The social life of citizenisation and naturalisation: outlining an analytical framework

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Abstract

This article interrupts the linear narrative that posits the conferment of citizenship (legal naturalisation) as the 'natural' outcome of citizenisation. Where the scholarship on citizenship and migration privileges the *institutional life* of citizenisation – where naturalisation appears as a discrete event at the end of the 'citizenisation' continuum – the *social life* of citizenisation includes naturalisation as an *ontological process* but is not reducible to it. 'Ontological process' refers to the ways in which different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, histories, geographies) are combined to produce understandings of what citizenship 'really is'. Drawing on critical policy studies, 'the social life' of citizenisation and naturalisation rejects a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document. I then turn to feminist science and technology scholars Annemarie Mol's (2002) 'ontological politics' and Charis Thompson's (2005) 'ontological choreographies' as useful frameworks to work with for tracing ontological processes within practices of citizenisation and naturalisation. To illustrate, the article builds on the widely used opposition between ascribed (birthright) and chosen citizenship (naturalisation) to show how the distinction falls apart when we understand naturalisation as part of the normalisation of such assumptions and their effects on global inequalities. The analysis demonstrates how the proposed analytical framework puts into relief joint processes of ontologising, normalising, subjectification, and stratification. Understanding how citizenisation and naturalisation function in tandem institutionally and socially is important if we are to gain a fuller grasp of how old and new forms of inequalities are refigured in twenty-first century citizenship.

The social life of citizenisation and naturalisation: outlining an analytical framework[1]

What do we assume about 'naturalisation' as a theoretical and practical concept as it functions in citizenship theory and in the practice of citizenship attribution today? And how do social analyses of 'citizenisation' – the promotion and assessment of skills and knowledge deemed necessary for political membership – lead us to contest, complicate and refine naturalisation and its relationships to citizenisation?

Legally speaking, naturalisation refers to the acquisition of citizenship and nationality by somebody who resides in a country where she or he is not a citizen or national. In his historical analysis of the body of legislation and court rulings that define US citizenship, Rogers Smith explains that the term 'naturalisation' originated in feudal regimes when

> subjectship to the political order under whom one was born was believed to be natural – sanctioned by divine will and rationally discoverable natural law. Persons who acquired allegiance to a new ruler we therefore said to be "naturalized." (1997, 13)

This feudal definition suggests that 'it is natural to be subject to the ruler under whom one is born and that it is so natural that one is subject to that ruler for life' (Smith in Kostakopoulou 2006, 95n108). Smith goes on to say that '[t]he puzzling survival of the term "naturalization" is, however, only one tip of a huge iceberg of anomalies and contradictions that lurk below the surface of American citizenship law.' (1997, 13)

Smith's puzzlement derives from an opposition that is still found in much of the current imagination, laws, and academic scholarship about citizenship attribution in the Anglo-European worlds: the opposition between ascription (birthright citizenship) and consent (naturalisation), which Smith attributes to illiberal and liberal traditions respectively. This opposition fails to recognise the extent to which 'subjectship' remains an integral part of citizenship in three ways, as Eldon Eisenach

argues (1999, 200): 'subject to the laws (and their protections); subject to the political sovereign or "state" (and its protections) […]; and subject to God.'[2] Like in much of the scholarship on citizenship and migration, what Eisenach intimates but does not elaborate is not only the limits of the consent-ascription dualism, but the many other ways in which 'naturalisation' operates if we consider it outside of its strict legal definition.

Contra the accepted understanding of legal naturalisation as a voluntary act, 'naturalisation' 'denotes the opposite of choice' (Joppke 2010, 16). For through 'naturalisation', something is 'made natural' – brought into conformity with nature – as in the case of aligning one's permanent place of residence with one's nationality. In this form, 'naturalisation' re-establishes the 'natural' order of things because citizenship takes as its baseline assumption that most of us reside in the country into which we are born. Furthermore, stating that something is 'natural' establishes a value judgement about what is socially acceptable and desirable. As Judith Williamson explains in her classic theory of 'decoding advertisements', ideas of what is 'natural' result from a transactional relationship between 'nature' and 'culture'. She writes: 'precisely because of this reference to Nature as the determinant of what is good, as though it were an independent arbiter, "the natural" becomes the meaning given *to* culture, *by* nature – although it is culture that determines "the natural" anyway' (1978, 123; emphasis original). In contrast to Rogers Smith's puzzlement then, an understanding of 'naturalisation' as a social and cultural *process* and *product* resulting from transactions between culture and nature rather than solely as a legal process, allows us to excavate how it continues to 'make sense' within the realm of citizenisation and citizenship attribution. This is more than a matter of semiotics. It is about how, *in practice*, citizenisation and naturalisation are variously enacted, the

different realities that they bring forth, and the 'ontological politics' (Mol 2002) surrounding the choice of some realities over others (Law 2004, 13).

This article interrupts a linear narrative within the multidisciplinary field of citizenship and migration studies that casts naturalisation as a discrete legal event confined to the conferment of nationality. Rejecting this position as a starting point for analysis, this article argues that the concepts of naturalisation and citizenisation and their relationships to one another need to be rethought. There is a need to bridge understandings of naturalisation as legal and political processes with understandings of naturalisation as a *social ontological process*. This is both a methodological and theoretical move. Methodologically, this means moving beyond top-down or bottom-up approaches in favour of what Wright and Reinhold (2011) call a 'studying through' of citizenisation and naturalisation that sheds light on how policies and their effects and outcomes are not fixed but variously enacted by various actors in different settings; these actors include both immigrants seeking citizenship or 'citizen-like' status, *as well as* institutional actors charged with implementing citizenisation processes (more on this below). In short, the framework requires a study of the *social world* of citizenisation policy. Theoretically, extending a social understanding of naturalisation into formal citizenisation measures is to scrutinise how citizenisation is framed, enacted and experienced, and to unpack the different 'realities' assumed under 'citizenship'. To be sure, the 'unnatural' character of citizenship is widely accepted in current scholarship on citizenship and migration. At the same time, the accepted distinction between chosen and ascribed citizenship suggests the endurance of some baseline assumptions about the 'reality' of how one acquires citizenship. My sociological curiosity takes me to question how this 'reality' is sustained as the state of 'how things are', what its effects are, and if it could be seen differently. Taking the

artifice of citizenship as a premise, understanding naturalisation as social ontological process invites an analysis of the ways in which the artifice of citizenship is *concealed or rendered irrelevant* in citizenisation. Thinking about the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation requires an analysis of how different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, [imperial] histories, geographies) are called forth and 'naturalised' in citizenisation practices, and combine to produce understandings of what citizenship 'really is'. Thus the questions are: what is naturalised in citizenisation? Put differently, what *are* the assumptions of citizenship (c.f. Clarke et al. 2014)? How do these assumptions circulate as a 'reality'? How and under what circumstances is one kind of reality enacted rather than another? What are the effects of privileging some realities over others on social relations?

It is important to address these questions because, as Engin Isin (2015) points out, understanding twenty-first century citizenship requires different concepts, methods, and data. Citizenship today is diffuse, fragmented, and unstable (e.g. Brown 2015, De Genova and Peutz 2010, Wacquant 2009). At the same time, European states are tightening access to citizenship for most foreigners. Exposing the ways in which assumptions about citizenship arise from a range of exchanges, transactions, or even compromises between what people know and what people view as 'the reality of how things are' is important if we are to understand how old and new forms of inequalities are (re)figured in contemporary citizenisation processes. Second, the questions move us beyond a view that opposes institutional actors to those who are the subjects affected and targeted by state policies, as if they were part of different 'cultures'. Rather, the object is to draw out how all these actors – and I include the policy itself as an 'actor' (more on this below) – are 'implicated in a set of shared and

divergent forces that bring [them] together and move [them] apart' (Povinelli 2011, 84). In sum, the social life approach is not meant to replace the institutional one, but rather to supplement it with an analysis of the 'ontological politics' of citizenisation. While institutional approaches largely feature an analysis of the political or state interests and national or international political trends and issues at stake surrounding the design of citizenisation measures, the social life approach proposed here features an analysis of the experiences, realities, subjects, and objects (such as citizenship itself) that these measures enact.

The framework sketched out here is still in its exploratory stages; it grows out of a multi-sited fieldwork on the British citizenship attribution process that I conducted between 2012 and 2014 in England.[3] This is a study of meso-levels of governing practices that take place in different settings: namely in local authorities, in ESOL[4] classes, and in interviews with applicants for citizenship or settlement, new citizens, as well as various institutional actors.[5] Though inspired by a locally specific study, the proposed framework is applicable to the wider field of citizenship and migration, particularly (but not exclusively) with regards to citizenisation and naturalisation.

The article includes two sections. The first section covers what I term 'the institutional life of citizenisation and naturalisation', where I discuss the contributions and limitations of current conceptualisations of 'citizenisation' and naturalisation as institutional legal processes. While I appreciate the distinction between the two policy measures, namely in the work of Sara Wallace Goodman (2014), I also critique the limits of a conception that posits citizenisation and naturalisation as discrete events on a same continuum. I argue that we need to rethink naturalisation as a social ontological process that is part and parcel to the integration agenda that citizenisation

measures are said to respond to. This takes me to the second section on 'the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation', where I sketch my analytical framework for examining how 'naturalisation' is variously enacted and variously attached to and detached from citizenisation. Drawing on critical social policy, I situate 'the social life' of citizenisation and naturalisation within an approach that rejects a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document, conceiving of policy instead as performative, relational and as producing multiple effects. I then turn to science and technology researchers Annemarie Mol's (2002) 'ontological politics' and Charis Thompson's (2005) 'ontological choreographies', to illustrate how, in practice, one could trace ontological processes in citizenisation and naturalisation policies.

The institutional life of citizenisation and naturalisation

The institutional life of naturalisation and 'citizenisation' is very well documented within the scholarship on citizenship and migration, where we learn how they have historically been subject to continuous reconfigurations within laws, rules, and policies. More recent studies of 'civic integration' measures reveal how the policy field of integration has expanded from the legal field of naturalisation. However, if integration requirements are no longer confined to naturalisation (e.g. language tests for entry visas; Kostakopoulou 2010, Goodman 2014), I add that naturalisation is part and parcel of the integration agenda. After exposing the possibilities and limitations of current understandings of the institutional life of citizenisation and naturalisation, this section argues that naturalisation is not as discrete a phenomenon that it is made out to be. This lays the groundwork for the subsequent section that elaborates on my framework for studying the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation.

The scholarly field on citizenship and migration has been a fertile ground for important debates concerning institutional changes in citizenship in the context of a globalised and mobile world. More specifically, the large tranche of scholarship devoted to the domains of citizenship acquisition and, more recently, 'civic integration' (Brubaker 1989, 1992, Bauböck 1994, 2006, Bauböck et al. 2006; Bauböck & Joppke 2010, Bloemraad 2006, Calder et al. 2010, Goodman 2014, Kiwan 2013a, Koopmans et al. 2012, Vink and de Groot 2010; Weil 2002; Pickus 1998) reveals how practices of 'citizenisation' have extended beyond the conferment of nationality strictly speaking and into the promotion and acquisition of citizen-like skills and statuses.

In her comparative study of civic integration measures in Western Europe, Sara Wallace Goodman (2014) argues that these measures signal the development of new forms of political membership and belonging that are not reducible to citizenship-as-nationality, but which rather lead to 'an alternative understanding of belonging' that she labels 'state identity' (2014, 16). As a result, integration policies have significantly changed the 'fundamental parameters of naturalization' (2014, 7), such as where the lines between nationality and other legal statuses become blurred. Goodman, drawing on Marie-Claire Foblets, speaks of these measures as 'citizenization' (2014, 3, 51) where changes in the timing and geographical reach of integration requirements have altered the fundaments of naturalisation insofar as 'citizen-like' skills and values are required for a range of subjects, 'from persons seeking citizenship to immigrants seeking entry and permanent residence.' (Goodman 2014, 3). For Goodman, citizenisation and naturalisation are formally different, and that difference reflects a wider shift in state policies that promote belonging and political membership rather than citizenship strictly speaking. As a result of these

policy developments, the scope of citizenisation has expanded while the remit and scope of naturalisation have narrowed.[6]

The differentiation between citizenisation and naturalisation is useful because it highlights how 'citizen-like' statuses can be acquired outside of nationality, namely in the context of the strengthening of the rights of foreigners and the rise of minority rights (Joppke 2010, Bosniak 2006, Soysal 1994). Citizenisation also refers to a range of concrete measures designed by governments to ensure the eligibility of immigrants seeking permanent residency or citizenship status: namely language and citizenship education and tests, residency requirements, 'good character', and so on. From the state's point of view, citizenisation is a solution against the 'citizenship deficit' of applicants. But 'citizen*isation*' also opens up the possibility for thinking of citizenship as an ongoing process, not a finite 'status' or something that one simply has (or not). This view is suggested by Camilla Nordberg and Sirpa Wrede's use of 'citizenisation' which they define as 'the ways in which "citizens to be" are enacting and negotiating their paths to citizenship through myriad street-level encounters' (2015, 56). What I add to this is that institutional actors are also 'enacting and negotiating' their way through citizenisation as they encounter applicants: they are finding their way through the policies and measures, and they also reflectively engage with what citizenship means through their encounters with noncitizens. In this sense, citizenisation interpellates citizens as well as immigrants.

This is a blind spot of the literature on citizenisation: by centring on immigrants as the sole subjects of citizenisation measures, it risks renaturalising the distinction between so-called 'native born' or 'birthright citizens' and foreigners by neglecting to consider how citizenship education and testing for immigrants must also be understood as addressing the nation at large, as Bonnie Honig (2001) argues with

regards to citizenship ceremonies. In this vein, some educational researchers propose to retrieve the 'pedagogical power' of citizenship education by drawing out the range of possibilities that are afforded in education practices and settings (Kiwan 2013b, Roberts and Cooke 2009, Pykett 2010). Still, researchers on citizenisation overwhelmingly adopt the state's viewpoint and accept that citizenisation of new citizens is solely about immigrants – whether these authors are concerned with the extent to which citizenisation measures comply with or violate liberal citizenship's principles of inclusion and equality (Bauböck and Joppke 2010, Etzioni 2007, Triadafilopoulos 2011), or whether they analyse the programmatic structure of naturalisation and integration as power laden and disciplining mechanisms (Fortier 2013, Löwenheim and Gazit 2009, de Leeuw and van Wichelen 2012).

The field of naturalisation and citizenisation is largely organised along different 'moments' in the attribution or acquisition of citizen-like statuses, as if 'citizenisation' and naturalisation are discrete events: thus educational and testing measures are considered separately from citizenship ceremonies [7]. In short, citizenisation is to integration what 'naturalisation' is to the conferment of nationality. As a result, citizenisation and naturalisation are placed on a temporal continuum, with the conferment of citizenship understood as the natural outcome of a successful citizenisation process.

The reduction of naturalisation and citizenisation to the letter of the law and of policy so simplifies understandings of naturalisation and citizenisation that it occludes how they may not always be on the same continuum, and confines naturalisation to a single moment at the end of the citizenisation process. Naturalisation and citizenisation *appear* to be on the same continuum because they are often mediated by institutional processes aimed at inculcating, assessing, and then celebrating applicants'

degree of integration: indeed Bridget Byrne (2014) rightly compares citizenship ceremonies to graduation ceremonies, and speaks of applicants for citizenship as 'citizands' (like graduands). Thus the assumption that citizenisation *qua* integration naturally leads to naturalisation *qua* citizenship as achieved, completed and secure status, remains unscathed.

Where the scholarship on citizenship in the policy fields of integration privileges the *institutional life* of citizenisation – where naturalisation is conceived as a discrete event at the end of the same continuum – I focus on the *social life* of citizenisation – which includes naturalisation as an *ontological process* but is not reducible to it. I explain the social life of citizenisation/naturalisation below. The point to make here is that citizenisation and naturalisation extend into each other and as such, they are more than the formal, linear procedures through which they are institutionalised and measured.

First, citizenisation is more than about the acquisition of 'citizen-like' skills and statuses, and occurs in sites where it is often overlooked, such as citizenship ceremonies. Still, it remains that *temporally*, naturalisation ceremonies are primarily conceived in law and in academic scholarship as sites where citizenisation stops and naturalisation begins (and ends) (*pace* Khan and Blackledge 2015 who see ceremonies as sites where language testing continues). We can learn from authors analysing citizenship ceremonies who combine an analysis of rhetoric and discourse with performative theories (Byrne 2014, Damsholt 2008a-b, Somerville 2005). In doing so, they highlight how new citizens are reminded of their relationship to the nation or the state: thus new citizens continue to be citizenised at the ceremony. In this way, citizeni*sation* suggests that 'becoming' citizen is an ongoing process that ties in with normative conceptions of what the 'becoming' citizen should be as a

member of the national community or polity that citizenship is tethered to. Moreover, the performative approach not only sheds light on how citizenship and the nation are performed in ceremonies, but also how the state and the state-citizen relationship are performed as well. Thus citizenisation is not only about immigrants and 'new citizens'; it is also about reiterating and confirming the authority of the state to confer citizenship (or to deny it), as well as to enact the state-citizen relationship (Fortier 2013)

Second, if citizeni*sation* (and not only citizenship) is more part of the naturalisation ritual in ceremonies than has been recognised, so too is naturalisation more present than it is made out to be in citizenisation practices, if we look at it as a social ontological process that can take many forms: bureaucratic practices of classification, differentiation, and objectification for example, or more broadly as a *transaction* between 'nature' – what simply 'is' – and culture – what is taught and learnt – that establishes what is desirable and socially acceptable. In short, what is missing from current research on citizenship and migration is a more complex theorisation of the relationship between naturalisation and citizenisation that allows for more in-depth empirical analyses.

The social life of citizenisation and naturalisation

Rather than approaching citizenisation and naturalisation only as institutional legal procedures, I conceive them as *social* events as well, that is as part of a *social world* where *both* institutional actors and applicants meet.[8] This is not to say that legal procedures are not part of the social world and shaped by it. Quite the contrary: interrupting the linear narrative of citizenisation-naturalisation and expanding an understanding of naturalisation as a social as well as legal process, is to recognise

how citizenisation and naturalisation extend into each other and extend beyond their strict legal parameters. It also calls for an examination of the dynamic character of the formal procedures as they variously affect, are interpreted by, and circulate between different actors in different settings. This section outlines an analytical framework for studying the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation, which includes but is not reducible to its institutional life. I begin by situating my approach within anti-essentialist feminist and critical race theorists, and then within critical policy studies that invite analyses of the 'social life' of policy. I then illustrate how, in practice, we could trace the ways in which citizenisation – citizenship as learnt, as socialisation – and naturalisation – citizenship as the natural outcome of citizenisation – are variously entangled, connected or disconnected. To do so, I draw on science and technology scholars Annemarie Mol's (2002) 'ontological politics' and Charis Thompson's (2005) 'ontological choreography'. But first, the recognition of the influence of anti-essentialist critics on my thinking is called for.

When thinking of naturalisation as an ontological process, I am indebted to debates around essentialism in the 1980s and 1990s which significantly advanced theories of race, gender and sex by revealing the ubiquitous means by which identities and differences, and by extension power, get naturalised (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995). With regards to citizenship, Nancy Leys Stepan (1998) pointedly argued that the history of embodiment of human racial and gendered differences must be seen as part of the history of liberal citizenship and its limits (Stepan 1998). Similarly, several feminist, queer and critical race scholars have shown that to be(come) a citizen is also to be(come) a gendered, racialised and sexualised subject (Alexander 1994, Bell and Binnie 2000, Berlant 1997, Glenn 2002, MacKinnon 1989, Sheller 2012, Pateman 1988, Yuval-Davis and Werbner 1999;).

The legacy of these interventions is summed up in this deceptively simple question: what is naturalised in citizenisation? Some authors have begun to answer this question by demonstrating how access to citizenship reproduces racialised, gendered, sexualised and class-based differences, not only through histories of exclusions (e.g. Joppke 2010, Motomura 2006, Smith 1997), but also as an enduring effect of colonial histories, immigration policies, or foundational conceptions of citizenship itself (e.g. as birthright or as property; Anderson 2013, Bhambra 2015, Brace 2004, Stevens 2010, Shachar 2009). While these offer theoretical paths into denaturalising universal citizenship, the empirical question of how we can track the production and reproduction of this and other ideals of citizenship remains open. In other words, citizenis*ation* forces the question of *how* identities, ideas (and other objects) are (re)produced in the everyday *practices* of allocating citizen-like or 'full' citizenship status. In turn, naturali*sation* leads us into the diverse ways in which the natural and the artificial, the abstract and the 'material', the political and the social, are variously entangled, negotiated, exchanged, or stabilised.

I take the phrase 'the social life' of citizenisation and naturalisation from critical policy studies that follow the social life of policy and explore the constitutive role of experience, culture and enactment in policy (Clarke et al. 2015, Shore and Wright 1997, Shore et al. 2011). Rejecting a conception of policy as a coercive instrument of the state or as a fixed document, this scholarship conceives of policy as performative, relational and as producing multiple effects. It emphasises the 'lived and embodied conception of "doing" rather than interpreting or implementing policy' (Newman 2013, 257). Furthermore, like much of the policy world today, citizenisation (including naturalisation) is a dispersed form of governance that involves multiple actors across multiple sites – public, semi-public, private, and

voluntary. Consequently, as Clarke et al. point out (2015, 52; also Clarke et al. 2014), it is hard to contain it within the linear narratives of 'path-dependence' (Bloemraad 2006, Janoski 2010, Goodman 2014) or cross-national convergence (Joppke 2010, Koopmans et al. 2012).

Going a step further, Shona Hunter (2008) proposes a view that positions policy itself as 'actant' or agent in policy-making. Drawing on Actor Network Theory, Hunter describes this approach as 'rethinking policy documents as in some sense "living"; . . . as the product of relational practices, but also as productive of social relations.' (2008, 507) While Hunter also attributes to policy the capacity to 'feel' (2008, 507), I rather see the significance in considering how policies *mediate* activities and relations, while they will also change as they move through sites and subjects. In this light, citizenisation and naturalisation policies are 'integral parts of relational webs, constituting the link between individual selves and multiple others' (Hunter 2008, 523) via a range of practices (reading, writing, listening, looking, assessing, filling forms, etc.). Put simply, citizenisation measures inscribe different parties into different relationships: to each other, to the state, to nation(s), to space and place (here and there), to time (past [his]stories, aspirations, waiting times), etc. Applying for settlement or citizenship puts in motion a range of social relations and interactions that are lived, embodied, felt, reasoned, processed, and documented by those involved, in ways that exceed the kind of coherence that policy, as an instrument of the state, is expected to confer onto its subjects. In this sense, policies themselves will be differently enacted. Tracking how policy moves through different settings, and how it moves (through) subjects, captures not only 'something of the livedness' (Lewis 2010, 214) of the policy's social life (how it is lived), but captures something of its *live*-ness as well (how it is 'living' [Hunter 2008, 507]).

Theorising the formal process of citizenisation as embedded in, and constitutive of, a complex field of material, discursive, imaginative practices yields a fuller understanding of how 'naturalisation' is variously enacted and variously attached to and detached from citizenisation. Methodologically, studying the social life of citizenisation entails not a top-down approach, nor does it beckon a bottom-up approach. Rather, it consists of 'studying through' (Wright and Reinhold 2011) citizenisation and its 'policy world': tracking the ways in which in policies are variously and sometimes contestably enacted by different people in different situations (Shore and Wright 2011, 8). There are several examples of studies where researchers follow the 'social life' of policy, such as Shona Hunter's (2015) study of the psychosocial life of British diversity policy, or Gregory Feldman's (2012) ethnography of the daily practices of European migration policy. But for the purposes that interest me here, namely the interactions between citizenisation and naturalisation and the question of how the artificial and the 'natural' are variously entangled and negotiated in the stabilisation of 'citizenship', I turn to two feminist ethnographies in science and technology studies by way of illustrating the 'ontological politics' (Mol 2002) and 'ontological choreographies' (Thompson 2005) that take place in citizenisation and naturalisation policies.

Annemarie Mol's (2002) ethnography of the day-to-day diagnosis and treatment of atherosclerosis in a Dutch hospital emphasises how enacting identities is not only social, but also practical and material. Mol describes her analysis as theorizing the 'ontological politics' of medicine: 'a politics that has to do with the way in which problems are framed, bodies are shaped, and lives are pushed and pulled into one shape or another' (2002, viii). Translating this into the field of citizenship attribution, it draws attention to how mundane bureaucratic processes and face-to-face

interactions enact *multiple* subjects and realities, rather than seeing these practices in the way that government policy is commonly understood; that is, as simply responding to a singular 'reality' (e.g. 'British citizenship' or any other citizenship-as-nationality) or singular 'subject' (the 'EU' applicant, the 'foreigner', the 'refugee'). Furthermore, these multiple enactments are more than different perspectives on the same thing. Mol cautions against what she calls perspectivalism, which remains in the realm of meaning, in the realm of how people talk about and interpret the object – citizenship for our purposes here – without considering how the object itself might change and take multiple forms. Mol suggests that to tackle the limits of perspectivalism we need to foreground 'practicalities, materialities, *events*' so that, in the case that interests me here, citizenisation and naturalisation become 'part of what is done *in practice*' (Mol 2002, 13; second emphasis added).

To illustrate, the stories that applicants and institutional actors told me in interviews reveal something of their feelings, experiences, and interpretations of what citizenisation is and of their part in the process. But they also told me a lot about how citizenisation is done in practice, and how their lives – be it their working lives or domestic lives – are touched by it in practical and material terms: from child-care arrangements around language or citizenship classes, to taking time off work, to preparing for the citizenship test, to ordering catering for citizenship ceremonies, or running photocopies to send someone's settlement application to UK Visa and Immigration (UKVI).[9] Seeing citizenisation through the lens of practices and events reveals not perspectival cleavages between applicants and institutional actors, but the necessary interactions between several actors and bureaucratic/administrative processes in making citizenisation and citizenship themselves a reality that impacts on their everyday lives, let alone one that might radically change their lives.

Recognising the significance of such practicalities, moreover, not only tells us something of how citizenisation becomes a tangible object in people's lives. It also reveals how citizenisation brings forth *multiple* realities. Thus citizenisation is a site of enactments that bring about the 'citizen multiple', to paraphrase Mol (2002), where the ways that subjects and objects are handled in practice are not the same from one site to another: for example, the world of the 'Settlement Checking Service' that local authorities offer is haunted by the figure of the sham marriage because the applications that they are authorised to check are only those to do with SET(M): 'settlement on the basis of marriage (or civil partnership) to a British spouse'. In that world, a person using this service at her local authority is likely to be treated as a suspect spouse. If she is successful and proceeds to obtaining British nationality, the same person moves to the world of ceremonies where she may be seen as a 'model citizen' because of her fluency in the English language (see Fortier 2017). In the end, however, through a set of bureaucratic, performative, affective, and material interactions and practices, the applicant comes out at the end of the process as a normalised genuine spouse and integrated new citizen.

This is not to take away any agency from applicants or state agents. One of the aims of Charis Thompson's work discussed next is to insert an ontological connection between selves (the making of personhood) and things (documented evidence of 'genuine marriage') to show how objectification does not necessarily deny agency, but that agency rather 'sometimes *requires* periods of objectification.' (2005, 185). As stated above, citizenisation a form of dispersed governance that is not singular, unidirectional, or uniform, and it cannot be removed from the relational, discursive, affective and material practices that sustain it or exceed it. However, we must caution against the risk that might result from prioritizing contingency and multiplicity at the

cost of omitting the inequalities and relations of power that are inherent in citizenship attribution. As John Law points out, Mol's 'ontological politics' draws attention the '*political* reasons for preferring and enacting one kind of *reality* rather than another.' (Law 2004, 13; second emphasis added)

And so we return to naturalisation as ontological process embedded in citizenisation measures. Charis Thompson (2005) uses the concept of 'ontological choreography' – 'the dynamic coordination of the technical, scientific, kinship, gender, emotional, legal, political, and financial' (2005, 8) – to examine processes of socialisation, normalisation, naturalisation and subjectification in her ethnography of assisted reproductive technology clinics. Drawing on her explanation of socialisation (2005, 80) for my purposes here, socialisation includes practices of normalisation by which 'new data' (new policy measures, new instruments, new staff, new roles, new applicants, new costs, new administrative constraints and possibilities, changes in government and in the political landscape) are incorporated into pre-existing procedures and objects of the various organisations (public and private) charged with dispensing a range of services to those seeking permanent residence or citizenship. Thompson adds that naturalisation 'is an important part of normalization'.

> This meaning of naturalization encompasses . . . ways of going on that do not seem to be driven by underlying causal or rational logics and that apply as much to the practice of science and formal reasoning as they do to tacit forms of socialization. (2005, 81)

Taking the artifice of citizenship as a premise, understanding naturalisation as part of normalisation invites an analysis of the ways in which the artifice is concealed or rendered irrelevant in citizenisation. The task, then (paraphrasing Thompson 2005, 145), is to decipher the ways in which certain bases of citizenship differentiation are foregrounded and recrafted while others a minimalised to make those who seek and pay for citizenisation come out at the end, through legitimate chains of connections

(being applicant who was at first suspect but then not, with proof of residency + language test + proof of genuine marriage), as insiders rather than outsiders. What kinds of material, discursive, affective economies are involved in these chains of connection?

Let us return to the 'choice/ascription' distinction that we opened with, and consider birthright. It is a crucial site where transactions between the natural and the cultural take place in citizenisation processes, particularly in the conferment of nationality. I have argued elsewhere (Fortier 2013) that ideas of kin and birth endure in contemporary practices of legal naturalisation, which reaffirm the transgenerational transmission of citizenship by birth (through parentage, *jus sanguinis*, or through territory, *jus soli*) as the preferred mode of citizenship acquisition and transmission. This renaturalises the heterosexual, reproductive family and its embedding within citizenship (Somerville 2005). But in addition, embedded in 'birthright citizenship' is a coupling of loyalty to the country with reproduction that places obligations of (presumed) heterosexual intimacy and national perpetuity on the presumed autonomous citizens who has 'chosen' to naturalise. What is more, the system of birthright entitlements and kinship that dominates not only our imagination but also our laws in the allotment of political membership serve to renaturalise 'the "wealth-preserving" aspect of hereditary citizenship' (Shachar and Hirschl 2007, 274)' and to preserve the unequal global distribution of the world's riches. While where we are born may be 'accidental', the unequal distribution of our ensuing life-chances is not (also Shachar 2009). The point is that against the distinction between 'ascribed' citizenship (birthright) and 'chosen' citizenship (naturalisation), thinking of naturalisation as part of normalisation takes us to unpacking the transaction that takes place between 'choice' (culture) and 'birth' (nature) in legal naturalisation where the

naturalised citizens are expected to transmit citizenship through birth to their offspring. This reproduces the 'natural' order of the reproductive heterosexual family as the founding unit of the national community, and it naturalises the unequal global distribution of life chances through birthright.

Conclusion

This article interrupts the linear narrative that posits the conferment of citizenship (legal naturalisation) as the natural outcome of citizenisation. The article offers instead to rethink the relationship between naturalisation and citizenisation through an analysis of their intertwined *social life*. The proposed framework bridges institutional approaches that privilege the formal, legal procedures with social life approaches inspired by feminist and anti-racist critiques of essentialism, that privilege experiences, practices, objects, and discursive and affective relations. An understanding of naturalisation as a *social ontological process* supports the bridge between the two approaches. 'Ontological process' refers to the ways in which different categories or locales of existence (the self, society, culture, the state, the nation, [imperial] histories, geographies) are combined to produce understandings of what citizenship 'really is'.

The proposed framework includes methodological and theoretical elements. Methodologically, it consists of 'studying through' citizenisation and naturalisation measures as they circulate, are enacted and experienced in different settings by different actors, the latter including citizens and 'noncitizens'. Theoretically, extending a social understanding of naturalisation into formal citizenisation measures is to scrutinise how citizenisation is framed, enacted and experienced, and to unpack the different 'realities' assumed under 'citizenship'.

Taking the unnatural character of citizenship as an object to unpack, this approach concerns itself with how the artifice is concealed or rendered irrelevant in citizenisation processes. In this framework, citizenis*ation* forces the question of *how* and *which* identities, ideas, knowledges, affects, relations are (re)produced in the name of redressing the citizenship-deficit of immigrants. It rejects, furthermore, the contention that citizenisation only concerns immigrants. Rather, citizenisation assumes that citizenship is never fully complete, and that the 'integration' measures that it is often reduced to interpellate all members of a nation-state, regardless of their citizenship. A social analysis of naturali*sation*, for its part, leads us into the diverse ways in which the natural and the artificial, the abstract and the 'material', the political and the social, are variously entangled, negotiated, exchanged, or stabilised. In this framework, the differentiation between ascribed citizenship (birthright) and chosen citizenship (naturalisation) falls apart when put under the scrutiny of the transactions between 'nature' and 'culture', or 'choice' and 'obligation' that circulate in the process of 'making' citizens. More broadly, prying apart the exchanges between nature and culture that support the endurance of birthright as the privileged means of transmitting citizenship maintains the global inequality of life chances that result from the 'accident' of birth.

In sum, analysing the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation puts into relief joint processes of ontologising, normalising, subjectification, and stratification. The purpose of a framework that asks the deceptively simple question 'what is naturalised in citizenisation?' is to shed more light on the foundations of citizenship. It is to go beyond understandings of citizenship as inclusion/exclusion, us/them, inside/outside. While citizenship is undoubtedly a form of border control, it is also a site that rests on and reproduces a host of other assumptions about geographies,

personhood, temporalities and histories, desires and anxieties that should not be ignored. Understanding citizenship today requires different concepts, methods, and data (Isin 2015). The analytical framework outlined here contributes to filling this gap with a theory and method for researching the social life of citizenisation and naturalisation that will offer a better understanding of how citizenship today is variously 'made', conceived, enacted, and experienced. Understanding how citizenisation and naturalisation function in tandem institutionally and socially is important if we are to gain a fuller grasp of the array of inequalities, old and new, that they produce and reproduce.

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² In the US – the context that concerns Smith and Eisenach – the pledge of allegiance that is commonly recited in schools, in public meetings, congressional sessions, etc., refers to the US Republic as 'on nation under God'. In a constitutional monarchy such as the UK, oaths of allegiance are sworn to the monarch, and are performed by members of parliament, certain public servants, and by new citizens at the citizenship ceremony. All have the option between a religious or secular version.

³ The fieldwork involved observations of eleven citizenship ceremonies in nine local councils, six ESOL classes, and of a citizenship and nationality team at a London Borough Council. The latter involved shadowing registrars for one week as they completed a range of tasks related to citizenship attribution. During the fieldwork, I completed a total of 43 interviews with ESOL teachers, registrars, ceremony officials, applicants and new citizens.

⁴ English for Speakers of Other Languages.

⁵ In the context where citizenisation is a dispersed form of governance that contracts out to private and public organisations, I use institutional actors as a shorthand to designate all those 'bureau' (Lea 2008) or 'new' (Osborne and Gaebler 1992) professionals or 'street-level bureaucrats' (Lipsky 1980) from both public or private sectors who are tasked with a range of different roles in the citizenship attribution process. These include test supervisors and authorisers, ESOL teachers, local authority registrars and officials.

⁶ It is beyond the scope of this article to further elaborate on the relationship between integration policies and citizenisation/naturalisation. There is considerable debate around whether integration measures 'thicken' citizenship by foregrounding a cultural content, or whether they produce a 'citizenship light' (Joppke 2010). Much of this discussion follows the classic distinction between civic and ethnic nationalism and extends it into citizenship. In contrast, the framework developed here seeks to challenge that distinction – citizenship (like nationalism) *always* contains both 'civic' and 'ethnic' elements – by examining how the distinction itself is naturalized in citizenisation measures, and what effects it has on social relations.

⁷ On tests, see Byrne 2016, Etzioni 2007, Extra et al. 2009, Han et al. 2010, Hogan-Brun 2009, Joppke 2013, Löwenheim and Gazit 2003, Shohamy and McNamara 2009, Slade and Möllering 2010, Wright 2008. On citizenship ceremonies, see Aptekar 2012, Byrne 2014, Coutin 2003, Mazouz 2008, Fassin and Mazouz 2009, Damsholt 2008a-b, Ossipow and Fedler 2015.

⁸ As stated above, much of the existing qualitative empirical research on citizenship attribution focuses on one specific 'moment' in the conferment or acquisition of citizen-like statuses: citizenship ceremonies, or citizenship or language tests and education. The little empirical research that explores the naturalisation process *as a whole* does so either from the perspective of applicants (Centlivres 1993, Bassel et al. ongoing) or from the perspective of politicians or other agents of the state (Helbling 2008, 2010). My research fills a gap by documenting and analysing how the naturalisation process is enacted and experienced by *both* applicants and institutional actors (from the private and public sectors).

⁹ Formerly UK Border Agency, UKBA.