since "[n]ot only are tests constructed, like every other social institution; . . . [but] their use has been constructed also. It is important that we understand how and why that happened" (Lemann, 2004, p. 5-6) and because "tests do not exist in a social vacuum . . . [how] they are used to embody ideas about how society should work" (p. 14).

While in each chapter content and discourse analysis, broadly conceived, constitute the primary analytical approach, I also made specific adaptations depending on the purpose of the chapter—to the description, synthesis and conceptual ordering of qualitative content analysis, for example, I added features of critical discourse analysis or, in Chapter 4, visual rhetorical analysis as required by the multi-modal environments of the governmental naturalization websites.

First, Norman Fairclough's (1992) critical dimension of discourse was important with its central tenet that pervasive positions are maintained by making certain assumptions appear natural and "common sense" and perpetuating them to the point of internalization. The practices of such discourses, then, contribute to the preservation of unequal power relationships and have crucial ideological effects in maintaining certain social ideals that also create standards in the popular imaginaries. These dominant

narratives or myths are necessary for social control and cohesion and we use them to both interpret action, objects and scenes, and suggest choices. They have a plot, they tell a story and they organize understanding over time of what is an acceptable situation, position or belief. Insight provided by critical discourse analysis, therefore, helped assess the historical emergence of dominant approaches to immigrant scrutiny and has been relevant to understanding naturalization practice and citizen testing.

Second, analyzing discourses in Internet environments highlights a premise that is already an established practice for interactional socio-linguistics or mediated discourse analysis: discourse is not only language-based and focused attention on language alone, without the context of communication (such as gestures or environments) is limiting the scope of the analysis (Norris, 2004). As Siegfried Jager (2001) also points out, "the linguistic toolbox represents merely one drawer in the discourse-analytical 'toolbox' which can be filled with very various instruments according to the texture of the object to be investigated" (p. 46). The adaptation of discourse analysis for multi-modal environments has become increasingly useful with the rise of such communication media as the Internet, where different modes of communication and semiotic resources—text, typography, sounds, images or movements become semiotic means in their own right— combine in hypertext to communicate messages more powerfully and more subtly than was possible by any of those means separately.

In his compelling argument that linguists should pay attention to visual communication, Theo VanLeeuwen (2004) exemplifies this with the problem of racist messages. Often times, racist imagery has a more tenacious life than racist language, especially since images are considered to be more subjective in interpretation and thus

often escape the scrutiny of critical analysis. Or, a visual message can convey a

contrasting message from that of the written text. It is thus essential to take visual context

into consideration when analyzing a message. In fact, he argues, "[n]owhere near enough

attention has been paid to [visual communication] in critical discourse analysis with most

critical discourse analysts . . . analyzing transcripts of only the words of political

speeches, or newspaper articles, taken out of their visual context" (p. 15). In a sense,

Marshall McLuhan's famous dictum, "the medium is the message," (McLuhan, 1964) is

elaborated on in multi-modal discourse analysis—we acknowledge that we cannot

separate the message from the means by which it is delivered, but we can understand

them together, as a "single, multi-layered, multimodal communicative act, whose

illocutionary force comes about through the fusion of all the component semiotic

modalities" (Van Leeuwen, 2004, p. 7 ).

　　　While this cohesion between the verbal and the visual is usually scrutinized very

carefully in such areas as recruiting or advertising—where special attention to the

connection between the two is assumed to be crafted and intentional—a similar attention,

albeit less detailed, has been revealing when applied to the communication between the

state and the prospective citizen through the means of these official websites. There are

mathematics-based multimodal discourse analysis approaches—such as attempts to create

digital interface for tracing the complex meaning-making processes of multimodal

phenomena. However, my approach in Chapter 5 is not mathematical or software-based,

even at the risk of falling under the more "descriptive" types of this approach (Machin,

2007). My intention in approaching this analysis through multi-modal perspective was

simply to "understand how an institution and its objectives become translated, transmitted

and received through the hypertext medium" (Chiew, 2006, p. 131). The official internet sites where the naturalization process and exam are explained to the prospective citizens are precisely such types of media, and their analysis through this specific lens revealed important common themes that connect the stated intentions of these governments, as well as differentiate some of them according to historical and contemporary socio-political circumstances.

Across the chapters, therefore, I have undertaken a series of analytic activities—reviews and integration of separate disciplinary literatures, qualitative content analysis of official documents and newspaper articles, as well as critical discourse analysis of selected document sections and discourse and visual analysis of the official websites. Across these analytic activities, I attempted to remain committed to some fundamental tenets of qualitative inquiry of this nature—an openness to adapting inquiry as understanding deepens; purposeful sampling; inductive analysis and creative synthesis; holistic perspective over the naturalization process even if the civics component of the exam has been my focus; and context sensitivity—placing findings in social, historical and temporal context (Patton, 2002). I also avoided a strongly normative register since "[f]lexibility and openness are linked to having learned to sustain a certain level of ambiguity. It is not that researchers do not want to pin down things analytically, but the urge to avoid uncertainty and avoid quick closure on one's research is tempered with the realization that phenomena are complex and their meaning is not easily fathomed or just taken for granted" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 5-6).

## Looking Ahead

Chapter 2, *"Seeing Like a State:" Understanding Frameworks of U.S. Immigrant Civic Testing* begins with the historical context of selecting and screening prospective citizens in order to highlight the multiple layers of the U.S. citizenship and naturalization story. It has generated potent policy frameworks that mark the current parameters of naturalization policy implementation—the use of the test—structuring the vision of what is necessary or even possible when in comes to new citizens' acceptance and incorporation. These resilient frameworks are the anxiety over socio-political dissolution and the afferent perceived need to test new members' loyalty; suspicion that they may not easily incorporate and their need for assistance to participate in the preservation of the American way of life—both politically and socio-culturally; and a concomitant aspiration to making new members' experiences meaningful and reflective of the positive things their country has to offer. Attention to this institutional perspective complements the currently predominant critical approaches to the use of citizenship tests.

Chapter 3, *Citizenship Curricula in School and Out: Problems of Promise and Practice* focuses on further assessing official claims made about the exam, especially about its educational qualities—the claim that the revised exam follows a basic civics curriculum that is to be found in public schools. By examining the test's content and current civic standards for schools, contextualized by the literature of social studies and civic education, I examine the improvements in the civic test, showing that civic education programs in schools and the education made possible by the naturalization process share similar challenges. While the educational contexts of public schools afford them better potential for powerful civic education, current challenges and limitations

make them less than a golden standard for the comparatively diminished potential of the naturalization exam. Then, in Chapter 4, *Imaginaries of the Citizen in the New U. S. Naturalization Exam*, I elaborate on the third chapter's central issues, by probing into the exam's implications for the type of citizen it aims to educate. The analysis of citizen desirability is positioned within four existing typologies of citizenship—two from a general, political philosophy point of view and two categorizations specifically developed in the context of civic education in schools. The complexities and tensions of competing aims and implementations that stand out in the previous chapter also become evident here, as the analysis will show how the exam does not comply with one typology alone and, in fact, falls short of what existing typologies would consider more "advanced" visions of citizenship.

Having begun with the historical background of U. S. naturalization testing, its position within dominant frameworks and its current implementations for shaping the desirable citizen, I turn in Chapter 5 to addressing the 21st century rising trend of testing citizens through civics tests in Europe. *Forming and Informing Citizens in Virtual Spaces: Comparative Perspectives on Naturalization Testing in Western Europe* positions the U.S. attention to enhancing the test as one example of a wider phenomenon. I compare the approaches taken by the four European countries who have introduced or drastically revised such tests since 2000: Germany, the United Kingdom, The Netherlands and Denmark.

The analysis focuses on the state-sponsored websites that address and aid the immigrant in the naturalization process, examining how the state 'interacts' with the prospective citizen through official rhetorical and visual means that communicate

different narratives of their mutual responsibility in the citizenship projects. In a sense, this comparative analysis takes us back to the issues raised in the beginning, namely the importance of nation-specific, historically-shaped frameworks that structure approaches to receiving the newcomer.

In the final chapter, I highlight major points as I draw theoretical and practical implications and suggest ways that current uses of the exam could be improved to enhance its civic potential. The recommendations are based, in part, on already existing civic education initiatives that could be extrapolated to the education of new citizens, even if initially done at a smaller, manageable scale.

# CHAPTER TWO

## "Seeing Like a State:" Understanding Frameworks of U. S. Immigrant Civic Testing

*The term 'naturalized citizen' implies the*
*importance of manufacturing political commitment. To*
*'make natural' suggests the artifice in shaping a citizen in*
*the constitutional order. "*
Noah Pickus

### The Centrality of "Seeing Like a State"

The oxymoron embedded in the naturalization process, "to make natural," is not a

pedantic play on words—it captures the veritable dilemmas faced by the state in

incorporating individuals into a stable social order based on particular values and

intentions. There is, in fact, nothing natural about the process, not just when it comes to

the potential members of the nation-state who arrive from elsewhere, but even regarding

those already born on its territory. While the rise of the nation-state has been addressed at

length from multiple disciplinary perspectives and is a central part of our understanding

of modern society, the consensus is that the process was intentional and systematic,

drawing on multiple levels of control that range from systematizing people's names

(Scott, 1998) to monopolizing the means of legitimate violence (Weber, 1919) and later

employing mass education to shape desired public ideologies (Kaestle, 1983).

In this chapter, I position the U. S. naturalization process, and especially the

citizenship testing, within the institutional parameters of state interests and policy

formation. In doing so, I offer an analysis that responds to the predominant critical

perspectives on such testing, paying attention to the historical contexts that turn policy

frameworks into resilient shapers of current decisions on immigrant screening and

incorporation. I begin by highlighting the role of the state in striving to control

immigration and citizenship and overview the perspective offered by attention to policy

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frameworks. Then, an historical overview of the civics exam's evolution points to the resistance of institutionalized ideas which continue to shape and legitimize naturalization policy today.

**The Nature and Power of the State**

The use of the term "state" has generated debates that cut to the heart of political science, sociology and philosophy, with critiques that the "term is just thrown into scholarly pieces" (Dusza, 1989). I use the term simply to refer to the supreme public power within a sovereign political entity which posses certain features such as territoriality, constitutionality, citizenship and public bureaucracy, among others (Pierson, 2004). These features have solidified and disseminated in a current global arena where, despite much discussion over the demise of the nation state, we are in fact experiencing its highest point—in previous eras imperial systems existed alongside nations. In contrast, every state is currently a nation-state, having become a universal form, with even local nationalist movements striving towards their own nation-states (Giddens, 1991, 2003).

Granted, states act in various coalitions and fundamental economic and geopolitical processes can only be understood as transnational and global, functioning beyond the autonomy of any single state. The fact that some aspects of sovereignty have been lost cannot and should not be overlooked—the rapid changes over the last decades have indeed led to more permeability in state borders and its systems may not be as ossified as previously believed. It is, nevertheless, both premature and misleading to conclude that the nation-states have lost meaningful roles, especially in such areas as migration and the granting of citizenship. Legal scholar Catherine Dauvergne (2008), for

example, even connects the so-called demise of the nation-state with its increased efforts to control migration, arguing that "the worldwide crackdown on extralegal migration is a reaction to state perceptions of a loss of control over policy initiatives in other areas . . . In contemporary globalizing times, migration laws and their enforcement are increasingly understood as the last bastion of sovereignty" (p. 2). This echoes an argument also made by Guiraudon and Joppke (2001), namely that governments give up some of their authority only to increase their capacity to control movement—as economies become more integrated, political spheres can do the opposite, with implications for belonging and exclusion.

While extralegal migration may not seem directly relevant to a discussion of citizenship, it does highlight the intensity with which nation-states still strive to control the path of movement and the acquisition of new identities through citizenship. This is, according to sociologist John Tropey (2000), a continuation of the state's monopoly of legitimate violence—the state, representing a self-declared, bounded and mutually exclusive community, also specifically controls the "legitimate means of movements" and brings closure not only to the territory but also to its members. As such, the traditional characterizations of the state as "penetrating" society as an overbearing intruder is complemented—or even replaced—by a metaphor of "embrace." Focusing on the history of the passport, Tropey suggests that, to enhance its capacity of governing, the state locates and lays claim on people by "surrounding" them as its members and ensuring the clarity of who is in and who is out through documentary control on movement. In this context, the passport, as prima facie evidence of the bearer's nationality, stands as a gradually evolved means to determine that level of belonging.

Dating back to mid-seventeenth century, the passport thus functions as a mechanism of state surveillance and despite its current, unprecedentedly frequent use across borders, people's movement has to happen through the institutional channels set up by the state.

Shifting from the image of "penetration" to one of "embrace," however, also carries protective overtones and the notion of surveillance is appeased, losing some of its conventional, grim connotations. Surveillance thus involves not only a policing facet that is usually emphasized in social science analysis, but also the protective shepherding—or "pastoral power"—with which it has been historically connected (Foucault, 1979). Although not free from all negative connotations, the image of the state's "embrace"—in contrast with single-sided critical approaches—allows more attention to the state's own possible justifications and perspectives on naturalization policies and the newly revised exam. Reactions to the naturalization exam can range from derision or skepticism by those who find it a nearly useless exercise—an attitude often seen in readers' reactions to media reports of the exam—to arguments about the exclusionary nature of naturalization and citizenship education, both historically and currently (Ueda, 1980; Perera, 1998; Carens, 1998; Carpenter, 2005; Gordon, 2007).

Indeed, critiques of "Americanization"—then and now—are more prevalent than attempting to understand the uses and perpetuation of this test through an institutional perspective. Legal attention to why and how the state would employ such tests is more directly discussed in specialized law scholarship (e.g., Neuman, 1994; Park, 2008) while the sociological, cultural and linguistic analyses usually emphasize its minimal relevance (Carens, 2004) marginalizing nature (Kunnan, 2009) or, relying of Foucaldian analysis,

its oppressive and alienating function as a "technology of government" to ensure the submission of new citizens (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009).

**Considering State Perspectives and Policy Frameworks for Citizenship Testing**

The state's perspectives are nevertheless important when discussing practices such as the naturalization exam because "citizenship . . . is conduit of individual rights but also reflects the growth of state power over civil society. . . . Modern citizenship . . . is related to the rise of the nation state [and] . . . state-building required national forms of citizenship" (Turner, 2005, p. 29-30). Institutional theorists consider the state as one of the higher, most elaborate forms of organization, having "been given something of a monopoly over the public good (i.e., sovereignty) and is thus a principle source of rules of organizing in terms of this good" (Meyer, 1994, p. 38). Resilient in its institutions composed of cultural-cognitive, normative, and regulative elements, the state provides certain levels of stability and continuity through its resources and actions even when remaining open to processes of change. Through its institutions, the state achieves continuity by various means, including symbolic systems, relational systems, routines, and artifacts (Scott, 2001, p. 48). The naturalization exam and the process surrounding it, incorporates to varying degrees aspects of these four means of continuity, fulfilling important roles for the state—tests are, after all, employed in the political realm as policy instruments (Linn, 1993).

Critiques of the test such as those that add to the analyses of "governmentality" in the modern state also discuss the state's role and actions, but call for critical assessments. Löwenheim and Gazit (2009), for example, explain their generally hostile assessment of states' usage of naturalization tests in recent years:

Citizenship tests are usually framed by test-giving states as an opportunity or incentive for the immigrants to acquire the tools and knowledge needed for successful incorporation in the new society. Our purpose . . . [is] not to doubt the right of states to decide who will be included in the national collective. Nor do we object to states' right to work toward the integration of immigrants. However, we believe that beyond the utilitarian and rationalistic terms outlined above, scholars should think about these exams in the more implicit and less observable context of the power relationship between the immigrant and the state" (p. 161).

They end by "calling upon academics and policymakers to think more reflectively and critically about the use of the testing technology in the context of immigration policy" (p. 163). This call is surprising in seeming to suggest that critical assessments of naturalization tests are rare—in fact, an increasing number of critical essays and some empirical studies have emerged in the last decade regarding the growing number of countries using citizenship testing (e.g., Shohamy, 2001; Graham, & Neu, 2004; Kostakopoulou, 2006; Rice-Oxley, 2008). Contrary to the impression that there might be a lack of critical evaluation, one would be hard-pressed to find much favorable scholarship regarding the state's rationales for test implementation. More common are the arguments that avoid direct critiques of testing in general—acknowledging some potentially positive uses—but critically assessing current implementations of the exam (e.g., Pickus, 1998; Etzioni, 2007). In this sense, critiques of naturalization testing echo the growing critical literature on education testing in general, both in the United States and Great Britain (Mazzeo, 2001).

Far from suggesting that scholarly and policy analyses should overlook the marginalization potentials and practices of the state in welcoming new members, I argue that critical approaches themselves tend to easily overlook the state's structural and cultural impediments that are both historically shaped and fueled by current circumstances. Policy-making is often wrought with conflict and uncertainty over the means to achieve stated aims, and critiques of the policies themselves should not be divorced from the background of pervasive ideas from which they emerge. These ideas accumulate historically and acquire institutional presence, being eventually integrated into the policy process.

Löwenheim and Gazit (2009), in the example above, begin by acknowledging the rationales of the state—its stated intentions—but they quickly move to a call to critique, as if the state's intentions are always undoubtedly duplicitous—in other words, one aim is stated in the official positions, but a different, more malevolent intention is clearly the covert goal. Instead, I approach the implementation of this test as taking place on the background of multiple, deeply rooted, constraints—the state's essential need for standardization; existing naturalization laws; current interpretations of these laws; and long-standing ideologies of immigrant incorporation. They all participate in creating powerful frameworks that delineate naturalization policy-making and interpretation.

As educational policy analyst Christopher Mazzeo (2001) also found in his review of the literature on educational testing, there are two recurrent images of assessment (or testing) policies—as a political symbol and as a mechanism of control. Both imageries suggest that one cannot understand the policy by examining its "direct" meaning; rather, the policy "stands for something else" (Stone, 1988, p. 108), conveying more important

meanings in the political arena. Additionally, these images suggest that testing policies are meant for political reassurance—having little meaning in themselves, they need to appease the fears of the public due to certain crises and demonstrate the state's control over these situations. In this view, control also refers to the control over certain groups who are being marginalized by the implementation of such tests. As the introduction has briefly shown already, there are strong parallels among these critiques of state educational testing and those of the naturalization exam which has also been critiqued for its exclusionary potential.

While vigilant attention to state's actions and the afferent critiques are a vital part of liberal democracy, the liberal democratic state itself is subject to a nexus of demands that make its actions incredibly complex in the monitoring of the "public good" to which it is held accountable. As the line between critique and cynicism is thinning, trying to understand the intentions behind the formation of these naturalization policy frameworks might increase our understanding of state actions and lessen the immediate tendency to critique alone. The intentions of policy makers do shape the design and implementation of state testing efforts, but the test cannot be ascribed an essential, rigid meaning either— as a policy instrument, it has served many purposes throughout its history, like any other government tool (Mazzeo, 2001). In addition, despite stated intentions, policy-making takes place in uncertainty and conflict over the means to achieve stated aims, and on the background of pervasive ideas—they accumulate historically, acquire institutional presence and are eventually integrated into the policy process (Eisner, 1991).

These institutionalized clusters of ideas—or policy frameworks—act as templates that influence decision-makers' behavior by limiting the set of resources out of which

they construct strategies of action, making some social interests more legitimate then others, and making change difficult even when circumstances shift (Swidler, 1986; Hall, 1993; Pierson, 1993). Policy frameworks, as Christopher Mazzeo synthesizes the concept, function as "an integrated and more or less coherent set of ideas that influences and reflects the way policy makers, professionals, and the public understand and act upon a particular policy issue" in areas of public concern (p. 374). And naturalization is such an area of concern—in fact, in the last fifteen years, it has become more central in the immigration debates that were previously more concerned with immigration control (Pickus, 1998). Doris Meissner, the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization between 1993-2000 used a catchy motto to frame the agency's priorities, explaining it was time to "put the 'N' back in INS" as well as reemphasize the "S" for service.

I thus argue for the complementary need to understand the naturalization exam implementation from such institutional perspective, rather than focusing on the critical perspective alone. Instead, I ask "How can the state's use and revision of the exam be understood institutionally as part of potent policy frameworks?" As immigration scholar Irene Bloemraad (2003) also does in her work on political incorporation through institutional approaches, I aim to "consider how objective constraints, such as legal structures, and more subjective higher order effects, such as cognitive maps and cultural norms, regularize the actions and understandings of actors without recourse to coercive force" (p. 364).

Policy frameworks feature two key elements: an animating core concept and a set of policy strategies and working theories that flow from it. The implementation of this test, my analysis suggests, happens with the following animating concepts and related

policy strategies and working theories. First there are "objective constraints" including 1) the state's essential need for *standardization* and 2) the *legal requirements* found in the country's naturalization laws—as well as "more subjective higher order effects" such as 3) current *interpretations* of those requirements into policy and 4) *long-standing ideologies* of immigrant *scrutiny* and *incorporation* that act as dominant policy frameworks.

In this chapter, I pay attention to these elements' interactions in legitimizing and turning the exam into a resilient mechanism that facilitates the two parties' mutual access to the other—in other words, the state and the prospective citizen can 'meet' in the space generated by the exam and its interview, excluding at the moment other feasible approaches to naturalization. I begin with an historical overview of the civics exam's evolution, in order to delineate the resistance of the "institutionalized clusters of ideas" which continue to shape naturalization policy. Attention to the exam's recent revision process follows, with a focus on how its rationalization fits within those established frameworks.

## U.S. Citizenship Testing in Historical Perspective—Context for Enduring Policy Frameworks

"How should we tell the story of American citizenship?" asks immigration historian and ethics scholar Noah Pickus (1998)—"Is it a noble chronicle of liberty, a shameful tale of domination, or a narrative too complex to reduce to any one account?" (p. xix-xx). Choosing the glorified or the shameful version often reflects particular political inclinations and always an overly-simplified approach. This is the case not only when the "noble chronicle of liberty" version is exalted, but also in favoring the "shameful tale of

domination" alone. As the country experiences the largest immigration wave of its history—of national origins that previous legislation has specifically banned or severely restricted from entry—newcomers' integration in the social fabric continues to capture policy, public and scholarly debates.

This has been a major narrative in U.S. history, since certain levels of scrutiny and purposeful integration initiatives were inevitable at the founding of the nation. They do, however, remaining in the background of collective ideological and policy memory and emerge more strongly to challenge ideologies of plurality and multiculturalism during times of perceived threat to national unity. As I show in what follows, remnants of anxiety over national cohesion and democratic preservation constrain policy-making, as pluralistic and nationalistic approaches to identity and culture are held in tension. When aiming towards increasingly just and inclusive naturalization practices, it does not suffice to critique certain naturalization practices, such as citizenship testing. Rather, it is important to understand their historical rootedness and to what extent they may contain a degree of inevitability.

While some assess that the "straight-line" assimilation assumptions need to be adapted to current contexts (Portes & Zhou, 1993), others express concern about the lack of integration and the country's future social cohesion (Beiner, 1995; Renshon, 2005) given the perceived transnational loyalties and the persistence of ethnic enclaves and economies. The popular imaginary generates different narratives about the place and reception of immigrants (Bean & Stevens, 2003), often corresponding to the country's political and economic situation at particular times and with the socially-constructed perceptions of what immigrants have to offer based on their origin, level of education and

work ethic. The dilemmas about membership through citizenship continue to be focused on the capacity for democratic self-rule, questions about loyalty and belonging to the nation—major themes that have developed historically. These concerns, in turn, easily coincide with the rhetoric of safety and protection, easily perpetuating and reshaping the debates over inclusion.

Much of the current controversy over immigration to the United States centers around the notions of protection and security in their various facets—economic security and the protection of American jobs, homeland security and the protection of physical well-being, as well as cultural protection and the preservation of the "American way of life" in the face of diversification of the immigrant population. Not surprisingly for this context, the Chair of the commissioned 2006 *Taskforce for New Americans*—whose mission was to research immigrant integration initiatives and make recommendations to the President—was then-Secretary of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff and co-author of the Patriot Act. To highlight the naturalization-security nexus even further, events such as the April 2010 attempt by a U. S. citizen to detonate a car bomb in Times Square—having legally naturalized one year earlier—have placed a magnifying glass over the naturalization process and raised concerns on both ends of the political spectrum (Bernstein, 2010).

The contested climate surrounding the integration of immigrants in the United States and the recurring attempts to amend these processes is, however, far from new. To state that the United States is a "nation of immigrants" is by now a tired truism that is often used to emphasize the egalitarian nature of the nation and as a folk guarantor of access and justice for all. Nevertheless, the truism belies historical and political practices

that have instituted criteria for exclusion ever since the first naturalization laws of 1790.[1]

If voting, for instance, as a central right in current conceptions of citizenship status were to be taken as an indicating measure, the ideals of citizenship would lose some of their luster—during much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century voting was reserved for white, male property owners, twenty-one years or older. African-descent people, Native Americans, women, the poor and minority groups were excluded from this right.

During the American Revolution, British soldiers were lured into becoming American citizens and renounce their previous allegiance by offers of land-ownership, while immediately after the American Revolution, individual states had specific and comparatively lenient naturalization policies—they were interested in attracting settlers, rather than repelling them through stringent selection processes. A brief residency requirement, good character attested to by witnesses, renouncing allegiance to the homeland by signature—sometimes indicated by an "X" marked by applicants who could not write—and swearing an oath of allegiance to the state government were usually the standards for naturalization.

A glance at naturalization documents from this period demonstrates that how these were formulated often varied from state to state, and often even within the same state, from a court to another. But the declaration of intent to become a citizen shared common text and read: "I do declare an oath that it is Bona Fide my intention to become a citizen of the United States of America and to renounce all allegiance and fidelity to all and any foreign Power, Prince, Potentate or Sovereignty whatever, and particularly to [....] of which I was a subject" (Declaration of Intent in New York, 1854, reproduced in

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[1] For concise accounts of the succession in major naturalization laws and their basic tenets, see Schaefer, (1997), Szucs (1998); for more detailed accounts see Ueda (1980)

Szucs, 1998, p. 7). The lack of uniformity, however, led to James Madison's proposition for uniform citizenship standards, initiating the first calls for standardization that have laced American naturalization policies ever since.

The subsequent Naturalization Act of 1790 formally limited citizenship to free white persons over the age of twenty-one and who have resided in the United States for two years and initiated an institutionalized process of almost two hundred years where access to the United States citizenship has been filtered and prevented through such social locations as gender, race, ethnicity and the perceived capacity for self-government that the free institutions of the new world would require (Franklin, 1969). The emphasis on good character, and later attachment—morality and loyalty—have also remained part of the U. S. naturalization debates and incorporated into official language ever since (Gordon, 2007).

Good character had to be proven to the satisfaction of the court judge, and while this could often be a simple requirement by the proof of witnesses, there are historical records of cases where the applicant's character was questioned and he was denied citizenship. For example, an immigrant who had left his family in Russia and came to the United States to work, had been unable to bring them with him for many years. When he wanted to become a citizen, so his trip to his family would be easier, the judge questioned the character of a man who would leave his family behind, regardless of the irony therein: the man left his family precisely because he came to work and create better chances for them (Luria v. The United States, 1913).

Even in the absence of official testing, the morality and loyalty are the longest standing requirements for naturalization, along with residency. They were originally

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favored over civics knowledge, with private morality standing as evidence of loyalty to the country and further institutionalized throughout the immigrant education programs throughout the 20th century. These emphases continue to show that, in addition to the need for standardization, a fear of dissolution lies behind the imposed requirements for naturalization and shapes the long-standing ideologies of immigrant scrutiny and incorporation. They have been acting as policy frameworks ever since.

In the absence of the common history and common coercive actions that, for better or worse, have shaped loyalties on the old continent, the new country's leadership appeared haunted by the fear that citizens had divided hearts—hence the centuries-old search for the proof of loyalty. As questioning loyalty continues to this day as an American phenomenon (Walzer, 1990)[2], its incorporation in contemporary discourses of citizenship is not surprising. And, the more standardization increased over time—with the introduction of tests and then the further standardization of those tests' implementation— the problems of loyalty as an "institutionalized cluster of ideas" morphed from personal morality into informed, principled participation. Still, assessing loyalty has remained a powerful policy framework in American history and it surrounds current justifications of the exam. Interpreting loyalty—along with attachment—as the ability to maintain the country's well-being through democratic participation makes the history and civic exam an initiator in that participation process and concurs with official statements justifying the exam.[3]

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[2] See Chapter 4, *Imaginaries of the Citizen,* for further discussion of current emphasis on loyalty and patriotism in official naturalization rhetoric.
[3] Idem, 1

Questioning and ensuring loyalty were thus at the forefront of naturalization debates from their initial stages, as inner conflicts between the two emerging political parties—the Federalists and the Republicans—led to a series of new requirements for naturalization, depending on what each of the groups thought to be preferred characteristics or possible dangers to the new form of government. These conflicts took place on the background of disagreements over major events abroad, such as the French Revolution. The events in France concerned the Americans about the political orientations of immigrants—either radicals or royalists—that may arrive on these shores and possibly undermine the new form of government. The subsequent Alien and Sedition Acts of 1798 forbade immigrants from countries at war with the U.S., required newcomers be "registered" within two days of arrival, extended the residency requirement to 14 years and had them renounce any noble titles and allegiances.

These requirements, however, were short-lived, as Jeffersonian Republicans acted upon Jefferson's concern that such regulations were subjecting people to an arbitrary authority of the president and subjected them to a law that in turn did not protect them (Neuman, 1996). As a result, in 1801, a five-year residency requirement was established, serving almost as a landmark of a new century's revised reactions towards certain kinds of diversity and immigrants. At the same time, racial lines beyond those already existent through the initial exclusion of Blacks became increasingly evident in preventing access to American citizenship. Racial basis for exclusion from citizenship eligibility co-existed at the time with concerns over political allegiance of those who had no experience with democratic-self rule, subscribed to so-called authoritative religions or did not speak English (Ueda, 1980).

The tumultuous legislation changes of the eighteenth century were positioned by historians as attempts to understand and implement the requirements of what the United States of America, as a new nation, was to be, while part of the nineteenth century was comparatively calm on that front (Higham, 1955). This was an "age of confidence," John Higham explains, when faith in the eventual unity of the United States predominated, despite the different origins of its people. The civil war had brought different European-born groups together and the postwar economic situation—opportunity, social stability, and international security—lent itself well to a good reception of new labor resources provided by new consumers. At the same time, this almost cosmopolitan view of tolerance and acceptance of different groups coexisted with views of condescension for the newcomer—Higham points out that Emma Lazarus' famous poem emerged at this time, in the second part of the 19th century, where the immigrant as the symbol of the "tempest-tost" freedom-searching person was juxtaposed with the image of the huddled masses and wretched refuse.

The ideals of the nation, therefore, stood in tension with the actual details of interacting with and living with these newcomers—in the middle of the "age of confidence" laced with nearly cosmopolitan ideals, the "nativist heritage" persisted, adding another dimension to resilient U. S. naturalization policy frameworks. It was a level of suspicion that the newcomers cannot easily become part of the community, and thus initiatives needed to be taken in order to ensure and speed up this uneasy process of incorporation. Such initiatives culminated during the notorious early nineteenth-century "Americanization movement," but current statements on naturalization also attest to the uneasy sentiment that new citizens just might not act well upon their new status: "We

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hope you will honor and respect the freedoms and opportunities citizenship gives you," official documents state. Hope, in this case, appears as an unconvinced desire, without guarantee of fulfillment. In this context, the subsequent citizenship exams, even in their current official presentation, are offered as an incentive for new members to learn some of the basic means by which they may act upon their newly-gained status.

The turn of the twentieth century tested the "age of confidence" and proved it weak. In the 1880s, a great wave of anti-foreign attitudes emerged, subsiding at the turn of the century—at the beginning of the Americanization movement—and re-emerging during World War I (Higham, 1955). In an 1893 Act, Congress included literacy in any language as one of the requirements for naturalization, making it the first area to be tested once formal tests were later introduced and English language ability—first oral and then written—became a statutory qualification for naturalization in 1906. Although this inclusion was met with disapproval by immigrant supporters who found workers' hard, busy days as obstacles to officially learning the language (Kunnan, 2009), these requirements only become more elaborate as time passed, up to the 1952 Act where Congress required that applicants demonstrate their ability to not only speak, but also write and read English, as well as to demonstrate their knowledge of U.S. history, principles and form of government. The language requirement remains contested to this day—for about one third of those who fail the citizenship test, the language portion is considered the culprit, since speaking comes more easily than reading and writing to many immigrants in their daily circumstances (Sachs, 1999).

The attention to incorporation initiatives that started at the end of the nineteenth century and culminated in the "Americanization" movement incorporated the

exclusionary and "nativist" tendencies identified by historian John Higham (1955), but also drew on the progressive ideals of the era—this juxtaposition makes the narrative of Americanization much more complex than what is usually conveyed by critical approaches. A new wave of immigrants arriving from non-northern countries and the subsequent fears of sectarianism led to the Naturalization Act of 1906, when the Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization was also established as part of the Department of Commerce and Labor. In the 1920s and 1930s the Bureau emphasized immigrants' formal declaration of loyalty, which read similar to those of the nineteenth century in their renouncement of any other allegiance, but also added a formal confession: "I am not an anarchist; I am not a polygamist, nor a believer in the practice of polygamy, and it is my intention, in good faith to become a citizen of the United States and to reside permanently therein" (Declaration of Intention of T. N. Dossing, 1930; reproduced in Szucs, 1998, p. 40). Finally, in 1952, English language and civics knowledge and history become more central through the passage of the Immigration and Naturalization Act which still represents current statutory requirements.

While the "Americanization" movement has generally gained the reputation of a "dirty word" (Renshon, 2005) and is associated with a history of exclusion and Anglo-Saxon superiority (Perera, 2004), its origin in the Progressive Era is usually overlooked. This is nevertheless an important dimension of the movement. Immigration and naturalization historian Reed Ueda (1980) explains that during that time, citizenship and its civic duties to the community and the state were promoted as means to overcome the divisiveness of ethnicity and class in the later stages of urban-industrial society. Sociologist Frances Alice Kellor, for example, was a prominent leader of the

Americanization movement—in her official positions as secretary and treasurer of the New York State Immigration Commission or director of the North American Civic League for Immigrants, she was also a member of the Progressive National Committee. She argued that native-born Americans had a duty to help newcomers incorporate easily into their new society, a call that is echoed in other current attempts to revive immigrant incorporation through a "new" Americanization (e.g., Taskforce on New Americans, 2008).

There were more progressive stands, however, and their approaches to the movement were grounded in different ideologies that led to different orientations towards the newcomers (Gordon, 2007). The Bureau of Immigration and Naturalization worked more closely with the centrist progressivism—with its notions of Anglo-Saxon superiority, standardization and cultural homogeneity—that characterized the more conservative, assimilationist orientation of the later Americanization movement. Those associated with the left also contributed, however, and advocated a pluralistic society and democratic participation with genuine beliefs that the immigrants simply needed help in their difficult conditions and that the "American way of life" would both help them and would contribute to its preservation (Gordon, 2007).

Progressive proponents of citizenship, including educational reformer John Dewey, took a stance on the justice-oriented value of citizenship and immigrant incorporation. They believed that despite conservative fears about the heterogeneity of U.S. society, the so-called aliens could be incorporated into the democratic state if they were guided through the naturalization process and progressive education. Their dedication to this perspective could also be interpreted as aspiring towards the new

members' genuine understanding and participation in the new society. The purpose was not simply to acquire a new status, but to adopt it and have the appropriate means to act on it. Implicit in these intentions, therefore, is an effort to make the new status meaningful beyond a simple ascription, resonating closely with the official justifications for the recent revisions of the naturalization exam. In the context of potent policy frameworks such as ensuring loyalty and then incorporation for the preservation of the American way of life, a focus on meaningful participation is also a legacy for current naturalization rhetoric.

It was, therefore, not simply a xenophobic nativism that originally fueled the movement—while "[n]obody can deny that Americanization fell on hard times beginning with World War I, and was ultimately co-opted by the very nativists who were its enemies for so long," what later emerged was a "demeaned version" of better original intentions (Miller, 1998, p. 79). While there was governmental involvement, much of the activities of the movement were led by private agencies and organizations—school boards, unions, philanthropic organizations—and even individual volunteers who wanted to participate in incorporating newcomers. They organized classes for language, civics, practical issues and parades, published documents on American history and government, and gave speeches in many languages about the duties of American citizenship. In fact, these actions were able to undercut for many years nativism's political power. Historian John Miller (1998) thus critiques views that take a thoroughly "bleak" view of American history in relation to citizenship—while he acknowledges and urges that we not forget the realities of discrimination that were woven into our civic stories, he also insists "they are not the only stories we have" (p. 79).

The multiple layers of the U.S. citizenship and naturalization story—"too complex to reduce to any one account" (Pickus, 1998)—have thus left us with potent policy frameworks: anxiety over socio-political dissolution and the afferent perceived need to test new members' loyalty; suspicion that they may not easily incorporate and their need for assistance to participate in the preservation of the American way of life—both politically and socio-culturally; and a concomitant aspiration to making new members' experiences meaningful and reflective of the positive things their country has to offer. These frameworks mark the current parameters of naturalization policy implementation, structuring the vision of what is necessary or even possible when it comes to new citizens' acceptance and incorporation.

## The Current Naturalization Exam: More Persistence than Change

The frameworks that mark the possibilities for policy change become more visible when historical overviews demonstrate that meaningfulness and standardization are not new ideas specific to this particular naturalization exam revision. This lack of novelty could be attributed to the fact that "[p]olicy making in virtually all fields takes place within the context of a particular set of ideas [policy frameworks] that recognize some social interests as more legitimate than others and privilege some lines of policy over others" (Hall, 1993, p. 291). As a result, changing established approaches to pressing social issues becomes difficult, even when social, political, and economic circumstances have shifted (Pierson, 1993). Critics of certain approaches can offer powerful refutations of current practice and advocates of particular interests can lobby for specific changes—still, in the face of well-established frameworks, such change is slow and often

cumbersome. Once such dominant frameworks take hold, both the rhetoric of an issue and the specific details of its implementation gain resilience.

For instance, a quick look at both content and rhetorical approach in the 2006 Presidentially-commissioned *Taskforce for New Americans* seems to take us back to all-too-familiar calls for all levels of society to get involved in helping "legal immigrants embrace the common core of American civic culture, learn our common language, and fully become Americans" (Taskforce, 2008, viii). The report, which suggests means for multi-level social incorporation initiatives, even draws directly on examples of the previous Americanization era, but glosses over all its troublesome facets by simply referring to the "challenges" encountered in the process. And, this most recent *Taskforce* is not alone in its mirroring of established immigrant incorporation narratives—for example, in 1977, another U.S. Commission on Immigration Reform, led by Barbara Jordan, put forth its own *Becoming an American* report. These persistent frameworks are also part of wider narratives of nation-state formation and those too, have emerged historically and have been crafted with intentionality.

While there are several scholarly approaches to understating the means by which states attempt to promote allegiance among their citizens, political scientist Rogers Smith (2003) explains the use of unifying ideologies—"stories of peoplehood," as he calls them—to consolidate power, legitimate state action, and generate narratives of common destiny. He is interested in how these are used to create the common identities which, in turn, will enhance the political capital of the officials who use them. His major contribution is in the account of the role of political institutions in this process, since he is not simply examining the "stories" that are used, but the mechanisms by which they are

implemented. He argues that the attachment-generating stories only work in the long-run to the extent that the institutions draw on already existing narratives of peoplehood and these attachment-generating stories are institutionalized through laws and policies. These, in turn, help to construct identities in a more concrete way. While ideational accounts are usually seen as elite-centric or top-down, Smith shows that, in fact, they must be drawn and connected to conceptions already circulated in society, ideas which have long-lasting effect because they are being institutionalized in laws. Attention to such mutually-reinforcing cycles adds a wider dimension to the impact and resilience of naturalization policy frameworks because it includes a larger scope, embedding them even more deeply into collective memory and perceptions of common identity.

Since naturalization policies do not simply "emerge" in a void, but draw on a history of these dominant policy frameworks, change in how new citizens' readiness for inclusion should be "evaluated" or "tested" (if at all) is bound to be slow, even in the face of mounting scholarly critique. We are now less than fifty years away from the removal of national origin quotas in U.S. immigration—a massive step in stripping some of its exclusionary practices—and only 25 years away from the first standardized exam similar to the current format. One could argue that this is a long time and changes should now reflect and adapt to local and global shifts; but policy frameworks, embedded in particular stories of peoplehood, possess their own half lives—residual elements will linger, at times indefinitely. The passing of time represents, in fact, a paradox here— while we are not far enough removed from original histories of anxiety over immigrant disloyalty and national dissolution to easily discard them, we *have* had this approach to the naturalization exam for long enough for it to be already engrained in policy thinking,

especially as testing new citizens has become a more common practice in the last decade[4]. As a result, even if an array of state and non-governmental actors spent six years on the exam's revisions, the new version looks unsurprisingly similar to the previous one introduced in 1986.[5]

## Exam Revisions in the Context of Policy Frameworks

In 1986, the Immigration Control and Reform Act (IRCA) enabled more than three million undocumented immigrants to legalize upon enrolment in special programs in civics and history—to test their newly acquired knowledge, a set of one hundred questions was hastily generated (Pickus, 1998), made public, and distributed to testing centers across the country. From the very beginning, however, these questions have not seen much welcome among those who perceived them perfunctory at best and intentionally exclusionary at worst. Scholars also continued to occasionally argue that such tests could never truly assess civics (Carens, 1998) and that such naturalization process "does not adequately incorporate newcomers, strengthen citizenship or foster self-government," being "more oriented towards processing applicants than it is to conveying any substantive knowledge or sense that citizenship has meaning" (Pickus, 1998, p. 121). After a time when INS contracted with private testing services to administer the tests, its administration has been reverted to INS due to documented cases of fraud (Kunnan, 2009). Nevertheless, the lack of uniformity across centers remained problematic, as it exposed applicants to unequal requirements, without a clear passing

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[4] See Chapter 5, *Forming and Informing Citizens in Virtual Spaces*, for a discussion of this phenomenon and its implementation in four European countries that have adopted or revised their exams since 2000
[5] For an analysis of the exam's content, See Chapter 3, *Citizenship Curricula, In School and Out*

requirement and thus remaining at the discretion of the INS officer (Miller & Muldoon, 1996).

Discussions about revising the examination content and process began in the late 1990s, on the background of wider immigration reform initiatives—this also restructured the old Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) into the U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), with a specific Office of Citizenship (OoC) that later become responsible for the redesign project. Research of the existing practices had been commissioned to a consulting firm, PricewaterhouseCoopers, which completed in 1998 a poll of a broad range of constituents, including Congressional aids, experts in linguistics and civics and immigrant support organizations. The survey results, pointing to problems of unequal requirements and perfunctory content—along with the backlog in naturalization applications processing—prompted the revision process that began in 2001. The process was thus projected on the background of concerns with both conformity and uniformity—they aimed to offer a better opportunity for aspiring citizens to engage with the principles of the country and, in the process, adopt them as their own; and they set cleared standards and officer training that would ensure test administration was consistent throughout the country.

Those involved in devising the test or providing feedback at conferences across the country included 150 community-based organizations, national agencies and immigrant organizations, along with legal educators, historians and linguists. Because the extent to which each of these parties participated varied, there is no complete list, but a sample of those who participated regularly in the discussions includes a variety of professional and ideological orientations: Catholic Legal Immigration Network, Hebrew

Immigrant Aid Society, Asian American Justice Center, National Council of La Raza, National Association of Latino Appointed and Elected Officials, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights and Massachusetts Immigrant and Refugee Advocacy Coalition. Among language, civics and testing experts were the Association of TESOL, National Academy of Sciences, American Institutes for Research (Pilot Study and a Supplemental Study on the civics portion), Heritage Foundation (no contractual relationship), Hudson Institute, Kennan Institute for Ethics at Duke University (no contractual relationship), Manhattan Institute and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

In addition, USCIS also utilized the expertise of "an adult education expert Technical Advisory Group (TAG). The TAG was comprised of eight consultants with expertise in one or more of the following areas: adult second language acquisition; test development and administration; adult English as a second language instruction and methodology; knowledge of psychometrics in test development; and, an understanding of the naturalization process" (USCIS, 2008, p. 6). The identity of the experts, however, is not evident in the official documentation.

With the exception of a few public statements issued by some of the immigrant-oriented organizations—such as Catholic Legal Immigration Network, National Association of Latino Appointed and Elected Officials, and Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights—mostly regarding the need to maintain reasonable testing standards, it is unclear how most of these participated with specific contributions in the redesign. This is especially puzzling since some were quoted later, in media commentaries, as having disapproved of the final revisions results and being concerned

with their potential to increase naturalization barriers. Nevertheless, a simple enumeration of this long sample can evoke their symbolic support for the redesign, democratic inclusivity and legitimization. Recurrent references to "experts," albeit anonymous, are also bound to create the desired effect in the public imagination shaped by the current attention to specialization, professionalization and deference to expertise.

In fact, in the USCIS explanations of the redesign process—such as the *Naturalization Test Redesign Project* document—legitimization is also invoked even more implicitly, both by aligning with established policy frameworks and partially maintaining them under scrutiny. In turn, this apparent tension may explain at least partially the lack of radical change from one version of the exam to the other. In the historical overview, I showed that several potent policy frameworks have evolved and continue to inform current naturalization approaches: anxiety over new members' loyalty; expectation of their difficult incorporation and a need for assistance to participate in the preservation of the American way of life; and a concomitant aspiration to making new members' experiences meaningful and reflective of the positive things their new country has to offer. These frameworks that eventually culminated in the formalization of citizenship testing, correspond to the "more subjective higher order effects" that regularize the actions and understandings of actors (Bloemraad, 2003). At the same time, I initially pointed out that more "objective constraints" were also at play through the country's naturalization law. Incidentally, the law that is now interpreted to justify the implementation of an exam is itself the result of "more subjective" cumulative ideologies regarding immigration—in other words, the currently "objective constraints" of the law also find their origin in the "more subjective" ideological constraints.

The USCIS alignment with these cumulative frameworks appears in its direct reference to "statutory requirements" as one of the objective constraints by which it had to abide in the redesign—"no person shall be naturalized as a citizen of the United States upon his own application who cannot demonstrate . . . a knowledge and understanding of the fundamentals of the history, and of the principles and form of government of the United States." (Sec. 312(a)(2). Once a "statutory requirement" is invoked, the possibility of a different naturalization procedure, no matter how reasonable, is more difficult to achieve. Critics have indeed pointed out that fulfilling this legal requirement through the one hundred-question exam is only an interpretation of the law (Kunnan, 2009; Neuman, 1996). Surprisingly, perhaps, USCIS (2008) itself anticipates the critique and points to this very fact in the *Naturalization Test Redesign Project*:

> USCIS developed a test in the context of U.S. naturalization policy that does not specifically mandate a formal testing process. Therefore, rather than a punitive assessment, the redesigned test can be understood as a vehicle for a naturalization candidate to learn about the principles of American democracy and further identify with its civic values. (p. 6)

Admitting to fulfill the law through what appears as an arbitrary procedure, the agency is still swift in redirecting attention from this fact—that technically undermines the exam's legitimacy—to some of the exam's ascribed potentials. In doing so, it taps into the historical frameworks of loyalty and democratic participation, while attempting to distance itself from other frameworks associated with "punishing" immigrants through testing. The test is thus legitimized both because it fulfills a law—hence the alignment with an established set of ideas—*and* because it attempts to shift from the exam's

marginalizing potential to an inclusionary one—hence the critical scrutiny of other, negative "institutionalized clusters of ideas."

Yet, framework alignment—and thus perpetuation of existing practice—rather than critical scrutiny, is the dominant mode in the USCIS legitimization of the exam. In fact, the exam's previous version becomes a constraint in itself, structuring the new one's possibilities of development. For example, in addition to other sources for generating civics questions, the previous version of the naturalization test along with a 2004 study guide served as the foundations of the civics component. Then, panels of "experts"— once again—ensured "the test met the desirable specifications for the number of questions in each section," a number that has been in fact determined in the previous version (p. 7). As a result,

> Some test items were deleted due to a limitation on the number of questions
> included within each section . . . Due to test *design limitations*, the developers
> were *restricted* in the amount of questions that could be included. For example,
> during the redesign process, several questions were developed on the concept of
> "veto." *It was determined* that, due to test design limitations, there could only be
> one question on the concept of "veto." [emphases mine] (p. 7, 8).

The existence of a certain kind of testing format, therefore, became a justification for the next, even if the central goal of the revision process was a change in that original exam. The tautological underpinnings of this rationale only enhance the institutional position that policy change on pressing issues is embedded in an accumulation of institutionalized ideas whose change can be frustratingly slow. At the same time, it is these circular layers

of mutually-reinforcing ideas that also contribute to the governing stability and continuity expected of the state.

Despite the slow pace of the revisions themselves and the far-from-drastic changes that resulted, the new test was implemented on October 1st, 2008, with the following public release *Pathways*:

> The new test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, will help encourage citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values we all share as Americans. The major aim of the redesign process was to ensure that naturalization applicants have uniform, consistent testing experiences nationwide, and that the civics test can effectively assess whether applicants have a meaningful understanding of U.S. government and history.

Neither meaningfulness nor standardization are necessarily new driving ideas in U. S. naturalization policy. Citizenship preparation that would actually offer the new members a strong background and inspiration for genuine civic participation was also a major driving force during the previous Americanization movement, while the problem of standardization was the impetus behind the very first naturalization law of 1790. In fact, standardization—despite critiques that such testing can never be responsive to the new citizens' identities and needs (Appiah, 1998; Carpenter, 2005)—taps into wider "objective constraints" that have to do with states' essential need for simplification and generalization. The rationale offered in the redesign description casts standardization as a need for the applicant—in order to ensure equity. The underlying need, too, is that of the

state itself—standardization that enhances efficiency, especially with an agency that has been plagued by processing delays and increased costs (Sachs, 1999).

To this end, James Scott's (1998) work on *Seeing like a state: How certain schemes to improve the human condition have failed* lends the helpful metaphor of *legibility* to understand state action towards its citizens and territory. Scott's analysis considers the rise of the nation-state and the structures that had to be instituted in order to increase the level of "legibility" of the complex realities found at the local level. Ascribing people last names, simplifying maps and street plans and even ordering natural environments through specific forestry techniques—by their very nature, these structures were going to simplify (thus reduce complexity) and only offer the state "relevant" information that would ensure its systems of control and stability. The use of a standardized exam with special officer training to also ensure standardized implementation of the naturalization process would make sense within such structured systems.

However, even this need of standardization that is common across states is implemented when it comes to naturalization, in the context of the U. S.-specific policy frameworks which catalyze lingering concerns over loyalty and integration ability. This seems to be the rationale for a *standardized* exam being administered in an *interview* process that brings the applicant and an officer in direct interaction. If the content knowledge meant to prompt civic engagement were the only concern of the exam, it could simply be administered electronically or on set forms as many other standardized exams are in educational contexts. But the direct interaction offers additional opportunities for increased "legibility"—and the "reading" that takes place in that context

is, unavoidably, filtered through the accumulated policy frameworks about immigrants' "difference" as well as officers' individual-level conceptions and expectations of immigrants based on different social locations such race, ethnicity, class or gender.

In this sense, critical approaches that emphasize how this process is meant to make the immigrant "transparent" to the state (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009) do raise important concerns—the implementation carries exclusionary potential, even with the state's reassurance that officers are trained in considering due process while maintaining standardization (USCIS Factsheet, 2008). After all, "All I.N.S. officers have enforcement training . . . This causes many of them to approach the interview with an eye to finding any reason a person cannot be naturalized" (Sachs, 1999). Yet, unlike the stance of critical approaches, this legibility can be explained not only through the state's increased "policing," but also through its need to protect from potential harm—or "shepherd"— those from whom it demands allegiance. And with the increased concerns over correct implementation and previous scandals over fraud (Kunnan, 2009), the process is likely to become more transparent.

Accounts like those of Löwenheim and Gazit also point out that in this increased legibility, the process remains uni-directional—the applicant is made transparent to the state, but the new member is not granted the right to scrutinize the state. That may be the case for the limited time of the naturalization process, but the process itself is, after all, the means to achieve that ability and right to scrutinize the state—and to do so from within its own parameters of acceptance and membership. Citizenship in liberal democratic states offers and demands that opportunity of its members, hence the

enhanced emphasis on understanding its principles and the call to meaningful participation throughout the naturalization rhetoric.

In this chapter I have shown that the overall phenomenon of naturalization—with its afferent legislation and implementations—is indeed far from easily interpreted, although choosing to focus on certain aspects alone can make it appear so. Critical approaches, for example, have the invaluable merit of pointing out the potentials and practices of exclusion that need to be perpetually resisted. Their calls for change, however, lose some of their potential when made in the absence of trying to understand how dominant clusters of ideas emerge and, becoming institutionalized, frame the possible courses of action. Attention to such policy frameworks and the overall institutional constraints that necessitate standardization offer some viable interpretations to the resilient nature of the naturalization exam and its surrounding current rhetoric.

Next, I turn to one of the two major "animating core concepts" of the naturalization examination policy—meaningfulness. Specifically, I assesses the claim that the U.S. exam follows a basic civics curriculum that is to be found in public schools. By examining the test's content and current civic standards for schools, contextualized by the literature of social studies and civic education, I evaluate the improvements in the civic test highlighting the fact that civic education programs in schools and that of the naturalization process share similar challenges in achieving what could be a potent citizenship preparation.

# CHAPTER THREE

## Citizenship curricula, in school and out: Problems of promise and practice

*A people who mean to be their own Governors, must arm themselves
with the power which knowledge gives. A popular Government without
popular information, or the means of acquiring it is but a Prologue
to a Farce or a Tragedy; or, perhaps, both.*
James Madison

## The Premise of the Naturalization Exam as Citizenship Education

Throughout the half decade that the governmental agency tinkered with the

naturalization exam requirements, recurrent media coverage in both local and nationally-

circulated newspapers such as *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* pointed to

the contention over content and the fact that, after all, native-born Americans themselves

could not answer many of the history and civics questions. As early as the first version of

the questions was generated in the 1980s, the lamentable state of the "natural" citizens'

civic knowledge was used as an argument against requiring comparatively more of those

being "naturalized." The refrain has been as common in congressional hearings on the

issue as in the street or online forums, where passers-by and readers were prompted to

test their knowledge and share their views on the naturalization requirements. Yet, as

others have pointed out, whatever the state of civic education in U. S. schools or of

Americans' own factual knowledge, their fundamental formation by the constitutional

order remains in place since the Constitution is, as it were, already "natural" *to* them

(Eisgruber, 1993; Pickus, 1998). While such claims rightly remain subject to debate,

parallels do emerge between the citizenship education that the state demands through

naturalization and that which it supports through public schools. Some of these parallels

occur in the context of popular opinion or lobbying for certain partisan positions on

immigration issues, and others are also drawn more intentionally in the actual official justifications for the exam's revisions.

This chapter addresses the seemingly simple claim made by naturalization officials that, in the new civic exam, "[t]he content now follows a basic U.S. history and government curriculum" (USCIS Factsheet, Oct 1, 2008). In other words, the test's revised questions and materials are to function as a curriculum that would parallel the basic civic education a student could be expected to experience through public schooling. To assess this claim, I examine the test's questions on the background of the test's previous version, the learning materials offered by USCIS, the objectives and standards of the National Council for the Social Studies, as well as relevant literature on citizenship education within the social studies. Throughout the chapter, I discuss the tensions and challenges identified in the field of social studies for the preparation of citizens and compare those intentions and challenges with the curricular potential of the naturalization exam. In doing so, I show that the two educational domains are, in some ways surprisingly, subject to some similar critiques and challenges—and that while the practice of social studies in school contexts continues to carry the better potential for powerful citizenship education experiences, its own limitations make it less of a golden standard than expected for what should occur in the education of adult prospective citizens.

From an applied linguistics point of view—since the naturalization process also tests language ability—some initial arguments have already been made that both the old and the redesigned naturalization exams have been unable to meet the standards recognized by the language assessment community as necessary properties of assessment procedures—given the standards such as those of the American Educational Research

Association, American Psychological Association and the National Council on Measurement in Education (Bachman & Palmer, 1996; Kunnan, Taylor & Weir, 2008). However, even if quick references are made to the civic components now embedded in the language requirements (because vocabulary lists are civic-oriented), these disciplinary approaches do not address the history and civics curricula and test questions in any significant detail.

Work in the naturalization literature has also captured the involved bureaucratic procedures (North, 1987), naturalization trends in the U.S. (Fix, Passel & Sucher, 2003) and even the puzzling gap in naturalization rates between the United States and Canada (Bloemraad, 2006). Focusing more on the educational facet of the process, some work addressed the historical involvement of the state in teaching citizenship and American values in the 1790-1973 period (Gordon, 2004) and critiques of current community-based citizenship classes which fail their democratic activism potential by focusing on the technical requirements of the test and basic English literacy (Carpenter, 2005). Still, little scholarly attention has been given to the exam in its current one hundred-question format—even if it has been in use since 1986—or its function as a civics curriculum, and especially one that could parallel that of schools. After 1973, the direct involvement of the state in official naturalization and citizenship education programs has declined, while community-based organizations still offer services to immigrants throughout their transition, to help them learn English, adapt to American culture and prepare for the naturalization exam (Cordero-Guzman, 2005).

However, even if the state does not directly oversee education initiatives[6], through the structuring of the test and the curricular materials it offers for both naturalization candidates and the tutors who may help them, the state positions and endorses this test as a type of citizenship education. The absence of a mandatory course or a specifically structured curriculum may obscure the fact that the process of preparing for this exam is citizenship education nonetheless, even for those who can pass this exam without the help of community-based classes. The differences between those who take the classes and those who do not raise important questions about the social structures which frame prospective citizens' choices—for example, the less educated eligible immigrants are and the more limited their English proficiency, the more likely they are to participate in the community-based citizenship classes. At least these are the demographic characteristics that emerge from the few accounts on participation in these community-based classes (Kong, 2008). In fact, some of these classes are taught in languages other than English (Henderson, 2007). At the same time, many of those who already have the language, cultural and social capital to participate more fully in American society—even prior to naturalization—may be less likely to attend the classes. Some even declare openly, when briefly questioned by media outlets, that they prepared alone and without much difficulty.

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[6] In September 2009, USCIS announced the award of $1.2 million in grants for 13 organizations to support citizenship preparation programs for legal permanent residents (LPRs). Grant recipients represent 13 recipient organization in 11 states, including both traditional immigrant destinations and new immigrant gateways. USCIS awarded grants of up to $100,000 for organizations to serve one or more priority immigrant groups. For this funding announcement, priority immigrant groups included: LPRs 65 years or older; Refugees or asylees; LPRs who adjusted under the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA); U or T-Visa holders; Special Immigrant Juvenile Visa holders; and Other underserved groups

While the differences implied in these approaches to preparing for the exam are socially important, they do not negate the fact that both group types, through this exam, participate in a process of citizenship education. This is especially so because this is the only formal U.S.-oriented citizenship education that many adult aspiring citizens will experience, whether through independent study or class participation. Needless to say, aspiring citizens are civically educated in many daily interactions and spaces that involve their previous histories and participation in everyday life in the United States, interaction with the media and other citizen and non-citizen members of society. The civic education involved in those processes is very important and the process of information acquisition and decision-making for democracy that it fosters has already been addressed in other contexts (see, for example, the compelling cross-disciplinary argument of Lupia & McCubbins, 1998). It is, however, beyond this chapter's scope, where the focus is on an analytically distinct feature of participatory democracy—legal citizenship acquisition through naturalization, and the specific means of civic preparation that its required exam generates.

These reasons, as well as the efforts and resources invested in the test's revisions, coupled with the overall claims about its educational intentions attest to a curricular interpretation of the test. They warrant inquiry into the parallels drawn between what at first glance appear as very different educational spaces. Different as these educational contexts may be—one centered on school-based social studies curricula and the other on a state-mandated exam for adults—the revised questions were individually evaluated[7] by the USCIS Office of Citizenship according to concise criteria that do coincide with some

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[7] The revision process, the groups involved and the debates surrounding revision decisions are discussed in detail in Chapter 1, *Citizenship Testing and the State*

of the major purposes of civic education nationally proposed to schools through Social Studies curricula. These parallels compel us to make more visible the specific mechanisms through which the state is involved in an official citizenship education of its immigrant members even when it does not directly require blatant or controversial civic programs. In doing so, we may take a closer look at the potential such an education might carry and what limitations curb it, despite the rhetoric of civic understanding and transformation.

We are thus drawn outside the school's traditional settings and, perhaps surprisingly, not too far. Evaluating the non-traditional citizenship education process generated by naturalization requires further thinking about citizenship education in K-12 settings and the limitations, tensions that they, too, face as they strive to fulfill their civic goals and democratic ideals for youth. That space itself is far from being free of controversy, and it shares some of those challenges with the naturalization exam. I begin with a brief overview of the civic preparation ideals embedded in U.S. public schooling—and especially in the field of social studies—and continue with a juxtaposition of the field's challenges with those of the naturalization exam.

## Public Schools and the Social Studies: Contested Locations for Citizenship Preparation

Even when assailed by critics from across the political spectrum, the indispensable role played by U. S. public education in the formation of a well-prepared democratic citizenry has become axiomatic, despite the continued debates over specific implementation. Even in the absence of a common, nationalized education system mandated through federal legislation, the preparation for participation in democratic

public life—citizenship education—has been assumed as one of the overarching goals of U. S. public education. If not always in practice, this has at least been the case rhetorically (Shaver, 1997; Barton & Levstik, 2004; Ross, 2004; Altoff, 2008). The ideologies of the common school movement of the 19th century grounded the origins of the U.S. public school, suggesting the goals of maintaining an orderly and democratic society envisioned as such from its very foundations. Shortly after the establishment of the new nation in 1776, new curriculum materials such as Noah Webster's standardized American dictionary and New England Primer, and stories about national heroes entered the curriculum to nurture national identity and pride.

As education historian Carl Kaestle (2001) has argued, at the foundation of the republic, some classical political theory elements of monarchy and aristocracy were heeded as necessary for maintaining stable systems, even democratic ones. Elusively pure forms of democracy were perceived as easily degenerative into anarchy, yet the dilemma of the founders was that they were suspicious of allowing any monarchic or aristocratic influences into the new form of government they had envisioned. This was a republican form of government through representation where the general will of the people would be "refined and enacted by its best men" (Kaestle, 2001). And, both the "general will" and this process of refinement and enactment were going to be served by the redemptive qualities of education, contributing to both liberty and order in the aftermath of the revolution.

However, since education was not easily available to all, Thomas Jefferson explained the basics of state-sponsored schools for republican citizenship, as all citizens (including girls, who would eventually teach their young) should have access to informed

election and the possibility to be themselves those "best men" who could be elected. Even though public schooling did not become a significant legal mandate until 1852 when Massachusetts became the first state with a compulsory school attendance law, citizenship education, was central to the mission of the American school ever since the emergence of the movement. The extension of suffrage after 1828 and the increase of immigrants from Ireland and Germany in the 1830s and 1840s created a change in the cultural climate that contributed to interest in a more organized and more democratic system of education with an explicit focus on citizenship. Expanded suffrage increased fear among elites of the power of the uneducated masses and immigrant cultures were seen as threatening to Protestant culture. In addition, an expanding economy and increased population mobility also heightened the perceived need for schooling, since young adults less frequently lived in one community or served long apprenticeships.

As a result, when Horace Mann led a common-school movement as "the great equalizer," states not only began to provide consistent funding, building and curriculum. improvements, teacher training, and attendance laws, but they explicitly focused on creating a moral, civic-mined citizen who could function in a diverse society. Of course, despite the noble aims, the racial and socio-economic diversity of common school children was originally limited, even with the high number of immigrants, since the richest children were privately taught, many of the poorest still remained unschooled, and Black and minority children were systematically segregated in separate schools.

The immigration-induced diversity, however, vastly increased in the early twentieth century. Education policy was thus influenced by the dramatic demographic shifts and especially by the rise of an industrial political economy and the ideological

shifts that accompanied it. As urbanization, labor unrest, trade unionism and the

centrality of efficiency were on the rise, so were scientism, new liberalism—that adapted

the classic tenant to the new social realities—and shifts in the foundational understanding

of morality (Tozer, Sense & Violas, 2009). If previous ideologies, also reflected in the

education of children, were rooted in the cultivation of personal virtue, a new civic virtue

would now be more consistent with the focus on scientific rationality. From a "good

man"—the virtuous person—a shift was thus made to the "good citizen"—capable of

civic morality. State and federal governments grew increasingly active during this time,

regulating not only business, industry, and labor, but also education.

Many concomitant reasons appeared to fuel school reforms—changes in

population, the demands of the new economy, the need to make them more efficient, the

need to create these necessary "good citizens" and, importantly, because of new

psychological understandings of the nature of human learning. Education was not only or

primarily an intellectual endeavor, but social psychologists increasingly emphasized the

social and emotional dimensions of schooling. These educators, the progressives,

believed that a curriculum of memorized classics, math, science and history should be

replaced and schools should consider the nature of the child as well as the needs of

society. But they differed in what they perceived to be those needs and how children

should be prepared for them. Proponents like John Dewey, who believed that democracy

required collaborative participation by all citizens in social, political and economic

decisions, viewed schools as a "laboratory for democracy"—education was progressive

in that it progressed outward from the needs of the child and curriculum should reflect the

interests of both students and society. Shaping citizens in this manner was, in a sense,

also reflected in the adult education programs that were set to serve the needs of immigrants while also enhancing their ability to integrate and become Americans.

At the same time, this progressive view focused on developmental democracy, co-existed with another strand of Progressivism that emphasized social efficiency. They did not oppose democracy, but understood its preservation in the maintenance of social order. Many schools did not reflect that, however, but demonstrated rising levels of juvenile delinquency, waste and inefficiency in management as well as a lack of "adequate" preparation of students according to social needs and their own abilities. Testing and tracking students into education for probable careers was deemed democratic since they would be educated according to their "probable destiny" in life and society had needs for both higher and lower levels of employment. While the democratic ideals of progressive education were also attempted and implemented in schools and influenced current educational ideals, the social efficiency model was the one that radically changed public schooling from its previous formats and focus and generated the structures of schools we know today. The tension between the ideals of child-centered, citizen-shaping curricula and those of social efficiency also continues to press on American public schools.

Still, the purpose of schools as sentinels of the established American—and democratic—way has become ingrained not only in popular imaginaries but also in many scholarly interpretations and attempts at implementation. Emphasis on these specific social purposes is also conceptualized under functionalist representations such as Emile Durkheim's (1961) classic stance which positions schooling as the connective tissue in a society's continuation, an institution by which

certain socially given ideas and values are internalized by individuals who thereby

acquire certain beliefs, wants and feelings and act in certain ways . . . [with

education being] a continuous effort to impose upon the child ways of seeing,

feeling and acting at which he would not have arrived spontaneously. (p. 17)

At the same time, however, the determinism of functionalism—even when cast in the

positive light of democratic maintenance—has been widely critiqued in later years for the

static approach to social systems. According to critical theorists, for example, the focus

on the status quo was especially problematic because schools were far from perpetuating

a fair and democratic society. Instead, these views were deemed ethically and politically

"innocent" (Giroux, 1980), and focusing on a logic of consensus that left unexamined the

questions of schools' relations with power, class conflict and social control. Critics

pointed, instead, to the correspondence that existed between the structural inequalities

and those found in schools (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), which in turn reproduced those very

inequalities in the wider society.

Other critics questioned schools' contemporary ability to perpetuate democratic

ideals because public education goals have succumbed to credentialism and private

interests at the public's expense (Labaree, 1999). Past president of the NCSS, Peggy

Altoff (2008) also argues that in the nine decades since its founding, the goal of NCSS

has been to be prepare effective citizens, but that an alarming trend settled across the

nation, with citizenship being "the last of the three 'C's"—after college and career

preparation. On the background of the fact that at least half of the U. S. states no longer

make the teaching of civics and government a requirement for high school graduation,

she argues that "[w]e must urge every individual or group to engage in the work needed to maintain and enhance citizenship as a goal of education." (p. 379).

Still, the belief in the public schools' role for the democratic project and the specific preparation of citizens continues, even if it does so through a deluge of criticism. For example, the Campaign for the Civic Mission of Schools was founded to implement the recommendations of a report on the "Civic Mission of Schools" written by more than 50 scholars and educational practitioners and published in 2003 by the Carnegie Corporation of New York and the Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement at the University of Maryland. The initiative is based on the premise that the quality of civic education in schools forms the foundation of the future health of American democracy, especially since schools are the only institutions with that possess both the capacity and the mandate to reach every young person in the nation.

Other reactions also exist to effects of the No Child Left Behind Act—that encourages teaching of science and math but, in the absence of relevant tests and specific funding, has effectively marginalized civics education. This has raised concern even among partisan supporters and led to such actions as the former Supreme Court Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor's, involvement in the creation of digital games that enhance understanding of procedural democracy. "We can't forget," she said, "that the primary purpose of public schools in America has always been to help produce citizens who have the knowledge and the skills and the values to sustain our republic as a nation, our democratic form of government." (Schiesel, 2008).

**The Social Studies**

Within the wider educational arena, the field of social studies has been specifically invested with students' preparation for citizenship, justice and democracy. Social studies has specifically housed "citizenship education" since 1890, a date that also coincides with the demographic shift in immigrants' countries of origin, countries with cultural and political traditions considered more distant from those of the U. S. And, like the wider public education contexts, the field has also been a site of tension and critique regarding the means and possibilities to accomplish its ascribed tasks (Ross, 2001). John Dewey himself commented on the potential for the social studies as a vehicle for citizenship education during the 1930s, even if in his conceptualization of education he usually avoided disciplinary perspectives or divisions. As James Carpenter (2006) points out, quoting Dewey, he believed that two of the major components of the social studies— history and geography—"suppl[ied] subject matter which gives background and outlook, intellectual perspective, to what might otherwise be narrow personal actions or mere forms of technical skills. They 'are the two great school resources bringing about the enlargement of the significance of a direct personal experience' and could thus allow a person to see herself/himself more clearly in the evolving social context existent in the United States" (p. 33).

At the same time, these tangential mentions need to be understood in the wider context of Dewey's educational and political philosophy, lest they be interpreted only in the narrower sense of fact-based disciplinary teaching and testing. Dewey's vision for democracy involved far more than informed *voters*—it was, rather, a form of "associated living" and a "communicated experience" where various interests are consciously shared

and where interaction among groups is encouraged by the mores and institutions shared by the broader public. Specific skills and deliberation tactics geared towards the maintenance of those practices represented the higher end of teaching and learning in the social studies. While one begins with the facts offered through the disciplinary lenses of history, geography or civics, one is to move beyond them into democratic participatory activities, a shift that has also been identified in the historic progression of social studies approaches (Barr, Barth, & Shermis, 1977). As Carpenter also emphasizes, "[t]he continual evolution of democracy and the consequent need to adapt social studies education to produce participatory citizens is reflected in contemporary curriculum documents as well [such as the] National Council for the Social Studies" (p. 34).

While this "need to adapt social studies education" has been accepted by many scholars, a gradual evolutionary interpretation of the field would be misleading, as would assuming a clear progression from fact-memorization to a superior version of participatory social studies. The field has been, in fact, stretched by tensions and lack of agreement over what social studies education is (Marker & Mehlinger, 1992), subjected to virulent attacks from conservative political stances (e.g., Leming, Ellington & Porter, 2003) and claims that an incoherent amalgam of goals usually passes as the "phantom core" of social studies citizenship education (Longstreet, 1985). While some claimed to attempt to sort through the so-called field "chaos" (Vinson & Ross, 2001), others addressed the ideological combats that were deemed a true "war" (Evans, 2004). S. G. Grant and Bruce Vansledright (1996) capture the dilemmas that stand at the root of these controversies:

There has been little debate about the relationship between social studies and citizenship education: The goal of social studies education is active citizenship. But beyond a rhetorical consensus, what does this relationship mean? What is "active" citizenship? What social studies content directly addresses this goal? What instructional strategies promote citizenship education? What evidence do we have that social studies education significantly effects students' participation in U. S. society? These are difficult questions. (p. 57)

In contrast with the growing research on teaching and learning in traditional disciplinary areas such as history or English, the research literature on citizenship education had remained significantly more limited, with fewer rich portraits of teaching and learning that directly addressed issues of citizenship education. In addition, despite the contested nature of the field and tensions among different theoretical and political perspectives, historians have claimed that the practice of social studies has been marked more by constancy than change (Cuban, 1991). In this view, the tensions of the field that could revitalize it, lose their potential and lead to more stagnation or factions that are far from useful in accomplishing the stated goal of educating effective citizens for democracy.

It is perhaps not surprising, then, that S. G. Grant and Bruce Vansledright (1996) make the claim that the "relationship between social studies and citizenship education is tangential at best" (p. 57) and remains "dubious," as they offer an overview of reasons from existing literature. They argue that the areas addressed are not associated with a specific discipline that would offer some anchorage for content coverage; some teachers themselves do not seem to value the subjects enough and all are also faced with major dilemmas of implementation in terms of time allotted, pedagogical approaches and

content; the texts and teaching materials used are often contested; students' views and attitudes seem to be less influenced by these classes than by what they learn about citizenship in outside contexts; and schools provide mixed messages about citizenship because their institutional organization creates contexts that are different from those that the students will experience as adults and with little chance to implement democratic participation.

They thus make a powerful point in suggesting that the "problem" does not reside with one particular part of the equation—the students' or teachers' attitudes, the curriculum, or particular pedagogical approaches alone. They argue, instead, that the challenge is more systemic and make what they call a "provocative" suggestion: "It is time, we believe, to retire the notion that citizenship education is the defining mission of the social studies" (p. 56). In this view, civic education is not the sole responsibility of social studies educators, but of the whole schooling experience and institution, proposing activities and experiences to construct a school-wide program of citizenship education. Critiques of the social studies vision and implementation, therefore, have ranged throughout the decades from theorists to practitioners to political figures, all fearing that the country's young citizens were not prepared well to maintain the privileges of democracy.

In the middle of these challenges, nevertheless, other evaluations based on large-scale comparative studies also found positive results. One such source of optimism is the report issued by the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement (IEA 1999). It conducted a Civic Education Study which is, to date, the largest and most rigorous study of civic education ever conducted internationally. The

study surveyed nationally representative samples of 90,000 14-year-old students in 28 countries, and 50,000 17- to 19-year-old students in 16 countries throughout 1999 and 2000. The study surveyed civic knowledge (including content and skills), concepts, attitudes, and experiences. The content domains covered were identified through previous national case studies and included democracy, national identity and social cohesion and diversity, as well as a component focused on the engagement of youth in civil society. The U. S. report suggested that American ninth graders (a nationally-representative sample of 2,811) were on a good path to becoming knowledgeable, caring, engaged citizens when compared to their peers internationally. On the overall test of civic knowledge, U. S. students performed above the international mean, doing especially well in demonstrating the ability to distinguish fact from opinion and interpret political messages. On the civic skills subscale, they scored significantly higher than students in the other countries (e. g., 83 percent could correctly interpret a political leaflet, compared to 65 percent internationally), while on the subscale of content knowledge, U. S. students' performance was almost as high as the international average (e. g., 72 percent understood the function of political parties compared to the 75 percent international average).

Of course, these results are based on testing at a time when 70 percent of schools with a ninth grade still had a civics-related requirement, and that is not the only source of concern. The principal investigators on the IEA study reported that the data revealed a "mixed picture" of U. S. youth's civic education achievement and engagement. As the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) in civics had previously shown, socioeconomic variables are associated with civic achievement (Anderson et. al, 1990;

Lutkus et al. 1998). The troubling IEA results confirmed that a student's socioeconomic status and race or ethnicity turned out to matter in learning about democracy. Those in schools with a higher proportion of economically disadvantaged students (more than 25 percent) were outperformed on all measures. At the same time, a family's cultural capital was also important, since performance was related also to home literacy resources and parents' education. Students who had high expectations for their own continued education also did better than those who expected to drop out (Baldi et al., 2001). White and multiracial students scored higher, on average, than did Black and Hispanic students. The authors thus emphasize that the quality of social studies instruction provided to students varies by the socioeconomic level of the local community (such as contrasts between worksheet instruction and deliberative activities) and this is a very disquieting recurrence.

**The Naturalization Civics Exam: Contested Location for Citizenship Preparation**

That the exam has had a tremendous share of critics is nothing new—even from the circles of social studies teacher educators (Feinberg, & Doppen, 2010)—as scholars have argued such tests could never truly assess civics (Carens, 1998) and that the naturalization process "does not adequately incorporate newcomers, strengthen citizenship or foster self-government," being "more oriented towards processing applicants than it is to conveying any *substantive knowledge* or sense that citizenship has *meaning* [emphases added]" (Pickus, 1998, p. 121). Public policy analyst Noah Pickus who also studies ethics and immigrant incorporation was writing during the previous exam's revision process and consulted with the USCIS for that purpose. He critiqued the old test for its content as well as the formulation of questions—they can be seen as

intellectually controversial (such answers as the fact that free speech comes from the Bill of Rights, or that Native Americans helped the Pilgrims); some questions were simply irrelevant without a wider context (asking about Alaska as the 49th state is not the same as asking about the status of Puerto Rico, he claimed); while other questions were perceived as boring, restated versions that led to confusion for the applicant (a question about the significance of the 4th of July would be restated later in the test to ask about the day Americans celebrate Independence Day).

In addition to such critiques about question significance and importance of the exam, there were the growing concerns about its implementation and equity. From 1991 to 1996 the INS contracted with private testing services to administer the tests, but cases of fraud revealed by hidden camera investigations led to ceasing those contracts and the administration of the test being reverted to INS where it has stayed since (Kunnan, 2009). Nevertheless, the lack of uniformity across centers remained problematic, as it exposed applicants to unequal requirements. While the dominant form of the test was an oral questioning by the officer, in which the applicant had to answer seven out of ten questions correctly, investigators found that in some centers the questions could also be written, while in extreme cases, as was Atlanta's, applicants faced up to one hundred oral questions, without a clear passing requirement and thus remaining at the discretion of the INS officer (Miller & Muldoon, 1996).

The exam revisions tried therefore to address these two major issues and the new questions were projected on the background of concerns with both conformity and uniformity—they aimed to offer a better opportunity for aspiring citizens to engage with the principles of the country and, in the process, adopt them as their own; and they set

clear standards and officer training that would ensure administration was consistent

throughout the country. Vehement critics, however, raised issues based on social class

equity—reminiscent of those encountered in the IEA Civics results—claiming the exam

would only make the process more difficult for those immigrants with lower levels of

income and education (Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights, 2007). Still,

the result of a 6.5 million-dollar investment and six years of consulting with scholars,

policy-makers and non-governmental organizations serving immigrants and refugees, the

new set of questions is claimed to move away from the memorization of facts to

prompting aspiring citizens to engage with the fundamental principles of the American

democracy. An official release on October 1st, 2008, the day the new questions replaced

previous one, states:

> The new test, with an emphasis on the fundamental concepts of American
>
> democracy and the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, will help encourage
>
> citizenship applicants to learn and identify with the basic values we all share as
>
> Americans. The major aim of the redesign process was to ensure that
>
> naturalization applicants have uniform, consistent testing experiences nationwide,
>
> and that the civics test can effectively assess whether applicants have a
>
> meaningful understanding of U.S. government and history. (USCIS Factsheet)

Officials made similar public claims throughout the years when the test was being

reconsidered and when it was released. In evaluating the new test and as if speaking

directly to such critiques as those articulated by Noah Pickus, Emilio Gonzalez, director

of U. S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) told the press that "It's no longer

a test about how many stars are on the flag or how many stripes, it's a test that genuinely

talks about those things that make America what it is" (Dinan, 2007). Moreover, the

officials endorsing the test hope that the process will not be simply a technical exercise in

a bureaucratic requirement. Instead, Alfonso Aguilar, the chief of the Office of

Citizenship within USCIS hopes that "as [immigrants] study the fundamentals of our

history and civics, they will also identify with them and become attached to our country"

(Dinan, 2007).

The new question pool was evaluated by the USCIS Office of Citizenship and the

final one hundred questions were included according to the following criteria:

1. Does it involve critical thinking about government and history?

2. Does it offer an inferred or implicit concept about government, history or other

areas?

3. Does it provide a geographical context for a current or historical event?

4. Does it help the applicant better utilize the system and is it useful in their daily

lives?

5. Does it help the applicant better understand and relate to our shared history?

The one hundred questions were divided into three sections, with several subsections and

official titles. The table below offers a breakdown of these sections as well as an

overview and distribution of the topics covered in each.

Many questions that have caused critics to deride the exam were removed[8]—the number
of stripes on the U.S. flag, the name of the ship that carried the Pilgrims to
Massachusetts, the author of the national anthem lyrics or of the decontextualized famous
line Give me liberty or give me death." The exam now does focus more on the
Constitution and implications for a democratic government, on the division of powers
and roles among its various branches and agencies. In fact, the *System of Government*
subtheme is dominant among the rest, comprising over a third of the complete question

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[8] See Appendices section for a side-by-side comparison of the two exam versions and
easy observation of the differences among rephrased questions.

set. Fifty of the questions are new, without a clear equivalent in the former version of the test, while fifty are reworded questions. Examining the reworded versions reveals several types of rephrasing, with some questions demonstrating more than one:

a) Clarification (the wording now allows a better understanding of the question):

*Example*: "What makes up Congress?" became "What are the <u>two</u> parts of the U. S. Congress?"

b) Transfer from one correct answer of closed-ended questions to several possible answers

*Example:* "Name the amendments that guarantee or address voting rights" became "There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe <u>one</u> of them."

c) Change in question focus from naming an existing historical fact to offering its reasons

*Example:* "What country did we fight during the Revolutionary War?" became "Why did the colonists fight the British?"

d) Change in certain word choices that connote a different interpretation of historic events

*Example:* "Why did the Pilgrims come to America?" became "What is <u>one</u> reason colonists came to America?"

In some cases, such changes can be perceived as minimal or even cosmetic, and critics who would argue for that position would be justified. But only to an extent. Attention to these small details not only makes some of the questions clearer and thus less susceptible to misunderstanding on the part of an applicant but, more importantly,

Table 1: Distribution of the new civics questions by category and topic.

| Category | Subcategory | Number of Questions | Topics | Comments |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **American Government** | Principles of American Democracy | 12 | The constitution, its roles and amendments (7); the declaration of independence (2); freedom of religion (3), the rule of law and the type of economic system in the U. S. (1 each). | *System of Government—* highest proportion, with over one third of the questions *Of 10 Rights and Responsibilities* questions, only 3 are focused on rights; an emphasis on responsibilities is consistent with the state's interests and stands in contrast with immigrant support organizations' stronger emphasis on rights |
| | System of Government | 35 | Branches of Government and Political Parties: 5 general questions; legislative branch (10), executive (12) and judicial (4); Federal vs. State powers (2); State-specific questions on officials' names (2) | |
| | Rights and Responsibilities | 10 | Naming citizen-specific rights, voting, modes of participatory democracy, military service and taxes | |
| **History** | Colonial Period and Independence | 13 | Reasons for Europeans' coming to America, Native-American presence, slavery, the revolutionary war, the declaration of independence, the original colonies, names of important figures in the process of independence and initial presidency and leadership | * The *History* category remains focused on facts despite potential to address major historic turning points * *Colonial Period and Independence* questions stand out with the introduction of questions on Native American presence, slavery, and reformulations of previous questions for more critical engagement with specific historic episodes. |
| | The 1800s | 7 | Wars fought, the Civil War, emancipation, women's rights | |
| | Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information | 10 | The major wars and leadership throughout them, civil rights movement (2), September 11, names of Native American tribes. | |
| **Integrated Civics** | Geography | 8 | Names of surrounding oceans, north and south border states, major rives, U.S. territories, location of U.S. capital and the Statue of Liberty. | * The *Integrated Civics* category is the most basic of all three, and perhaps the most marginal in relevance and meeting the goals set up by USCIS |
| | Symbols | 3 | Symbolism of flag stripes and starts, name of national anthem | |
| | Holidays | 2 | Date of Independence Day, naming major U.S. holidays. | |

some of these changes increase the exam's potential as a civics curriculum. By making a change such as that of "pilgrims" into "colonists" the question no longer perpetuates a single-sided story of the search for religious freedom and also allows for the possibility of discussing the implications of colonization. Or, in asking for reasons why the colonists fought the British during the Revolutionary war, rather than simply naming the opponent, the rephrased questions allow for the possibility of further understating some of the principles of democratic government. If applicants were to be given the opportunity to examine some of these implications in the questions they study, this rephrasing process, small as it may be, would increased the civic preparation potential.

At the same time, some questions have also become more challenging in this process, since single-utterance answers (i.e., the British) now would have to be elaborated on is sentence form, which is an example of some of the language-related concerns. Nevertheless, the current citizenship application process requires that the applicant answer questions related to his or her documents when prompted by the interviewing officer, so a slightly more elaborate civics answer is not likely to be more linguistically difficult than what the very process of the naturalization interview already requires.

The newly-introduced fifty questions—which are either entirely new or significantly change the meaning of some previous ones—span across the test's categories and stand out due to characteristics held in tension: on the one hand, some might enhance understating of participatory democracy if used well; on the other hand, some are perplexing in their apparent triviality or troubling disengagement from controversial topics. Three types of questions or topics thus emerge in this category:

a) Questions focused more intentionally on the characteristics of democracy, rights, responsibilities, citizen loyalty and participatory democracy. In addition to asking for the names of the applicant's congressional representatives, for example, a question also asks for specific ways in which American citizens can be involved in their own government. Of course, this is far from actual practice for participation, but it is an important nod to the basic premise of self-government, and one that was not as specifically stated in the previous version of the exam.

b) Questions on controversial aspects of U.S. history. The *Colonial Period and Independence* questions stand out in the revisions due to the introduction of questions on Native American pre-Colombian presence and slavery. While this is, again, a nod to the importance of essential episodes previously not mentioned, the wording of these *two* questions signals a blatant disengagement from the realities of these historic episodes. "Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?" and "What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?" are sanitized of their dreadful past and reduced to single-utterance naming, the very kind of questions the reviewers worked to reduce throughout the test. Such formulations create a clear distancing effect that effaces both the tragedy of the events and, through the use of passive voice, the existence of any agents who participated in that "bringing" and selling of slaves. Overall, the *History* category has been enriched in number, but many questions remain mainly focused on facts even when there would be potential to address the importance of major historic turning points, rather than only tangential mentions of the emancipation, women's rights or the civil rights movement. If the USCIS fifth criterion about "help[ing] the applicant better understand and relate to *our shared history* [emphasis mine]" is to be better

fulfilled, there is a need to also address the fact that this history was not always shared in the same manner by different groups.

c) Questions on *Integrated Civics* are in disappointing contrast with the subcategory's promising title. The thirteen questions (focused on geography, symbols and holidays) are the most basic in the test and perhaps the most marginal in relevance and meeting the goals set up by USCIS. While one of the five criteria by which the questions were evaluated requires that some questions provide a "geographical context for current or historical events," it is unclear how naming the two oceans, major rivers or states bordering Canada might meaningfully offer that context. In the absence of clear guidance that would *offer* that context to the applicant, these questions remain a truly basic geography quiz.

An additional facet of the test that further speaks to its particular kind of focus on civic preparation is the selection that officials made for the applicants who are 65 years old or older and have been legal permanent residents of the United States for 20 or more years at the time of the examination. They are exempt from studying the entire question set, and may prepare only with the twenty questions officially marked with an asterisk in the question pool (Appendix C). Making the test more accessible to the elderly is an important move, as is the twenty-year residency requirement, since this may be assumed to have already granted the applicants essentials encounters with the country's principles and governmental system. Through this official emphasis on twenty questions, a message is sent about what is deemed essential in this vision of civic education. The twenty questions are selected from each category and emphasize, like the complete question set, the subsection on the *System of Government,* focusing of the specifics of political parties

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and presidential voting. This is placed in the context of history questions on the first president, the role of Abraham Lincoln, the fear of Communism during the Cold War and the role of Martin Luther King, Jr. It is a selection that further reduces the questions to basics and, as in the case of the complete question pool, surprisingly allots four of the twenty questions (20 percent) to the *Symbols* category instead of addressing some of the many other relevant topics.

The image of the exam that emerges in light of this analysis is more complex than that of a simple, ill-conceived or ill-intentioned test. Such single-sided interpretations of the test would be limiting and even misguided. These final versions of the questions emerge out of a struggle among and for many interests—as shown in chapter two—and present, in that confined space, more potential than the previous versions. The exam as the site of implementation of a civics curriculum can also easily fall short of this potential, especially when applicants resort only to memorization by themselves, without attempt to address some of the questions' implications.

The same failed potential has been identified when applicants participate in civics community-based classrooms that simply 'teach to the test' (Carpenter, 2005) given the importance of passing the exam—ironically, that is also a challenge that social studies educators face in school as the focus on testing in other major areas has impeded their time and ability to pay fuller attention to the social studies. Moreover, the questions' acknowledging nods to the complexities of U. S. history and the mechanisms of participatory democracy are to be themselves acknowledged as positive changes, but they do remain far from what a powerful civic curriculum could and should do for its students. Yet how does it compare to what schools aim at achieving through their social studies

curricula, and to what scholars have assessed schools are actually able to accomplish? In what follows, I address this question, showing that possible criticisms of the test are, in fact, shared by some of the dominant approaches in schools.

### Naturalization Civic Education and the Goals of Social Studies in Schools

Set against the critiques towards the field, the National Council for the Social Studies strives to offer powerful guidelines and support for both vision and practice. "These standards provide a solid foundation upon which major reform of what goes on in schools can be based" (NCSS, 2010). It is a hopeful attempt to thus actualize what Carole Hahn (2001), as one of the IEA principal investigators, has called the field to do: "It is crucial, however, that social studies educators resist the current pressures to limit instruction to a drill of low-level facts—or even the squeezing out of social studies from the day's schedule. Instead, we must insist on high-quality issues-centered instruction for all of our students. In that way, we may indeed help our young people become the knowledgeable, engaged citizens that they want and expect to be" (p. 461). Its motto, "Creating Effective Citizens," is central to their mission statement which declares a commitment to "teach students the content knowledge, intellectual skills, and civic values necessary for fulfilling the duties of citizenship in a participatory democracy." Ten thematic strands form the basis of its social studies standards—briefly stated for easy reference, they are also followed by elaborated statements that offer examples of guiding questions for each theme, as well as brief overviews of thematic applications according to grade levels.

The following thematic standards are offered with the expectation that their "quality implementation . . . will improve the quality of each student's life both as an

individual and as a member of the many social communities within which each lives"

(NCSS, 1994):

- Culture

- *Time, Continuity, and Change*

- *People, Places, and Environment*

- Individual Development and Identity

- *Individuals, Groups, and Institutions*

- *Power, Authority, and Governance*

- *Production, Distribution, and Consumption*

- Science, Technology, and Society

- Global Connections

- *Civic Ideals and Practices*

The highlighted themes center on the areas of inquiry—history, geography, political

systems, governmental institutions, economic systems and civic participation—that

do coincide, to a lesser or greater degree, with USCIS's own criteria for question

evaluation:

1. Does it involve critical thinking about government and history?

2. Does it offer an inferred or implicit concept about government, history or other

areas?

3. Does it provide a geographical context for a current or historical event?

4. Does it help the applicant better utilize the system and is it useful in their daily

lives?

5. Does it help the applicant better understand and relate to our shared history?

Nevertheless, not only does the NCSS guide towards areas of inquiry that are not present in the USCIS criteria (and thus the actual questions), but also offers more detailed guidance for the kinds of questions to be addressed under each theme as well as a progression of grade-appropriate learning activities that would bring to life these criteria for the students. Take, for example, the tenth theme, most directly relevant to the naturalization exam:

X. *Civic Ideals and Practices*

An understanding of civic ideals and practices of citizenship is critical to full participation in society and is a central purpose of the social studies. Students confront such questions as: What is civic participation and how can I be involved? How has the meaning of citizenship evolved? What is the balance between rights and responsibilities? What is the role of the citizen in the community and the nation, and as a member of the world community? How can I make a positive difference?

In the early grades, students are introduced to civic ideals and practices through activities such as helping to set classroom expectations, examining experiences in relation to ideals, and determining how to balance the needs of individuals and the group. During these years, children also experience views of citizenship in other times and places through stories and drama. By the middle grades, students expand their ability to analyze and evaluate the relationships between ideals and practice. They are able to see themselves taking civic roles in their communities. High school students increasingly recognize the rights and responsibilities of

citizens in identifying societal needs, setting directions for public policies, and

working to support both individual dignity and the common good. They learn by

experience how to participate in community service and political activities and

how to use democratic process to influence public policy.

Even through a cursory read of this standard elaboration, it becomes easily apparent that

the depth of attention to citizenship and the emphasis on participatory learning could

make such an approach far superior to what the one hundred-question naturalization

exam could accomplish. By suggesting actual opportunities for principle implementation,

these standards take stock in the formation of citizens as an on-going process that does

not simply begin with the age-based eligibility to vote. Youth, with their ever-increasing

abilities to understand and participate, are already treated as citizens and need not wait

for a sudden transformation that thrusts them into the heart of the political and

community arena. Instead, they are to practice those principles throughout their school

years, especially since that is deemed to be a central mission of the school.

In fact, in addition to these standards that make participatory learning central, the

NCSS  also emphasizes it in position statements on topics of importance such as

"Preparing Citizens for a Global Community"—a facet of citizenship training that is

recognized as increasingly relevant even if it was adopted by the NCSS in 1982—or

"Service Learning as Essential in Citizenship Education." For our immediate purposes,

"Creating Effective Citizens" (put forth by the NCSS Task Force on Revitalizing

Citizenship Education, 2001) is a telling document where the characteristics of an

effective citizenship education program are delineated, clearly resonating with the

approaches found across the standards.

Of its nine characteristics which greatly emphasize an active and inquiry-based approach, it again becomes evident that only two are—maybe remotely—captured by the USCIS curricular plan: 1) "instruction on our nation's founding documents, civic institutions, and political processes" and 2) "instruction on the people, history, and traditions that have shaped our local communities, our nation, and the world." Yet before we add yet another round of critique to the shortcomings of the test, it is important to recognize that the differences between the two kinds of citizenship "programs"—in school and out—are partly due to the very nature of the test. It is not implemented in a school environment where a talented teacher might enact its possibilities. It is also addressed to adults who do not have access to scaffolded civic activities throughout an extensive spiral curriculum.

At the same time, it would be equally important to pay attention to actual implementation of social studies as citizenship preparation curricula in schools. The setting of the NCSS standards is not a naïve enterprise that overlooks the essential difference between written and enacted curriculum. On the contrary, authors clearly refer to the standards' "quality implementation" as the necessary intermediary step between their goals and actual student learning. It is to this "quality implementation" issue that our attention needs to turn if we are to assess the naturalization exam curricular intentions in light of those found in schools. And, again, it is at this step that the hopeful picture of citizenship education in schools loses some of its veneer as the golden standard against which the naturalization exam would inevitably fall short.

Historians and teacher educators Keith Barton and Linda Levstik (2004) remind us also that "[c]urriculum guides may identify a wide range of objectives . . . but in

practice, the content of civics instruction usually is more limited" (p. 29) and claim that democratic citizenship education has been indeed undertaken in schools but often in "narrow and unproductive visions of the task" (p. 28). They refer to rituals such as the Pledge of Allegiance, patriotic songs and curricula that are, particularly at the elementary level, geared toward developing "reverence for American heroes, symbols and political procedures," leading to an education better described as education for patriotism and nationalism than citizenship (p. 29). They argue, as others have done (Hahn, 1998), that the most common way to teach citizenship in U.S. schools is through various versions of civics curricula that emphasize governmental institutions' operations and the rights of citizens. For example, the primary level introduces students to elections and the importance of voting, while in the upper grades they learn about the three branches of government and high school students study political parties, constitutional guarantees, and the ubiquitous "how a bill becomes law." Indeed, as members of a democratic polity, they need to have this kind of knowledge whose teaching, when done well, is very important. Yet this kind of knowledge does not guarantee participation and can remain decontextualized and "narrow." These critiques are clearly echoed in those brought against the naturalization exam (Kunnan, 2009) and the limited civic value of any exam like it (Carens, 1998)—they thus constitute a first critical approach that civic education in schools shares with that of the exam.

A second level of critique that bridges the two civic educational contexts could be termed "the transmission problem" and connects to the previous claims that civic education in schools may, in fact, have remained narrow and fallen short of its potential. As critical educator E. Wayne Ross (2004) points out, there are long-standing tensions

among different approaches to civic education, tensions which he identifies as (1) the relative emphasis on the cultural heritage of the dominant society versus the development of critical thought; and (2) conflicting conceptions of citizenship—citizenship for social reproduction or social reconstruction. While this is not a clear dichotomy, the orientations are said to range from "indoctrination"—described as the "citizenship transmission" model of social studies—and "critical thought"—described also as the "informed social criticism" tradition. The former envisions social studies as the acquisition of "American" or "democratic" values through factual information drawn from the canon of Western thought and culture and American history and government. This factual information is perceived as essential to the practice of good citizenship and is best determined by a consensus of authorities and experts.

The other, "critical" version, aims towards social studies as citizenship education by providing students opportunities to examine and critique past traditions and current social practices. In this view, students need to learn how to *be* citizens, thus to engage in the activities that demonstrate and teach active participation and help them gain the intellectual skills necessary for continuous evaluation of information and decision-making in a democratic society (e.g. issue-centered approaches such as those of Oliver & Shaver, 1966; Engle & Ochoa, 1988; Evans & Saxe, 1996; Ochoa-Becker, 2007). To this, others have added the importance of using these skills for exercising political influence through such practices as fund-raising, bargaining, public testimonies, using the media for specific causes and so on (e. g., Newmann, 1975; Newmann, Bertocci & Landsness, 1977). Instead of social transmission, this approach aims for social transformation, justice and equality. A primary pedagogical goal is thus to go beyond facts into supporting

students as they come to understand and act upon their agency as citizens (Stanley & Nelson, 1994; Ross, 2000). Differences of opinion remain, nevertheless, about the form of social action that should be promoted with students—whether community service or attendance at local city council meetings (Newman & Oliver, 1967), or more blatantly activist approaches aimed at larger-scale or major social change.

Historian Rod Janzen (1995) nuanced this duality, showing that over the past fifty years, social science educators have suggested a number of conceptual pathways which he presents as six models: cultural transmission; social action; life adjustment; discovery; inquiry; and multiculturalism. He describes the cultural transmission model as one where students are exposed to essential theoretical principles of democracy so that they could come to accept and act upon such tenets. A collective adherence to a particular social-political existence is thus created when learners are exposed to a common body of knowledge. Reflecting together, through an educational process, upon certain ideas, persons, events, and facts establishes a sense of community at the city, county, state, and even national levels (as shown in the work of E. D. Hirsch, 1987; Arthur Schlesinger Jr., 1992). When juxtaposed with the stated intentions of USCIS officials and the previous analysis of the exam's actual questions, the characteristics of the naturalization civic curriculum as a transmission model become evident.

This is a model that is not popular among social studies teacher educators, being considered ethno-centric and unable to accomplish citizenship education's true democratic potential. Nevertheless, the vehement critiques suggest its continued prevalence, along with eclectic approaches that combine elements of different models, as social studies educators act on a continuum that is undergoing continuous alteration. Rod

Janzen (1995), however, makes a provocative claim that "[a]lthough most social studies educators who publish articles and make presentations hesitate to commit themselves publicly to this position, one can find, when one looks behind the closed doors of social science classrooms, teachers adhering to this approach much of the time" (p. 141). In that case, even if civic education in schools can and does encourage more active and powerful approaches to citizenship preparation, overall, it still shares the limitations ascribed to the transmission model with the naturalization exam which more openly espouses it.

A final level of critique towards school-based social studies curricula has been their state-centered representation of citizenship, with lesser to no civil society orientation. Like the naturalization exam's focus on the institution of government, its functioning and the citizen's participation in it, too often civic curricula focus almost exclusively on the interactions between the individual and the state and those kinds of political interactions and competences that directly influence the state (Barton & Levstik, 2004). In these approaches, political participation is assumed to revolve around governmental institutions, leading to a view of citizenship that is defined and limited to the interactions with the state. While this is part of democratic citizenship, the authors argue that much of it happens, in fact, in the webs of social capital among society's members, the participation in the non-governmental organizations of civic society. It is through those organizations that most individuals have the greatest exposure and participation in democratic action, rather then direct participation in the political technicalities of the state. Historically, such organizations have in fact been central to democratization and justice-gaining of marginalized groups.

Attention to participation in civil society, even if absent from the naturalization exam and still receiving limited attention in schools, is as important in citizenship preparation as governmental policy analysis and knowledge of government and history. It is an approach that does not exclude preparation in the arena of formal politics, but rather includes it. While this third shared critique makes much sense in advocating a focus beyond the state-centered citizenship approaches, in the case of the naturalization exam it is important to note that the exam itself—not just its questions—is by its very existence a form of state-centered approach to citizenship. Not only is the exam required by the state, with content issued by the state, but the process surrounding this exam is precisely the means of connecting the prospective citizen with the state. That remains its main function, even when it falls short of accomplishing a powerful civic education, facilitating the formal entry of the new citizen into the polity. From the perspective of citizenship as legal status, this state-centric approach remains a necessary one, at least in the case of the naturalization process, if not in schools.

I have thus addressed three levels of criticism towards citizenship education within social studies that resonate with the kinds of criticism stated and implied against the naturalization exam. In assessing the claim that the naturalization exam follows a basic civics curriculum, the evaluation is less favorable than the officials' projected hopes for the exam. Yet it is also more favorable than vehement critics' default dismissal of the test. In fact, in demonstrating the potential and shortcomings of the two civic education contexts, it becomes apparent that, if the critiques against school curricula are correct, the civic exam indeed shares characteristics with them, just as stated by the officials. The

irony, of course, is that these similarities do not evoke the positive implications the supporters hoped for in making that comparative claim with school-based civics.

Conversely, the school civics practices are not necessarily a golden standard, a Platonic perfect form against which all other manifestations of civic preparation fall short. Nevertheless, the nature of school environments and, especially, the investment of dedicated educators who work towards improving civic education in schools, strongly position schools as the better location for civic education among the two assessed here. At the same time, there are possibilities to further actualize the potential of the naturalization exam, as I discuss in the conclusion. In the meantime, regardless of the depth currently achieved by this test, as a civic education curriculum nonetheless, it evokes and promotes—like all civic curricula—models of the desirable citizen it aims to shape. Aspiring citizens receive messages of expectation for their new roles. These models are communicated both through the exam's content and the naturalization rhetoric that surrounds it, and it is to these civic models that I turn next.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## Imaginaries of the Citizen in the New U. S. Naturalization Exam

> *Are there not some qualities of which all the citizens must be*
> *partakers if there is to be a city at all?*
> Plato, *Protagoras*

### The Importance of Citizenship Imaginaries

This question, as posed by Plato and as old as the classic works that have made it

central over the centuries, suggests that conceptions of the "good citizen" invoke visions

of the good society and the perpetual tension between best and actual regimes. The

concept of the regime, going beyond structures, constitutes a way of life, an ethos that

nurtures distinctive citizen types—whatever form it takes, a regime will always favor a

certain kind of citizen, with particular traits. Aristotle himself emphasized that a "good

citizen" is relative to a regime when he distinguished between being a good citizen and a

good person (Develin, 1973). One was a good citizen to the extent to which one upheld

and honored the constitution, and because there are different kinds of constitutions there

are also different kinds of good citizens. The imaginaries of the "good citizen" thus exist

in a zone of indeterminism between what is and what ought to be, the actual and the

ideal. These imaginaries are themselves contingent upon other preferred manifestations

of "the good" in other relevant areas. Derek Heater's (2004) extensive work on

citizenship, for example, captures the domino effect involved in setting standards for the

preparation of good citizens, and its dependence on achieving certain levels of agreement

on other fundamental social and political questions:

> The style of political education [and thus the formation of the good citizen] will
>
> be affected by the perceived purpose of the school system as a whole. This in turn
>
> may well be determined by the accepted purpose of the political regime. This

purpose itself will be related to the kind of involvement in politics expected of the individual. And this expectation will be shaped by basic assumptions concerning the way people can and should behave in society (p. 216-217).

While Derek Heater refers here to the school system as a site for political education, the same complexities arise in relation to the naturalization civics curriculum and its implied visions of citizenship. The naturalization exam highlights what is deemed important, communicates expectations of and to the prospective citizens and forms conceptions of participation as part of their new identities. Noah Pickus (1998), who was also a consultant in the exam' revision process, pointed out that revising the exam does and needs to raise questions of what conceptions of citizenship our naturalization policy embodies. This process communicates a message of expectation to the state's newest members, and in this chapter I examine this message. In other words, in placing the exam's questions and the official statements under the scrutiny of established typologies of the citizen, I assess the message of civic expectation that the state communicates through the naturalization process, echoing a question social educators have asked about various in-school civic education programs: "What political or ideological interests are embedded in or easily attached to varied conceptions of citizenship?" (Westheimer & Khane, 2004, p. 263).

Differing conceptions of citizenship and the role of citizens have been subjected to much debate and undertaken in other general overviews (e.g., Turner, 1993; Van Gunsteren, 1998; Faulks, 2000; Pikus, 2005) beyond the scope of this chapter. Citizenship as a contested, contextually-bound concept has by now become self-evident since even in democratic societies—where the concept is central to the definition of self-

government—unanimous agreement is far from being achieved. Basic citizenship questions of who belongs and how, and what their rights and responsibilities should be turn out to be far from basic, morphing from the classic models, elaborated through the rise of post-Enlightenment liberal thought and having shifted in light of globalization. Derek Heater (1990) contends that from its inception, the concept has accumulated a "cluster of meanings," including "a defined legal or social status, a means of political identity, a focus of loyalty, a requirement of duties, an expectation of rights and a yardstick of good behavior" (p. 163). Different contexts have thus generated differing emphases on the defining aspects of citizenship enumerated by Heater, and with these emphases come specific visions of the good citizens. A range of "good citizen" typologies have been created to correspond with ideals about what citizenship entails and what citizens can and need to do. For instance, T. H. Marshall's (1950) conceptualization of citizenship as a status position—implicitly focused on rights—sets forth a different image of the citizen than do recent critiques of his work that find it narrowly focused on status rights and incomplete in light of salient contemporary problems such as ethnic exclusions, asylum seekers, and the politics of identity. On the other hand, interpretations of citizenship in a global environment (e.g., Gaudelli, 2003; Merryfield & Wilson, 2005; Noddings, 2005; Heilman, 2007) would highlight citizen affiliations and responsibilities that reach beyond the borders of the state which confers the legal status, an image of the citizen who acts ethically and responsibly at the local and global levels.

Historical analyses of the U. S. context similarly illustrate differing concepts of citizenship and the citizen which depend both on political ideologies and the socio-economic climate. In his history of American citizenship, Michael Schudson (1998)

delineates dramatic changes in terms of definitions and manifestations of good

citizenship across three distinct periods—from the initial property-owning white men

who delegated authority to a local gentleman in a "politics of assent," to early-nineteenth

century "politics of parties" with elaborate campaigns where fighting, drinking and banter

were common, and finally to the "politics of information" of the Progressive reformers,

with their informative campaigns for "informed votes" to the point that it has become

impossible for voters to maintain the swift pace of self-information. While Schudson

(1998) is focusing on macro-level types of political participation, Rogers Smith (1997)

has focused on the specifics of social locations intersecting with ideologies of citizenship.

As others have done both before and more recently (Spinner, 1995; Nakano Glenn, 2002;

Bosniak, 2006; Takaki, 2008), Smith highlights the struggles between the liberal

democratic principles and blatantly discriminatory practices that marginalized and legally

denied access to full citizenship due to race, ethnicity, or gender. He warns that struggles

over full citizenship and membership are not over and that in the absence of vigilance, the

United States can erode previous egalitarian civic reforms through the lingering sprouts

of racism, sexism and nativism.

　　　　While the marginalization of individuals and groups has existed in disturbing

contrast with the ideals of equality and freedom, the dominant ideology has nevertheless

been that of liberal democracy. As shown in chapter three, the concept of the citizen as a

knowledgeable participant in social and political affairs has manifested itself from the

dawn of the nation in shaping schooling as a social institution. Yet, as social educators

Joel Westheimer and Joseph Khane (2004) remind us, policymakers, educators and

community activists may well pursue multiple agendas for change under the same banner

of furthering democracy and do so based on differing grounding beliefs. By examining these conceptualizations in democratic education programs nation-wide, they call attention to the spectrum of ideas about what good citizenship is and what good citizens do, finding what they called a "narrow and often ideologically conservative conception of citizenship." These conceptions, they argue, are not arbitrary choices or simply pedagogical limitations, but political choices with important political consequences. The same argument about the importance of these choices can be made about the naturalization exam's curriculum, and the manner in which it communicates visions of good citizenship to the newcomers, paralleling sociologist Amitai Etzioni's (2007) assertion that "[i]mplicit in all the citizenship tests are distinct conceptions of what a good citizen makes" (p. 358). Endowed by official endorsements with the important, if rather evasive, task of being "meaningful," this exam stands as a mirror reflecting current conceptualizations of democratic participation to new citizens.

Easily dismissible to some, this reflected image constitutes the newcomers' first official encounter with the various interpretations of citizenship in their new country. Even if only deemed as a symbol at best and a bureaucratic exclusionary exercise at worst, the projected image of the exam nevertheless communicates values, expectations, possibilities and limitations. In urging that in-school social studies not lose their potential for genuine democratic and citizenship education, E. Wayne Ross (2004) quoted the radical positions of Ludwig Fuerbach's philosophy to warn against preferring the representation to the reality, and called educators to be diligent to avoid merely reproducing the 'image' of the democratic citizen. Like Westheimer and Khane, his valid concern is that despite the "banner of democracy" that covers many activities for

citizenship preparation, they may, in fact, be missing the mark. However, Ross' Platonic

dismissal of the "image" as of lesser value than the "reality" of an actual democratic

system need not lead to a hasted dismissal of the images of citizenry projected by the test.

Such images are not necessarily divorced from "realities" because they make first

impressions, draw attention, speak of future possibilities and enable an assessment, albeit

partial, of what is valued in citizenship. Images leave lasting impressions, as they impact

human affect and new citizens can connect with their new roles by grasping the perceived

meanings that the new exam communicates to them. While in the previous chapter I

referred to the test's comparisons with in-school citizenship preparation and showed how

the two educational contexts share some aspirations and challenges, I turn here to its

implied images or imaginaries of the desirable United States citizen.

## Analytical approach

Four accounts of citizenship typologies help me situate this analysis—two

connect the naturalization exam with the realm of political philosophy, while the other

two with citizenship preparation in schools. Both arenas are relevant to the analysis, as

political philosophy orients us towards the wider parameters of understanding citizenry,

while accounts of civic education capture the visions embedded in schools—the contexts

where citizenship education regularly happens. From a political philosophy perspective, I

refer to Derek Heater's (2004) general citizen typology coupled with Amitai Etzioni's

(2007) test-directed categorization.[9] In the second category, I draw upon Walter Parker's

(1996) general categorization of citizenship visions found in schools, as well as the

empirical-based study of Joel Westheimer and Joseph Khane (2004). The school-based

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[9] This is among the rare accounts that connect typologies of citizenship to the U.S. naturalization exam.

citizenship models are also helpful in offering a more detailed interpretation of the general political philosophy typologies.

Using typologies comes with obvious limitations. As Heater (2004) also points out, "[a]ll classifications are in danger of being over-simplifications" and "policies pursued by any government, party, pressure group or school may incorporate more than one [position]. Even so, it is useful when examining any policies to be aware how the amalgam is constituted" (p. 217). The "amalgam" can hold multiple positions of civic participation that are in tension, not only among themselves, but also with the stated intentions of the state, the prevailing rhetoric that surrounds the practice of citizenship in the state, and the liberal democratic traditions to which it subscribes. The varied positions on the expected civic participation stand in for priorities that materialize drastically different beliefs about the capacities, equipping and commitments that new members need for the maintenance and growth of democracy. In examining "the amalgam" we are better positioned to name those tensions or inconsistencies which, in turn, may allow for better future formulations of the civic messages that state institutions communicate to their newest members.

The four typology accounts, therefore, do not necessarily juxtapose neatly, as a set of layered transparencies where each new one adds a new element to the other and form a clear, cohesive image. The transparencies image comes from Reba Page (1999) who, interested in the politics and aesthetics of representing knowledge, studied science curricula and their enactment in schools. Looking at the different manifestations of curriculum, she undertakes both a cultural and relational analysis, "treat[ing] curriculum as a set of multilayered transparencies, each piled one on top of the other" (p. 561). Her

conclusion was that eventually the curriculum became "muddled" in the midst of competing goals and expectations—in a sense, her transparencies did not fit neatly either.

In the case of the naturalization exam and the "transparencies" of citizen participation, competing expectations and interpretations also exist, but the tension is not surprising, since "existing tests are not explicitly designed to reflect any particular political philosophy and often are the result of political give-and-take. [Therefore], they typically reflect a mixture of concepts of the requirements of citizenship, but still tend to lean towards one pure type or another" (Etzioni, 2007, p. 358). Nor is the tension and complexity problematic from an analytic point of view. The issue, however, arises when considering the kind of overall message this examining process will communicate to the immigrants who want to become part of this society—what is expected of them? How are they to act as citizens? Visions of citizenship exist to project what one is expected to *be*. They are not rhetorical exercises alone, so while underlying tensions add complexity, they may also contribute to the less desirable "muddled" message of citizenship expectations for the country's newest citizens. As Etzioni (2007) claims, "[i]f the kind of citizenship tests used is not aligned with the governing conception of citizenship, testing will tend to undermine rather than help implement that conception" (p. 360).

### Desirable Citizen Qualities in Official Naturalization Rhetoric

Taken separately from the actual questions of the exam, the official statements endorsing and justifying the exam do not appear muddled at all. On the contrary, the emphasis on certain traits is consistent and clear throughout: patriotism and attachment to democratic principles, knowledge of the government system, as well as of the country's history as an inspiration for desirable attachment. In addition, participation in the

democratic process also receives a good share of mention. To illustrate the emphasis on these desirable traits, I quote from three relevant official documents delineating the state position and intentions for the exam: the USCIS Newsletter, its published guide to naturalization and the report issued on the naturalization test redesign project.

When you raise your hand and swear *allegiance*[10] to the United States, you really ought to *know* what you are swearing allegiance to. You ought to *internalize* by that time, the very *values* that make this country what it is, the very reason why you are raising your right hand. Studying for the test should itself carry special meaning. . . . Our goal with the new exam is to *inspire* immigrants to learn about the civic values of this *Nation*, so that after they take the oath of citizenship they will *participate* fully in our great democracy. The test should be a credible instrument we can use to gauge an immigrant's *appreciation* of our shared principles and a learning tool to help them *identify* with the history of their adopted nation. As such, the questions on the test should correspond to the high honors received following successful passage. (*USCIS Today* newsletter, Dec. 2006, "A message from USCIS director, Emilio T. Gonzales.")

U.S. citizens have many *responsibilities* other than the ones mentioned in the Oath. Citizens have a responsibility to *participate* in the political process by registering and *voting* in elections. Serving on a *jury* is another responsibility of citizenship. Finally, America becomes stronger when all of its citizens *respect* the different opinions, cultures, ethnic groups, and religions found in this country.

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[10] All emphases were added to the original versions to highlight these major themes in official statements

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*Tolerance* for differences is also a responsibility of citizenship. When you decide

to become a U.S. citizen, you should be willing to fulfill the responsibilities of

citizenship. We hope you will honor and *respect* the freedoms and opportunities

citizenship gives you. At the same time, we hope you become an *active member*

of your *community*. It is by participating in your community that you truly

become an American" (*A Guide to Naturalization*, USCIS, Sept 3. 2009).


[One] criterion of the redesign initiative was to create a testing process, and test

content, that is *meaningful* for applicants. USCIS envisioned enhancing the test's

meaningfulness by encouraging *civic learning* through the development of

concept-based test items and educational study materials provided through the

immigration process. These materials would focus on concepts such as the *rights*

and *responsibilities* of U.S. citizenship, rule of law, and inalienable rights.

Immigrants will be able to use the *knowledge* acquired through either self-study or

through classroom education to more effectively *integrate* themselves into their

*communities*. To meet this need, the USCIS Office of Citizenship will produce

educational materials to accompany the redesigned test (*Naturalization Test*

*Redesign Project: Civics Items Selection Analysis*, 2008, p. 3).

It is a message laced with recurrent key words conveying the essence of its focus:

internalization of and identification with values and principles, appreciation of and

allegiance to a unifying (and capitalized) Nation—with a simultaneous tolerance for its

different cultures—and participation in this Nation's formal democratic processes (such

voting and jury duty) as well as in the local communities that shape it. Synthesized, the

desirable ideal of the new citizen is of a person who demonstrates allegiance rooted in genuine appreciation and understanding of the country' foundational values for the purpose of meaningful participation in its communities. It is a three-fold attention to affect, intellect and action, and one that echoes to an extent the three-level IEA international civic study which assessed participants on their attitudes, knowledge and experience.[11] Parallels also exist with the National Council for the Social Studies Standards which also aim to help students develop the values, knowledge and skills necessary for democracy. There are differences among these assessments of citizenship and the categories are not equivalent—the overt focus on allegiance in the naturalization process, for example, is not emphasized in the IEA study or in the NCSS standards, while the naturalization exam includes nothing on global awareness or analytical skills when both NCSS and the IEA study do. Nevertheless, all three assessments emphasize not only knowledge and action, but also affective elements that underlie the overall attention to values and attitudes.

Attachment and allegiance as central elements in the naturalization rhetoric—in addition to commitments to knowledge and participation—are not surprising when taking into consideration the particular contexts that subject native-born persons to the similar assessments. In fact, political philosopher Michael Walzer (2004) points out in the classic "What does it mean to be an 'American'?" that questioning the allegiance of politicians, for example, is a common United States phenomenon where they engage in an "odd competition" to demonstrate patriotism. Meanwhile, in many other countries, their patriotism is simply assumed and other policy-oriented issues take precedence. Walzer

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[11] See Chapter 3 for further discussion of the IEA study and its focus

suggests the this interest in assessing attachment may be rooted in the fact that the "American" adjective is perceived as providing "no reliable information about the origins, histories, connections, or cultures of those whom it designates." (p. 591). A question that seems to ensue, he explains, is "What does it say, then, about their political allegiance?" (p. 591). In the historic absence of a "patrie"—a fatherland—as used, for example, in French national rhetoric, the "fatherland" of Americans seems to always lie elsewhere, in the "native land of one's ancestors," while in their current country, both maintaining a hyphenated identity and deciding to be free from it mark the unique American identity. It is an identity, as Walzer continues, based not on a

> merger or fusion, but only a fastening, a putting together: many-in-one. Perhaps
> the adjective "American" describes this kind of oneness. We might say,
> tentatively, that it points to the *citizenship*, not the nativity or nationality, of the
> men and women it designates. It is a *political adjective*, and its politics is liberal
> in the strict sense: generous, tolerant, ample, accommodating—it allows for the
> survival, even the enhancement and flourishing of manyness. ... If the manyness
> of America is cultural, *its oneness is political*, and it may be the case that men and
> women who are free from non-American cultures will commit themselves more
> fully to the American political system. Maybe cultural anonymity is the best
> possible grounding for American politics." (p. 593-94) [emphases added]

While Walzer's speculation on the advantages of becoming "hyphen-free" has been and will remain contested (e.g., Parker, 1996), his position does draw attention to the stance endorsed by many others, namely that the unity of the United States rests upon a commitment to liberal political ideals and practice. A fear of factions and dissolution

goes back to the Federalists, with a long-standing difficulty negotiating between unity and diversity (Parker, 1996), an anxiety over the accomplishment of unity that lingers to today's use of such naturalization exams.[12] In turn, Amitai Etzioni (2007), who does not advocate that immigrants become "plain Americans without any particular distinction, unique ethnic history or subculture," does stress the condition that "they accept the core of shared values and institutions" (p. 359). And, since not all citizens will undertake extensive political knowledge, a good foundation for allegiance is said to begin with the members' emotional attachment (Pickus, 1998).

Following these premises, it is not surprising that the state aims to assess the new citizens' commitments—both intellectual and affective—in an attempt to evaluate "attachment," a quality that can appear even more elusive in the case of the immigrant than that of the native-born. The fear of their detachment and alleged proclivity towards factions has lingered throughout the country's history, as increasing numbers of immigrants arrived seeking not only political but mainly economic advantages. This fear of a self- or group-seeking new citizen who will not appropriate the purposes of the nation infiltrates, therefore, the USCIS messages directed at new citizens. We notice a telling use of the word "hope" in the official statements on naturalization—"We hope you will honor and respect the freedoms and opportunities citizenship gives you." Hope, in this case, appears as an unconvinced desire. In fact, it resonates with a similar use of the word in the French context of naturalization. There, probably precisely because there is a historic "patrie" to refer back to, officials welcome new members with a similar rhetoric of uncertainty. In a context where the national anthem calls upon the "children of the

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[12] Chapter One addresses further the historical roots of testing loyalty that continue into today's naturalization rhetoric and exam.

Patrie," officials still lace their naturalization welcome speeches with persistent implications that the new members may not adopt France's foundational principles. When an official states "I hope you will make them your own," the uncertainty embedded makes for a paradox—while the overt intention of the ceremony welcomes the newcomer to partake into the unifying liberal democratic tradition, the implied message is a reminder that the new members are still outsiders, even at that solemn moment of oath-taking (Mazouz, 2008).

Affective attachment, however, is not meant to be acquired and demonstrated in a mindless and disengaged fashion—on the contrary, it is conveyed as both knowledge- and action-based. As Emilo Gonzales urges the prospective citizen in his open letter, "you really ought to *know* what you are swearing allegiance to." While naturalization ceremonies may contribute to the affective response (Pickus, 1998; Szucs, 1998; Mazouz, 2008), so could the naturalization exam questions which were envisioned to "*inspire* immigrants to learn about the civic values of this *Nation*" and thus fulfill this knowledge requirement. In turn, knowledge and attachment are meant to precede and equip for the participation expectation, "so that after they take the oath of citizenship they will *participate* fully in our great democracy." An inner tension fissures this vision, however. If the test were to simply inspire citizens to further prepare for democratic participation, and to do so more thoroughly, that would be a desirable aim. However, these claims also suggest that success at the exam itself may enable one to "fully participate" in democratic processes immediately after the oath of allegiance. If that participation refers to voting and jury—directly mentioned as citizenship responsibilities—then indeed the new citizen would be able to do so. However, that would not be because of adequate preparation, but

because of the new legal status gained through naturalization. The other kinds of participation that the official statements suggest—community-based action, integration and even informed voting itself—require a different preparation, one that simply passing the current test cannot ensure either. The good intentions of basing attachment on knowledge and framing knowledge as generating participation make knowledge central. This is a noble position. These intentions could, however, remain nearly fruitless if mastering the exam's content through the one hundred questions were to be the only standard of preparation.

Because the *System of Government* subtheme is dominant among the one hundred questions, comprising over a third of the complete question set, the focus on the knowledge-base remains consistent between the official rhetoric and the questions themselves. In addition, the many history questions may indeed act as inspiration for pride and attachment, as endorsers expected. This consistency is nevertheless fragile. Chapter three showed that the exam content had better equipping potential than the previous one, but while some questions might enhance understating of participatory democracy if used well, others are perplexing in their apparent triviality or troubling disengagement from controversial topics.

The exam can also easily fall short of its potential when applicants resort only to memorization, by themselves, without attempt to address some of the questions' implications. Even the USCIS materials that expand on the brief answers are still quick sketches of the afferent topics. The ways some questions briefly brush against complexities of U. S. history and the mechanisms of participatory democracy are to be themselves acknowledged as positive changes, but they remain far from what a powerful

civic preparation could and should be able to achieve. In the meantime, questions about responsibilities, especially community-based participation, are nearly absent. Therefore, when juxtaposed with the actual exam content and questions, the expectations of the knowledgeable, attached citizen, active in the democratic process become more "muddled" than what the official statements suggest. Further juxtaposition with a second set of "transparencies"—those of citizenship typologies—adds to the complicated message of citizen ideals and expectations communicated by the new naturalization exam along with its rhetoric.

**"What kind of citizen?" – Four Typologies and the Naturalization Exam**

The four typology accounts that orient the analysis here point to the tensions that affect the overall message received by prospective citizens and help highlight possible interpretations of the dominant citizen types envisioned by this exam. The official statements suggest that the state's ideal of the new citizen is of a person who demonstrates allegiance rooted in genuine appreciation and understanding of the country' foundational values for the purpose of meaningful participation in its communities. When this message and the actual exam content are placed against four typology "transparencies," in each case there is not a singular dominant pattern, but rather a juxtaposition of two. Therefore, the syntagms I create in each case as headers for each section—such as the "the participatory patriot" or "the liberal communitarian"—are meant to demonstrate the "amalgam," as Derek Heater (2004) put it, that these combined messages of citizenship create. If in several cases the union will seem unlikely—for example, the strong differences between liberal and communitarian positions—this

surprising combination further emphasizes the complicated citizenship imaginary that emerged in the political struggle over the creation and implementation of such an exam.

**Derek Heater's Participatory Patriot**

Derek Heater (2004) places his typology of citizenship within a historical overview of its civic ideals both in politics and in the educational approaches undertaken to achieve those ideals. He proposes a typology based on the variation of citizen participation found at the heart of liberal democratic thought. In considering such elements as perception of individual capacity and roles, level of political involvement, the overall purpose of politics and the formal approach to political education, he proposes citizenship models under the headings of five main political doctrinal positions:

- Participatory/Democratic

- Conservative/Elitist

- Totalitarian/Manipulative

- Nationalist/Integrative

- World/Universalist

Two of the five are not immediately relevant to our discussion for the simple reasons that the United States is not a totalitarian regime and neither the naturalization exam nor the official statements involve a global orientation. Of special interest, however, are the remaining three models. The Participatory/Democratic and Nationalist/Integrative models are the first to stand out as directly connected to the citizen ideal suggested by the naturalization exam content and its supporting rhetoric. Their message is that the desirable ideal of the new citizen is a person who demonstrates allegiance rooted in genuine appreciation and understanding of the country's foundational

values for the purpose of meaningful participation in its communities. Under the Participatory/Democratic model the 'masses' are deemed to posses the common sense necessary for political participation—in contrast with elitist models—beneficial to the perpetuation of the regime. Citizens' political involvement should be maximized and opportunities for participation used fully—the overall purpose of politics is to maximize individual freedom and autonomy, in tune with classical liberalism, while the aim of political education policies is to increase knowledge and understanding of the system and participative skills. The Jeffersonian ideals that prompted the state sponsorship of public education fit predictably well under this model and are also mirrored, albeit in a more appeased manner, in the naturalization rhetoric. Its focus on understanding and appreciating liberal democratic values, the knowledge of governmental mechanisms as well as the prompting towards participation all lead towards this particular interpretation.

Even if the particular content of the exam may come across as perfunctory and falls short of what many scholars consider relevant citizen knowledge, its emphases still bear an echo of participatory democracy. Countering the standing argument of elitists, Derek Heater (2004) concedes that,

> If a sample of citizens are presented with a sample of pre-formulated questions, their total scores on knowledge and interests criteria, as the elitists assert, are likely to be dismally low. But ask the same group if they have worries and irritations, if there are matters which they would like to see handled differently, then individually these people are most likely to reveal a political consciousness about particular issues that impinge on their lives. (p. 222-23)

Lack of specific factual knowledge about political systems is not, in this view, synonymous with political apathy and lack of interest. Granted, a participatory model does rely on important skills and knowledge, but not to the extent to which elitist model supporters would suggest. On the contrary, since the large majority is deemed capable of participation and is also affected by political choices, this large majority is encouraged to participate. In this sense, even if the knowledge acquired through the citizenship test is solely symbolic, it would be sufficient to at least inspire the new citizen and raise awareness about his or her own capacity for participation. As officials have hinted in public statements, participation in this exam becomes an invitation to a more meaningful, long-term participation. Especially when new citizens arrive, as many do, from political traditions that have not historically acquired the level of democratic engagement experienced in the United States, the content conveyed by the exam stands as an important reminder that the new citizenship status is an invitation to participation, perhaps radically different from what the new citizen had previously encountered.

At the same time, although Derek Heater positions the Conservative/Elitist model as a "mirror image" of the Participatory/Democratic one—suggesting that the two constitute opposite orientations—some elitist elements can still be traced in the current official approach to naturalization. An emphasis on loyalty and the preservation of traditional values are core elements in this model and receive some attention in the naturalization rhetoric as well. Alternatively, because these are not accompanied by other cornerstone elitist views, the focus on allegiance could be also incorporated in the patriotism focus of the Nationalist/Integrative model. This is the second relevant typology to the naturalization exam, where the citizen is still deemed capable of participation and

expected to play his or her role, but with a focus on supporting national cohesion and greatness. In this view, political education policies support national consciousness and patriotism. The hefty section on U. S. history questions, landmark decisions in the democratic struggle and glimpses of iconic characters are far from subtle indicators that the current naturalization exam aims at fostering pride and patriotism in the newcomer. The official statements also confirm this view, with a rhetoric of inspiration and identification that positions the United States as a great nation which will incorporate the new citizen and demands his or her loyalty in return.

The relevance of two separate models confirms Amitai Etzioni's (2007) assessment that naturalization policies and tests rarely fit one typology alone. As a result, under the juxtaposition of these two models, the naturalization exam and rhetoric lead us, perhaps unsurprisingly, to the imaginary of a *participatory patriot*. In this case, the official endorsements and the exam contents remain consistent in projecting that image. It is an image endowed with positive possibilities where the two components—liberal participation and patriotism—need to remain in balance. In the following typological interpretations, however, the projected image of the desirable citizen is less clear and, according to these analysts, less desirable itself—under these models, the naturalization exam falls short of what it would need to communicate to new citizens in a country that not only has a vastly multicultural presence, but is also a central player in an increasingly connected global environment.

## Amitai Etzioni's Liberal Communitarian

Sociologist Amitai Etzioni's (2007) citizen typology, also focused on levels of participation, is especially telling because of its direct attention to naturalization exams,

both in the United States and abroad. Written during the last stages of the U. S. exam's revision process, the evaluation is based on the previous version as well as the piloted questions of the new exam, all placed in the context of political theory. Similar to Derek Heater's, Etzioni's categorization includes a discussion of authoritarian views on citizenship which is not relevant to the current analysis. The other three categories, however—libertarian, liberal and neo-communitarian—help illuminate some of the inconsistencies between the naturalization rhetoric and the exam itself, contributing to that potentially "muddled" message communicated to new citizens.

A purely libertarian approach to citizenship and the afferent test, Etzioni explains, would emphasize the status of citizen and its minimal requirements for participation through volunteer voting, limited tax payments and abiding by a basic, non-infringing set of laws. A corresponding test would simply establish the applicant's knowledge of how to vote, pay taxes, and familiarity with the content of those laws. This is a "thin" concept of citizen participation since it addresses little else—in fact, libertarians may not even favor a test at all. These basic elements were dominant in the previous version of the test, being assessed as "thin," "largely cognitive" and libertarian. In Etzioni's analysis, that test was not trying to assess if the responders have developed any commitments to shared American values and superficially addressed responsibilities. "A proper citizenship test," he argues, "should establish both whether [immigrants] are acculturated (on some key fronts) and are fully aware of their right to keep their differences in many other areas" (p. 359). These "key fronts" represent the foundation of democratic community commitments and are key to Etzioni's preferred citizen type—the communitarian— discussed in more detail below, after the liberal model.

Although similarly focused on rights in the Marshallian (1950) tradition, the liberal perspective further emphasizes the participatory facet of citizenship in relation to the state, with citizens as political entities "whose essential nature is most fully realized in a democratic society in which there is widespread and vigorous participation in political life" (Rawls, 1993, p. 26). Corresponding tests thus aim to determine if prospective citizens are aware of their important rights such as free speech, association or religion as well as the responsibilities for political participation that ensure the perpetuation of those rights. Naturalizing immigrants would thus have to be more thoroughly prepared for liberal citizenship participation. In some manifestations of the liberal approach, however, this preparation would not necessarily mean the acquisition of thorough political knowledge—instead, lawful permanent residents' presence in the country is deemed as civil society membership and has moral priority in relation to political society (Carens, 2004). While this is not a shared view among liberal thinkers who consider political knowledge as essential to sustaining a democratic society, from Joseph Carens' perspective, normative values such as loyalty, patriotism and identity can only be encouraged and emerge over time. The state should not impose them as expectations, and certainly not do so through naturalization tests. In a sense, views such as Carens'—who debated Noah Pickus over the necessary ease of naturalization requirements—are indirectly being fulfilled in the new naturalization exam.

This test emphasizes knowledge of governmental mechanisms, of rights and some level of formal responsibility such as voting, jury duty and paying taxes, as well as elements of the democratic struggle in historical perspective. This latter category can function as inspiration for attachment to these foundational values, but the test itself does

not directly assess their appropriation as it aimed at doing in other countries. In Germany, for example, earlier versions of state-level exams included controversial questions in which applicants were asked their opinions on matters of civil liberties for certain marginalized groups such as homosexuals. None of the U. S. questions involves evaluative and affective elements—in a strict sense, therefore, despite the official statements on the importance of value appropriation, the exam cannot assess it. In fact, according to political sociologist Christian Joppke (2010), the test should not attempt to test inner dispositions if it were to respect liberal principles: "Ever since Kant, it is a key precept of liberalism that law and public policy can regulate only the external behavior of people, not their inner motivations. And this is not just a philosophical wish but hard legal fact in the constitutional state." Despite the rhetorical statements on attachment and values, the test itself can only address a certain level of knowledge that precedes more thorough understanding for political involvement.

The third, neo-communitarian, concept of citizenship—one favored by Etzioni himself—would define a well-crafted citizenship exam as an important instrument to assess the prospective citizen's understanding of the country's democratic values and its cementing elements of nationhood and community. Its members participate not mainly as rights bearers but especially as carriers of mutual responsibilities. Although in other perspectives the nation may appear as an abstract concept, too remote to conjure feelings of attachment and loyalty, the communitarian view is that the nation *is* a community invested in a state. A citizen, therefore, has both law-abiding responsibilities toward the political entity and value-supporting commitments toward the national community.

Neo-communitarian core assumptions have been critiqued in comparison with liberal democratic principles because of the contrast that emerges between the two ideological positions (Etzioni, Volmert & Rothschild, 2004). In contrast with Locke' and Mills' liberalism, where individual assessments of the good are central and common policies are achieved through contract negotiation, the communitarian position strives towards the priority of a common, "social," formulation of the good. While liberalism's core stands upon universalism—the common rights regardless of location— communitarianism emphasizes particularism—duties to one's groups such as family and communities. Subcultures and particularist loyalties are not perceived as a threat to social cohesion as long as a common foundation is built through sharing values and institutions (e.g., the constitution, bill of rights, democratic way of life, a commitment to mutual tolerance). Additionally, neo-communitarians continue to argue that the fear of an excessive imposition of duty has led to an excessive concern with rights and too little care for responsibility. Still, the rights-responsibility pair need not be a false dichotomy: the fulfillment of responsibilities sustains and ensures the conditions where rights can endure (Etzioni, 1995).

Since liberty and social order are mutually supportive in an "invertive symbiosis" (Glendon, 1991)—the more one area grows, the more it erodes the other— communitarians apply the same principle to the balance between self and community. Communities need encompassing webs formed in public gathering places and the third sector, volunteer organizations to shoulder some of the burden in the decreasing welfare state—mutual is thus help envisioned as community revitalization as opposed to group-oriented charity. For over fifteen years, these associations have been portrayed as a

solution to the problems of neoliberalism, to reinvigorate the public sphere, foster social

capital and strengthen active citizenship (Fyfe, 2005). Non-profit organizations have

become the central focus of neo-communitarian strategies to resolve local problems of

exclusion (Jessop, 2002) while some have even suggested, despite critiques, that

increasing "partnership" between the state and third sector organizations was the solution

to "modern realities" (Salamon, 1999).

Perceiving classical liberal citizenship as too rights- and individually-oriented,

communitarians urge that it be "transformed for more communal and solidaristic

sensibilities" (Hollenbach, 1995, p. 143). The two need not be mutually exclusive, but, as

political philosopher Jean Bethke Elstein (1995) argues, the dualities of individualism

and communitarianism can be avoided in "sketch[ing] a picture of the communitarian

individual, stressing both the communitarian and the individual registers in this complex

composite" (p. 99). Citizenship tests, then, need to go beyond testing factual

knowledge—be it of national history or rights—into an assessment of the future citizen's

readiness to assume his or her role in the community both locally and nationally. This

perspective, of course, implies sensitive notions of acculturation—which the test

preparation would promote—but supporters argue that they only concerns the nation's

foundational values and should not translate into or be understood as an erasure of

individual subcultures.

Amitai Etzioni evaluates the new test as "much more neo-communitarian" when

compared to its past version—aiming more specifically at applicants' knowledge of their

rights as Americans *as well as* some of their responsibilities represents an improvement.

Also, when defining the community at a macro-level—with the nation as a community

invested in the state and whose preservation new citizens would support by undertaking its values—the questions on democratic tenets or the country's history are to be evocative of major U.S. values. Yet, even if Etzioni does not state this as directly, the exam falls short of the movements' ideals. It does not contain any questions about local-level civic action, a key element in communitarianism. In other countries that use naturalization exams, especially in the United Kingdom and the Netherlands—exam procedures pay attention not only to the political elements of government, but also to community-level issues. Volunteerism, communal service, how to be a good neighbor, responsibility towards one's children and elders or towards those most in need are absent from the U.S. exam.

Local community-based action, nevertheless, is present in the official statements on naturalization, generating a gap between their respective images of the ideal citizen. The official positions reflect both liberal and communitarian positions—perhaps in tune with the trend of placing more responsibility at the community level—but the exam itself remains at a basic liberal level of knowledge with the local-level communitarian details lacking. Perhaps Etzioni's own position—as a supporter of communitarian political ideals and action—prompt him to see more communitarian potential in the new exam than there currently is. He is also basing his assessments on the piloted questions of the new exam, some of which have been, in fact, removed from the finalized format. The gap between a certain potential and what seems to be the current implementation emerges in this case again—if the impression left on the prospective citizen is of a focus on the knowledge of the governmental system, certain rights and historical events, then even the new version

remains a dominantly liberal test, with a traditional implementation, and only tangentially communitarian.

## Walter Parker's Progressive Traditionalist

Social educator Walter Parker (1996), interested in the civic education of youth, identified three models that suggest different afferent citizen types—the "traditional," the "progressive," and the "advanced." Traditionalists, Parker explains, emphasize an understanding of how government works, traditional subject area content and core democratic values. It is evident by now how this model reflects the major elements of he new naturalization exam. To this focus "progressives" add a greater emphasis on civic participation in many forms—including but not limited to the communitarian-type local action favored by Etzioni—while "advanced" citizenship further adds careful attention to tensions between pluralism and assimilation in multicultural states. The emphasis on multiculturalism and its affirmation, not only toleration of difference, is a key element to Parker's "advanced" vision of citizenship. His major concern is that despite the progressive wing's expectation that citizens act upon their roles, this view of citizenship minimalizes social and cultural heterogeneity. According to this interpretation—countering the cultural "anonymity" suggested by Michael Walzer as the basis American politics—both the traditional and progressive views stress the civil and political relations among members to the detriment of diversity. In fact, it is as if these members were people who transcended difference:

> By distancing matters of race, gender, and ethnicity from the central concerns of governmental and direct democracy, the progressives, like the traditionalists, are limited in their ability to advance contemporary thinking about the

unity/difference tension or what is arguably the central citizenship question of our time: "How can we live together justly, in ways that are mutually satisfying, and that leave our differences, both individual and group, intact and our multiple identities recognized?"

Political knowledge and action within the existing democratic system—both emphasized to varying degrees by the naturalization exam and official statements— remain important foundations for "advanced" citizenship. Parker contends that human dignity, individual liberty, equality, and popular sovereignty need to be preserved but also deepened and protected both from individualism and hostility towards diversity. "This is a citizenship," Parker proposes, "that embraces individual differences, multiple group identities, and a unifying political community all at once." While the specifics of its accomplishment are not addressed, the task he envisions is recognizing individual and group difference and uniting them horizontally in democratic moral discourse. This is a discourse of authenticity, responsibility, negotiation, and obligation—a discourse of participation, where the necessary citizen qualities are practical judgment, a shared fund of civic knowledge, and deliberation skills and dispositions. And, all this, in the context of knowing that the "Enlightenment values clearly are essential and must be retained as bearing walls . . . [but] they no longer are of sufficient power, however, to compose the whole structure . . . for they are too easily appropriated by the individualistic obsession with rights, self-interest, and property."

However, Parker's concern with the degeneration of liberal democratic practice into an egotistic rights-chase is not the same as that of communitarianism. In fact, Parker interprets their calls for organic communities (e.g., Etzioni, 1993) as a fear of social

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heterogeneity due to perceiving difference as a source of danger. Even if difference is tolerated and tolerance is valued as a civic virtue, it retains its "reluctant" quality that prefers a transcendence of difference and constraint of social and cultural diversity. Tolerance is not sufficient, Parker argues, as he highlights the contradiction embedded in the U.S. liberal democracy's celebration of pluralism while persistently "shortchanging" minority and marginalized groups. Unity and varying degrees of exclusion co-exist in frustrating ways requiring a reconceptualization of the relationship of unity to difference. This would allow political oneness to exist alongside social and cultural diversity, not to replace it.

Yet political oneness alone is emphasized in the naturalization process and tolerance specifically appears in the official statements, echoing what others have found in terms of the U.S. official policy towards diversity (Bloemraad, 2006). The government's role is to ensure that individuals and institutions do not oppress others based on different social locations, but it does not make it its role to affirm and promote difference in the same sense that Canada, for example, has taken up in its official stance on multiculturalism. Under this interpretation, the official vision of the naturalized citizen will fall short of Parker's preferred view of "advanced" citizenship, both when the exam and the official rhetoric are concerned. In fact, even if tolerance of diversity appears in the statements, the exam questions do not address diversity and all—with the exception of the two questions pointing to the presence of Native Americans and the historic enslavement of African peoples. According to this criterion, the exam does not fall into the "advanced" category of citizenship at all.

Meanwhile, the exam's focus on basic civic knowledge and U.S. history, along with some of its heroic figures, places it mainly under the "traditional" type, while its questions on citizenship responsibilities and ways to clearly partake into the democratic process tangentially place it in the "progressive" wing—a progressive traditionalist, as it were. Parker's argument is not against these categories. A shared fund of civic knowledge is essential as is a sense of belonging to a long tradition of increasing liberty. The "advanced" vision of the citizen acknowledges that it is important that members— either by birth or naturalization—understand the traditions that sponsor a continual deepening of democracy and rethinking of its tenets. They are, after all, part of a country that slowly and painfully achieved irreplaceable liberal democratic landmarks. So the naturalization exam questions that address the workings of the U.S. governmental system and include nods of recognition to some of its major figures are not problematic in themselves.

According to Parker's interpretation, however, the problem arises when the concept of citizenship and what a citizen should be able to know and do stops at that level. This is a level where the main message received by the new citizen is that the democratic struggles of the nation are to be celebrated and cherished but not necessarily continued. They represent accomplished, glorious chapters in the nation's epic narrative. A citizen would participate within the current structures—for example vote, act as a juror and participate in local community, as the officials endorsements also state—but he or she would not have a genuine sense of this democracy as a path that is continually shaped and sustained as a creative, constructive process. It is dangerous, nevertheless, to view democracy as already accomplished, as something to only protect and not create through

work that arises anew. Such forces—the view of democracy as already accomplished, Parker suggests, along with the fear of dissolution—are immediate obstacles and threats to achieving the more "advanced" visions of the citizen.

**Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne's Responsible Participant**

Based on a two-year study of school-based educational programs aimed at democracy, social educators Joel Westheimer and Joseph Kahne (2004) offer three visions of citizenship that were helpful in making sense of the variation found in these programs —"personally responsible," "participatory," and "justice oriented" citizens. These three categories were chosen as descriptors of their findings having satisfied three main criteria—they aligned well with prominent theoretical perspectives on democratic and citizenship participation; they highlighted important differences in educators' conceptions of democratic educational goals (framing distinctions with significant implications for the politics of democratic education); and they articulate ideas that resonate with education practitioners (e.g., teachers, administrators, and curriculum designers). These three visions, therefore, have significant implications for policymaking and curriculum formation, as each reflects a relatively different set of theoretical and curricular goals. The narrow and often ideologically conservative conception of citizenship which they found embedded in many current efforts at teaching for democracy reflects political choices with political consequences. For example, a law-abiding personally responsible citizen who votes and donates food to the local food bank participates in a different political project than the justice-oriented citizen who, according to the authors, would critically assess why people are hungry and would act to eradicate

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root causes. Such citizen typologies are relevant to democratic civic education because they also imply types of civic preparation and curricula.

The first, most common, vision is the preparation of a personally responsible citizen who acts responsibly in his or her own community by obeying laws, picking up litter, giving blood, or donating money to charity. This kind of citizen ideal will focus on building character and personal responsibility by emphasizing honesty, integrity, self-discipline and hard work, based on the assumption that such members of society are able to improve it by dutifully offering their individual efforts to immediate social problems. The second model focuses on the formation of participatory citizens and emphasizes "preparing students to engage in collective, community based efforts" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). Coupled with its community focus, which might connect it more closely with the communitarian positions, comes a view of civic participation that transcends particular community problems in order to foster common understandings and collective commitments. This is a "thicker" vision of democratic citizenship, with a more "visible" citizen who would need to know how governmental and other social organizations function, learn how to participate in them, and thus influence the decision-making processes. The basic assumption here, the authors explain, is that "to solve social problems and improve society, citizens must actively participate and take leadership positions within established systems and community structures" (Westheimer & Kahne, 2004, p. 240). This is the model most reflected in the current naturalization process and exam, echoing Derek Heater's Democratic/Participatory model, as well as Parker's "progressive traditionalist." Since the structures that allow for participation are already in place and considered efficient and suitable, the "participatory" citizen does not focus on

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the larger concepts that allow him or her to assess the entire system through critical thinking and consider the need of a systematic change.

In contrast, the third vision of the citizen—the justice-oriented citizen, which the authors previously called the "social-reconstructionist"— is the "the least commonly pursued" and argues that citizens should be educated to and given opportunities to assess and understand the interplay of social, economic and political forces. Attention shifts in this vision from charity and volunteerism to social movements and how to effect social change. Unlike the communitarians, these citizens are not simply concerned with community declines and their revitalization through mutual help and attention to the public sphere. The justice-oriented citizen would aim to understand and affect the structural roots of a situation, and then envision collective undertakings for change. At the same time, in this vision, citizens would not attempt to prescribe the desirable justice approaches—unlike communitarians, in the vein of the liberal tradition, this type of citizen would recognize that visions of the greater good will differ, with individuals and groups just needing to learn to communicate across difference in contentious political arenas.

The personally responsible citizen type receives the most attention in American schools through character education and community service movements. While these aims are valuable and noble, overly focusing on this approach can obscure the need for collective and public sector initiatives, glossing over the need for systematic solutions— personal qualities such as kindness and willingness for altruism can become ways to avoid politics and policy (Barber, 1992; Westheimer & Kahne, 2000). The visions of obedience and patriotism that this type supports can also become at odds with the

democratic agenda. Westheimer and Kahne (2004) argue that such characteristics are not

inherently democratic—even leaders of totalitarian states might want to have good

neighborhoods with responsible citizens. Yet these alone do not foster critical

engagement and social action that democracy requires to perpetuate. In fact, this type is a

conservative and individualistic conception of the citizen. However, while the authors

argue for the participatory and justice-oriented agendas of citizenship, they also caution

that they could easily just become academic-level exercises that are not, in fact,

participatory and that are not in actuality superior to the individually responsible citizen

type who actually participates in his or her local activities. This caution is important

when it comes to easily dismissing the naturalization rhetoric and its call to local

participation. In other words, a new citizen who takes personal action to improve his or

her surroundings and add to the immediate well-being of others is a preferred citizen type

over one whose preoccupation with justice is an intellectual exercise without eventual

action.

Through its actual content, however, the naturalization exam's participatory

elements are not in danger of over-focusing on personal, community-based responsibility.

On the contrary, the content is aimed mainly at state and political action, rather than the

community level, resonating with the state-centered citizenship curricula discussed in

chapter two. The naturalization exam's focus is on the institution of government, its

functioning and the citizen's participation in it, focusing, like many in-school curricula,

on the interactions between the individual citizen and the state (Barton & Levstik, 2004).

Political participation is thus implied to revolve around governmental institutions, leading

to a view of citizenship that is defined and limited to the interactions with the state,

within its existing structures, despite the message about local participation that is incorporated in the naturalization rhetoric. In remaining state-centric, this focus also falls short of the transformational civic action ideals envisioned either by Walter Parker or Joel Westheimer and Joseph Khane.

## New Americans: State-oriented and Informed?

In the attempt to offer new citizens a "meaningful," naturalization experience, the state makes the exam and its supporting rhetoric into a mirror reflecting to them current conceptualizations of democratic participation. Going beyond rhetorical exercises, imaginaries of citizenship thus communicate priorities, and their alignment with governing conceptions of citizenship can help strengthen those conceptions and values. But the alignment is not necessarily easy to achieve, nor are single visions of the citizen emerging clearly from the naturalization process. Multiple positions of civic participation stand in tension—either 1) between the official statements and the actual exam, or 2) between their combined message and the visions for democratic participation identified by current theorists and civic education practitioners.

The first kind of tension has become clearer by holding the exam content and examining approach against the naturalization rhetoric, demonstrating that despite official emphasis on allegiance and local civic participation, the exam itself addresses neither directly. It remains mainly focused on a state-centered, fact-based understanding of procedural democracy and history. Allegiance-orientation may be thus assumed through the attention given to inspiring landmark events in U.S. history and their afferent heroic figures. These figures, in turn, could be assumed to inspire participation even if, again, the exam content itself only refers to participation within the parameters of

democratic institutional procedures. Still, the lack of a clearer alignment between the rhetoric and the content of the exam can easily degenerate into Amitai Etzioni's (2007) warning that in such cases testing will likely undermine rather than help implement the intended conceptions of governing and citizenship in the new country.

The second level of tension has emerged through holding the combined message of the exam and its rhetoric, as fissured as it may be, against the four citizen typologies that propose necessary models for the fuller realization of the democratic project and for meeting upcoming socio-political challenges. In each case, at least two dominant positions have combined to define visions of citizenship currently projected by the naturalization process—"the participatory patriot," "the liberal communitarian," "the progressive traditionalist" and "the responsible participant. " These juxtapositions demonstrate the "amalgam," as Derek Heater put it, that these combined messages of citizenship create. This is especially the case when a surprising combination occurs, such as "progressive traditionalist" or "liberal communitarian" citizen that further highlights the complexity of attempting to incorporate multiple priorities in coherent imageries of citizenship that emerge through political struggle.

As shown throughout the chapter, the four typologies have different intentions and criteria for what would make the most desirable citizen—in fact, some stand in stark contrast. Walter Parker, for example, who proposes the need for the "advanced" visions of the citizen, attuned to the multicultural realities of the new country, would take issue with Amitai Etzioni's communitarian visions of "comfortable" local participation and even with Derek Heater's democratic participant who mostly understands the workings of government, and rights and responsibilities in an individual-oriented, liberal tradition.

But even if "ideals" differ across the four typologies, the telling part is that the U. S.

naturalization process does not truly reach advanced levels across any of the proposed

typologies.

If these levels of citizenship involvement—in each of the models—were to be

placed on a continuum from more fundamental approaches to what are, in the respective

authors' views, the desirable (advanced) ones, the naturalization exam would not reach

the right end of the spectrum in any case (Figure 1).

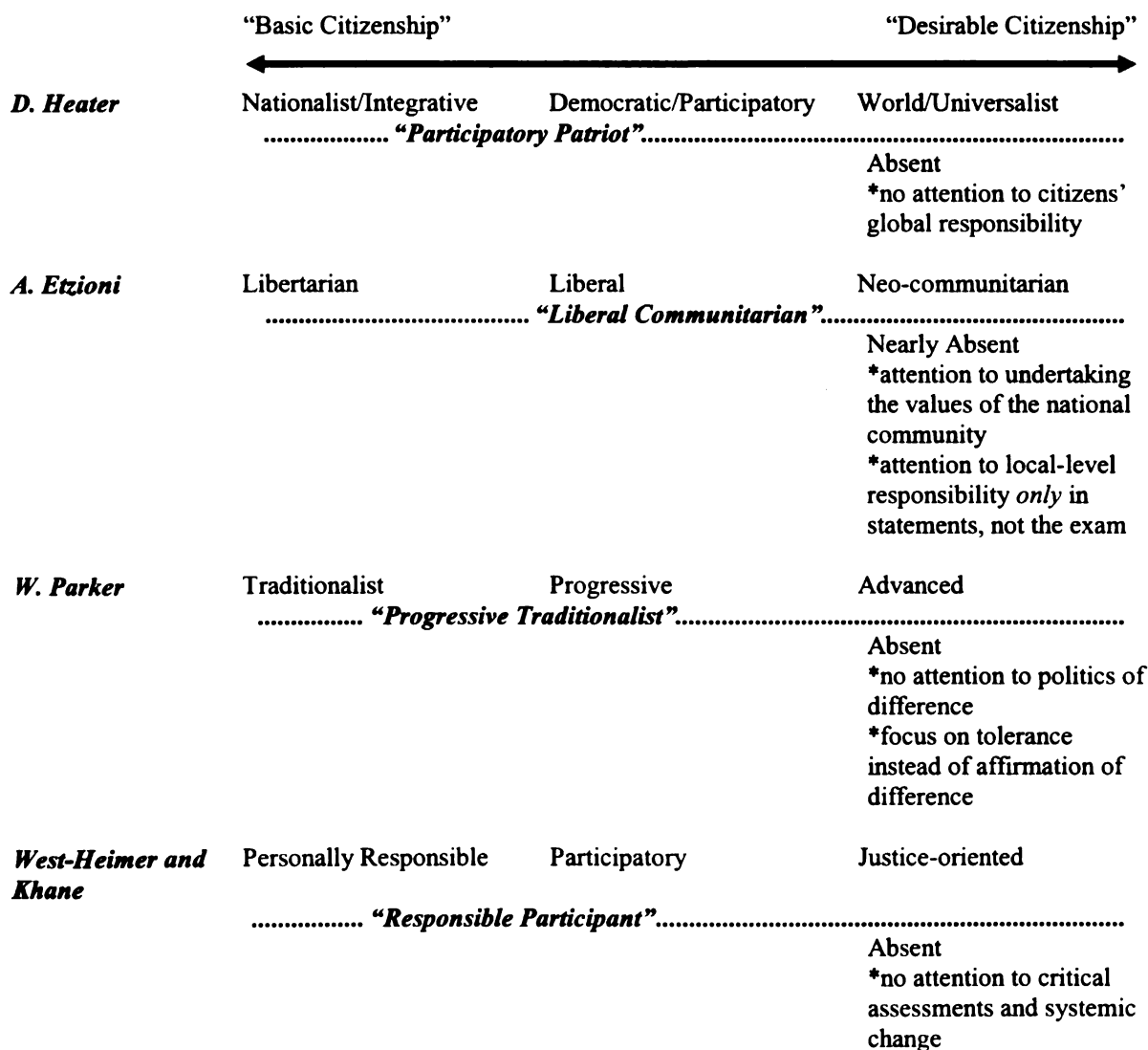| | "Basic Citizenship" | | "Desirable Citizenship" |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ◄──────────────────────────────────────────► | | |
| *D. Heater* | Nationalist/Integrative<br>.................... *"Participatory Patriot"*............. | Democratic/Participatory<br>................................ | World/Universalist<br>................................<br>Absent<br>*no attention to citizens'<br>global responsibility |
| *A. Etzioni* | Libertarian<br>........................................ *"Liberal Communitarian"*.... | Liberal<br>........................................ | Neo-communitarian<br>........................................<br>Nearly Absent<br>*attention to undertaking<br>the values of the national<br>community<br>*attention to local-level<br>responsibility *only* in<br>statements, not the exam |
| *W. Parker* | Traditionalist<br>................ *"Progressive Traditionalist"*................ | Progressive<br>................................ | Advanced<br>................................<br>Absent<br>*no attention to politics of<br>difference<br>*focus on tolerance<br>instead of affirmation of<br>difference |
| *West-Heimer and Khane* | Personally Responsible<br>................ *"Responsible Participant"*............ | Participatory<br>................................ | Justice-oriented<br>................................<br>Absent<br>*no attention to critical<br>assessments and systemic<br>change |

Figure 1: Possible imaginaries of the naturalized citizen based on the four citizenship models.

Regardless of the specific model used, there seems to be a barrier between current implementation of civic preparation through the exam and the identified demands of citizenship in democratic, multicultural societies in a global environment. In other words, the exam does not encourage enough community-level engagement to satisfy Amitai Etzioni's communitarian ideals or any genuine engagement with the nation's inherent, multi-faceted diversity to fulfill Walter Parker's call for advanced citizenship. Nor does it promote critical evaluation of current structures or any concern with the challenges of being a U.S. citizen in an increasingly global environment, to respond to Joel Westheimer, Joseph Khane or Derek Heater's models. Instead, across these models, the exam remains at what might be seen as a more traditional manifestation of citizenship— even if its specific meanings in each model do not overlap. The purpose of comparison with these current typologies of citizenship is not necessarily to suggest that the naturalization process make all these drastic changes to incorporate them fully in its own projected image of the citizen.

Some of these may be invaluable additions indeed—for example, a deeper understanding of the multicultural nature of the United States and the importance of democratic communication across difference would add a powerful focus, especially since many new citizens may come from countries with stronger emphasis on homogeneity and less attention to the essence of the democratic process. If democratic citizenship is "the organization of plurality" (Van Gunsteren, 1998), more attention to these issues would add in important ways to the naturalization process. So too would Westheimer and Khane's call for critical assessments of inequity and its root causes, issues that the new citizen's new country is far from having outgrown. Addition along

these two important lines would probably enhance the naturalization process more than elements of global citizenship awareness. While these are also important for current geo-political realities, naturalizing citizens are already likely to possess such global orientations, to a greater degree than their native-born counterparts whose potential towards isolationism have spurred global citizenship education initiatives in the first place. Precisely because of the globalization processes that make global education necessary, today's new citizens are more likely to remain powerfully connected with other regions of the world, with many participating both in their economies and politics. So if choices had to be made among new important areas of emphasis for the naturalization process, global citizenship preparation may not comparatively be the most urgent necessity.

Yet the issue at hand is not primarily how the exam should change according to these exiting citizen typologies, but how they help us elucidate the dominant citizen traits proposed by the exam and its rhetoric in the current forms. In each of the four pairs there are recurring citizen characteristics that center on *knowledge*, with additional attention to *action*. The kind of knowledge assumed, however, and what it might enable the new citizen to do, is not necessarily consistent between the exam content and its rhetoric, since the factual knowledge demanded by the existing questions could easily stop at that level of memorization without an impetus for action. The locus of the action, too—whether the local or governmental level—differs in emphasis from the rhetoric to the actual exam content and from one typology to another. The exam and the rhetoric, however, aim to satisfy both locations, yet at differing degrees. And taken by itself, the

exam does not communicate any community-level action, further contributing to communicating citizenship ideals in a dimmer, somewhat inconsistent, manner.

In the beginning of the chapter, I showed that, based on the naturalization rhetoric, the ideal of the desirable citizen was that of a person who demonstrates allegiance rooted in genuine appreciation and understanding of the country' foundational values for the purpose of meaningful participation in its communities. It was a three-fold attention to affect, intellect and action. Yet, when juxtaposing the rhetoric with the exam content, and then with the four typologies, the triangular field of knowledge-action-affect is uneven, skewed to the side of knowledge, with a less clear attention to action and even lesser clarity at the level of allegiance which cannot be assessed by such an exam. It is an inverted triangle, with a projected foundation of knowledge that is meant to generate on one side action and the other attachment—but the results are irregular. The foundation of understanding justifies the strive for "meaningfulness" that partly drove the revision process. Nevertheless, as shown in Chapter 3, such factual knowledge, despite its potential, does not necessarily generate the informed new member ready for the demands of active citizenship—especially when "action" is not clearly conveyed. As it stands, the naturalization exam content demands a state-oriented, knowledgeable citizen.

While focused on the knowledge of fundamental premises of American democracy, it also seems to diffuse and even entirely avoid any elements of citizenship that are not oriented to the nation as it currently is. The democratic dynamic, while lauded in the exam's supporting statements through references to full participation, is mollified through the exam's questions—their detailed attention to procedural democracy somehow appeases the lively engagement the exam is supposed to promote. Action is

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thus targeted within the parameters marked by governmental institutions. And still, before embarking on the route taken by critical analysts who see in such approaches an uneven and stifling relationship (e.g., Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009), we might recall, as done in Chapter 2, that once new citizens have gained access to these institutional parameters—through demonstrating the required knowledge, as limited as it might be—they can further attempt to act upon the structures of those institutions as well as mobilize local level civic action.

This chapter's intention was to assess the message communicated to newcomers about the kind of polity members they need to be. The projected citizen model of a state-oriented, knowledgeable citizen sends messages about values, possibilities and limitations. This image—at times dim—can leave lasting impressions and impact human affect, as new citizens can connect with their new roles by grasping the perceived meanings that the new exam communicates to them. What is expected of them? How are they to act as citizens? Far from being rhetorical exercises alone, these messages, with their tensions, contribute to the "muddled" message of citizenship expectations for the country's newest citizens. In the same manner, state officials communicate messages of expectation to newcomers in other national contexts where naturalization tests have been introduced in the last decade. These messages are first communicated through the official websites that are created to introduce prospective citizens to the requirements of this process of becoming. I now turn to examining this official communication in these virtual spaces where the state and the newcomer can meet and where, even in these initial stages of the encounter, expectations and roles of each party are already formed, fueled by the wider national contexts.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## Forming and Informing Citizens in Virtual Spaces: Comparative Perspectives on Naturalization Testing in Western Europe

> ... Before I built a wall I'd ask to know
> What I was walling in or walling out,
> And to whom I was like to give offence.
> Something there is that doesn't love a wall,
> That wants it down.' I could say 'Elves' to him,
> But it's not elves exactly, and I'd rather
> He said it for himself. I see him there
> Bringing a stone grasped firmly by the top
> In each hand, like an old-stone savage armed.
> He moves in darkness as it seems to me~
> Not of woods only and the shade of trees.
> He will not go behind his father's saying,
> And he likes having thought of it so well
> He says again, "Good fences make good neighbors."
> Robert Frost, *Mending Wall*

From their early twentieth century rural settings that belie profound philosophical themes, Robert Frost's classic poems cast a literary shadow on current shifts in immigration and naturalization practices and their implicit questions of acceptance, cooperation and belonging. In *Mending Wall,* we find the narrator musing over the wall's recurrent weakening by different natural and man-made forces, as well as the repeated attempts to mend it and thus maintain the separation in place. Not only is there something inherently unnatural about the separation ("something there is that doesn't love a wall") but also, the narrator contends, his own rationality suggests that the wall does not seem to serve a purpose ("There where it is we do not need a wall . . . here there are no cows"). In contrast, the neighbor with whom the mending takes place, is cast in a conservative light as he "moves in darkness," with rigid principles and mannerisms "like an old-stone savage armed"—despite being reasoned out of the importance of the wall, he maintains tradition which he cannot truly explain: "He will not go behind his father's saying . . .

Good fences make good neighbors." And yet, despite the contrast between the two,

between a set of principles and another, between a type of progressive pragmatism and a

dismissively rigid tradition, it is the narrator himself, not the neighbor, who continues to

bring the weakening fence to the attention of the other:

> "I let my neighbor know beyond the hill;
>
> And on a day we meet to walk the line
>
> And set the wall between us once again.
>
> We keep the wall between us as we go."

The paradox of simultaneously rejecting separation on philosophical and pragmatic

grounds, and yet seeking to "walk the line, [a]nd set the wall between us once again" is

also illuminating for the current context of international migration and naturalization

practices.

In this arena, the spread of liberal-democratic ideals facilitated by globalization

and the rise of transnational and cosmopolitan trends co-exist with restrictive movement

policies and attempts at tight grips on migration flows, all on the background of increased

popular anxiety about the ability of strangers to ever become insiders, especially in

troubled economic times. One need not look further than the September 2009 raids in

Calais, France, where local authorities seized, once more, hundreds of Afghani

undocumented immigrants in a makeshift camp that has become known as "The Jungle."

Escaping political persecution and danger of death, these men sought refugee in Britain,

despite the European Union law that refugees on its territory should seek refugee status in

the first country of entry. While for Afghanis this would predominantly be Greece, the

Greek government usually only grants asylum to about one percent of those who seek it.

Under these conditions, asylum seekers move forward across borders and on their way to Britain—with no national identification cards—they often have to spend months on the French side of the channel. In 2002, Britain agreed to take in the majority of refugees living in a French Red Cross center and urged the French to address the problem on their coast, while also improving the detection systems in their own ports. As a result, the number of people crossing from Calais has drastically decreased, but the clash between the two national authorities is not over, since Britain claims that the newly reopened Red Cross refugee center in Calais will still be a source of illegal migration on its territory. As anxiety over who should be responsible for the prevention of undocumented migration flows is growing in a time of allegedly minimized national borders, these two neighbors have yet to agree on further ways to mend their fences.

This troubling European (and not only) trend—building more walls for certain groups of people through citizenship and even pre-migration requirements—while simultaneously opening more doors for others constitutes the background for this chapter's focus on the increased levels of testing prospective citizens. This analysis offers a comparative context for the recent revisions in the U.S. naturalization exam, showing it as only a manifestation of a wider phenomenon—one on the rise in the first decade of the 21st century across democratic nations who have previously had certain requirements for naturalization but have not used tests. Walls become more evident when integration policy—such as these newly introduced exams—becomes immigration control by restricting the entry of certain types of "undesirable" immigrants, deemed less capable of integration than the groups who are exempt from passing such tests. Focusing on the four countries that have introduced naturalization or integration exams since the turn of the

century—Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom—offers us an opportunity to see how these tests are presented and justified in official discourse and contextualized in the country's own particular socio-political experiences. At the same time, it affords a "a window into the mind of the state" (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009)—a glimpse into how the state authority uses the context of the exam to engage the prospective citizens in spaces aimed at both information and formation, as citizenship roles are communicated.

## Opening Gates but Mending Walls

The second half of the twentieth century did witness the dissemination of egalitarian ideals across political and social contexts, both internationally and in the United States—the rise of the national civil rights movement, for example, was mirrored in immigration legislation that reached beyond the nation's borders. A landmark in immigration policy, the Hart-Cellar Act of 1965 abolished the national origin quota system which originally prevented entry for groups that were perceived unable to integrate into American mainstream culture. After all, regulating who enters the country ultimately affects who is allowed to remain through citizenship acquisition. The act set an equal twenty thousand immigrants per country limit and established a seven-category preference system for family unification and for persons with needed skills. Equalitarian ideals that did away with blatant discriminatory practices, were thus juxtaposed with utilitarian reasoning, since the facilitated entry of those who could make economic contributions would benefit the receiving contexts. The increased levels of immigration in the United States—where, directly (through arrival) or indirectly (though childbearing in the U. S.), immigration now accounts for 60 percent of annual population growth

(Bean & Stevens, 2003)—only mirrored global trends. In fact, between 1965 and 2000 the number of migrants worldwide doubled from 75 million to 150.

European countries such as Germany, France, the Netherlands and other northern European nations began allowing initially-intended temporary guest workers, mainly from Turkey and northern Africa. They were entitled to social benefits, but not citizenship, as they were not meant to set roots in these countries. Yet, over the course of a few decades alone, they transformed the face of the continent, reflecting what immigration scholars now can reliably argue: historical precedent shows that "controlling" migration is more of a nominal legislative procedure that an actual reality in preventing people who enter the country from staying (Sassen, 2006). These immigrants also ended up at the heart of major controversies about so-called "parallel societies"— where immigrant groups do not become part of the mainstream both by choice and by structural constraints—integration and second-class citizenship, as liberal-democratic ideals of basic rights continue to clash with the protectionist practices and anti-immigration public opinion.

Indeed, while scholarly arguments are being made about the flexibility of borders and identities, a United Nations report shows that by 2001, one quarter of all countries viewed immigration levels as too high (International Migration Report, 2002). Moreover, even if the more economically-developed countries more frequently aimed towards lowering immigration flows, the other countries are moving in a similar direction of more restrictive policies (forty-four and thirty-nine percent of developed and developing

countries,[13] respectively, have had as of 2001, policies aimed at lowering foreign

population inflow). Because of the nature of national naturalization laws which hold

requirements of mandatory residency prior to becoming a citizen, the aim to control

immigration is intrinsically related to decisions about who is to become an insider of the

nation-state through citizenship. A brief overview of overall immigration control trends

must thus precede a more focused discussion of naturalization procedures across

countries.

In fact, in the specific area of naturalization, the same pattern of liberalization-

restriction juxtaposition emerges, especially since important changes in naturalization

requirements occurred in the last decade of the 20th century. On the one hand, we have

witnessed in the United States the first attempts to revise the naturalization examination

with the stated purpose of making it more relevant to the prospective citizens and to

ensure standardization across naturalization centers and thus the equitable treatment of all

applicants. This was in addition to the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986 that

allowed for 2.7 million undocumented immigrants to become eligible for citizenship

through legalization. In Europe, dual citizenship prohibitions have been eased in some

countries, residency requirements have been decreased, Germany introduced *jus soli*

citizenship for those born to permanent residents (in contrast to the previous citizenship

rights based on German ancestry only), and the Netherlands piqued the interest of

scholars and legislators alike as it became a social laboratory with its open

multiculturalism approaches. Yet, at the same time, counter forces pulled in the opposite

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[13] The term "developed" and "developing" in reference to countries is used here as it
appears in the UN report, which are justified by the authors as designators used for
"statistical convenience" and not as judgment on particular levels of development.

direction: some countries have increased the residency requirement (some as drastically as doubling it; e.g., Italy and Greece went from five to ten years), in the United States social rights become dependent on citizenship (through the 1996 Social Welfare Act) and beginning with the year 2000 citizenship policy reforms have introduced an array of secondary requirements such as language tests, citizenship exams and mandatory naturalization ceremonies (Hansen, 2008).

These "secondary requirements" may seem inconsequential in comparison to the major legislation affecting how long one needs to wait before becoming eligible for citizenship or whether one can be granted the right at all. In fact, as Randall Hansen (2008) and Rogers Brubaker (2004) emphasize, the scholarship that focuses on these legal aspects of citizenship as status has been curiously limited, in comparison with that which now adapts the concept of citizenship to contexts as varied as ecological, diasporic or sexual. However, the introduction of additional legal requirements, and especially the *uneven* demands that, in some cases, affect immigrant groups differently (for example, some "integration" tests were given in Germany to Muslims only), is in fact symptomatic of more profound socio-politic shifts that characterize nation-states' attitudes towards new-comers and highlight the challenges posed by naturalization and integration at the beginning of the 21st century, both in North America and Europe.

## Learning from Comparative Perspective

My focus in this chapter is not to compare, for example, passing rates among applicants or estimate the impact such exams have on naturalization tendencies among eligible immigrants. In fact, some reports (e.g., Hansen, 2008) have already begun to show that such naturalization practices do have some level of positive impact on the

integration of those who naturalize, although more time would need to pass for such studies to be fully revealing. Rather, the comparison I draw here aims at bringing to the foreground the phenomenon of "testing" prospective citizens which has been on the rise in the first decade of the 21st century across nations with democratic traditions that have previously had certain requirements for naturalization but have not used tests. I specifically examine the rationales offered by nation-states for the use of these tests and, in this, compare the ideological messages that prospective citizens receive in the official naturalization and integration rhetoric, messages that are embedded in the country's particular contexts and experiences with immigration.

On the background of elevated levels of openness to immigration in Europe—for the first time in 25 years, it is possible to immigrate without family connections and outside the asylum system to Great Britain, Germany and France—Amitai Etzioni (2007) points out a seemingly counterintuitive trend:

> In Europe, citizenship tests are by and large more exacting than they are in the United States and Canada, reflecting a less favorable and less accommodating attitude towards immigration. This has been most evident during the past 10-15 years, a period that has seen an explosive increase in immigration to Europe from Turkey, the former Soviet bloc nations, former colonial African nations, South-East Asia and the Middle East. Current or proposed tests in the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and France are all significantly more rigorous than previous ones or their US counterpart. (p. 355-356).

Still, despite its increased occurrence, this phenomenon of testing has only very recently lead to sustained scholarly debates. And yet, if the exam were that marginal in

the naturalization process, why have these nations begun *introducing* such exams? The mere increase in the number of counties that have begun using such testing, almost as in a domino effect, is enough to draw attention to its significance for the nation-state and the prospective citizens themselves. Indeed, some recent debates demonstrate the ideological tension these exams inhabit. Some scholars debunk the very concept of testing, proposing that the "most liberal test is none at all" (Carens, 2010) or that they are highly illiberal and affronts to human dignity (Kostakopoulou, 2010). Others are more concerned with the actual content and implementation of specific tests, finding that certain approaches lend themselves more easily to illiberal practices, such as aiming to test the immigrants' inner dispositions which would be a violation of freedom of opinion and conscience (Joppke, 2010). I join this conversation by adding the more specific attention to the rhetorical state-immigrant engagement and the justification of such exams.

In order to achieve a consistent comparison, the current analysis includes countries that simultaneously fulfill the following criteria of relevance:

a) they had major changes in naturalization legislation in the last decade, corresponding with the trend seen across Western Europe

b) they include a naturalization exam as part of naturalization requirements (for the fist time or a revised one)

c) they have been the subject of migration scholarly analysis because of significant immigration-induced demographic shifts and the consequent integration debates

Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Denmark have all adopted since the turn of

the 21st century the civics exam, as part of the so-called "secondary requirements"

(Hansen, 2008), and have thus been included in the comparison.

Two major data sources served as the foundation for the analysis. One source,

addressing the first specific aims of this comparison, is each country's official Internet

site where the responsible ministerial authority makes the naturalization information and

testing requirements available to prospective citizens and in this sense communicates

directly with the applicant. It is on these sites where each country's official discourses

about these tests' intentions are most evident, both directly though the materials offered

and issues covered, and indirectly, through the means of communication.

A second source of data comes from secondary analyses about these countries'

immigration issues and debates, especially as they pertain to the naturalization and

integration of newcomers. While there are studies comparing the immigration and

naturalization laws among many of these countries, my aim has not been to replicate

them or merely synthesize them into this chapter. Rather, my intention was to use

secondary data analysis as the backdrop for the primary research analysis of the

governments' documents that delineate the intentions of the state towards the prospective

citizens. Therefore, while examining how these tests are used, explained and justified, as

well as the governments' relationship with the prospective citizen remain in the

foreground of analysis, the secondary sources offer the important contextualization of

these examination trends.

The analytic comparison across these countries is based on a research protocol

that I created to fit the study's intentions. In creating the analytical protocol, I carefully

examined these official sites to observe general trends in areas of focus and general

rhetoric approaches in addressing the prospective citizen and the use of naturalization or

integration exam. I attempted to answer these questions:

1. How easy is it to access and navigate the site and what is its general presentation?

2. What seem to be the purposes of the site (simply communicate official requirements;

welcome the prospective citizen; offer additional integrative information, etc.)

3. How understandable is the content of the site, in terms of the skills one would need to

find the necessary information without the help of a lawyer?

4. What are the states' stated intentions' of the presented naturalization law and exam?

5. How is the immigrant addressed overall—what is the tone of the approach (hopeful,

optimistic, cautionary, bureaucratic formalism, etc.)?

6. How is the prospective citizen positioned in relation to the state?

7. What kind of images are used and what do they convey?

The questions pertaining to contextual part of the analysis focused on these questions:

1. What are the basic requirements and procedures for naturalization in this country?

2. What changes took place in the last decade and what were their official reasons?

3. What events preceded or surrounded these changes and how were they presented in

relationship to the changes in the naturalization requirements?

The increased use of elaborate internet sites in the naturalization process also

raises important questions about the demands that online environments and related new

literacies place on prospective citizens. The revisions of the actual naturalization exam

raised questions in the United States about the impact of such new content on the access

of less educated immigrants to citizenship. Similarly, equity-related issues emerge with

the increased prevalence of making naturalization information available primarily in online environments. At the same time, communicating essential information in this manner also implies that new skills are expected of the new citizen in changing knowledge society and technological environments, adding to the already complex list of citizen attributes discussed previously.

The increased access to online naturalization information—with its detailed legal and bureaucratic requirements—has made the process more accessible to interested parties. A prospective citizen could potentially find all the information he or she needs by simply visiting the designated governmental site, navigating from a relevant link to another, and fill out all the necessary forms available for download. This simplifies the process, making it more direct, and allows the applicant more control over a legal process that often depends on the expensive services of specialized personnel such as immigration lawyers. In this sense, online environments have potentially made the legal process of citizenship acquisition more equitable.

At the same time, however, the paradox emerges as the very accessibility to this complex, detailed information can simultaneously become an obstacle to easy access. The increased availability of information online seems to have reduced the possibility to contact government personnel for naturalization-related questions outside the medium of the internet. Phone numbers are often unavailable, as interested persons are encouraged to use solely online systems to submit their questions or make appointments for interviews. In the absence of person-to-person communication that clarifies and guides, the increased ease of access to digital information becomes proportional with the applicant's ability to use the often complex, if not complicated, online systems. This is not only an issue of

access *to* the internet—the "digital gap" has arguably narrowed as public places such as libraries have been making the internet available to individuals without personal computers. Nor is it only an issue of *how* to use the internet information for prospective applicants that may be less educated or literate. Indeed, both these aspects are still relevant and important.

However, it is the third issue—that of the *kind* of literacy required in these online environments—that poses an increasingly pressing and interesting question in the recent naturalization process. The rapid changes and increase in information technology have affected reading and comprehension processes and the emergence of new literacies. These build on foundational elements of traditional literacy—far from replacing them (Leu et al., 2004)—but require new skills, processing strategies and cognitive processes (Coiro, 2003; Rouet, 2006) through the multiple forms of media and navigational pathways enabled by hypertext technologies. Traditional text-based reading and comprehension need to be augmented by additional strategies for information assessment, synthesis, focus, inference and selection, among other aspects.

Prospective citizens are therefore now engaged in a naturalization process that makes demands unknown to those naturalized prior to the digital age. And the official internet sites that make the information more readily available all abound in details but vary in their information architecture, organizational clarity and navigation ease. Amongst the abundance of information—now presented in the new environments enabled by hypertext—future citizens, regardless of prior preparation, need strategies to make correct inferences among hyperlinks, to synthesize enormous information and to know how to prioritize elements and allow others to simply provide a background. Such skill

requirements easily outpace the current preparation and readiness of the majority of citizenship-eligible immigrants, adding to the already demanding list of characteristics that current citizenship interpretations suggest. This issue of naturalization in the digital age, with its multiple possibilities and challenges, is simply raised here in the context of the official sites, but it is a facet of the process that warrants further attention.

## Closing In: Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands and The United Kingdom

Table 2: Summary of major components by country

| Country | Website presentation | Means of test justification | Engagement with immigrant | Integration Focus |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Germany | most elaborate; most information-dense; use of inviting multi-ethnic group portraits | Need and responsibility of immigrant to know rights and responsibilities in new context | Direct; personal; explains policy; state stresses own responsibility in integration process | Strongest; most elaborate description of initiatives |
| Denmark | Elaborate; information-dense; use of multi-ethnic group portraits | Need and responsibility of immigrant to know rights and responsibilities in new context | Direct; personal; explains policy; state stresses own responsibility in integration process | Strong; elaborate description of initiatives |
| The Netherlands | Simple; information-dense; use of multi-ethnic *individual* portraits | Need and responsibility of immigrant to know rights and responsibilities in new context | Direct; procedural/impersonal language; state responsibility less emphasized | Tangential; appears instead in most elaborate integration exam requirements |
| The United Kingdom | Simple; information – dense; *least* use of visual rhetoric | Need and responsibility of immigrant to know rights and responsibilities in new context | Direct; procedural/impersonal language but personal on "U. K. Test site"; state responsibility less emphasized | Absent (in direct reference); only country with direct reference to "maintaining personal identity" |

## Germany: National Naturalization Context

Germany's case highlights the distinction between discretionary naturalization and that by right. Until 1990 naturalizations were discretionary and beginning with 1990, those born and schooled in Germany could naturalize by right, and since 2000, the children of those who have lived in Germany for eight years and have a permanent residency permit must choose between German or their parents' citizenship before the age of 23. As a general rule, foreigners now have the right to become naturalized after eight years of habitual residence in Germany, provided they meet the relevant conditions, instead of the fifteen years previously required. For naturalization, it is necessary to prove adequate knowledge of German. A clean record and commitment to the tenets of the Basic Law (Constitution) are further criteria. The person to be naturalized must also be able to financially support him/herself. Through the immigration Act of January 2005, all Non-EU immigrants must take integration courses (basic and intermediate German, politics and culture)—this translates into 600 hours of language training and 45 hours of civics training. All new immigrants need to take this course, but those who are already in the country could do it voluntarily. Cost is one Euro per hour and is waived for those who receive social assistance. In 2007 a new language requirement was introduced for foreign spouses from countries that require a visa for visit (including Turkey). The test requires basic knowledge—several hundred words—and must be passed before arriving in Germany. The argument is that these spouses, when they do not work, will not take the integration courses and will be often isolated in ethic enclaves without exposure to German. However, the test has been critiqued as a measure to discourage the arrival of foreign brides, especially of certain national origins. As similar statutory requirement is

now being proposed for family reunification immigrants such as spouses in the United

Kingdom, and it has amassed the same critiques there (BBC, 2010).

This reaction to the test may be justified in light of previous the 2006

controversies, when two of the German states introduced civic tests to be required of

immigrants from Islamic countries. The questions addressed such topics as attitudes

towards homosexuality (Tzortzis, 2006) and domestic violence, and while they were very

controversial as targeting Muslims and violating the liberal principle of freedom of

opinion and conscience (Joppke, 2010), in the Federal Parliament, these tests were

derided. Nevertheless, these events contributed to reviving a conversation about the

importance of national standards and a few months later, in May 2006, the Interior

ministers of the 16 federal states set some common standards for the language and

citizenship courses. Future applicants would have to attend language and integration

courses when applying for citizenship, and these courses would be accredited and

overseen by the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. A multiple choice test

covering geography, history, politics and society was developed and has become

obligatory since September 2008. Candidates are tested on 33 of 310 possible questions,

and must answer at least 17 questions correctly to pass. The questions on the exam range

from technical ones related to geography and history (i.e., bordering counties and specific

marking dates in the nation's history) to questions that assess the knowledge of one's

rights in a democracy (i.e., "Freedom of speech means that I can . . ." or "When can a

political party be banned in Germany?") as well as practical knowledge of administrative

issues (i.e., "A couple wants to open a restaurant in Germany. What will they definitely

need?"). The test costs only 25 Euro and can be taken as many times as candidates wish.

Those exempted include people who have gone through the German school system, those younger than 16 and older people with failing learning capacities, according to the Interior Ministry. Successful applicants also have to have adequate German, no criminal record and have been living in Germany for at least eight years.

Despite Germany's integration minister, Maria Bohmer's insistence that "Those who want to be German and have all of the corresponding rights of German citizens, particularly the right to vote, should at least have a basic command of the structure and mechanisms of our country," the test generated both support and controversy, with the same camps even issuing conflicting reactions ("Böhmer rejects criticism of German naturalization tests", 2008). For example, some support came from organizations supporting immigrants and minorities (e. g., Central Council for Muslims in Germany, The German-Turkish Forum) whose spokespersons deemed such a test as a step in the right direction, since it was necessary for better integration and helped individuals in their affiliation with the country.

However, objections were equally visible in other groups supporting minorities (e. g., Türkische Bund in Berlin-Brandenburg) who pointed out that the new, more open, naturalization laws in Germany were now being undermined by new barriers that showed no intention to allow minorities to integrate easily (Turks say Germans would not pass citizenship test, 2008). Critiques, just as in the U. S. were also raised related to the ability of Germans themselves to answer such questions, but three months after the test went into effect, the overwhelming majority of applicants (98.8 percent of 18.000) passed (Pluta, 2009). This was probably because some of the original types of questions that

were derided by some as lifted from the German version of *Who Wants to be a Millionaire?* were not included in the test (Harding, 2006).

The center-left political party spectrum (Social Democrats, Free Democrats, and the Green Party) have all expressed reservations about the test, as well as such organizations as the Central Council of Jews in Germany. The latter opponents pointed out the "strange attitude towards history" revealed in a test where questions about German history are part of the questionnaire, but the word Holocaust is not even mentioned once within those 320 questions. (For example, one question reads: "What did Willy Brandt want to express with his genuflection in the former Jewish ghetto in Warsaw in 1970?"). Prior to the 2008 revisions the U.S. test was also critiqued for excluding issues of slavery or the realities of Native American history in the land. Once these have been introduced, as shown in Chapter 2, they are now similarly perceived as avoiding an honest confrontation with history, by using questions that are formulated in sanitized ways (i.e., "Who lived in American before the European settles arrived?" or "What groups of people were sold into slavery?").

**The official German meeting space:  The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees' "Integration Portal."** The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees hosts a site dedicated to issues of immigration, naturalization and integration, with three major sections specifically designed with the purpose of *Overview,* or to address *Immigrants* and *Stakeholders.* While some of the information on the overview page is repeated also under the *Immigrants,* here the immigrants are not addressed directly—rather, issues about integration initiatives are described here. For example, a funded prize for integration initiatives of 20,000 Euros which invites applications, as well as the newly

revised (December 2008) guidelines and requirements for the general integration courses

called "Concepts for a Nationwide Integration Course." The new Immigration Act went

into effect on the first of January 2005. As result of this act, state-run integration services

for immigrants will be regulated by law for the first time and they used texts and

materials "approved by the Federal Office" and take place in adult education centers that

have been accredited by Federal Office for Migration and Refugees. This is a 35-page file

that explains the aims for the integration courses, and implicitly of the exam which is

state-mandated at the completion of the course:

> The objective of the integration course is to promote the integration of immigrants
>
> with regard to social participation and equal opportunities. Furthermore,
>
> examining the culture, history, political values of the constitution, the legal
>
> system and the political institutions of the *democratic constitutional state* helps to
>
> promote *a positive association with the new environment* [emphasis added].

> Knowledge of the basic values of society as well as knowledge of the legal
>
> system, history, culture and the political institutions in Germany makes it easier
>
> *for immigrants to acclimate to the new society and creates opportunities for*
>
> *identification.* The integration course thus also makes an important contribution to
>
> social and cultural integration.

> The orientation course teaches immigrants about the legal system, the culture and
>
> history of Germany, *in particular also the values of the democratic political*

*system of the Federal Republic of Germany as well as the principles of the*

*constitutional state, equal rights, tolerance and freedom of religion.*

The emphasis on the fundamental aspects of participating in a liberal democratic state

create a leitmotif beyond the introductory remarks and, while in this case they are

mentioned in *relation to* the immigrants (while addressing those responsible for the

orientation courses and the general public), these themes are also found, albeit in less

elaborate fashion, on the site that *addresses* immigrants directly. In addition to the

directly-stated intentions to promote a "positive" assessment of the state and a possibility

for "identification," the emphases on the liberal democratic facets of citizenry—such as

equal rights, participation, tolerance and freedom of religion—seem to be expected

intentions in such courses and tests. Indeed, they are found in the integration or

naturalization tests of all other democratic countries in this comparison.

This resonates with Christian Joppke's (2005) argument that, in fact, there is

nothing specifically "German" about the culture for which immigrants are being prepared

or tested for. He explains that, in addition to the language requirement, the only

'exclusionary potential' inherent in Germany's 'civic-nationalist turn' is to "thicken the

liberal-democratic integration requirement and to make the liberal state for liberal people

only" (Joppke, 2005). This, in turn, is consistent with the modern nation-state's shifts in

the legitimate mode of excluding, from group to individual-based criteria. Therefore, in

this trend towards increased testing of prospective citizens, individuals need to

demonstrate the willingness to develop certain capacities deemed compatible with the

democratic constitutional state. In fact, a subsection of the site "Culture and lifestyle"

presents "Germany [as] a modern, cosmopolitan country distinguished by its openness, a

high standard of living and multi-national diversity. Freedom of worship and the separation of church and state are the cornerstones of the legal system." It almost seems as if the declaration is a warning for eliciting those necessary capacities from each immigrant. However, even if these assessments have moved towards the individual level, as Joppke (2005) argues, we must not overlook the fact that individuals can be required to take the federal integration course at the recommendation of local authorities—and these in-person assessments can thus be the site where dominant imaginaries about specific groups and their alleged characteristics and capacities for integration can play powerful roles that escape the realm of the objective.

Since assessment at the individual level is a primary component in the process of acquiring citizenship in these liberal democracies, Germany too, has a section of The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees addressed directly to immigrants. This is the *Integration Portal* site available in German, Russian, Turkish and English and is of special interest in this analysis as well. A simple white background design that is clean but far from bare, features a banner that welcomes the visitor with a portrait of two women, both smiling, their heads close together—one with red hair, while the hair of the other is covered with a pink scarf indicating her Islamic heritage. The smiles, slight tilting of the head in each other's direction, and the direct eye contact with the camera, offer the visitor an initial benevolent presence and the opportunity to indentify with one of the persons. A left side bar offers hyperlinks to relevant topics such as *Welcome to Germany, Naturalization Test, Integration Courses,* and *Themes and Perspectives,* as clear explanation about what the integration test consists of (with a link to the actual questions, including the sample exam and adult education centers that administer it). In reading

these options, the eye is drawn to the a high-contrast image just below the list: a

rectangular banner presents the motto of this portal: *Integration: Learning from one*

*another, living together.* This is accompanied by a schematic representation of primary

colors silhouettes, holding hands in a circular shape, reminiscent of the prevalent image

representations of multicultural environments used in schools and organizational

workspaces.

Indeed, the motto seems to set the tone for the entire site—as visitors link to the

parts relevant to their interest or need, the portrait of the two women follows them (as the

different sites change very little visually) and so does the connecting rhetorical thread of

dual responsibility, privilege and mutual learning. "Integration is a multi-layered

process," the front page reads. "Everyone – immigrants and locals – must all pull together

to ensure that it succeeds." (BAMF, 2009). Still, in the first few sentences of the

*Welcome to Germany* section, the prospective citizen is reminded that it was his or her

decision to make this move across culture: "You have decided to live here and, perhaps,

together with your family, have decided to build a new life here. This decision involves

making many changes and as a result there may be some uncertainty. It is crucial that you

see the opportunities that this new start can offer. This will be made much easier if you

know and understand Germany well." Individual decision-making and responsibility are

the foundational premise for the state's involvement in the citizen's integration: "We

would like to help you to integrate permanently and successfully into German society.

But this is a goal that we will only achieve with your help."

Throughout the site two narratives interweave: the responsibility of the

immigrants and the willingness of the receiving context to welcome them. Testimonials

from immigrants—both from Western and non-Western countries—as well as that of a course teacher are presented alongside portraits of prospective citizens from integration courses. These are positive representations and outcomes of the experience in which participants express a desire to wanting to know German, to communicate well with Germans and with the children's teachers. These positive outcomes are as contrasted with times when these individuals only spent time with members of their ethnic community and years had passed without learning the language. The teacher, in turn, highlights the benefits of such a multicultural exchange and presents herself as an example—namely, in teaching the course she has herself been enriched with the outlooks of other cultures while teaching newcomers about her own. These narratives of mutual enhancement are dominant in the integration discourse on the site and echo findings about the German official stance on integration: "The official rhetoric calls for `intercultural competence' in which both immigrants and those already living in Germany make an effort to get to know and learn how to get along with each other" (Hartnell, 2006, p. 395).

Once the responsibility of the immigrant and the willingness of the reception context—the government and society—are established as mutually enforceable, the word choices in the state's position towards the immigrant reinforce that position even through the unapologetic use of modal verbs like *should*. While it is most commonly used to make recommendations or give advice, it can also be used to express obligation as well as expectation. In order to introduce the integration courses, the official address to the immigrant reads: "If you would like to live in Germany, you should learn German. This is important for finding work, filling in forms and meeting new people. Also, you should know certain things about Germany, for example, about its history, culture and its legal

system. You will learn all this on the integration course." The tone is different from the

U.S. site, for example, where the immigrant is not positioned in the same way—

expectations are made clear through the presentation of policy but the immigrant is never

directly *told* what he or she *should* do. The message in general, is that once the receiving

context has expressed a willingness and desire to accommodate the newcomer, the

newcomer is responsible for fulfilling its requirements.

However, this approach—and the requirements of civic integration course in

general—can be also interpreted as symbols that in fact are meant to appease the native

populations whose anxiety over lack of integration in hard economic times is unsettling

to the state: perhaps "the true addressees of civic integration may not be the immigrants

but the natives, who are to be assured that the state is sternly requiring newcomers to

adjust and thus protecting the status quo. In this sense, obligatory civic integration

courses are a prime example of "symbolic politics," whose mere existence matters more

than the declared goals pursued by it" ("Do Obligatory Civic Integration Courses for

Immigrants in Western Europe further Integration?" n.d.)

**Denmark: National Naturalization Context**

In November 2009, the *Oprah* show featured Denmark as one of the happiest

places on earth. Based on social psychologist Adrian White's "world map of happiness,"

the feature highlighted the country's health and welfare outcomes, with free health care,

money offered to citizens to attended college, as well as 90 percent of one's salary for

four years in case of unemployment. An interviewed woman explains: "When you go to

university, then you get paid $400 or $500 ... You have free education. Then, you have

healthy, well-educated people in the world. What could beat that?" Rhetorical or not, the

cheerful question takes us back to the importance of citizenship and national boarders, back to insiders and outsiders—in fact, Denmark's recent reforms to immigration law were called the "toughest in Europe" (Osborn, 2002). However, this contrast between the high level of care for the insider citizen and the high barriers to the acquisition of new citizenship makes sense not only economically, but also historically. Thomas Janoski (2010) explains that the Nordic countries differ from the rest of Europe in their strong left politics that contains a major universalistic position towards and rights and justice. Nevertheless, "inclusive or 'encompassing' labor movements may take the welfare of the country as a whole into their strategy, but may not take the welfare of the world's migrants into their purview" (p. 225). In fact, Denmark is known to historically be the least powerful in left party politics among the Nordic countries—the Social Democrat party gained control for the first time in 1924 and their nationality law continued the "right of blood" tradition without alteration, and, as Janoski emphasizes, "the Social Democrats were [until after World War II] much more concerned about building the welfare state, and universalistic principles towards immigrants were largely unimportant (Janoski, 2010, p. 228). Once the immigrants are inside, of course, there is high incentive to integrate them.

In 1999, Denmark had the first Integration Act of its kind in a Western country. After the 2001 election, when the political context changed fundamentally through the formation of a center-right coalition government, a new Ministry for Refugees, Immigrants and Integration was formed. It presented a legislative "package" on immigration with a multi-layered target: to restrict the number of immigrants and refugees, to introduce tougher requirements on access to permanent residence and

citizenship, to ensure the loyalty of newcomers to "Danish values," and to speed up the integration of existing immigrants, particularly women and young, second-generation males, into the labor market. The proposals passed into law in the summer of 2002 and residence requirements went up to nine years for most migrants (with the exception of citizens of other Nordic counties who are only required two), and language tests were introduced along with knowledge of Danish society and culture.

While the acquisition of citizenship by foreigners through naturalization has traditionally been a lengthy process, in May 2007 Denmark implemented a new test as part of the requirements for obtaining citizenship: 40 questions with multiple choice answers about Danish society. To pass, a candidate must answer correctly at least 28 questions in one hour. When taking the test no aids are allowed, but 35 of the 40 questions are taken from a pool of 200 possible questions which have been made publicly available along with a 150-page online document that acts as a manual. These are provided on the *New to Denmark* governmental website. The remaining five questions are about Danish current affairs. Denmark is thus the first country in the Nordic area to pursue a very restrictive immigration and naturalization policy and anti-immigration parties have had their strongest impact there, in comparison with its neighbours.

**The official Danish meeting space: "New to Denmark, the Official Portal for Foreigners and Integration."** Visiting the Danish official site is like an opportunity for intertextuality, as visual presentation, use of images, the presence of a "portal for integration" as well as the availability of the site in an impressive number of languages (20) are reminiscent of the German approach and the mind draws continual connections in the process. Image use on the main page is limited and so is color, as is the case of

both Germany and the Netherlands. As in the German case, we are welcome by portraits of two or three individuals whose eyes watch us, yet here, all these individuals' skin tones and racial characteristics hint to a foreign origin in a Nordic country. The only fair-skinned, blond-haired individual here is a phone operator who represents the help that is available in case questions arise in the application process. The same simple design, in hues of blue, and the same several pictures are rotated as the visitors follows through the three main areas of the site: *Coming to Denmark, Integration* and *New Citizens*. It is not the *Integration* portal that addresses immigrants directly—rather, it presents statistics on Denmark's immigrant and descendent populations, reminders of the rights of religious minorities (with an emphasis on Islam), as well as a polished perspective on the Danish integration initiatives and especially its 2005 "A New Chance for Everyone" campaign:

> In 1999, Denmark was the first country in the world to introduce an Integration Act. The Act is intended to ensure that newly-arrived refugees and immigrants can *make the most of their capacities on an equal footing with other citizens of Denmark* [emphasis added]. All refugees and immigrants are therefore offered free teaching of Danish for three years.

While in the beginning this refers to newly-arrived immigrants (in a rhetorical move that, much as in the German case, places the onus on the immigrant *in the context* of the state's insurance of a fair environment), it quickly becomes apparent that, in fact, integration concerns have been raised by the lack of economic and social integration of already existing minorities. The examples of governmental initiatives hint to this, as they focus on raising the percentage of minority youths that complete their education, the presence of immigrant descendents in the labor market, as well as such surveys that demonstrate

the increased levels of friendships among immigrants or descendents and the Danish

population. Such an approach, of course, can appear self-aggrandizing and can be often

used to pinpoint the existing opposite realities in a specific social context—that is, the

very need of an official statement to emphasize such statistics as increased levels of inter-

ethnic friendships may be a bandage on a deeper social wound that can no longer be

overlooked.

Once the integration initiatives are presented, the *New Citizens* section is the space where

the prospective citizen is engaged directly in the official discourse, but the tone remains

relatively bureaucratic though policy explanations and without many attempts at

explaining the presence and necessity of the new naturalization test: "If you apply for

Danish nationality, you have to prove your knowledge of the Danish society and of

Danish culture and history by presenting a certificate of a special citizenship test." In

addition to application procedures, this section then moves to discussing the initiatives

for the prevention of extremist views and radicalization among youth under the motto, "A

Common and safe Future." Their aims are to:

> ensure that society identifies and deals with specific problems of extremism in a
>
> timely manner, and that the extremist propaganda is met with objective
>
> information and alternatives for the young people. To safeguard and develop
>
> Denmark as a *democratic society with freedom, responsibility, equality and*
>
> *opportunities for all, hence diminishing the growth conditions of extremism.*
>
> [emphasis added]

Thus the rhetorical thread of individual responsibility under the auspices of a state that

needs to ensure genuine justice and the conditions for the achievement of one's full

potential continues in this case as well. In order to take up their role in this partnership

that alludes to the one found in the German official discourse, the prospective citizen is

presented with the online 150-page document that traces Denmark from the beginning of

early archeological discoveries to its role in the current globalized economy. While this is

the official curriculum for the actual test, the state also offers another, in the form of the

*Citizen in Denmark* subsection of the site.

Interestingly, while the title seems to suggest that the practical information

offered here is meant for those who have just acquired their citizenship, one quickly finds

out that it is, in fact, addressed to those who are beginning their life in Denmark—it

offers information on cultural aspects, housing, rights, the shared responsibilities within

the new society, and practical links to other sources of information. Yet these cannot then

be addressed to new naturalized citizens since they will have lived in Denmark for nine

years before they would be eligible to apply. Of course, it could be a problem of

semantics: given that the site is powered in twenty different languages, the meanings of

citizenship as status may have been literally lost in translation. Or, one has to wonder

why, in a country that has only two naturalization exams a year and, unlike any of the

other countries, has to have the names of those admitted entered into a Naturalization Bill

to be passed by the Parliament, would suddenly the distinctions between an actual citizen

and non-citizen resident be abandoned?

If it is not a problem of translation, but an intentional rhetorical move, the official

position takes a step further to emphasize the newcomers' rights and responsibilities,

drawing them into a relationship with the state in which the power of naming gives these

individuals an impetus towards the realization of a *possibility*. Because one lives in this

space and one might be a citizen one day, acting like one can begin in the present. And yet, it is not easy to overlook that despite these implied demands on the individual to project his or her citizenship identity before legally acquiring it, the legal status of full member through citizenship is still (nine) years away. And that too, is equally official—and enforced—even more powerfully that the word choices on this site and the realities they can or cannot create.

## The Netherlands: National Naturalization Context

While the Netherlands was often used as a model of open multiculturalism in the 1990s, since 2000 it has turned towards policies that are, in some views, purposefully integrative and, in other interpretations, are in part exclusionary (i.e., they are meant to control undesirable migration, especially in terms of family formation and unification). Like in the case of the other countries who have made changes in their naturalization laws, these took place on the background of multiple factors: at a political level, the Council of the European Union recommended in 2004 "common basic principles" of immigrant integration. They emphasized the need for enhanced labor market integration through better knowledge of the host-society language as well as respect for the "basic values of the EU", to be gained through increased knowledge of the history and institutions of the host society.

Socially, there was increased anxiety over the radicalization of certain segments of society (see anti-radicalization initiatives in Denmark, for further examples). Several events in the Netherland precipitated these anxieties: concerns over the alleged failures of multiculturalism started making the subject of intellectual and public debates; the 2002 murder of populist politician Pim Fortuyn—the politician who advocated the integration

of current immigrants before new ones would be allowed; as well as the 2004 murder by a dual Dutch-Moroccan citizen of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, whose film critique of Islam had caused much controversy. Indeed, "[b]y 2003, the word 'multicultural,' increasingly criticized as 'soft,' had all but disappeared from policymakers' plans, replaced with an approach that emphasized integrating into and understanding Dutch society" (Nana, 2007). While a five-year residency used to suffice as grounds for naturalization, beginning in 2003 a naturalization exam was also required, testing basic language skills and practical knowledge about Dutch society.

Naturalization ceremonies were introduced in 2006 (applicants must participate in one once the Queen has approved the recommendation for naturalization, and without it, citizenship is not granted) and since 2007, the Dutch government requires a "civic integration exam." This replaced the naturalization test both for those who apply for naturalization and those who wish to receive a temporary resident permit through (enter the country for more than 90 days) for family formation or reunification. However, the test is not uniformly required, applying only to specific groups—the test is only expected of citizens of most countries outside of the European Union with the exception of the United States of America, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea. It has already been deemed unlawful, albeit based on technicalities in the test's design and not by addressing its discriminatory practices ("Netherlands: Court Rules Pre-Entry Integration Exam Unlawful", 2008). Despite these rulings, the practice has remained unchanged while the Dutch government has been "conducting a review of the legislation"—non-Western nationals who wish to join family in the Netherlands are required to pass the basic listening and speaking test abroad, by phone, at a Dutch

embassy. The test is based on a film available in many languages, *Coming to the Netherlands,* a film that offers an overview of Dutch history and geography, as well as governmental structure and cultural symbols and practices.

In fact, these requirements have generated lucrative businesses (Kamerman, 2009). Dutch language courses are advertised on the Internet in countries like Thailand, while even in the Netherlands individuals offer services to the so-called 'import brides' who enter the country on tourist visas, take crash courses, only to return to their home countries and take the exam before actual immigration. And this is only one facet of an intriguing trend towards the "privatization of integration" (Joppke, 2007). In addition, official integration courses have been contracted out to private organizations and the state involvement beyond the actual testing has become minimal.

Like the newly-introduced (in 2008) similar requirements for foreign spouses in Germany, this negative focus on family immigrants needs to be interpreted in the context of Dutch Muslims' marriage practices—the overwhelming majority of family migrants in the Netherlands and elsewhere in Western Europe—since over 50% continue to look for spouses in their country of origin. This process is perceived at the heart of the levels of self-segregation among Muslims that perpetuate across generations. These drastic integration policies take place, therefore, in a juxtaposition of socio-political and demographic contexts and have led to practices that, in fact, have connected previously separate domains: migration control and immigrant integration. Even the name of this new practice, "integration from abroad" appears almost oxymoronic. When integration practices are (more or less) subtly used to achieve immigration control, it is bound to

attract critiques that question the honest, liberal-democratic intentions of immigrant naturalization and integration.

For those who already immigrated to the Netherlands prior to the new provisions of the "integration abroad" approach, the integration test is more elaborate, as it requires, in addition to language and knowledge of Dutch society examined for those who take the test abroad, a "practical portfolio" with gathered evidence of the applicant's ability to function in society. This multi-layered approach to testing both potential and future citizens makes the Dutch system of "citizen assessment" by far the most elaborate and, in fact, potentially confusing, among the countries included in this comparison. While the Ministry's of Justice Immigration and Naturalization Site offers only the technical and bureaucratic information about the policy's procedures, it offers a hyperlink to *Integration* site created by the sub-contracted administrative body which does offer a more direct, and easier to understand explanation of the process.

**The official Dutch meeting space: The Ministry's of Justice Immigration and Naturalization site.** The simple white and purple contrast background of the Immigration and Naturalization site belies the elaborate, multiple steps involved in the process of naturalization and testing prospective citizens. There are no busy designs to distract attention, no banners with portraits of multi-ethnic groups as those used in the German official discourse of integration. Here, the vertical line that divides the purple and white backgrounds on the left side of the screen, also serves as an axis for single portraits of individuals, portraits captured as still frames of silhouettes in motion. These are indeed individuals of different racial and ethnic backgrounds, genders and ages, all dressed in western-style casual or business clothing, all appearing to move with

purpose—in each case, as the portraits change on different subsections of the site, their chins are up, eyes fixed in a distance and their limbs engaged in motion. Such images may be fitting for a "world on the move" metaphor possibly employed here by a governmental body that does not engage on this site in a rhetoric of integration. Unlike in the German case, where this discourse is elaborately constructed, these individuals are not together, they do not pose for the camera and thus do not engage the visitor with a direct look or personalized presence.

Therefore, from the first encounter, there seems to be less personal engagement with the prospective citizen which becomes increasingly evident in the word choices and passage constructions, as the visitor links from section to section to find the applicable legal requirements. By these means, the distant approach to the visitor is striking despite the ministry's description of its personal attention in its overview page: "the IND [Immigration and naturalization area] realizes that a Yes or No may have a serious impact on the lives of the people who want to enter our country to live or work here. This makes the IND very careful in its approach. IND staff examine each and every case and allow the foreign nationals to present their story. It gives the IND an opportunity to find a balance between rules and people."

Rules, however, in the sense of a bureaucratic tone and layout of "procedure," "advantages" and "consequences" seem to be in focus here, even if austerity would be too powerful a term to describe the atmosphere in this meeting space. While there is no stated or directly perceived aversion to the prospective citizens, they are positioned as participants in a legal process that takes place under the authority of the state, and not as characters in a narrative of integration, travelers on a path that the state and the

prospective citizen will engage in together, as projected in the German case. Instead, what Christian Joppke (2005) has argued about the Dutch model of citizenship acquisition being the end and not the beginning of the journey comes across clearly in the address towards the applicant: "If you wish to acquire Dutch citizenship by means of naturalisation, *you must demonstrate that you have integrated sufficiently* [emphasis added]. This means that you should speak, read, write, and understand Dutch reasonably well. You must be able to manage in Dutch society." At the same time, minimal to no attention is paid to explaining the need (or justifying) the exam that would test such "sufficient integration." In contrast with the German case, there are no officially stated aims on this site although other reports submit that the test had four main aims: provide a sense of pride for the applicant, offer some meaning to the naturalization process, encourage the applicant to think of the meanings of citizenship, its rights and responsibilities, and link the citizen to the local government where the ceremony takes place (Hansen, 2008).

While these sound very similar to the purposes stated by the other countries which employ an exam, they are not at all evident on the official site. Instead, the official statement on testing language, for example, is the most directly stated practical-orientation among the four countries:

> So, you do not have to speak or write Dutch without making any mistakes. You must, for example, be able to have a short chat with your neighbour about the weather, pay in the super market, buy a train ticket, or write a short letter to the insurance company. If you watch the news or listen to the radio, you must be able to understand what it is about, but you do not have to understand everything.

Once you have passed the examination, you will get a Civic Integration

Certificate. With this certificate, you can submit a naturalisation application.

The tone here seems surprisingly lax in comparison with the rest of procedural language

on the site, but it is, in fact, consistent in its aims with the overall Dutch practical

emphasis on applicants' ability to truly engage in society. This is reflected in the fact that

it is the only country in this comparison whose exam consists of a "practical,"

decentralized component, in addition to the three centralized components (a digital

practical test, a Knowledge of Dutch Society examination and a Spoken Dutch Test).

It is this "decentralized" component that makes it stand out from the other

approaches to testing citizens. It is described as a portfolio with "evidence" of 30

situations that the applicant has experienced in practice, where they have had to engage

with others and accomplish certain purposes in society—registering a birth, discussion

with a teacher at a child's school, seeking information to volunteer at an organization and

so on. This evidence is assessed by an examination body, after which the candidate will

be required to justify his or her evidence in front of the panel from this examination body.

If a candidate does not have any evidence of practical situations, he or she may take an

oral examination instead, where the candidate must demonstrate sufficient command of

Dutch by taking part in 6 role plays. Or, a combination of the two options is possible, If

an individual has evidence of a number of situations, however not as many as 30,

supplementing some gathered evidence with a lower number of role plays. For managing

and administering the exams, The Information Management Group has been

commissioned as an independent administrative body by the Minister of Education,

Culture and Science. This group's own website, called *Integration,* is linked as a further

source of information to the applicant, thus expanding the official meeting place between the state and the prospective citizen into a privatized realm whose presentation both echoes and contrasts the that of the government.

The visual rhetoric of the *Integration* site remains, despite a more vivid use of color, rather simple and technical with limited use of text. With only one picture of two young women sharing a bike ride, it explains even less why one would want to naturalize and integrate, but dedicates more attention to explaining the process of the "decentralized" exam through video clips that show an African origin applicant organizing his portfolio, or a multi-ethnic group taking the computerized exam. While the governmental site is available in both Dutch and English, this private site is only available in Dutch. However, it offers a step further in detailing what could be a confusing requirement. It delineates the thirty proofs of engagement with society as falling into three categories: citizenship, social participation and benevolence. Such terms, however, are layered with meaning and examples of possible "evidence" for each category hint to their interpretations that the Dutch context. For example, the "citizenship" category needs to include twelve proofs and can be such things as ask for a passport, renewing a license or "solving problems with the neighbors." The twelve required instances of "social participation" can be neighborhood/area meetings or registering for a sport. And, finally, the six proofs need to demonstrate one's "benevolence" through recorded instances of requesting information or actual volunteer work.

While the Dutch official rhetoric does not offer the promise of support and mutual enrichment between the native and the newcomer, its integration discourse becomes a

bold subtext through these social participation proofs—being able to survive in the new context, as well as develop capacities of social compassion and duty for the fellow citizens seem central here, even beyond the simple knowledge of a governmental structure. And the cultivation of these capacities for compassionate participation make it stand out among the other models which do not highlight this feature at all. It also stands out among models by what Joppke (2010) considers a trespassing of the "illiberal threshold" and what other countries, like Great Britain are also experimenting with: "resource-starved, post-welfare states have devolved responsibilities to active citizens. But only for citizenship applicants has this recently hardened into a legal obligation. . . . [T]roubling from a liberal point of view is making virtuous citizenship a condition for legal citizenship." But perhaps this requirement is meant to reinforce what other scholars have found to be a highly valued attitude in the historically-shaped Dutch context: tolerance. As Janoski (2010) reviewed this work, he found that the Dutch "don't expect immigrants to wear clogs or convert to Christianity, but groups that oppose the rights of women, gays, Jews, and other groups to democracy and human life are not welcome" (p. 202). Benevolence and tolerance may be mutually enforceable here and thus areas where the new citizen is tested to assess whether he or she has "sufficiently integrated" in the Netherlands.

**The United Kingdom: National Naturalization Context**

Changes in the U. K. citizenship policy, first introduced in 2001, are similar to those in continental Europe, but they have been less coercive. They were introduced in the wake of inter-racial riots (which were assessed to be the result of minorities' segregation from mainstream society), the September 11, 2001 attacks in the U.S., and

then were further changed after the London transportation bombings of 2005. Beginning with 2004, the prospective citizens had to participate in naturalizing ceremonies in which they would pledge allegiance to the Queen and committed to upholding the country's freedoms and democratic values. Since 2005, however, a citizenship test known as the "Life in the U.K. test" was introduced, being also used as an assessment for the applicants' language proficiency. However, Christian Joppke points out that this test differed from its counterparts in the Netherlands or Germany, by initially refusing to subordinate integration attempts to the immigration control agenda (Joppke, 2007). The Crick Commission (2003), in preparing the new civics courses and tests (on the background of citizenship policy reform), emphasized that "(T)he object is not to diminish, and indeed cannot diminish, numbers of people already settled and employed." So, the British approach was less coercive and more service-oriented. Indeed, the exam was initially introduced as a "citizenship test" in 2005 and thus as a support for civic integration, and only later, in 2007, did it became a requirement for those who were still outside the borders seeking residence in the U.K.

To the critical (and somewhat cynical) mind, however, the more relaxed U.K. approach could be also attributed to the point-system immigration policies it implements in selecting immigrants based on skills, while its less-skilled immigrant laborers come from other EU countries, as they cannot be stopped due the Union's guarantees of free movement. Nevertheless, they are a different category from the kinds of non-Western immigrants the other countries deem as "undesirable" and thus the U.K. may not have had a similar need to employ integration initiatives to control immigration. It could thus "afford" its more liberal tone in integration, since it already had a more exclusive

immigrant selection. Still, in comparison to an approach such as that in the Netherlands where the acquisition of citizenship is presented as the apex of successful integration, Great Britain has remained more liberal in its orientation: citizenship is the beginning of a journey of lifelong self-improvement. Even the language requirements reflect this concept, in having designed a tiered system adapted to each applicants' learning trajectory. Instead of needing to demonstrate a minimum standard, applicants have to demonstrate having improved their English by one step on an official "English as Second Language" scale after having taken a course. The "Life in the U. K. test" itself, is not very different in content-focus from those used in continental Europe or even the United States, emphasizing mainly "British national institutions" and "Britain as a multicultural society," but also addressing practical questions necessary for social participation and some specific questions about the applicant's area.

**The official British meeting space: The Home Office U. K. Border Agency.** The U. K. Border Agency's official site, which offers the necessary information on the procedures of citizenship acquisition is, among the four, the most technically focused. While it does address the prospective applicants directly—rather than referring to them in third person as "the applicant" as is the case in other contexts—the communication is simply procedural, with numerous links applicable to the various individual and legal scenarios. There are no images at all on the white and light blue backgrounds and, unlike the other countries, there is no mention of integration initiatives, not even as tangentially as in the case of the Netherlands' brief touch upon being "sufficiently integrated." One exception occurs in the context of the compulsory citizenship ceremonies which are presented as the mark of an important step and the opportunity to be "welcomed in a local

community." In fact, from the procedural explanations about citizenship acquisition, no direct link is offered to any information about the required "Life in the U. K." test. An official governmental site for this purpose does exist, however, and it has to be accessed through a different Internet search.

This site, too, is initially simple, bare of any images that might signify integration. It takes a condensed approach and it is perhaps the least time-consuming site among the four. Employing direct and simply-stated remarks, it explains the aims of the site as a place where prospective citizens can learn about the details of the test, including its technical aspects, assess their knowledge and know how to best proceed towards the actual exam. Once the visitor enters the "About the Test" and "Prepare for the Test" sections, the tone changes, although it remains very straightforward and without any embellishments of a multicultural or integrationist rhetoric—smiling portraits of different ethnicities are intermittently added to the white backgrounds, and a brief justification is given for the use of this test, inviting the prospective citizen to engage in the process and understand citizenship acquisition as an achievement:

> Becoming a British citizen or deciding to settle permanently in this country is an important event in your life. If you are applying for naturalisation as a British citizen or for indefinite leave to remain, you will need to show that you know about life in the U. K.

As was the case with the other three countries, the emphasis on the immigrants' decision to relocate to England brings forth from the beginning a rhetoric of responsibility, and it is continued in a brief slideshow that introduces the test:

Becoming a British citizen is an important event in your life and is something that you can feel proud of. Becoming settled in the U. K. is also an achievement. It is a significant step in your journey to citizenship and *the Government encourages you to think about whether you want to make the further commitment of becoming a British Citizen. ...* Britain is a country where people of many different cultures and faiths live. What brings British people together is that they *listen to different points of view*, they have *respect for equal rights* and they believe that *community is important.* Becoming settled in the U. K. by getting indefinite leave to remain means you will have the opportunity to *play an even more active role in your community and wider society. ...* As an individual, you also have many talents and experiences to bring to U. K. society. Being a British citizen or getting indefinite leave to remain *doesn't mean you have to lose your own identity.* There will, however, be things about life in the U. K. that *you should know about before making a long-term commitment to the country.* That's why the Life in the U. K. Test has been introduced. Studying for and taking the test will give you the practical knowledge you need to live in this country and to take part in society

This is a long excerpt, but it isn't much shorter than the entire text offered on the test's presentation slideshow. In comparison to Germany (with the most elaborate explanation of a its democratic values and the position of the newcomer), this comparatively condensed version accomplishes parallel purposes: it delineates democratic principles of the context of reception; it highlights personal decision-making and the need for democratic participation; and it acknowledges the contribution that the newcomers can offer to the further development of the country. However, "an active role" in one's

society, while possibly synonymous with the integration rhetoric found in Germany, the

Netherlands on Denmark, is not necessarily so. Or, if it is, the U. K. official position is

the only one among the four to directly state that this possible participation (hence

integration) is not expected to translate into cultural homogeneity. Here, "knowing" about

one's new context is both necessary and symbolic of a desire to understand and

participate in informed ways. Yet, "knowing" and "being" are still held in tension and not

easily conflated, allowing the visitor to consider the differences between "information"

and "identity." Comparatively, this rhetorical stance is unique among the four countries

and seems consistent with previous assessments that, among the countries who have

changed their naturalization policies by introducing or revising naturalization exams, the

U.K.'s implementation of integrative practices has been the least coercive (Joppke,

2007).

### Naturalization and Integration: An Immigrant-State Partnership of Various Degrees

As "windows into the mind of the state," the official naturalization sites across the

four countries, position the passing of an integration or naturalization exam as the

demonstration of initiative on the part of the immigrant to understand the basic

organization and norms of the new country. It is thus an opportunity for the state to

emphasize the responsibility of each future citizen towards lawful participation, as a

consequence of his or her own decision to relocate (the forced relocation of refugees does

not take any precedence in this discourse, perhaps due to the fact that, even if refugees

are forced migrants from the sending country, they are usually voluntarily going to the

specific countries that receive them).

However, while the theme of personal responsibility connects the four cases, the countries differ in the kinds of meetings spaces they create for the immigrants through the official sites, as well as the emphasis they place on levels of integration. Germany and Denmark are most similar in their concerted effort to demonstrate a balance between the roles of the state and those of the individual immigrant in achieving integration. A clear integrative discourse is present both in the ways in which the immigrant is addressed—as invited *and* under a duty to participate—and in the comparatively elaborate descriptions of the government's overall integration initiatives. To that end, Germany's virtual *Integration* space is most-developed, while Denmark's presentation is less visually inviting but still conveying the powerful message of integration. For the Netherlands, however, the rhetoric of integration is heavily reduced to tangential mention and the overall language of the meeting space is rather procedural and distant in comparison. This seems counterintuitive, since this country requires the most elaborate integration exam among them, one whose components are actually meant to measure tangible instance of participation in society (or integration). Conversely, its more rigorous testing could be the very reason why the state is not compelled into making convincing rhetorical arguments about the need for integration, when it already legislated more demanding means to show it. Still, even with the Netherland's minimal justifications for integration, it is the United Kingdom that lacks it almost completely. The rights-and-responsibilities rhetoric is similarly present—with the same themes as those of Germany and Denmark—but in much more condensed form. And, its uniqueness among the four extends also to the fact that, this official discourse alone, makes explicit the "permission" to maintain one's identity in this new process of "becoming."

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# CHAPTER 6

## Striving for improvement, working with what we have: Implications for Theory and Practice

From the early 1990s to 2002, when almost 49 percent of eligible immigrants had naturalized, the number of naturalized citizens in the U.S. had nearly doubled—from 6.5 million to 11.3 million. In 2008, there was an historic high of almost 1,400,000 active naturalization petitions, with all these prospective citizens having to pass the naturalization exam—and, beginning with October 1st, 2008, all have had to pass the newly introduced version. Perhaps it is a reason for derision for some who find it a futile exercise, while for others a reason of anxiety over their abilities to meet the new standards—and yet, "[t]he citizenship test is one of the most high-stakes examinations an immigrant will ever face" (The Migration Policy Institute, 2008, p. 1). Debates can continue among those on different sides of the opinion and political spectrum, as well as among scholars who would like to posit alternative approaches to scrutinizing and welcoming new members into the polity. Meanwhile, the exam—after a decade of debates and a significant financial investment—remains a firm political instrument of naturalization whose implementation and implications need to be made more visible in the scholarship of immigrant integration and citizenship.

This has been the task I undertook in this study. I have done so, first in response to increasingly popular trends that propose post-national models and various new appropriations of the concept of citizenship, while leaving its most fundamental facet—citizenship as status—in the relic galleries of an allegedly outdated political past. Second, when the naturalization process has been addressed, the approaches have mostly dealt

with naturalization rates and their relationship with immigrant characteristics and the bureaucratic features of a slow and often cumbersome process. When the naturalization exam is addressed specifically, it is often done from a language assessment perspective, brushing over the civics aspects as limiting and fruitless, or from critical studies perspectives that position the whole exam as a marginalizing instrument of control and exclusion. In what follows, by briefly reflecting on the major arguments made throughout the chapters, I aim to highlight the study' emerging implications for scholarship, future policy, as well as the practice of the current exam. I also discuss possible future research avenues which would complement the work undertaken here, to deepen our understanding of citizenship testing as a formative process.

## Theoretical and Practical Implications of Institutional Contextualization

The United States government operates the world's largest immigration service agency—while the European Union receives more immigrants per year across its entire territory, the U.S., as a single country, remains at the top in immigrant reception. This continues a historic trend in which maintaining national cohesion and addressing the afferent questions of immigrant integration have been central in debates and policy-making. It is a history wrought with idealism, conflict, hope, tension, inclusion, discrimination, justice-seeking and perpetual attempts at reevaluation—to this day, the selection and inclusion of the newcomer remain laden with multiple narratives, with some remarkable strides towards stripping exclusionary practices. Questions about the process by which an outsider can lay claim on the means of inclusion and belonging—the process of naturalization—are also found at the heart of these debates. Through Chapters 1 and 4, drawing attention to broader structures—such as the history of naturalization in

the U.S. and then the current environment of citizen testing in the international arena—I

delineated the wider parameters for the more detailed attention to the actual exam's

positioning as civic education in Chapters 3 and 4.

Attention to those broader parameters aimed to highlight the means by which such

testing policy emerges, being both reactionary and continuous—in other words, it

responds to current configurations and perceptions of immigration, but in doing so, it

draws on the historic and socio-political contexts in which it exists. Even if the

naturalization practices of the U.S. and other European countries which employ testing

seem to converge towards similar types of tests—perhaps as a facet of international flows

of influence—the specifics of the implementation and the rhetoric employed draw upon

the particulars of national contexts. To illustrate, the comparative Chapter 4 offered an

opportunity to explore how these tests are presented and justified in European national

discourses—especially to the immigrants themselves—and how the state authority uses

the context of the exam as an official site of engagement with the prospective citizens.

Passing an integration or naturalization exam is shown, across all cases, as the

demonstration of initiative on the part of the immigrant to understand the basic

organization and norms of the new country—it is thus an opportunity for the state to

emphasize the responsibility of each future citizen towards lawful participation, as a

consequence of his or her own decision to relocate. The locus of responsibility lies,

therefore, with the newcomer who attempts settlement within an already established, self-

preserving, social system. However, while the theme of personal responsibility connects

the four cases, the countries differ in the emphasis they place on levels of integration,

with some demonstrating a balance between the roles of the state and those of the

individual immigrant, and others putting more emphasis on the prospective citizen. These differences can be understood within each country's established immigration policy that are further nested within historically-shaped ideologies of belonging and integration.

Similarly, in the U.S. context, attention to policy-generation processes illuminates how the naturalization exam as a policy instrument contributes to institutional continuity, indispensable to the state. Policy change on pressing issues—such as naturalization—is thus embedded in an accumulation of institutionalized ideas, multiple and mutually-reinforcing layers of the U.S. citizenship and naturalization narrative. These layers have left us with potent policy frameworks: anxiety over socio-political dissolution and the afferent perceived need to test new members' loyalty; suspicion that they may not easily incorporate and their need for assistance to participate in the preservation of the American way of life—both politically and socio-culturally; and a concomitant, justice-driven, aspiration to make new members' experiences meaningful and reflective of the positive things their new country has to offer. These frameworks structure the vision of what is necessary or even possible when it comes to new citizens' acceptance and incorporation, legitimizing and turning the exam into a resilient mechanism that seems to exclude at the moment other feasible approaches to naturalization.

By undertaking an institutional perspective and highlighting the impact of policy frameworks development on the approaches to naturalization and citizen integration, I have added to the predominant critical perspectives on naturalization testing, without undermining their important contributions. They are indeed essential to the vigilance necessary in the maintenance of the democratic project; their illumination of the exclusionary potential of naturalization practices needs to be maintained. I do, however,

caution against their often- sweeping assessments that seem to take a decontextualized approach to understating the process. Considering the state's structural and cultural impediments that are both historically shaped and fueled by current circumstances enhances our understanding with a sociological dimension that acknowledges the accumulative nature of policy. Without it, radical critical perspectives that neglect the institutionalization of dominant clusters of ideas, lose some of their revealing potential. Attention to such policy frameworks offers some viable interpretations to the resilient nature of the naturalization exam and its predominant rhetoric, and offers the context within which critical approaches can make their recommendations for change. In the absence of such contexts, these critiques lose their intended edge; however, but by emphasizing the exam's rootedness and its institutional constraints, my study offered a contextualizing perspective and calls for more careful attention to such policy accumulation, attention that can then enhance the possibilities for revision and change.

As a result, this is not only a theoretical contribution, but also one that can add to practice, because it helps us move from a decontextualized demonization of the exam and its association with unilateral versions of past "Americanization" attempts. The historical context offered in this study does not justify, overlook or excuse the xenophobic and unjust facets of historical immigrant incorporation initiatives, but it does remind of the complexity of the tale. It is a complexity that critical interpretations tend to overlook. In highlighting a complexity where stories of marginalization co-existed with genuine attempts at welcoming the outsider into a common project of self-rule, I aimed to move away from dichotomy—the alleged incompatibility between immigrant-centered, cultural preservation propositions and the use of a naturalization exam that aims for the creation

of a common consciousness, based not only on democratic principles, but also on distinctly American cultural features. I argue that when the two facets are not perceived as mutually corrosive, but as complementary parts of a historically-crafted American identity narrative, the national orientations of the naturalization exam need not be interpreted as a homogenizing tool.

Some current calls towards post-national visions of citizenship do advocate the promotion of liberal democratic citizenship and not "just" American citizenship—they consider efforts to build a sense of communal concord based on geography to be harkening back to outmoded models of 19th century instead of acknowledging the new challenges of 21st century (Bosniak, 1998). Such positions would probably consider civic education and testing immigrants for a distinctly American citizenship as slightly anachronistic. At the same time, others point to the fact that singular, uncontested conceptions of American identity are recognizably naïve, but that the U.S. is far more than a set of abstract liberal values and their afferent institutions—it is a historical, finite entity, albeit not timeless or static (Hollinger, 1998). Indeed, as immigration scholar Roger Waldinger (2003) has argued, aversion towards "assimilation" is usually based on the idea of a fabricated "mainstream"—once we detach, however, this "elusive majority from its dialectical opposite," it "collapses along the class, regional, religious, and ideological cleavages that keep members of the majority regularly at odds with each other" (p. 23).

This passing mention of unified groups which are, nonetheless, "at odds with each other" is significant in our current discussion of naturalization. Democratic citizenship, as the organization of plurality, is by definition an attempt at achieving common goals with

participants that are likely to be "at odds" along multiple lines. U.S. citizenship and the naturalizing exam that positions a state-oriented, informed citizen, promote an image of a dynamic nation committed to debate over its collective identity, but grounding this commitment in the noble parts of its past. As Hollinger (1998) pointed out in his conceptualization of U.S. citizenship, there is not only a shared past with arguments over the meaning of American identity, but also, and especially, a current and future project of maintaining and expanding human freedom and well-being. When immigrants relocate and naturalize as American citizens, they do join a finite, historical entity and not only abstract democratic principles at "stratospheric" levels (Renshon, 2005)—the naturalization exam, as basic as its content may be, does offer the possibility of a more tangible understanding of the basic tenets of these past and current projects of democracy. It is to be, in Noah Pickus' words, "a delicate balancing act between inspiration and criticism, idealism and alienation," because "teaching new and native-born citizens that American history is an epic tale of conflict over who we are as a nation may have great potential to inspire commitment to liberal principles and the American nation."

Positioning the exam in this manner, we can distance ourselves from monolithic interpretations of the exam as an accomplice to "Americanization," interpreted as the neutralization of difference and coerced absorption into the fabricated mainstream. Rather, while maintaining an alert eye for exclusionary practices, we could also move the exam into an analytic and practical space where it participates to the necessities of nation and identity building which, in light of perpetual immigration, remain relevant today. In addition to the glimpse of a "shared" past that the new citizen is joining, the exam might thus function at a basic level to foster attachment by offering then the possibility to

position themselves in a particular relationship with this new knowledge. Popular media

representations of the exam that would take these insights into further consideration could

contribute to a more constructive portrayal of the exam, while immigrant-support

examinations might also adjust the exam's typical representation as mainly a bureaucratic

exercise.

In educational philosophy, the argument has already been made (e.g., Greene,

1997) that learning through a curriculum—and the naturalization exam functions as

one—is not only about absorbing the history and civics information, but about

undergoing a formative process. In the case of citizenship, both knowledge and identity

building are important—indeed, "critical judgment in the absence of emotional

attachment is as risky as attachment without judgment" (Pickus, 1998, p. xxv). Civics

courses teachers who work in community-based naturalization classes can, as some do,

also contribute to the more balanced interpretation of the exam by approaching the

teaching and learning in those contexts as opportunities for more than simply passing the

exam. While that is an essential outcome, the opportunities of new citizens to reflect and

see themselves in light of the acquired knowledge is also an invaluable goal. This process

of naturalization as civic education—citizen formation—is the second major facet of this

study and whose theoretical and practical implications I turn my attention next.

### Theoretical and Practical Implications of the Exam as Civic Education

While the exam has the potential to act as a symbolic connecting mechanism

between the new citizens and their new polity, rather than being positioned only as a

marginalizing instrument, the details of how this might happen are not lacking their own

level of complexity, tension and some degree of unfulfilled ambition. Through this study,

I have taken seriously the official positioning of the exam as a civics curriculum, aiming to partly compensate for the lack of focused scholarly attention to the exam's civic formative capacity. I assessed that formative claim in light of civic education in school—to which it has been officially compared—and, in the process, also examined the kind of citizen ideal this exam and its rhetoric communicate to the newcomers. Multiple positions of civic participation emerged, often in tension, either between the official statements and the actual exam, or between their combined message and the visions for democratic participation identified by current civic theorists and educators. Despite official emphasis on allegiance and local civic participation, the exam questions address neither directly, remaining mainly focused on a state-centered, fact-based understanding of procedural democracy and history. The recurring citizen characteristics, therefore, center on knowledge and action, with its location differing in emphasis from the rhetoric to the actual exam content. The lack of alignment that this study has revealed in the naturalization message would need to be reconsidered in future policy attention to the exam, with the questions being brought in closer configuration with the rhetoric, or the official statements to better fit the actual content of the exam.

Separate from its rhetoric, current content—which we have to work with until any future, currently unanticipated revisions—does remain a central part of the naturalization testing process and official intentions have invested it with a more "meaningful" civic formative capacity. In contrast with some of the low expectations of the exam—especially in light of high ideals held for civic education in schools—I showed that, in fact, these two educational domains share similar challenges. They both demonstrate a limited ability to promote a more profound, engaged preparation for the challenges of

citizenship that involves both local and state-oriented components. The new questions

that hint to some of the complexities of U.S. history, as well as the mechanisms of

participatory democracy are to be themselves acknowledged as positive changes. They do

remain far from what a powerful civic curriculum, under different circumstances, could

and should do for its students—but the overall sense of the revised exam is more

favorable than what the critics' default dismissal might suggest.

Conversely, the school civics practices, albeit possessing a much better potential,

are not necessarily free from their own shortcomings and criticisms. Evaluating the non-

traditional citizenship education process generated by naturalization suggests once more

in this study, that further thinking about citizenship education in K-12 settings is

necessary to combat the limitations that they, too, face as they strive to fulfill civic ideals

for youth. At the same time, the image of the naturalization exam that this comparison

has enabled, is more complex than that of a simple, ill-intentioned test. Given that the

revised questions emerged out of a struggle among many interests—chief among them,

the pressure to not significantly raise the exam's difficulty—the content still presents in

its confined space, more potential than the previous versions. The problem, of course, is

that the exam as the enabler of an actual civics curriculum can also easily fall short of this

potential and necessitates different conceptualizations of implementation.

While some questions have been removed and others updated or added to increase

clarity and meaning-making, the exam has not necessarily become more difficult. In fact,

the potential for a straight-forward memorization of acceptable answers, without

engagement with the higher order aspects of the questions is still possible with the new

exam. However, many prospective citizens do learn in collective environments facilitated

by different community-based organizations. Many, in fact, depend on these contexts to reach acceptable levels of language and civic preparation to even attempt to pass the exam: "If the policy goal is to promote integration of immigrants by encouraging naturalization, the characteristics of the eligible pool suggest the value of expanding publicly supported language and civics instruction" (Fix, Passel, & Sucher, 2003). Nevertheless, despite suggestions that the welcome of new citizens and the naturalization process would benefit from the involvement of the private, volunteer sector (Renshon, 2005; Chertoff, 2007), such initiatives have remained comparatively limited and insufficient to meet needs (Etzioni, 2007). As Noah Pickus (1998) also suggests, "[g]overnment policy is a blunt instrument; so nurturing a common identity must often be accomplished in smaller settings" (p. 133).

Moreover, in addition to being limited in resources for wider access, immigrant-support ethnic organizations often have to focus on the technicalities of the naturalization process, as well as ensuring that the applicants they support have the minimal skills necessary to pass the exam. Passing is a major goal in these cases since these organizations' major concern is with immigrant rights and securing them through naturalization. Among them, the right to vote has captured the attention of large ethnic campaigns such as "Citizenship Now!" In this process, with attention to important technical procedures whose obstacles often prevent eligible residents from naturalizing, it does not seem possible for these organizations to invest much effort in engaging prospective citizens in more powerful citizenship conversations—even some prompted by the exam questions themselves. Noah Pickus, interviewed by the *New York Times* during the initial stages of the revision, envisioned the power for such conversations: "It

can play a kind of catalytic role," he said. "Imagine a situation where you had civic education courses that talked not just about the separation of powers, but what to do if your landlord sues you" (Sachs, 1999).

While the mandatory, government-supported citizenship classes in Germany would be controversial in the U.S. context and are not likely to be implemented soon— even if they have already been suggested as alternatives to the exam (Fix, Passel, & Sucher, 2003)—perhaps a possibility to increase both the availability and depth of civic preparation would be in partnership between community-based organizations and colleges and universities and even senior-level high school history and civics classes. A growing literature exists on service learning initiatives which emerges out of the increased interest in opportunities to implement civic principles through experience, as well as develop skills and orientations while contributing in tangible ways to local communities (Hunter & Brisbin, 2000). Service learning initiatives are advocated already beginning with K-12 contexts, as an "essential component of citizenship education," with the National Council for the Social Studies, "supports the integration of quality service-learning activities into the K-12 social studies curriculum as well as all social studies teacher education programs" (NCSS, 2000). At the college level, some service learning initiatives have taken places that were targeted specifically at citizenship development and some involving immigrants (e.g., Koulish, 1998; Battistoni, 2000).

For some of their service learning requirements, college students in a limited number of classes participated along community-based organizations in preparing immigrants for naturalization, with both immigrants and students being able to learn more about citizenship and democracy. The initiative, although gaining recognition in

scholarly circles interested in such initiatives (Koulish, 1998) has even better potential. It would tap into a tremendous resource afforded by the combination of growing requirements for service learning on many college campuses with our growing knowledge of today's generations of college-age students who have already been identified as being more service-oriented (Reinke, 2005). Such partnership between community-based organizations and college students could lead to fruitful learning, since college students would, as part of their courses, also prepare and receive feedback on their approaches to engaging the immigrant participants. This way, it is less likely that these community civic courses would remain at rudimentary, test-driven levels. If such initiatives could be supported to the extent that established models would rise across the country, the benefits would not be only for immigrants who would learn and experience a better level of reception, but also for the students themselves who would themselves be both in preparation for and in the active implementation of citizenship.

It is also the connections formed in these learning contexts that would be of tremendous value, adding to the actual skills gained in the classes. One of the major issues with the naturalization process, is that it is mostly impersonal and "does not generate a sense of mutual commitment among naturalized and native-born Americans ... a link between old and new immigrants [is important] and an opportunity to encourage both native-born and naturalized citizens to explore the meaning of their shared identity" (xxix). The context of such classes would provide these opportunities and would add to many immigrants' transitions towards citizenship—the naturalization exam's questions would act in these contexts as more than transmitters of content, and would have a higher potential to offer a clearer mirror of what is expected of them and that they are, indeed,

invited and expected to participate along with their fellow citizens. Yet it is one issue to state such invitations in the naturalization rhetoric, and quite another to see it in practice through the participation of such fellow Americans as the students who would invest in this valuable process.

**Understanding Further: Countering Limitations and Implications for Future Work**

While I have tried to decrease the limitations of this study by adapting my research and analysis approach to the questions that directed it, one of its limitations is also the grounding a future work. The purpose of the study was to understand U.S. citizenship testing as a civic formative process, as embedded in its content and official policy positions. In doing so, the study provides a necessary context for a further component which is essential to understanding the naturalization process as civic education: the prospective citizen's own perspectives on and experiences with this new naturalization exam. From the studied texts and materials, I have shown that the new exam, if used well, has more potential than initially thought, but that at the same time, the ideals of citizenship that it promoted were less coherent that expected. It would be illuminating to examine how these assessments compare with to the narratives of those who experience it and what their accounts can tell us about the new exam's intersections with various social locations.

# APPENDIX A

## Civics Questions in the Redesigned Naturalization Test

Some of the items have more than one possible answer listed. The official

requirements state that although the hope is that the applicants will invest in learning all

the content, applicants are only required to give one answer from the possible answers,

unless the question clearly asks for more than one. Applicants who are 65 years old or

older and have been legal permanent residents of the United States for 20 or more years,

may study just the twenty questions marked with an asterisk. (See Appendix C for the

list). Also, a disclaimer is included: "Applicants for naturalization taking the redesigned

test should note that USCIS is aware that the 100 items sometimes have answers that are

not listed here."

## AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

### A: Principles of American Democracy

**1. What is the supreme law of the land?**

- *the Constitution*

**2. What does the Constitution do?**

- *sets up the government*

- *defines the government*

- *protects basic rights of Americans*

**3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution.**

  **What are these words?**

- *We the People*

**4. What is an amendment?**

- *a change (to the Constitution)*

- *an addition (to the Constitution)*

**5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?**

- *the Bill of Rights*

**6. What is <u>one</u> right or freedom from the First Amendment?***

- *speech*

- *religion*

- *assembly*

- *press*

- *petition the government*

**7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?**

- *twenty-seven (27)*

**8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?**

- *announced our independence (from Great Britain)*

- *declared our independence (from Great Britain)*

- *said that the United States is free (from Great Britain)*

**9. What are <u>two</u> rights in the Declaration of Independence?**

- *life*

- *liberty*

- *pursuit of happiness*

**10. What is freedom of religion?**

- *You can practice any religion, or not practice a religion.*

## 11. What is the economic system in the United States?*

- *capitalist economy*

- *market economy*

## 12. What is the "rule of law"?

- *Everyone must follow the law.*

- *Leaders must obey the law.*

- *Government must obey the law.*

- *No one is above the law.*

## B: System of Government

### 13. Name **one** branch or part of the government.*

- *Congress*

- *legislative*

- *President*

- *executive*

- *the courts*

- *judicial*

### 14. What stops **one** branch of government from becoming too powerful?

- *checks and balances*

- *separation of powers*

### 15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?

- *the President*

**16. Who makes federal laws?**

• *Congress*

• *Senate and House (of Representatives)*

• *(U.S. or national) legislature*

**17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?***

• *the Senate and House (of Representatives)*

**18. How many U.S. Senators are there?**

• *one hundred (100)*

**19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?**

• *six (6)*

**20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators?***

*Answers will vary. [For District of Columbia residents and residents of U.S.*

*territories, the answer is that D.C. (or the territory where the applicant lives) has*

*no U.S. Senators.]*

**21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?**

• *four hundred thirty-five (435)*

**22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?**

• *two (2)*

**23. Name your U.S. Representative.**

• *Answers will vary. [Residents of territories with nonvoting Delegates or resident*

*Commissioners may provide the name of that Delegate or Commissioner. Also*

*acceptable is any statement that the territory has no (voting) Representatives in Congress.]*

## 24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

▪ *all people of the state*

## 25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

▪ *(because of) the state's population*

▪ *(because) they have more people*

▪ *(because) some states have more people*

## 26. We elect a President for how many years?

▪ *four (4)*

## 27. In what month do we vote for President?*

▪ *November*

## 28. What is the name of the President of the United States now?* (this was released in 2008)

▪ *George W. Bush*

▪ *George Bush*

▪ *Bush*

## 29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?

▪ *Richard Cheney*

▪ *Dick Cheney*

▪ *Cheney*

## 30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

- *the Vice President*

## 31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

- *the Speaker of the House*

## 32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?

- *the President*

## 33. Who signs bills to become laws?

- *the President*

## 34. Who vetoes bills?

- *the President*

## 35. What does the President's Cabinet do?

- *advises the President*

## 36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?

- *Secretary of Agriculture*

- *Secretary of Commerce*

- *Secretary of Defense*

- *Secretary of Education*

- *Secretary of Energy*

- *Secretary of Health and Human Services*

- *Secretary of Homeland Security*

- *Secretary of Housing and Urban Development*

- *Secretary of Interior*

- *Secretary of State*

- *Secretary of Transportation*

- *Secretary of Treasury*

- *Secretary of Veterans' Affairs*

- *Secretary of Labor*

- *Attorney General*

**37. What does the judicial branch do?**

- *reviews laws*

- *explains laws*

- *resolves disputes (disagreements)*

- *decides if a law goes against the Constitution*

**38. What is the highest court in the United States?**

- *the Supreme Court*

**39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court?**

- *nine (9)*

**40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States?**

- *John Roberts (John G. Roberts, Jr.)*

**41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government.**

**What is <u>one</u> power of the federal government?**

- *to print money*

- *to declare war*

- *to create an army*

- *to make treaties*

## 42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is <u>one</u> power of the states?

- *provide schooling and education*

- *provide protection (police)*

- *provide safety (fire departments)*

- *give a driver's license*

- *approve zoning and land use*

## 43. Who is the Governor of your state?

- *Answers will vary. [Residents of the District of Columbia and U.S. territories without a Governor should say "we don't have a Governor."]*

## 44. What is the capital of your state?*

- *Answers will vary. [District of Columbia residents should answer that D.C. is not a state and does not have a capital. Residents of U.S. territories should name the capital of the territory.]*

## 45. What are the <u>two</u> major political parties in the United States?*

- *Democratic and Republican*

## 46. What is the political party of the President now?

- *Republican (Party)*

## 47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

- *(Nancy) Pelosi*

## C: Rights and Responsibilities

**48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.**

- *Citizens eighteen (18) and older (can vote).*

- *You don't have to pay (a poll tax) to vote.*

- *Any citizen can vote. (Women and men can vote.)*

- *A male citizen of any race (can vote).*

**49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?***

- *serve on a jury*

- *vote*

**50. What are two rights only for United States citizens?**

- *apply for a federal job*

- *vote*

- *run for office*

- *carry a U.S. passport*

**51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?**

- *freedom of expression*

- *freedom of speech*

- *freedom of assembly*

- *freedom to petition the government*

- *freedom of worship*

- *the right to bear arms*

**52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?**

- *the United States*

- *the flag*

## 53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?

- *give up loyalty to other countries*

- *defend the Constitution and laws of the United States*

- *obey the laws of the United States*

- *serve in the U.S. military (if needed)*

- *serve (do important work for) the nation (if needed)*

- *be loyal to the United States*

## 54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?*

- *eighteen (18) and older*

## 55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?

- *vote*

- *join a political party*

- *help with a campaign*

- *join a civic group*

- *join a community group*

- *give an elected official your opinion on an issue*

- *call Senators and Representatives*

- *publicly support or oppose an issue or policy*

- *run for office*

- *write to a newspaper*

## 56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?*

- *April 15*

**57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?**

- *at age eighteen (18)*

- *between eighteen (18) and twenty-six (26)*

# AMERICAN HISTORY

## A: Colonial Period and Independence

**58. What is <u>one</u> reason colonists came to America?**

- *freedom*

- *political liberty*

- *religious freedom*

- *economic opportunity*

- *practice their religion*

- *escape persecution*

**59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?**

- *Native Americans*

- *American Indians*

**60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?**

- *Africans*

- *people from Africa*

**61. Why did the colonists fight the British?**

- *because of high taxes (taxation without representation)*

- *because the British army stayed in their houses (boarding, quartering)*

- *because they didn't have self-government*

**62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?**

▪ *(Thomas) Jefferson*

**63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?**

▪ *July 4, 1776*

**64. There were 13 original states. Name <u>three</u>.**

▪ *New Hampshire*

▪ *Massachusetts*

▪ *Rhode Island*

▪ *Connecticut*

▪ *New York*

▪ *New Jersey*

▪ *Pennsylvania*

▪ *Delaware*

▪ *Maryland*

▪ *Virginia*

▪ *North Carolina*

▪ *South Carolina*

▪ *Georgia*

**65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?**

▪ *The Constitution was written.*

▪ *The Founding Fathers wrote the Constitution.*

**66. When was the Constitution written?**

▪ *1787*

**67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name <u>one</u> of the writers.**

- *(James) Madison*

- *(Alexander) Hamilton*

- *(John) Jay*

- *Publius*

**68. What is <u>one</u> thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?**

- *U.S. diplomat*

- *oldest member of the Constitutional Convention*

- *first Postmaster General of the United States*

- *writer of "Poor Richard's Almanac"*

- *started the first free libraries*

**69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?**

- *(George) Washington*

**70. Who was the first President?\***

- *(George) Washington*

**B: 1800s**

**71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?**

- *the Louisiana Territory*

- *Louisiana*

**72. Name <u>one</u> war fought by the United States in the 1800s.**

- *War of 1812*

- *Mexican-American War*

- *Civil War*

- *Spanish-American War*

**73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.**

- *the Civil War*

- *the War between the States*

**74. Name <u>one</u> problem that led to the Civil War.**

- *slavery*

- *economic reasons*

- *states' rights*

**75. What was <u>one</u> important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?***

- *freed the slaves (Emancipation Proclamation)*

- *saved (or preserved) the Union*

- *led the United States during the Civil War*

**76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?**

- *freed the slaves*

- *freed slaves in the Confederacy*

- *freed slaves in the Confederate states*

- *freed slaves in most Southern states*

**77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?**

- *fought for women's rights*

- *fought for civil rights*

## C: Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information

**78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.\***

- *World War I*

- *World War II*

- *Korean War*

- *Vietnam War*

- *(Persian) Gulf War*

**79. Who was President during World War I?**

- *(Woodrow) Wilson*

**80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?**

- *(Franklin) Roosevelt*

**81. Who did the United States fight in World War II?**

- *Japan, Germany, and Italy*

**82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?**

- *World War II*

**83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?**

- *Communism*

**84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?**

- *civil rights (movement)*

**85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?\***

- *fought for civil rights*

- *worked for equality for all Americans*

**86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?**

- *Terrorists attacked the United States.*

**87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.**

*[Adjudicators will be supplied with a complete list.]*

- *Cherokee*

- *Navajo*

- *Sioux*

- *Chippewa*

- *Choctaw*

- *Pueblo*

- *Apache*

- *Iroquois*

- *Creek*

- *Blackfeet*

- *Seminole*

- *Cheyenne*

- *Arawak*

- *Shawnee*

- *Mohegan*

- *Huron*

- *Oneida*

- *Lakota*

- *Crow*

- *Teton*

- *Hopi*

- *Inuit*

# INTEGRATED CIVICS

## A: Geography

**88. Name <u>one</u> of the two longest rivers in the United States.**

- *Missouri (River)*

- *Mississippi (River)*

**89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?**

- *Pacific (Ocean)*

**90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?**

- *Atlantic (Ocean)*

**91. Name <u>one</u> U.S. territory.**

- *Puerto Rico*

- *U.S. Virgin Islands*

- *American Samoa*

- *Northern Mariana Islands*

- *Guam*

**92. Name <u>one</u> state that borders Canada.**

- *Maine*

- *New Hampshire*

- *Vermont*

- *New York*

- *Pennsylvania*

- *Ohio*

- *Michigan*

- *Minnesota*

- *North Dakota*

- *Montana*

- *Idaho*

- *Washington*

- *Alaska*

**93. Name <u>one</u> state that borders Mexico.**

- *California*

- *Arizona*

- *New Mexico*

- *Texas*

**94. What is the capital of the United States?***

- *Washington, D.C.*

**95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?***

- *New York (Harbor)*

- *Liberty Island*

*[Also acceptable are New Jersey, near New York City, and on the Hudson (River).]*

**B: Symbols**

**96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?**

▪ *because there were 13 original colonies*

▪ *because the stripes represent the original colonies*

**97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?***

▪ *because there is one star for each state*

▪ *because each star represents a state*

▪ *because there are 50 states*

**98. What is the name of the national anthem?**

▪ *The Star-Spangled Banner*

## C: Holidays

**99. When do we celebrate Independence Day?***

▪ *July 4*

**100. Name two national U.S. holidays.**

▪ *New Year's Day*

▪ *Martin Luther King, Jr., Day*

▪ *Presidents' Day*

▪ *Memorial Day*

▪ *Independence Day*

▪ *Labor Day*

▪ *Columbus Day*

▪ *Veterans Day*

▪ *Thanksgiving*

▪ *Christmas*

# APPENDIX B

## Comparison of Questions in Previous and Redesigned Tests

The questions in the left column, marked with "Q" were those implemented before

October 1, 2008. Some of them were rephrased and appear in the right column as the new

version of the questions, currently used. If a new version does not appear, this means the

question has been removed in the revision process. Conversely, if a question only appears

in the right column but not in the left, it is a question that has been newly introduced and

did not exist in the previous version.

**Previous Questions**                                       **Current Questions**

Q1. What are the colors of the flag?

Q2. What do the stars on the flag mean?

Q3. How many stars are there on our flag?

Q4. What color are the stars on our flag?

Q5. How many stripes are there on our
flag?

Q6. What do the stripes on the flag          96. Why does the flag have 13 stripes?
represent?

Q7. What colors are the stripes on the
flag?

Q8. How many states are there in the
Union (the United States)?

Q9. What do we celebrate on the 4th of
July?

Q10. Independence Day celebrates
independence from whom?

Q11. What country did we fight during      61. Why did the colonists fight the
the Revolutionary War?                     British?

Q12. Who was the first president of the    70. Who was the first President?
United States?

Q13. Who is the President of the United    28. What is the name of the President
States today?                              of the United States now?

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Q14. Who is the Vice President of the United States today?

29. What is the name of the Vice President of the United States now?

Q15. Who elects the President of the United States?

Q16. Who becomes President if the President dies?

30. If the President can no longer serve, who becomes President?

Q17. What is the Constitution?

2. What does the Constitution do?

Q18. What do we call changes to the Constitution?

Q19. How many changes, or amendments, are there to the Constitution?

7. How many amendments does the Constitution have?

Q20. What are the three branches of our government?

13. Name one branch or part of the government.

Q21. What is the legislative branch of our government?

Q22. What makes up Congress?

17. What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?

Q23. Who makes the Federal laws in the United States?

16. Who makes federal laws?

Q24. Who elects Congress?

Q25. How many Senators are there in Congress?

18. How many U.S. Senators are there?

Q26. For how long do we elect each Senator?

19. We elect a U.S. Senator for how many years?

Q27. Name two Senators from your state.

20. Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators?

Q28. How many voting members are in the House of Representatives?

21. The House of Representatives has how many voting members?

Q29. For how long do we elect each member of the House of Representatives?

22. We elect a U.S. Representative for how many years?

Q30. Who is the head of the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government?

15. Who is in charge of the executive branch?

Q31. For how long is the President elected?

26. We elect a President for how many years?

Q32. What is the highest part of the Judiciary Branch of our government?

Q33. What are the duties of the Supreme Court?

37. What does the judicial branch do?

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|---|---|
| Q34. What is the supreme law of the United States? | 1. What is the supreme law of the land? |
| Q35. What is the Bill of Rights? | 5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution? |
| Q36. What is the capital of the state you live in? | 44. What is the capital of your state? |
| Q37. Who is the current Governor of the state you live in? | 43. Who is the Governor of your state? |
| Q38. Who becomes President if both the President and Vice President die? | 31. If both the President and the Vice President can no longer serve, who becomes President? |
| Q39. Who is Chief Justice of the Supreme Court? | 40. Who is the Chief Justice of the United States? |
| Q40. What were the original 13 states? | 64. There were 13 original states. Name three. |
| Q41. Who said, "Give me liberty or give me death"? | |
| Q42. Name some countries that were our enemies during World War II. | 81. Who did the United States fight in World War II? |
| Q43. What was the 49th state added to our Union (the United States)? | |
| Q44. How many full terms can a President serve? | 26. We elect a President for how many years? |
| Q45. Who was Martin Luther King, Jr.? | 85. What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do? |
| Q46. What are some of the requirements to be eligible to become President? | |
| Q47. Why are there 100 Senators in the United States Senate? | |
| Q48. Who nominates judges for the Supreme Court? | |
| Q49. How many Supreme Court Justices are there? | 39. How many justices are on the Supreme Court? |
| Q50. Why did the Pilgrims come to America? | 58. What is one reason colonists came to America? |
| Q51. What is the executive of a state government called? | |
| Q52. What is the head executive of a city | |

government called?

Q53. What holiday was celebrated for the first time by American colonists?

Q54. Who was the main writer of the Declaration of Independence?

62. Who wrote the Declaration of Independence?

Q55. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

63. When was the Declaration of Independence adopted?

Q56. What are some of the basic beliefs of the Declaration of Independence?

Q57. What is the national anthem of the United States?

98. What is the name of the national anthem?

Q58. Who wrote The Star-Spangled Banner?

Q59. What is the minimum voting age in the United States?

54. How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?

Q60. Who signs bills into law?

33. Who signs bills to become laws?

Q61. What is the highest court in the United States?

38. What is the highest court in the United States?

Q62. Who was President during the Civil War?

75. What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?

Q63. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

76. What did the Emancipation Proclamation do?

Q64. What special group advises the President?

35. What does the President's Cabinet do?

Q65. Which President is called the "Father of our Country"?

69. Who is the "Father of Our Country"?

Q66. Which President was the first Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Army and Navy?

Q67. What was the 50th state to be added to our Union (the United States)?

Q68. Who helped the Pilgrims in America?

Q69. What is the name of the ship that brought the Pilgrims to America?

Q70. What were the 13 original states of the United States called before they were states?

Q71. What group has the power to declare war?

Q72. Name the amendments that guarantee or address voting rights.

48. There are four amendments to the Constitution about who can vote. Describe one of them.

Q73. In what year was the Constitution written?

66. When was the Constitution written?

Q74. What are the first 10 amendments to the Constitution called?

5. What do we call the first ten amendments to the Constitution?

Q75. Whose rights are guaranteed by the Constitution and the Bill of Rights?

51. What are two rights of everyone living in the United States?

Q76. What is the introduction to the Constitution called?

Q77. Who meets in the U.S. Capitol building?

Q78. What is the name of the President's official home?

Q79. Where is the White House located?

Q80. Name one right or freedom guaranteed by the first amendment.

6. What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?

Q81. Who is Commander-in-Chief of the United States military?

32. Who is the Commander in Chief of the military?

Q82. In what month do we vote for the President?

27. In what month do we vote for President?

Q83. In what month is the new President inaugurated?

Q84. How many times may a Senator or Congressman be re-elected?

Q85. What are the two major political parties in the United States today?

45. What are the two major political parties in the United States?

Q86. What is the executive branch of our government?

Q87. Where does freedom of speech come from?

Q88. What U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services form is used to apply for naturalized citizenship?

Q89. What kind of government does the

United States have?

Q90. Name one of the purposes of the United Nations.

Q91. Name one benefit of being a citizen of the United States.

50. What are two rights only for United States citizens?

Q92. Can the Constitution be changed?

4. What is an amendment?

Q93. What is the most important right granted to United States citizens?

50. What are two rights only for United States citizens?

Q94. What is the White House?

Q95. What is the United States Capitol?

Q96. How many branches are there in the United States government?

13. Name one branch or part of the government.

14. What stops one branch of government from becoming too powerful?

3. The idea of self-government is in the first three words of the Constitution. What are these words?

8. What did the Declaration of Independence do?

9. What are two rights in the Declaration of Independence?

10. What is freedom of religion?

11. What is the economic system in the United States?

12. What is the "rule of law"?

25. Why do some states have more Representatives than other states?

23. Name your U.S. Representative.

24. Who does a U.S. Senator represent?

34. Who vetoes bills?

36. What are two Cabinet-level positions?

41. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the federal government. What is one power of

the federal government?

42. Under our Constitution, some powers belong to the states. What is one power of the states?

46. What is the political party of the President now?

47. What is the name of the Speaker of the House of Representatives now?

49. What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?

52. What do we show loyalty to when we say the Pledge of Allegiance?

53. What is one promise you make when you become a United States citizen?

55. What are two ways that Americans can participate in their democracy?

56. When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

57. When must all men register for the Selective Service?

59. Who lived in America before the Europeans arrived?

60. What group of people was taken to America and sold as slaves?

65. What happened at the Constitutional Convention?

67. The Federalist Papers supported the passage of the U.S. Constitution. Name one of the writers.

68. What is one thing Benjamin Franklin is famous for?

71. What territory did the United States buy from France in 1803?

72. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1800s.

73. Name the U.S. war between the North and the South.

74. Name one problem that led to the Civil War.

77. What did Susan B. Anthony do?

78. Name one war fought by the United States in the 1900s.

79. Who was President during World War I?

80. Who was President during the Great Depression and World War II?

82. Before he was President, Eisenhower was a general. What war was he in?

83. During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

84. What movement tried to end racial discrimination?

86. What major event happened on September 11, 2001 in the United States?

87. Name one American Indian tribe in the United States.

88. Name one of the two longest rivers in the United States.

89. What ocean is on the West Coast of the United States?

90. What ocean is on the East Coast of the United States?

91. Name one U.S. territory.

92. Name one state that borders Canada.

93. Name one state that borders Mexico.

94. What is the capital of the United States?

95. Where is the Statue of Liberty?

97. Why does the flag have 50 stars?

99. When do we celebrate
Independence Day?

100. Name <u>two</u> national U.S. holidays.

# APPENDIX C

## Selected Test Items for Special Category Applicants

Applicants who are 65 years old or older and have been legal permanent residents of the United States for 20 or more years, may study just these twenty questions.

*Principles of American Democracy*

What is one right or freedom from the First Amendment?

What is the economic system in the United States?

*System of government*

Name one branch or part of the government.

What are the two parts of the U.S. Congress?

Who is one of your state's U.S. Senators?

In what month do we vote for President?

What is the name of the President of the United States now?

What is the capital of your state?

What are the two major political parties in the United States?

*Rights and Responsibilities*

What is one responsibility that is only for United States citizens?

How old do citizens have to be to vote for President?

When is the last day you can send in federal income tax forms?

*Colonial Period*

Who was the first President?

*The 1800s*

What was one important thing that Abraham Lincoln did?

*Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information*

Name <u>one</u> war fought by the United States in the 1900s.

During the Cold War, what was the main concern of the United States?

What did Martin Luther King, Jr. do?

*Integrated Civics*

What is the capital of the United States?

Where is the Statue of Liberty?

Why does the flag have 50 stars?

When do we celebrate Independence Day?

# APPENDIX D

## Questions Omitted in the Revised Test

Name one important idea found in the Declaration of Independence.

What do we call changes to the Constitution?

What are the three branches or parts of the government?

How many U.S. Senators does each state have?

Who does a U.S. Representative represent?

What decides each state's number of U.S. Representatives?

Why do we have three branches of government?

How old must a President be?

To become President of the United States, what must the person be at birth?

Who is the President now?

Who is the Vice President now?

How many full terms can a President serve?

What is a veto?

What Cabinet-level agency advises the President on foreign policy?

Who confirms Supreme Court justices?

Who nominates justices to the Supreme Court?

What does it mean that the U.S. Constitution is a constitution of *limited powers*?

What is the majority political party in the House of Representatives now?

What is the political party of the majority in the Senate now?

Who is the Senate Majority Leader now?

Who is the Secretary of State now?

Who is the Attorney General now?

Is the current President in his first or second term?

What is self-government?

Who governs the people in a self-governed country?

What are "inalienable rights"?

Where did most of America's colonists come from before the Revolution?

Why were the colonists upset with the British government?

What group of essays supported passage of the U.S. Constitution?

What country sold the Louisiana Territory to the United States?

In 1803, the United States bought a large amount of land from France. Where was that land?

What did the abolitionists try to end before the Civil War?

What international organization was established after World War II (WWII) to keep the world at peace?

What alliance of North American and European countries was created during the Cold War?

Martin Luther King. Jr. had a dream for America. What was his dream?

What country is on the northern border of the United States?

Where is the Grand Canyon?

What country is on the southern border of the United States?

Name one large mountain range in the United States.

What is the tallest mountain in the United States?

Name the state that is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean.

Why do we have 13 stripes on the flag?

On the Fourth of July, we celebrate independence from what country?

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