

The Civic Turn in European Immigrant Integration Policies

In recent decades, the growth of immigrant minority groups in Europe has influenced public discussions about social cohesion and welfare state sustainability. Concern with unemployment, socio-economic gaps, ethnic fragmentation of cities, increasing unrest in the streets and perceived illiberal beliefs and cultural practices within immigrant communities have turned into a widespread sense of integration failure. Along with the recognition that aging populations creates a need for labour migration in order to maintain a certain welfare level, there is a broadly shared worry that growing numbers of immigrants – particularly of non-Western origin – will prove too difficult to integrate into the work force and that their cultural difference undermines trust and solidarity in the population. In this context, public debates about the cultivation of ‘good citizenship’ – civic virtues, values, identifications and loyalties – reoccur regularly in most of Europe (Joppke 2008b; Mouritsen 2013).

In their attempts to work out these issues, countries tend to be moving away from the idea that integration is best obtained through the extension of rights, instead conceiving of rights as an incentive or reward for those succeeding in achieving certain integration goals. States are taking on a more active role in the ‘making’ of immigrants into citizens through tools of ‘civic’ conditioning that test and require competences in the language, history and political values of the recipient society, political loyalty, as well as employment relevant skills, as a condition for admission, permanent residence and/or citizenship. Integration contracts, introduction programs, language tests, citizenship tests, loyalty oaths, ceremonies and economic self-sufficiency requirements are some of the most common instruments in this endeavor (Goodman 2010, Odmalm 2007, Rea & Jacobs 2007). These instruments seem to represent a broad European ‘civic turn’ in integration policy approach. For some observers, most notably Christian Joppke (2007a, 2007b), it is seen as convergence towards a common European approach – termed civic integration – that promotes labour market functionality and individual autonomy. From this perspective, old national models of multiculturalism, universalism and assimilationism, as well as nationalism, are becoming increasingly analytically obsolete.

Notwithstanding the growing literature on civic integration, this workshop seeks to further the progress of the field by addressing four interconnected areas that so far remain under-examined.

First, as we witness the field growing, it becomes increasingly alarming that no broadly shared definition of ‘civic integration’ and ‘national model’ has emerged. Still, it is unclear whether civic integration should be defined as a set of policy instruments, as a certain blend of liberalism or as a policy paradigm encompassing both. Is civic integration a model on par with multiculturalism, universalism and assimilationism, and can it be defined along common parameters? The same goes for the concept of a ‘national model’. To what extent

should we understand it as a public philosophy, a certain configuration of policies, and as a case of institutional and ideational path-dependency, respectively? Clearing common conceptual ground is necessary in order to make sure we are describing, explaining and normatively evaluating the same phenomena.

Second, the extent to which we can talk of convergence remains unsettled. It is evident that states vary significantly in how they use the above mentioned policy instruments in terms of difficulty, sequencing and scope (Goodman 2010; Koopmans et al. 2012). The Danish and Dutch states, for example, have used these instruments to craft comparatively highly restrictive integration regimes, while the UK and France use the instruments in much more permissive ways. Sweden continues to use them to a very limited extent at all (Borevi 2010, 2014). As Sarah Wallace Goodman notes, it is surprising that 'none have puzzled over the empirical *diversity* of civic integration policy designs; nor have any presented systematic, comparative explanations for policy variation' (2012: 660). Given this diversity we need to be clearer on what we mean by convergence. How could we specify the talk of convergence in terms of scope across governance level (national and local), policy dimensions (e.g., all or only some policy goals, instruments and settings) and policy areas (e.g., admission, residence, citizenship, family reunification, education, anti-discrimination)?

Thirdly, there is a need to better address the question *why* countries adopt civic integration policies to greater or less extent and in various ways. Such cross-country variation might leave enough room for proponents of the 'national models approach' too convincingly maintain that the 'stickiness' of institutional configurations and/or conceptions of citizenship, national identity and social cohesion are still central factors shaping integration policies. The turn towards republican or comprehensive liberal integration arguably comes in recognizable national shapes, and has a more or less 'multicultural' or 'ethno-cultural' flavour (Mouritsen 2013). However, some, including Joppke, argue that the variation is a consequence of incoherent and hodge-podge decision-making, coalitional bargaining, government ideology and a successful radical right party (Bale 2008, Howard 2009, Joppke 2008a). There is a strong need for a dialogue between the different ideational, institutional, structural and power explanations of national differences/similarities in order to uncover new roads of investigation. This process must unfold through systematic studies that more clearly specify the interlocking parts of the causal mechanism(s) under study and develop more convincing empirical tests to show them at work.

Finally, surprisingly few have conducted any systematic analysis of the defensibility of these policies in their different designs, although many commentaries do have a normative thrust. Some are partly or wholly critical of 'civic integrationist' policies (Joppke 2007a; Kostakopoulou 2010, Triadafilopoulos 2011), while others defend them, confidently or apprehensively (Hansen 2011; Müller 2007), but their normative frameworks of analysis often remain undeveloped. Normative judgment, however, tends to occur implicitly, and

simultaneously with description in the use of key terms such as 'liberalism', 'republicanism', 'multiculturalism', etc. Therefore, a more systematic approach would be desirable, in which the conceptual, empirical and normative levels of analysis inform each other in a constructive way.

The workshop invites empirically founded, theoretical-conceptual, comparative, policy-oriented and normative papers addressing one or several of the questions raised in the topic description above. In particular, we welcome three types of papers: (1) Theoretical-conceptual papers examining the core concepts of the field – particularly 'civic integration' and 'national model', e.g. by tracing the use of these concepts in order to elucidate a common ground, or papers proposing new, more productive ways of understanding these concepts. (2) Empirical studies where the attempt is to give a better account of the variations of civic integration policies and how they should be explained. Papers could for instance attempt at combining, developing and testing in novel ways the causal mechanisms proposed in the literature. This could both be single-case studies as well as comparative studies. (3) Normative papers that more systematically explore the defensibility of civic integration policies.

This workshop aims at fostering discussions among senior, midlevel, and junior academics from Europe and beyond covering different approaches and areas. The goal is a broad dialogue on our conceptual common ground and new roads of investigation. The goal is further to develop contributions from this workshop to a special issue of a good journal in the field.