

*The Meanings of Citizenship:  
Mobility, Legal Attachment and Recognition*

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# **The Meanings of Citizenship: Mobility, Legal Attachment and Recognition**

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# Abstract

Citizenship denotes formal membership in a nation-state. As such, it provides individuals with equal rights and duties, and symbolizes membership in the collective identity of the nation-state (Joppke 2007). Naturalization, the act of granting citizenship to a foreign resident, is a prerequisite to become a full-fledged member of the nation-state (Erdal & Midtbøen forthcoming).

The scholarship in the immigration-citizenship nexus has so far been dominated by macro perspectives, while less attention has been paid to “micro experiences” of citizenship (Joppke 2010). “Macro diagnoses” of the citizenship institution (Brubaker 1992; Soysal 1994; Joppke 2010) have tended to undermine what citizenship means to immigrants, but with very little in-depth qualitative research to substantiate their claims. Thus, what immigrants think of citizenship and naturalization is something we know little about. Based on 19 semi-structured interviews with immigrants from Afghanistan, Russia and Somalia, both naturalized citizens and long-term residents holding foreign citizenship (“denizens”), this thesis addresses the research question: *What does citizenship mean to immigrants in Norway in material, emotional and symbolical terms?*

I found that Norwegian citizenship mattered *materially* in terms of spatial *mobility*. Citizenship in Norway and other wealthy, Western democracies entails having vast “mobility rights” (Mau 2010), by giving visa-free access to most countries in the world. The Russian interviewees already held a relatively valuable European passport, but nonetheless they emphasized the “bonus mobility” that Norwegian citizenship would give them. The Afghan and Somali interviewees lacking Norwegian citizenship, however, found their spatial mobility constrained by the immigration authorities’ travel restrictions, visa policies and selective border controls. Therefore, the Afghan and Somali informants were reliant on obtaining a Norwegian passport to travel, and to facilitate transnational connections. I argue that citizenship status is a crucial determinant of spatial mobility, capable of creating “transnational inequalities” (Mau 2010) between citizens from the “Global North” and the “Global South”.

*Emotionally*, citizenship was conceptualized as a stable status, perceived to give an unconditional *legal attachment* to Norway. Over the years, the Afghan and Somali denizens had applied multiple times for Norwegian citizenship, but with no success, as the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration deemed their identity documentation invalid. Drawing on Menjivar (2006), I argue that the lack of legal closure engendered a state of “permanent

liminal legality”: A profound, seemingly indefinite uncertainty about one’s legal status and right to stay in Norway. Moreover, I analyze a second case of liminal legality, namely that of three Somali immigrants who faced possible citizenship revocation. The imminent risk of losing their Norwegian citizenships invoked what I call an “acute liminal legality”. Arguably, citizenship revocations illustrate that liminal legality is not necessarily a direct reflection of a marginal legal status. Even naturalized citizens were not exempted from legal instability in the current immigration policy climate, thus challenging the notion that citizenship provides an unconditional legal attachment to Norway.

Lastly, citizenship mattered as a *symbolical recognition* of identity, equality and belonging. Arguably, the Norwegian citizenship legislation affected the interviewees in two ways. Firstly, the ban on dual citizenship was conceptualized by the Russian informants as a legal non-recognition that constricted them from fostering dual identities. Secondly, the denial of citizenship to the Afghan and Somali denizens spurred sentiments of second-class membership and alienation. To them, acquiring Norwegian citizenship would entail a *de jure* recognition of their *de facto* belonging. However, *legal* equality did not necessarily turn into *social* equality. In everyday interactions – the “horizontal sphere” of citizenship – the national membership of the *naturalized* citizens was occasionally questioned on the basis of ethnicity. In these situations, formal citizenship mattered less as a symbol of belonging.

I conclude with a discussion of the compatibility between macro diagnoses and micro experiences of citizenship. I argue that the general tendency of Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke to “banalize” (Mouritsen 2012) citizenship obscures the continuing salience of the institution. Contrary to Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke’s assumptions, this thesis demonstrates that national citizenship remains significant to immigrants in material (mobility), emotional (legal attachment) and symbolical terms (recognition).

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# 1 Introduction

Immigrants in North America and Europe tend to value citizenship in their country of residence highly (Aptekar 2016; Galvez 2013; Leitner & Ehrkamp 2006; C Jensen 2014; Pettersen 2017). *Naturalization*, the act of granting citizenship to a foreign resident, is a prerequisite for becoming a full-fledged member of the nation-state (Brochmann & Seland 2010; Erdal & Midtbøen forthcoming). Citizenship denotes formal membership in a nation-state, provides individuals with equal rights and duties exclusive for the citizenry, and symbolizes membership in the collective identity of the nation-state (Joppke 2007).

Norwegian citizenship is very popular among immigrants in Norway. A recent survey showed that 74 percent of immigrants who were eligible for citizenship were naturalized citizens.<sup>1</sup> The share of Norwegian citizens were over 80 percent among immigrants from 11 out of 12 countries of origin surveyed. The main reasons for wanting to become a Norwegian citizen were to feel a greater sense of belonging, to improve their prospects in Norwegian society and to ease travels to their country of origin and other countries (Pettersen 2017: 154-6).

The survey is a rare piece of information about something we generally know little about: What immigrants think of citizenship and naturalization. The scholarship in the immigration-citizenship nexus has so far been dominated by macro perspectives (Joppke 2010). In analyzing the influence of global and migratory transformation on conceptions of citizenship, scholars have mainly focused on the study of institutions, laws and policies (Miller-Idriss 2006). The lived “micro experiences” of citizenship, however, have largely been left unnoticed. Instead of talking *with* immigrants, citizenship scholars have tended to talk *about* them (Leitner & Ehrkamp 2006: 1616). Based on 19 semi-structured interviews with immigrants in Norway, both Norwegian and foreign citizens, this thesis critically examines the qualitative meanings of citizenship. I address the research question:

- *What does citizenship mean to immigrants in Norway in material, emotional and symbolical terms?*

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<sup>1</sup> Seven years of residence in Norway is one of the requirements to apply for Norwegian citizenship (more on the citizenship requirements in chapter 3).

Materially, citizenship means having full rights in Norway. Holding a Norwegian passport is arguably one of the most important rights. To hold a passport in an affluent, democratic country like Norway, entails having vast “mobility rights”: The right to seamless, legal crossing of international borders (Mau 2010). Norwegian citizens are freed from visa-policies in most countries in the world, which otherwise is a major mobility barrier to citizens from less affluent countries (Mau 2010; Passport Index 2017). By easing international travel, acquiring citizenship can facilitate transnational connections.

Emotionally, citizenship entails holding a stable legal status with security, protection and legal attachment. Citizenship gives an unconditional right to residence live and work in Norway, as well as providing protection against deportation (Brochmann 2013). Conversely, holding a more unstable, less secure legal status may spur enduring uncertainty about one’s right to residence in the country. “Liminal legality” (Menjivar 2006) denotes such tenuous legal positions offering *more* protection than an undocumented status but *less* than a formal citizenship.

Symbolically, citizenship signifies full membership in the political community. Granting of citizenship recognizes immigrants as legally equal to the majority population (cf. Honneth 2005; Marshall [1950] 1992). Relatedly, citizenship is a symbol of national membership that may validate immigrants’ sense of belonging, which seems to be an important reason for naturalizing (Pettersen 2017).

The claim that citizenship is materially, emotionally and symbolically salient is not uncontroversial in citizenship theory. Since the end of the 1980s, when citizenship and immigration emerged as a distinct field of research, the salience of national citizenship has been extensively debated, but without reaching any definitive answers (Bauböck 2006: 9). Two political trends have been discerned in European and North American countries: A *liberalizing* trend leading to a “devaluation” of citizenship, and a *restrictive* trend attempting to “revitalize” the citizenship institution. Although the means have differed – either by liberalizing or restricting access to citizenship – national authorities have attempted to reach the same goals: To integrate immigrants successfully and to spur “social cohesion” in increasingly multicultural societies (Midtbøen 2015).

The dominant trend since the 1970s has been a general *liberalization* of citizenship acquisition in Europe, in which the requirements to naturalize were eased. Requirements of time of residence, language proficiency and economic self-sufficiency was decreased or removed, dual citizenship was increasingly endorsed, and the administrative discretion upon naturalization lessened (Midtbøen 2009: 540; Mouritsen 2012: 91; see also Hansen & Weil

2001). The liberalization signaled a willingness to include permanent resident immigrants in order to *speed up* the integration process (Midtbøen 2009: 540). Simultaneously as the access to citizenship was liberalized, substantive social and civil rights were detached from formal citizenship, and transferred to legal residency and the sphere of universal human rights (Brochmann and Seland 2010: 438). These two developments, the general liberalization to access the status of formal citizenship, and detaching important rights from this status, have been diagnosed as a *devaluation* of the citizenship institution (Brochmann 2002: 64).

Just as some scholars were discerning a wider trend towards devaluation, the pendulum swung the other way, towards a *revitalization* of citizenship. The terrorist attacks on the United States on 9/11 2001, and the increased focus on the threat of international terrorism in public discourse catalyzed a *restrictive turn*, in which states responded to the alleged “failure to integrate” immigrants with a new emphasis on citizenship (Midtbøen 2009: 545; Modood & Meer 2012: 37). Brochmann (2007) has described this restrictive turn as a dialectic response to the past trend of devaluation processes. The revitalization has materialized in heightened language requirements, requirements of knowledge of polity and society, and implementation of oaths of allegiance and citizenship ceremonies (Brochmann & Seland 2010: 430). These attempts aim not only to reinforce the legal, but also the *emotional* bonds between the state and its prospective citizens (Lægaard 2010: 456). That it should *mean something* to be a citizen, seems now to be the prevailing political notion. In Durkhemian terminology: “citizenship should be sacred, not profane” (Brubaker 1992: 147).

These dialectical developments – devaluation and revitalization – have given rise to different sociological “macro diagnoses” of the citizenship institution as well. Brubaker (1992) stresses the *enduring significance* of the institution. Citizenship, according to Brubaker, remains important to the state in a time where the nation-state is losing power to economic and political unions. Admission to citizenship status and the rights that follow is entirely in the hands of the state, which makes it a “last bastion of sovereignty” (1992: 3). Soysal (1994), on the other hand, heralds *the end of nation-based citizenship*. According to Soysal, most of immigrants’ civil and social rights are granted on “personhood” – that is human rights – rather than nation-based membership, making national citizenship obsolete. Joppke (2009; 2010) claims that national citizenship is neither marked by enduring significance nor global decline. In Joppke’s perspective, the citizenship institution is characterized by easy access, socially inconsequential rights and a thin, procedural identity (2009: 12). In Joppke’s point of view, citizenship remains *objectively* significant in a world

of growing social and economic inequalities, but *subjectively* unimportant to those who hold the status.

What these three macro diagnoses of citizenship have in common, is that they evaluate the salience of citizenship entirely through the lens of *the state*. Immigrants' point of view are not addressed, yet Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke tend to make poorly supported assumptions on what citizenship means to them. However, nation-states' legal policies for citizenship and naturalization cannot be automatically extrapolated to the understandings of citizenship among immigrants (cf. Miller Idriss 2006), unlike what Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke assume. Gaining greater insight into what legal citizenship means to immigrants can possibly shed light on other aspects of this institution, complimenting but perhaps also challenging the assumptions and conclusions drawn by the macro diagnoses. Therefore, I raise a second question:

- *How does micro experiences fit with macro diagnoses of citizenship?*

By addressing immigrants' views on citizenship and naturalization, a perspective that largely has gone missing in the literature, the thesis engages in the theoretical debates about the salience of citizenship. I argue that the perspectives of immigrants, who actually *experience* the effects of law and policies, are imperative to understand the salience of the citizenship institution.

Illuminating the meanings of citizenship and naturalization to immigrants will also have implications for citizenship legislation and policies. The official aim of citizenship policies may be to create cohesion and spur integration, but immigrants may experience these matters differently. Examining how the recipients interpret citizenship law and policies may therefore increase our knowledge on how policies work and what effects they have (Bevelander, Helgertz, Bratsberg & Tegunimataka 2015: 2). By studying potential mismatches between citizenship, ties and belonging, I will take a critical look at the institutions that may be able to reduce these mismatches (cf. Bauböck 2006: 20).

## **1.1 Which immigrants?**

What citizenship means to immigrants in Norway *per se* is too big a question to answer in this thesis – arguably it is too big a question for any scientific research project. Some clarifications as to *which* immigrants I focus on are therefore in order.

I employ Statistics Norway's (2017a) definition of an *immigrant* as "a person born abroad by two foreign born parents and with four foreign grandparents", who at some time has immigrated to Norway. I concentrate on a particular subset of immigrants, namely those who tend to naturalize in great numbers. Acquiring a Norwegian citizenship is relatively attractive among immigrants in Norway, but is clearly more popular among immigrants from certain countries of origin (Brochmann 2002; Pettersen 2017). Afghan, Russian and Somali immigrants tend to naturalize in greater numbers than most other groups (Pettersen 2012; Pettersen 2017), and hence I have chosen these three groups as my focus of study. Picking such "extreme cases", in terms of naturalization numbers, may reveal more information about the phenomenon – the value and meaning(s) of citizenship – than average cases (Flyvbjerg: 2006: 229).<sup>2</sup>

To get a wider range of perceptions and experiences I have not only interviewed naturalized citizens but also immigrants from the same countries of origin who have *not* naturalized. These immigrants are long-term residents with access to most social and civil rights, but lacking Norwegian citizenship. I refer to these long-term residents without formal citizenship as "denizens", as they are called in the citizenship literature (Hammar 1990). What are the reasons for non-naturalization? Is it a matter of choice for them or are there certain requirements that they are unable to fulfill? When does their lack of Norwegian citizenship matter materially, emotionally and symbolically? These are questions I will address in the thesis.

## 1.2 Conceptualizing citizenship

Citizenship is said to be an "essentially contested concept" (Gallie 1956). Political theorist Shklar writes, "There is no notion more central in politics than citizenship, yet none more variable in history or contested in theory" (quoted in Faist 2007: 9). The term covers several phenomena and is often used in confusing and contradictory ways (Bosniak 2006: 4; Brochmann 2002: 57). Joppke (2007) asserts that the heterodox uses of the concept demonstrate the recent proliferation of "hyphenated citizenships" both in academic and public discourse – for instance, the use of terms such as sexual, multicultural, urban and ecological citizenship. According to Joppke, the proponents of hyphenated citizenships have sought to detach citizenship from the state by making normative claims on behalf of repressed actors or areas (2007: 38). However, arguing with Joppke, this thesis will employ a

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<sup>2</sup> I describe the sample criteria in deeper detail in chapter 2.

strictly political and state-centered definition of citizenship, which in its most basic form is “a certain sort of membership in a political community” (Smith [2001: 1857] quoted in Joppke 2010: 1).

Citizenship, in Joppke’s lens, consists of three different dimensions: status, rights and identity (2007; 2010). As *status*, citizenship denotes a formal state membership and the rules of access to it are thus regulated by the state (Joppke 2007: 38). Furthermore, there are certain *rights* attached to this status, that are civil, social and political. Lastly, citizenship denotes collective *identities* on the part of the citizenry (Joppke 2010). The identity dimension has two components. Firstly, it refers to the actual behavior of individuals within the community, “acting and conceiving of themselves as members of a collectivity” – classically, the *nation* as an “imagined community” (Anderson 1983; Joppke 2007: 38). Secondly, the normative beliefs that states try to impute on people (Joppke 2010: 30).<sup>3</sup> While these citizenship-identities and the beliefs they rest upon have been more or less latent in “homogenous societies” – maybe because the states assumed that they were widely shared and therefore saw no need to explicate them – they have been made manifest in tandem with increasing immigration and intra-societal diversity (Brochmann 2002: 57).

In a Norwegian context, Brochmann (2002; 2007) has translated the multifaceted British term *citizenship* to “samfunnsborgerskap” in Norwegian. Samfunnsborgerskap covers the two main dimensions of citizenship: The judicial dimension – legal *status* and its inherent *rights* (“statsborgerskap” in Norwegian) – and its more informal, substantive dimension who’s meaning is more vague, denoting notions of participation, belonging and identity (“medborgerskap” in Norwegian). Similarly, a distinction between *vertical* (“statsborgerskap”) and *horizontal* (“medborgerskap”) dimensions of citizenship can be made.

The decision to employ a nation-state centered, political definition of citizenship may be subjected to normative and political criticism, since it naturalizes and privileges the “national citizenship model”, in other words a form of “methodological nationalism” (see Wimmer & Schiller 2002). However, as Brubaker argues, national citizenship is a “basic fact of political and social organization” and a “universal and distinctive feature of the modern political landscape” (1989: 1; 1992: 21). Therefore, it may be fallacious and problematic to ignore it, because it would channel attention away from a state-level structures that remains a fundamental locus of power (Brubaker 2004: 119). The nature of this thesis is precisely to

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<sup>3</sup> Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul (2008) also outline a fourth dimension of citizenship; *political participation*. I nonetheless confine myself to focus on status, rights and identity in this thesis.



examine to what degree national citizenship matters to immigrants in Norway, and thus what power it has to shape their lives. As such, I find a purely political definition of citizenship justifiable and necessary.

### **1.3 Outline of thesis**

The thesis contains nine chapters, including this introduction. The next chapter describes the research process in roughly three phases: Developing the research design, conducting the interviews and processing the data material. In chapter 3, I give a brief historical overview of the Norwegian citizenship legislation, and describe the current ways of acquiring and losing citizenship, as well as the enforced policy of citizenship revocation. Chapter 4 sketches out macro diagnoses of the citizenship institution, and theoretical perspectives and empirical studies that are based on micro experiences of citizenship. Additionally, I give a brief introduction to the three meanings of citizenship: mobility, legal attachment and recognition.

Chapter 5 analyzes the material meaning of citizenship: Spatial mobility. I scrutinize the relationship between citizenship status, mobility and transnational inequalities. In chapter 6, I investigate what legal citizenship means emotionally, namely as a stable, unconditional *legal attachment*. I focus on the uncertainty and mental strain of two distinct forms of “liminal legality”: permanent and acute. Chapter 7 analyzes what citizenship status means in symbolical terms. I analyze the symbolical meaning of citizenship through a *recognition*-perspective, both in the vertical (legal) and horizontal (social) sphere of citizenship. In chapter 8, I discuss the compatibility between macro diagnoses and micro experiences of citizenship, and outline the implications of my findings for citizenship theory. Chapter 9 sums up the main findings of the thesis, and concludes by discussing implications of an ambiguous citizenship legislation.



## 2 Data and Methods

The data material in this thesis consists of 18 semi-structured individual interviews and one focus group interview. The informants are immigrants in Norway from Afghanistan, Russia and Somalia, with Norwegian, foreign or dual citizenship. In this chapter, I describe the research process: from formulating research questions, constructing the interview guide, making sample criteria, recruiting informants, conducting interviews, to finally transcribing, coding and analyzing the interviews. I conclude the chapter by raising questions of reliability, validity and generalization.

### 2.1 Questions and strategies

The design in this thesis is qualitative. While quantitative studies (Bevelander et al. 2015; Hansen 2011; Pettersen 2012; Pettersen 2017) have generated valuable knowledge about explanatory factors of naturalization and tapped into subjective naturalization reasons, they nonetheless leave much space for further research when it comes to “thick descriptions” (Geertz 1973), experiences and micro-level understandings of citizenship. To capture such meanings and experiences, a qualitative, *abductive* research strategy was adopted in this study. The primary goal of an abductive research strategy is to “produce understanding rather than an explanation, by providing reasons rather than causes” (Blaikie 2010: 89). The abductive research focus of this study is thus both *inductive* and *deductive* (Blaikie 2010: 85, 89). Inductively, I explore how immigrants conceptualize, experience and value citizenship in their own words. Deductively, I discuss the compatibility between theoretical macro diagnoses of citizenship and the accounts of the informants. In sum, the abductive strategy aims to strike a balance between “bottom down” and “bottom up” approaches. Qualitative interviewing was employed to reach this goal.

### 2.2 Qualitative interviewing

This thesis aims to critically examine what kind of meanings immigrants – naturalized and non-naturalized – assign to legal citizenship. I am interested in the perceptions, interpretations and experiences of citizenship and naturalization among immigrants in Norway; in short, a specific part of their “lifeworld” (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 46). Qualitative interviewing is a natural extension of an abductive research design because it

allows interviewees to better express their own thoughts, experiences and views (Thagaard 2009: 13). The epistemological vantage point is that knowledge is *actively* produced through questions and answers, in the interplay between interviewer and the interviewee (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 76-7).

Semi-structured interviews were chosen as method. The semi-structured interview is a compromise between two opposing methods. On the one hand researchers can apply a completely structured interview, in which all questions and the order of them are determined in advance. On the other hand, a completely unstructured interview method can be applied, where only some guiding themes are set in advance, and when the researcher is open to whatever the informant brings up during the interview. The questions in the semi-structured interview, however, are formulated in advance, but the order can be modified as the interview goes along (Thagaard 2009: 89). The strength of this approach is that the informants can bring up themes that is not a part of the original interview guide, meanwhile the guide is relatively structured, which enables analytical comparisons between different interviews. Comparisons between citizens and non-citizens, and between Afghan, Russian and Somali immigrants are relevant to make in this thesis to see if there are any interesting differences. I therefore argue that this warrants a certain degree of structure in the interview guide.

## 2.3 The interview guide

Terming the interview guide as “semi-structured” does not reveal a whole lot; the majority of qualitative interviews are neither completely unstructured nor structured, but somewhere in between. To increase the *transparency* of the research process (Tjora 2012: 216), I find it necessary to give a thorough description of the interview guide and how it was constructed.<sup>4</sup> I conducted a pilot interview which resulted in a few minor changes.<sup>5</sup>

While constructing the interview guide I drew inspiration from the content and structure of Christine Jensen’s (2014) interview guide. Jensen’s (2014) master’s thesis studied the “integration effect” of Danish citizenship legislation based on qualitative interviews with western and non-western immigrants. My interview guide nonetheless diverges from Jensen’s due to my decision to employ an abductive approach. While Jensen tested hypotheses in a more stringent manner – prompting predominantly closed questions –

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<sup>4</sup> See full interview guide in appendix A (original and English translation).

<sup>5</sup> The pilot interview was conducted with a person that volunteered via one of the Facebook requests I put out, but did not fulfill the sample criteria (see next subchapter).

the abductive approach in this thesis employs primarily open-ended questions. Close-ended follow up-questions were also included, however, to negotiate some of the political and theoretical contentions with the informants (for example if a sense of belonging matters in the decision to naturalize).

The interview guide was structured in five thematic parts: 1) background in Norway and citizenship status; 2) reasons for naturalization/non-naturalization<sup>6</sup>; 3) perceptions of citizenship legislation; 4) belonging and attachment to Norway; 5) citizenship and “Norwegianness”. The first part aimed at clarifying when the informants came to Norway, their reason to do so and their current citizenship status. In the second part, I asked if the informant have applied for citizenship and why they have/have not done so. As these were the most important questions to cover – and not considered as particularly “sensitive” – I deemed this as a fruitful way to start the interviews.

The third part contained general questions about perceptions and evaluations of the current citizenship provisions and specific questions on the general Norwegian policy of not allowing dual citizenship. How immigrants experience the ban on dual citizenship is particularly interesting because this provision have perhaps been one of the most politically contested in the national discourse on citizenship, integration and belonging, and is often something that in fact keeps immigrants from seeking Norwegian citizenship (Midtbøen 2015: 7; Pettersen 2017: 158-9). To make it easier to evaluate the Norwegian legislation, I brought a list of the current provisions and a comparative table over selected provisions in Norway, Denmark and Sweden.<sup>7</sup> This was used as “stimulus material” (Tjora 2012: 231), aiming to make them reflect, compare and evaluate the Norwegian citizenship legislation by comparing it to the Swedish and Danish regimes.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth theme sought to grasp their sense of belonging to Norway, their feeling of inclusion in the Norwegian society and to what degree they identified themselves as Norwegians. These questions were included to evaluate if there are any connections between sentiments of belonging and citizenship status. This part was originally an earlier part of the guide. However, during the pilot interview, I sensed that this was the most “sensitive” theme in the guide, and consequently I deemed it wise to introduce it once the informants were sufficiently “warmed up” by less emotional questions. In accordance with the emotional

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<sup>6</sup> Two versions of the interview guide were constructed to accommodate for the differing citizenship statuses, see Appendix A (original and English translation).

<sup>7</sup> See list of requirements and comparative table in appendix B.

<sup>8</sup> Including the comparative table was also an accommodation of the Scandinavian perspective in the GOVCIT project.

trajectory of interviews advocated by Thagaard (2009: 99-100) and Tjora (2012: 112-113), I therefore moved it to the latter half of the guide.

The last part aimed specifically at finding out how and to what degree legal citizenship and “national identity” coincide. Concluding the interview, we discussed what it takes for an immigrant to feel Norwegian and what it takes to be accepted by the majority population.

## 2.4 Sample criteria

A *strategic* sampling strategy was adopted, in which the informants were sampled by virtue of having specific characteristics that were relevant to answer the research questions (Thagaard 2009: 55; Tjora 2012: 145). Three sample criteria determined the final sample composition. Firstly, a minimum requirement of 7 years of *residence time* in Norway, in order to exclude people who were legally ineligible for naturalization. Secondly, I wanted to sample both naturalized *and* non-naturalized citizens (*citizenship status*). Lastly, I saw it as advantageous to hold *country of origin* (in terms of which country they acquired their original citizenship) constant, and to sample immigrants from immigrant groups that are particularly inclined to naturalize. The latter two criteria will get a wider justification in the following.

To obtain a broad range of perceptions and experiences of citizenship and naturalization – thus to “maximize variation” (Flyvbjerg 2006: 128) – both Norwegian *citizens* and *non-citizens* were sampled. By exclusively focusing on naturalized citizens you run the risk of only telling “one side of the story”. As Aptekar (2016: 1160) notes, it is just as interesting to hear from those who are eligible for citizenship but have not naturalized. An inclusion of non-citizens also acknowledges the basic “ethical duality of citizenship” (Bosniak 2006). Citizenship is both “internally inclusive and externally exclusive” (Brubaker 1992): Inclusion of citizens is contingent on the exclusion of non-citizens. To get a fuller picture about what citizenship means for immigrants – and to shed empirical light on the theoretical debates about the salience of citizenship – it is essential to sample legal “insiders” and “outsiders” alike.

As a supplement, immigrants in a “third legal category” were interviewed in a focus group: Three naturalized citizens, originating from Somalia who faced possible revocation of their Norwegian citizenships. Although getting a wide range of perceptions by the two main categories – citizens and non-citizens – the participants in the focus group contribute to an even wider variation by constituting “extreme cases”, in Flyvbjerg’s terminology (2006:

229). Their situation, being naturalized citizens, but currently with their legal citizenship *at stake*, really puts the significance of citizenship front and center.

The other sample criterion set was *country of origin*. Naturalization numbers varies between immigrants from different countries of origin (Pettersen 2017). Therefore, it seemed reasonable to sample immigrants from the same countries of origin. Though not equal in all respects, holding this factor “constant” would attempt to adhere to the research ideal of comparing “like with like” (Firebaugh 2008). Comparing “like with like” in this case would mean the perceptions and experiences of citizenship between Norwegian citizens and non-citizens.

Furthermore, I chose to concentrate on immigrants from countries of origin that tend to naturalize in great numbers. Seemingly, immigrants from these groups have stronger reasons to naturalize than other group, and as argued earlier, atypical cases can often reveal more information than average cases because they get the point across in a more pronounced way (Flyvbjerg 2006: 229; Thagaard 2009: 58). Conversely, I expected that some of the non-naturalized immigrants, by defying the “naturalization norm” in their immigrant group, have just as strong – perhaps *political* – reasons for abstaining. Hagelund and Reegård (2011) interviewed participants in citizenship ceremonies in Norway, and found little resistance to the idea of this institutionalized ritual. Taking this as point of departure I wanted to investigate if these findings could be attributed to the Norwegian citizenship institution *en bloc*. Is there any political resistance towards the citizenship institution, or is it largely exempted, as suggested by Hagelund and Reegård? If there is any political resistance, do they object to it by refraining to naturalize?

In terms of *absolute numbers* of citizenship acquisitions, a report from Statistics Norway (Pettersen 2012: 17) shows that Somali immigrants were on top in 2011 (2100 persons). Immigrants from Afghanistan (1300 persons), Iraq (900 persons), stateless (800 persons) and Russia (600 persons) followed. Initially *Somali* and *Afghan* immigrants were chosen as sample groups, based on these numbers. Numbers from 2016 confirm the same picture: Out of 13 700 naturalizations in total that year, only Eritreans (1879 persons) exceeded Somalis (1200 persons) and Afghans (999 persons) in terms of number of naturalizations (Statistics Norway 2017b).<sup>9</sup> A recent report from Statistics Norway shows that 90 percent of Somalis with 7 years of residence were Norwegian citizens, and close to 90 percent of Afghans, too, had naturalized (Pettersen 2017: 155).

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<sup>9</sup> See Statistics Norway (2017b) for a list of the top ten countries in terms of naturalization numbers in 2016.

*Russia* was chosen as the last country of origin. In 2016, Russian immigrants were among the top ten countries in terms of numbers of naturalizations (457 persons), representing the only European country among the ten (Statistics Norway 2017b). Immigrants from Russia were chosen not just because they too exhibit a high propensity to naturalize, but primarily because they differ from the Somalis and Afghans in important ways.<sup>10</sup>

Family establishment (mostly Russian women marrying Norwegian men), fleeing from conflict (such as the ongoing conflict in Chechnya) and education are Russians' most common reasons for immigration to Norway. Afghan and Somali immigrants, however, are predominantly refugees and immigrants coming to Norway on the basis of family reunification. Russians generally arrive with a higher level of education, and have higher employment levels than Afghan and Somali immigrants (Henriksen 2007). Ethnically, geographically and culturally, Russians differ by the color of their skin, and by coming from a European country with a non-Muslim majority. While Afghans – and particularly Somali immigrants (see Fangen 2008) – are frequently targeted negatively in the media as “subjects of public concern” (associated with high unemployment rates, crime, cases of misuse of public welfare services, religious extremism etc.), Russian immigrants figure more rarely in public discourse. In light of these inter-group variations, it was from an analytical perspective interesting to see if Russian immigrants had other views on citizenship, naturalization and broader issues of cultural and political belonging to Norway.

## 2.5 Recruitment

Various strategies were used to recruit informants. Initially I sent a request to the National Registry (*Folkeregisteret*), asking for a list of naturalized immigrants in the past few years, mimicking Jensen's (2014: 38) strategy in her master thesis. It took a month before I heard back from them. I got a positive response, but they asked for a more thorough, formal application. Ultimately, I decided to discontinue the process due to time considerations.

I decided instead to send e-mails to various ethnic and national organizations based in Oslo. The e-mails stated the purpose of my project and asked them if they could put me in contact with relevant informants (fulfilling the sample criteria). Abiding to the principle of

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<sup>10</sup> Unfortunately, Russian immigrants are not included in Statistics Norway's latest survey on living conditions among immigrants in Norway (Vrålstad & Wiggen 2017), nor any other available information about their *naturalization rate*: i.e. how many who are eligible to naturalize who actually does so (e-mail correspondence with Silje Vatne Pettersen, Statistics Norway).



voluntariness (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 104), I prompted the organization to ask the person if they were interested before I contacted them directly. I also put out requests on two immigrant groups on Facebook (one Russian and one Afghan), where people who were interested were asked to contact me by e-mail or Facebook.

Once I got a hold of the first informants in the different categories, I employed the *snowball method* (Tjora 2012: 151) to recruit more informants. One of the general pitfalls of the snowball method is that you tend to get informants from the same network, in effect limiting the variation (Thagaard 2009: 56; Tjora 2012: 230). This problem was partially curbed by the fact that I rolled not one but *various* proverbial snowballs during the data collection (a minimum of one snowball per country of origin). This may have *reduced* but not eradicated this form of bias.

As I had six different categories to sample (citizens and non-citizens in each country of origin), several rounds of recruitment via immigrant organizations, Facebook groups and even personal networks, were necessary. In general, it was more difficult to get in touch with foreign citizens than Norwegian citizens, especially Afghan and Somali immigrants (statistically substantiated by the fact that they exhibit such high naturalization numbers).

## 2.6 Sample characteristics

The final sample consisted of 21 informants. 18 of them were interviewed individually, while the three Somalis facing citizenship revocation were interviewed in a focus group setting. The number of informants for *individual* interviews was determined by a “quota sampling strategy” (Thagaard 2009: 57), which aimed to get an equal number of informants in each category: An equal number of Afghan, Russian and Somali informants and an equal number of citizens and non-citizens within the three immigrant groups. Table 1 (see next page) displays the country of origin, citizenship status, reason for immigration, gender and years of residence in Norway for each informant. The informants have been “pseudonymized”, that is given fictive names (Tjora 2012: 198).

Among the 18 informants interviewed individually, nine were Norwegian citizens and nine foreign citizens, with an equal distribution on country of origin. The three informants in the focus group interview – Jamilah, Muhammed and Amina – were immigrants from Somalia, all naturalized citizens. Notably, three of the naturalized citizens carried *dual* citizenship (two Russians and one Afghan immigrant) – and were thus exempted from the general ban on dual citizenship in Norway (more on this rule in the following chapter). The

residence time in Norway spanned from 8 to 29 years. In spite of gender seemingly not being an important factor for naturalization rates (Pettersen 2012; Pettersen 2017), a balance between men and women was nonetheless strived for. The gender composition in the sample is nearly fifty-fifty (11 men and 10 women). Among Somali and Afghan informants the distribution was 60-40 (favoring men) and 60-40 among the Russian informants (favoring women). The biggest gender imbalance was between citizens and non-citizens, in which naturalized men only comprised approximately 25 percent of the sample.

**Table 1. Interviewees by country of origin, citizenship, reason for immigration, gender, and years of residence**

	Citizenship	Reason for immigration	Gender	Years of residence
<i>Afghanistan</i>				
Dawood	Afghan	Refuge	Male	12
Farhad	Afghan	Refuge	Male	13
Iqbal	Afghan	Refuge	Male	14
Maryam	Norwegian	Refuge	Female	8
Latifa	Norwegian	Refuge	Female	25
Hussein	Norwegian and Afghan	Refuge	Male	13
<i>Russia</i>				
Selina	Russian	Refuge	Female	10
Tatiana	Russian	Education	Female	15
Vladimir	Russian	Family	Male	19
Anna	Norwegian	Labor	Female	17
Igor	Norwegian and Russian	Education	Male	23
Natasha	Norwegian and Russian	Labor	Female	13
<i>Somalia</i>				
Yusuf	Somali	Refuge	Male	17
Saad	Somali	Refuge	Male	17
Sahra	Somali	Refuge	Female	18
Amal	Norwegian	Refuge	Female	22
Amina	Norwegian	Family	Female	16
Bashir	Norwegian	Refuge	Male	25
Ibrahim	Norwegian	Refuge	Male	29
Jamilah	Norwegian	Family	Female	16
Muhammed	Norwegian	Refuge	Male	22

The informants originating from Somalia and Afghanistan were refugees and immigrants due to family reunification. The Russian immigrants came to Norway to study, work or for family reasons. Despite not asking explicitly about socio-economic factors in the interviews, it is possible to say something about what characterizes the sample in general. Following prevailing notions on integration, the interviewees seemed to be very well integrated in the Norwegian society. Nearly all were currently working or studying (except one who was currently unemployed) and – except for two – spoke excellent Norwegian. Several were highly educated (university level), some were property owners and a few currently or previously actively engaged in politics (I discuss some of the implications of these observations for generalization in the end of the chapter).

## **2.7 Conduction of interviews and ethical considerations**

The 18 individual interviews and the focus group interview were conducted from the end of September until the end of December 2016. Due to practical and financial issues (namely, time and money), the interviews took place in the greater Oslo region. To make the interview as convenient and as safe as possible for the interviewees, recommended by Tjora (2012: 120), I usually let the informants decide where to meet. Three interviews were conducted in the homes of the informants, eleven in public places such as cafes and restaurants in central Oslo, and two at the Oslo University campus. The remaining three interviews were conducted on Skype. These informants were recruited on a regionally defined Facebook group with members living in other parts of Norway than Oslo.

During data collection, particularly three ethical guidelines were followed: informed consent was obtained and the informants were informed about consequences of participation and ensured confidentiality (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 106-8; Thagaard 2009: 25-30).<sup>11</sup> A written consent form was brought to every interview (or sent in advance to the Skype-interviewees by e-mail). The form clarified the purpose of the project, the consequences of participating in the study and assured anonymity and confidential treatment of personal data.<sup>12</sup> It was either read by the informants or read out loud by me, and usually consented to orally.

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<sup>11</sup> The study was notified and approved by Norwegian Social Sciences Data Services (NSD) prior to data collection.

<sup>12</sup> See the consent form in appendix C.

All interviews were recorded with a Dictaphone, which was clarified and consented to prior to the start of the interview. A debrief followed each interview, where the informants were given the opportunity to ask questions about the project.

## **2.8 Methodological reflections during data collection**

“Learning by doing”, according to Kvale and Brinkmann’s (2015) credo, is the only way to improve your interview skills. In retrospect, it is easier to spot what could have been done better. The first interviews conducted leaned more towards fully structured than semi-structured methodology. A meticulous concern with asking every question in the right order may have done the setting more artificial than desirable, perhaps hampering the spontaneity of the answers of the informants. Eventually I internalized the interview guide and felt freer to ask the questions whenever it felt natural. Like Tjora suggests (2012: 135), this internalization made it easier to immerse myself completely in the conversation. As a result, the flow was better and I got lengthier and richer responses. At the same time, it allowed me to ask more follow-up questions when something interesting and unexpected would pop up.

The focus group had a looser structure than the individual interviews. The main focus in the interview was to let them talk freely about the situation they were currently in – facing possible citizenship revocation – and how they experienced this. Consequently, less emphasis was put on the interview guide questions, but it was also not completely abandoned. The informants in the focus group knew each other well. Jamilah and Muhammed were married and Amina was a good friend of theirs. This probably made it safer for them to express the hardships of their legal problems. It was an effective form of interviewing, in which interview data was generated from several informants simultaneously (Tjora 2012: 122). The biggest comparative advantage over the individual interviews, were the large degree of spontaneity. Despite that they were all in the same situation, they experienced and emphasized different aspects, which were collectively negotiated during our conversation.

During data collection, I became aware of some of the inherent biases in the question phrasings. For example, “Do you feel Norwegian?” may imply that they do not feel Norwegian or not to a “sufficient degree”. It can also be interpreted as something that is *desirable* for immigrants; that every immigrant really *wants* to feel Norwegian. For the state, becoming Norwegian in more than a formal sense is desirable (see Fortier 2013), and asking these types of questions may reinforce this pressure. Some of the interviewees reacted negatively to the phrasing, while others dismissed its relevance as it was not viewed as

particularly important to feel Norwegian. Three informants would rather characterize themselves as “world citizens” than Norwegians. These reactions made me more open to the fact that not everyone necessarily *wants* to feel Norwegian.

A qualitative interview is undeniably a social context wherein the relation between researcher and informant affects the data that are produced (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 114; Thagaard 2009: 103; Tjora 2012). According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015: 37), the social nature of interviews implies that the researcher and the informant *mutually* engage in creation of knowledge. The interview situation is, however, not a level playing field. Rather, the relation between interviewer and interviewee is above all asymmetrical; the qualitative interview is an instrumental one-way dialogue, in which the interviewer decides the structure and content of the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 37, 51).

Sometimes the inherent asymmetry can be exacerbated if there are structural differences between interviewer and interviewee, such as gender, social class and ethnicity (Carling, Erdal & Ezzati 2014). In this study, ethnicity was a social marker that became especially salient during some of the interviews. For instance, an Afghan immigrant with Norwegian citizenship said that if “we” applied for the same job, I (as an “ethnic Norwegian”) would have a better chance than him (as an immigrant from Afghanistan). Another Norwegian citizen originating from Somalia said: “they don’t treat me as they treat you”. These remarks had an underlying ethnic dimension to them, which emphasized the structural inequality between informants and researcher. Such remarks are interesting because they elicit the tensions between formal and informal ways of societal inclusion and exclusion – between equality “on paper” and equality “in practice” – which is partly what this thesis revolves around. The social distance between researcher and informant was therefore not necessarily a problem, which it can be (Thagaard 2009: 103). On the contrary, my position as an “ethnic Norwegian” was used as a resource during the interviews to illuminate some of the dynamics of majority-minority relations.

## **2.9 Transcription, coding and analysis**

All interviews were continuously transcribed. The length of the interviews ranged from 34 to 82 minutes, on average lasting 50 minutes. Two recurrent challenges occurred in the transformation of speech to text. One was background noise in the recordings, which sometimes made it difficult to decipher and interpret what was being said. The other challenge was linguistic barriers. Two of the informants, being exceptions to the general rule,

had a hard time expressing themselves fully in Norwegian. In combination with background noise, this made certain sentences and remarks hard to comprehend. Luckily, few remarks were totally incomprehensible, and usually they were not directly relevant to the research questions. As such, they do not constitute a major reliability problem.

In line with Tjora's (2012: 144) recommendations, I did a thorough and detailed first transcription of the interviews, noting pauses, mimics and emotional outbursts to include as much contextual information as possible. The transcriptions were subsequently coded in Hyperresearch.<sup>13</sup> Coding is a common form of qualitative analysis, in which you go through the data material (the interview transcriptions in this case), select and mark out chunks of text and attach codes to them. It is an effective method to compress, categorize and get an overview of the data material (Kvale & Brinkmann 2015: 227).

I coded the interview material two times. The first time was predominantly *deductive*, where the material was coded according to predetermined categories derived from the interview guide (e.g. "why naturalize" and "perceptions of dual citizenship"). The first coding provided me with a rough overview over the data material and allowed me to develop "raw" categories based on the informants' different perceptions and experiences of citizenship. Tjora (2012) characterizes this deductive approach as "sorting-based coding". He is critical of this approach because it fails to address what the informants actually *say*; it only informs us what they are talking *about* (2012: 182). Another alternative, which Tjora subscribes to, is a grounded theory-inspired "textually attuned coding", where the codes are exclusively derived from the data – not from pre-existing theory, hypotheses, interview guides or research questions (2012: 179). To check if the preliminary findings based on the first coding were valid, I employed Tjora's inductive approach in the second round of coding. Going through the entire data material, I generated approximately 500 codes. These codes were subsequently compartmentalized into 20 different "code groups", which formed the basis of the main categories in the analysis: mobility, legal attachment and recognition.

The second coding did not radically change the main findings from the first coding, but it was useful because it helped me refine and nuance the preliminary findings. Most importantly, it offered novel perspectives on how to analyze the findings in relation to each other. As a result, the research questions and the structure of the thesis were modified. From the outset, I simply wanted to find out why some immigrants naturalize while others do not. But after the data collection and the second coding, I found it more interesting to inquire into

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<sup>13</sup> A popular "Computer-Aided Qualitative Data Analysis Software" (CAQDAS) program.

what citizenship generally means to citizens and non-citizens *alike* – mobility, legal attachment and recognition – and the relationship between these meanings. These alterations may have been the result of employing an inductive rather than a deductive coding method, or it may simply be refinements due to another reading of the material – irrespective of coding technique.

The excerpts used in the text are translated from Norwegian to English. I have tried to stay as close to the original meanings as possible, but for the purpose of clarity I have occasionally polished the language and corrected minor grammatical errors. As mentioned, the informants have been anonymized. This means that I will not use any information that can be used to identify the informants directly. Names are *pseudonymized* (Tjora 2012: 198) to make the material more alive and relatable. When I present interview excerpts I use relevant information, like their background in Norway (when they came and why) and information about their legal integration processes (e.g. experiences with applying for citizenship). Hopefully this will provide enough context to interpret the excerpts, while at the same time ensuring sufficient anonymization of informants.

## **2.10 The quality in qualitative research**

Reliability, validity and generalization are often used as indications of quality in qualitative research (Tjora 2012: 202). Reliability concerns the trustworthiness of the findings. Validity contains two dimensions: *Internal validity* – are the results valid for the sample? – and *external validity* – are the results transferable to other samples or contexts? I discuss two reliability concerns, and conclude with some considerations around external validity – or *generalization* – as the meanings of the two terms largely overlap.

Do the informants only tell us what they *think* we want to hear? (Thagaard 2009: 105). With this case, the informants may have interpreted the interviewer – a white, “ethnic Norwegian”, university student with middle-class background – as a kind of “representative” for the Norwegian majority, and feel compelled to answer accordingly to what they think I want to hear. Aptekar points out that, “questions about the meaning of citizenship are particularly vulnerable to interviewer effects and social desirability bias” because informants may feel pressured to answer patriotically and underline the “meaningfulness of naturalization” (2010: 62). Such social desirability bias can undermine the general reliability of the results.

On the one hand, most *naturalized* informants in this study put little emphasis on “patriotic sides” of citizenship acquisition. Either it was peripheral to their concerns or they tended to undermine these aspects, suggesting that social desirability bias was a minor problem. On the other hand, I acknowledge that some of the informant, for instance “involuntary” non-citizens and the three Somali immigrants who faced citizenship revocation, may have had a clearer “stake” in the interview situation. Possibly, they had an “interest” of bolstering their belonging, integration and attachment to Norway to legitimize their claims to citizenship.

When writing the analysis for this thesis, how were quotes and excerpts picked out and how do these relate to what was said but *not* quoted? (Tjora 2012: 205) This is another reliability concern. Generally, citizenship *did* seem to matter to the informants. However, to reflect the variation in the material as well, I “searched and accounted for negative instances” (Seale 1999: ch. 6), by coding interview excerpts that elicit situations when citizenship seemed to matter less or not at all (for example in the “horizontal domain” of citizenship).

Do the views and experiences of citizenship and non-citizenship in this study reflect the general views of Afghans, Russians and Somalis living in Norway – or even immigrants in Norway as a whole? Put differently: Are the findings generalizable? There are at least two reservations when it comes to generalizing the findings. Firstly, immigrant groups that exhibit lower propensities to naturalize would plausibly tend to value Norwegian citizenship less. Citizenship in the country of residence seems to mean less in material, emotional and symbolical terms to immigrants from “developed countries” (Western Europe and North America) since they already hold a “valuable” citizenship (Bauböck et al. 2013; Bevelander et al. 2015; C Jensen 2014).

Secondly, even though capturing a certain variation in the level of *legal* integration (including both naturalized citizens and permanent residents), the high level of *social* integration of the informants, in terms of education level, language skills and political engagement, does probably not represent the immigrant population(s) accurately. Possibly, immigrants on the lower half of the social ladder have other views and experiences of citizenship. However, since these well-integrated immigrants tended to value a Norwegian citizenship highly, it is likely that such views pertain to less integrated immigrants as well. One can argue that the less privileged immigrants have even stronger reasons for wanting *legal* recognition if they feel *socially* excluded.

This chapter has outlined the most important methodological steps, choices and challenges that came up in the research process for this thesis. In the next chapter, I take a



step back in time and describe some of the historical circumstances leading up the revision of the Norwegian citizenship law of 2006, which is still in place.



# 3 Citizenship Legislation in Norway: Past and Current Controversies

Citizenship legislation in Norway has, according to Brochmann (2013: 13-14), been a “sleeping issue” among more controversial topics in the immigration and integration nexus. The first law on the acquisition and loss of citizenship in Norway was passed in 1888. The citizenship law subsequently underwent minor revisions in 1924 and 1950 (see Brochmann 2013: 2-5). After 50 years of minor changes – mainly gradual liberalizations – a new Norwegian Nationality Act came into force on September 1, 2006 (Brochmann 2013: 1). In this chapter I describe the circumstances leading up to the 2006 revision, and the controversies surrounding the law revision process. Further, I outline the legal framework for acquiring and losing Norwegian citizenship. Lastly, I focus on a novel issue that has made citizenship legislation go from being a peripheral issue to taking center stage in Norwegian debates on immigration, integration and belonging, namely that of citizenship revocations.

## 3.1 The revision process

When looking at historical revisions in citizenship legislation in Norway, two developments in particular spurred the major revision of the citizenship legislation. The first one was the changing nature of immigration to Norway. In the first 20 years or so after the 1950 Act, Norway adhered to the general postwar *zeitgeist* in Europe: A positive attitude towards international migration, open borders and transnational exchanges of labor. Naturalization was, however, not seen as connected to immigration. “Guestworkers” were expected to follow the market demand: Come when they were needed, go when they no longer were (Brochmann 2013: 5). After a period of open borders, the Parliament (*Stortinget*) passed a temporary strict regulation of labor immigration (known as the “immigration stop”), which was made permanent in 1981. However, when the doors were shut for labor migrants, an unforeseen influx of migrants coming through humanitarian channels followed. Paradoxically, this new immigration pattern led to an even larger immigration than before the “immigration stop”. Unlike the labor migrants who came to work, the humanitarian migrants came to Norway because they lacked rights in the country of origin. To accommodate their lack of rights, naturalization law became relevant again. As a result of increasing immigration

through humanitarian channels, naturalization numbers rose steadily from the 1990s and onwards (Brochmann 2013: 5).

On the other hand, certain factors reduced the significance of the law. One of them was the increased influence of international conventions and human rights policies that serves to protect and give rights to individuals, irrespective of citizenship and residency. Additionally, in some welfare states, like the Norwegian, civic and social rights are granted to legal residents through the principle of equal treatment, decreasing the status of citizenship as the primary harbinger of institutional rights (Brochmann 2013: 6).

Another more direct cause of the law revision was the 1997 European Convention on Nationality, which sought a harmonization of citizenship laws in Europe. The convention represents the most comprehensive and complete collection of the founding principles of international citizenship law, and by calling for *dual citizenship* it broke radically with the *single citizenship* regime (“one citizen, one state”) that had prevailed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Midtbøen 2009: 528). Sweden quickly addressed the question of dual citizenship (and subsequently endorsed it), which motivated Norway to undertake a similar review (Brochmann 2013: 6). In 1999, the current centrist minority coalition government (consisting of the Christian Democrats (*Kristelig Folkeparti*), The Liberal Party (*Venstre*) and the Center Party (*Senterpartiet*), gave a dual mandate to a Preparatory Committee: Review the existing law and consider novel issues for possible inclusion or exclusion. These issues were the question of dual citizenship, requirements of language skills and knowledge of polity and society, and the consideration of the importance of citizenship legislation for the integration of foreigners (Brochmann 2013: 1).

The Preparatory Committee was divided between a majority and a minority on these issues. The majority generally wanted to *liberalize* the legislation by introducing dual citizenship and disavowing language and skills and knowledge of society as requirements. The minority, professor of political science Alf-Inge Jansen, dissented to this. Jansen wished to retain the principle of single citizenship, in addition to introducing language skills and knowledge of polity as preconditions for naturalization (Midtbøen 2009: 534-6).

Interestingly, the government went with the minority in retaining the single citizenship principle, despite the majority and other consultative bodies favoring an acceptance of dual citizenship (Midtbøen 2009: 535). On the question of language skills and knowledge of polity, the government chose the “golden middle way”, straddling a restrictive minority and a liberal majority. At this time, persons between 16 and 55 years of age, who has received work and residence permits, already had a duty to take 300 hours of Norwegian

lessons according to the Introductory Law.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the government followed the minority on the question of language skills. But when it came to knowledge of polity, they partially chose to implement the majority's view. There were no provisions of knowledge of Norwegian democracy in the new law, but 50 hours of social science was included in the 300 hours of Norwegian lessons (Midtbøen 2009).

Another point of contention was the introduction of citizenship ceremonies and an oath of allegiance to the Norwegian state. The committee did not see any reason to re-introduce an oath of allegiance but discussed the possibility of having voluntary ceremonies, equivalent to the Swedish model.<sup>15</sup> During the hearing, however, some of the immigrant organizations were – somewhat surprisingly to many – positive towards an oath of allegiance. The government therefore suggested to the parliament that a ceremony with an oath à la the Australian version should be (re-)instituted, but with the premise that the ceremony should be *voluntary* to participate in, while the oath should be *mandatory* (Brochmann 2013: 7-8).

The new Citizenship Law was accepted in both chambers of the Storting (*Odelstinget* and *Lagtinget*), endorsed by the King and came into force on 1 September 2006. Brochmann notes: “the new Citizenship Law is an interesting example of a very mixed piece of legislation, in which continuity and transformation, ideology and pragmatism are notably intertwined” (2013: 8). On the restrictive end, the principle of single citizenship was retained, language skills were implemented and an oath of allegiance re-introduced. On the liberalizing side, every person who meets these requirements has a *right* to citizenship in Norway, which substantially reduces the power of the authorities to make discretionary decisions. Thus, the legislation sought to balance liberal ideals of individual freedom on one side, with adherence to shared national values seen to be defined by the majority society on the other (Brochmann 2013: 10; Midtbøen 2009: 538).

The amendment to the citizenship law reflected the wider European trend of regarding citizenship in the context of broader integration processes, by drawing linkages between citizenship and integration, legal and social belonging to the nation-state. Norwegian citizenship is granted on the basis of an initiated process of integration; prospective citizens must document their willingness to integrate in order to be included into the national

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<sup>14</sup> The Introductory Law provides newly arrived immigrants with a *right* and a *duty* to language and work training and labor market preparation (Brochmann 2013: 17). When the law was changed in 2012, the requirement was raised to 600 hours of language training, included 50 hours of social studies (Midtbøen 2015).

<sup>15</sup> The first citizenship law of 1888 required prospective citizens to swear an oath of allegiance to the Norwegian constitution upon naturalization. The requirement was continued in the 1924 and 1950 laws, but repealed in 1976 because it was considered a “superfluous formality” (Hagelund & Reegård 2011).

community (Midtbøen 2015: 12). In the government's point of view, citizenship acquisition spurs integration of immigrants and increases social cohesion in a multicultural nation-state.

## 3.2 Ways of acquiring and losing citizenship

Norwegian citizenship gives rights and duties. It confers the unconditional right to live and work in Norway, and provides protection against deportation from the country. Furthermore, only citizens can vote in general elections and run for election as a member of Parliament. Certain government positions, offices in courts, the foreign service, police and prison institutions are reserved for Norwegian citizens. Military service is practically the only duty inherited in citizenship (Brochmann 2013: 9).

There are three basic ways of acquiring Norwegian citizenship: by birth or adoption, by notification or by application. Children born to a Norwegian citizen is automatically granted Norwegian citizenship (the *jus sanguinis* principle).<sup>16</sup> An adopted child obtains a Norwegian citizenship if the child is under the age of eighteen at the time of adoption. Danish, Finnish, Icelandic and Swedish citizens can acquire a Norwegian citizenship by notification if certain requirements are met (see Brochmann 2013: 9). Non-Nordic foreigners must *apply* to be granted citizenship. The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI from now on) is responsible for processing citizenship applications. Any person over 12 years has a *right* to citizenship if the following requirements are met (UDI 2017a):

- Payment of application fee (4200 Norwegian Kroners).
- The identity of the applicant is clarified. As a main rule, a passport must be submitted.
- One must be a resident in Norway and intends to continue residing in Norway in the future.
- Holding residency in Norway for a total of seven out of the past ten years, and have held residence or work permits that are each valid for at least one year.
- Conditions for permanent residence permit are met (including 600 hours of language training).
- Passed Norwegian oral test and a social studies test (citizenship test).<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> In its pure form, *jus sanguinis* implies that a newborn child will be granted citizenship if one of the parents possesses such citizenship. The alternative principle, *jus soli*, implies that any child born inside the territorial boundaries of the state automatically is granted citizenship of that state (Midtbøen 2015).

<sup>17</sup> This is a new provision pertaining to persons between 18 and 67 years who handed in their citizenship application after 1 January 2017.

- Previous convictions, fines by the police, or current investigations of criminal offences may prolong the waiting time.
- The applicant is released from (have renounced) their original citizenship.<sup>18</sup>

The “identity documentation” requirement has been a barrier to some immigrants coming from countries without adequately functioning authorities, such as those of Afghanistan and Somalia. Indeed, the law stipulates that information regarding nationality, birthplace, age, name and birth date has to be clarified with at least 50 percent probability (Statsborgerforskriften, chapter 1, section 1 and 2). UDI makes exceptions to applicants without passports if the applicant can provide other identity documentation with sufficient notoriety, or if the applicant is unable to contact the authorities in the country of origin due to safety issues.

The number of rejected applications increased over the first years of the new Citizenship Law, mainly due to difficulty of confirming the identity of the applicants (Brochmann 2013: 11). Most remarkable, from 2014 to 2015, 60 percent less Somalis were granted Norwegian citizenship, while Afghan applicants also saw a decline (Klassekampen 2016). 276 citizenship applications were turned down in 2016 due to insufficient identity documentation. Of these rejections, approximately one third were Somali and Afghan applicants (55 Somali and 34 Afghan applicants).<sup>19</sup>

Traditionally, there are three ways of *losing* Norwegian citizenship: by acquiring another citizenship (as a logical consequence of the single citizenship principle), by long-term absence from the country and by application to be released from the Norwegian citizenship (Brochmann 2013: 11). Additionally, UDI can *revoke* the Norwegian citizenship. With the revision of 2005, rules pertaining to revocation were made more enforceable (Brochmann 2013: 12). A revocation can be made on two grounds: if a person has been granted Norwegian citizenship, but has not renounced his/her other citizenship by the deadline, or if the decision whereby the person was granted a Norwegian citizenship is invalid. The latter rule pertains to situations where a person intentionally has provided incorrect or incomplete information, or withheld information, during the application process,

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<sup>18</sup> If the applicant does not automatically lose it when granted a Norwegian citizenship. In certain cases, applicants are exempted. If the legislation in the country where the applicant has his/her original citizenship does not permit the applicant to be released from it, or if it is not practically possible to renounce it. Examples could be: If it is impossible to travel to the country in question (e.g. due to civil war), if releasing the applicant from their original citizenship would result in losing property, inheritance rights, or other “unreasonably burdensome conditions” (see UDI 2017b).

<sup>19</sup> E-mail correspondence with Helen Sandal at UDI.

which was decisive for granting the citizenship (Brochmann 2013: 12). Revocation of citizenship marked a shift in public policy, whereby the institution of citizenship was redefined from being a non-revocable, irretrievable fact to becoming a more relative concept who's status was suddenly diminished.<sup>20</sup>

### **3.3 Citizenship revocations: Citizenship law from peripheral to central issue**

Citizenship law-making during the 1990s and 2000s did not draw much attention from the general Norwegian public compared to other, more contentious issues in the immigration-integration nexus (Brochmann 2013: 14-15). But recently the enforced practice of citizenship revocations moved citizenship legislation to the center of the Norwegian public debate. UDI's decision to revoke Mahad Abib Mahamud's Norwegian citizenship started a public debate about the state of current citizenship legislation (VG 2017). Mahad came to Norway in 2000 as a refugee from Somalia, and was granted residence on "humanitarian grounds".<sup>21</sup> Mahad was granted Norwegian citizenship in 2008. In 2013, UDI received an anonymous tip, claiming that Mahad was not from Somalia, but Djibouti (a country deemed by Norwegian authorities to be peaceful), rendering, according to the new laws, his original claim to asylum – and subsequently citizenship – baseless. The case led to the revocation of his citizenship in 2015. Mahad took the case to the Oslo District Court, but lost the trial in March 2017.

In the debate that followed, Mahad became the "posterboy" for a larger trend indicating the increased use of citizenship revocations by Norwegian authorities. Indeed, from 2012 to 2015, 71 Norwegian citizenships were revoked. By comparison, 65 Norwegian citizenships were revoked in 2016 (NRK 2017). As of January 2016, UDI were 500 citizenships were under consideration for revocation by UDI (VG 2017). However, according to the immigration authorities, this is not a change in practice. Rather, UDI sites an increased capacity to prioritize citizenship revocation as the reason why the numbers of revocations have increased. Low numbers of asylum seekers in 2016 and 2017 increased their capacity, according to UDI (2017c).

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<sup>20</sup> In December 2016, the current right-wing government proposed a change in the citizenship law which opens up for citizenship revocation on a new basis: Supporting or engaging in terrorist acts. Since it is considered illegitimate to make people stateless, a precondition for citizenship revocation is initial acceptance of dual citizenship. Therefore, the government is also considering to tolerate dual citizenship (Midtbøen forthcoming).

<sup>21</sup> A person can be granted a residence permit in Norway on "humanitarian grounds" because of strong humanitarian considerations or because she or she has a special connection with Norway (UDI 2017d).



Mahad's case raised important legal, political and normative questions. A strictly legal question was whether UDI, as an *administrative body*, should have the power to revoke citizenships, or if this should be a task of the courts instead. Indeed, the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk Venstreparti) proposed to change the Citizenship Law, making the case that only the District Courts should have the power to revoke citizenship. The proposal was eventually backed by all parliamentary parties (except for the Conservative Party (*Høyre*) and the Progress Party (*Fremskrittspartiet*)), and accepted by the Storting in May 2017. Until the change of law is implemented, all revocations were put on hold (TV2 2017).

Another point of contention was the absence of “statute of limitations” in the law. Unlike most other European countries, there are no temporal restrictions on revoking citizenship (NOU 2015:4). Practically, this means that UDI can re-open asylum cases anytime, regardless of how many years have gone by since asylum and citizenship status was granted. As a long-term resident and citizen, Mahad's situation spurred some controversial political and normative questions. For instance, what does it take and *how long* does it take to be accepted as a Norwegian citizen? If Mahad – the supposedly perfect example of a “well-integrated” immigrant, a bio-engineer at the Oslo University Hospital, and an active and well-liked community citizen in the rural town Brummunddal – is not accepted, who then? Are immigrants and descendants of immigrants ever safe from revocation and deportation?

This chapter has focused on the revision process around the turn of the millennium that resulted in the current legislation on acquisition and loss of citizenship. On the restrictive end, the single citizenship principle was maintained, language skills were implemented and an oath of allegiance re-introduced, although taking place in a *voluntary* citizenship ceremony. On the liberalizing side, every person satisfying the naturalization requirements have a right to Norwegian citizenship. The enforced revocation policy placed citizenship law center stage in the Norwegian public debate, which until then had been a rather peripheral issue. In the next chapter, I look at how such legislative developments have been analyzed by three different macro diagnoses, and how citizenship law is experienced on a micro level.



## 4 Macro Diagnoses and Micro Experiences of Citizenship

The revision process of the Norwegian Citizenship Law displayed an institution fraught with contradictions: continuity and change, liberalizations and restrictions, devaluation and revaluation. With a backdrop of such contradictory developments, the salience of national citizenship has been heavily disputed in citizenship theory. One of the key questions has been: Does national citizenship still matter? (Midtbøen 2009). This question has been addressed in various macro diagnoses of the citizenship institution, while micro experiences – namely immigrants’ perspectives – have largely been ignored.

I start this chapter by sketching out three influential macro diagnoses of the citizenship institution that each provide different perspectives of citizenship’s meaning and salience. Brubaker (1992) emphasizes the enduring significance of national citizenship. Soysal (1994; 2000; 2012) heralds the end of nation-based citizenship (see also Jacobson 1997; Sassen 1996; Tambini 2001). Lastly, Joppke’s (2010) “citizenship light” comprise a synthesis of Brubaker and Soysal’s works, claiming that citizenship is neither in global decline, nor marked by enduring significance.

Despite offering differing macro diagnoses of the citizenship institution, Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke have one important thing in common: They to a substantial degree neglect micro experiences of citizenship, that is what citizenship means to *immigrants* themselves. By effectively making claims about immigrants’ attitudes “from afar” (Leitner & Ehrkamp 2006: 1616), important aspects of the citizenship institution remain unaddressed. In the following, I will incorporate theoretical perspectives and empirical studies more attuned to the micro experiences of citizenship. I draw on insights from mobility and deportation studies (Mau 2010; Mau, Laube & Zaun 2015; Peutz & de Genova 2010; Shamir 2005), legal ethnography (Belton 2015; Chacon 2015; Coutin 2000, 2010; Menjivar 2006) and recognition perspectives (Honneth 2005; Hopkins & Blackwood 2011; Yanasmayan 2015). These perspectives will make up the guide in the subsequent analysis. I conclude this chapter by delineating “the meanings of citizenship” identified in the data material: *mobility, legal attachment and recognition*.

## 4.1 Macro diagnoses of citizenship

### 4.1.1 The enduring significance of citizenship

Brubaker's seminal work *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany* (1992) is credited to have merged the fields of citizenship and immigration studies (Joppke 2010: 14). By means of historical-sociological and formal-institutional scrutiny, Brubaker compared the developments of citizenship legislation in France and Germany. He employs Weber's concept of "social closure" to underline that citizenship is *externally* exclusive – "shielding prosperous states from the migrant poor" – and *internally* inclusive by establishing a "conceptual, legal and ideological boundary between citizens and foreigners" (1992: x).

Brubaker's central claim is that the citizenship laws of these two continental nation-states are rooted in – and continues to be shaped by – two distinct traditions of *nationhood*; deep, constitutive self-conceptions of the nation (Brubaker 1992: xi). In the French tradition, the nation has been conceived in relation to the institutional and territorial frame of the state, which has amounted to a liberal and expansive citizenship legislation towards immigrants. Germany's tradition of nationhood, on the other hand, has been *volk*-centered and differentialist, giving a restrictive citizenship legislation as result.

In an internationalized era where nation-states are losing sovereignty on other areas, national citizenship continues to be important to the state, according to Brubaker, because it is "a last bastion of sovereignty": Admission to citizenship and its rights is "entirely at the discretion of the state" (1992: 180). However, in this thesis, what national citizenship means to the *state* is not as relevant as what it means to *immigrants*. Even though this perspective is on the margins of Brubaker's empirical focus (illustrative of mainstream citizenship literature in general) he does assume what citizenship means to them:

For these immigrants [in France and Germany] (...) the material stakes are relatively minor (...) While not negligible, the marginal advantages conferred by citizenship over and above those conferred by the status of long-term foreign resident are of modest import. *From the point of view of the immigrants concerned*, citizenship status as such does not decisively shape life chances. (Brubaker 1992: 181, emphasis added)

National citizenship, in the Brubakerian line of reasoning, is only symbolically and ideologically salient to the nation-state. To immigrants, on the other hand, citizenship is of marginal material (and implicitly symbolical) significance.

### 4.1.2 The end of national citizenship

Soysal's *Limits of Citizenship* (1994) is perhaps *the* other classic work from the same decade.<sup>22</sup> Soysal's work sparked off a lively scholarly debate, as it was read as the *postnational* anti thesis to Brubaker's *nation-state* centered analysis.

Soysal's main contention is that *rights* (civil and social) are no longer invested in national citizenship but rather universal *personhood*. "Guestworkers" – which Soysal defines as "noncitizen migrants" (1994: 138) – are incorporated into various areas of the social and institutional order of their host countries, despite lacking formal citizenship. National citizenship, Soysal writes, "is losing ground to a more universal model of membership, anchored in deterritorialized notions of persons' rights" (1994: 3). The era of "postnational membership", which she calls it, derives its normative legitimacy from transnational discourse and human rights (1994: 3). Since states are obliged to grant rights to guestworkers as individuals – not as citizens – the distinction between citizens and non-citizens has become blurred. As permanent residents enjoy more or less the same rights as citizens, they go from legal to "symbolic foreigners" (1994: 135). The expansion of membership categories has thus made traditional citizenship "peculiarly less important" (1994: 29), Soysal concludes.

Although disagreeing on the salience of national citizenship, Soysal and Brubaker agrees on that citizenship rights are of marginal importance to immigrants. Additionally, they implicitly assume that citizenship is void of symbolical value to immigrants. Joppke, as we will see, more or less shares the same view.

### 4.1.3 Citizenship light

Joppke's (2010) "citizenship light" is both a critique and synthesis of Brubaker and Soysal's diagnoses. Citizenship is, according to Joppke, neither reproduced in "nationally distinct ways" (Brubaker) nor "set on a global path of decline" (Soysal). Rather, Joppke says, citizenship have "continued to evolve toward becoming more inclusive and universalistic" (2010: 31). Joppke analyzes the evolution of postwar citizenship as a "chain of causation", and analyzes how the three dimensions of the citizenship institution (status, rights and identity) have affected each other.

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<sup>22</sup> Soysal has defended the "post-national membership"-thesis in later works (2000; 2012), but I focus on *Limits of Citizenship* (1994), as this is the most complete presentation of her ideas.

According to Joppke, access to citizenship *status* have been liberalized in Europe and North America. Ethnically closed citizenship regimes in Europe have become more inclusive towards immigrants, by implementing *jus soli*, accepting dual citizenship and significantly lowering the naturalization provisions (Joppke 2010: 31). However, Joppke does discern a “restrictive trend” within the “liberalizing framework”, but the restrictions have remained limited to making naturalization more exacting, leaving dual citizenship and *jus soli*-liberalizations untouched. Additionally, Joppke (2010: 68) argues that the civic integration requirements are *individual*, rather than *group*-based, which means that all individuals irrespective of ascriptive origin traits can meet them.

In turn, the liberalization of access have diversified the citizenry, which consequently have made social *rights* more accessible to non-citizens, due to anti-discrimination imperatives imposed on the states (cf. Soysal 1994). This has made the distinction between citizen and alien rights less clear, according to Joppke (2010: 32). In response to the increasing diversity, states have rediscovered citizenship as a “tool of integration”. The civic integration focus concretely manifests itself into citizenship campaigns for unity, social cohesion and national *identity*. However, liberal states cannot legitimately force a particularistic cultural identity on diverse populations but must remain neutral with respect to different ways of life. Therefore, Joppke argues, campaigns must be formulated in a liberal-universalistic language that does not discriminate (2010: 148). Cogently put: “identity cannot be legislated” (Joppke 2010: 121). States promoting citizenship campaigns for unity and social cohesion are caught in a “paradox of universalism”, Joppke claims, forced to provide universalistic answers to questions of particular national identities (2010: 111-2).

“Citizenship light”, Joppke claims, is the inevitable result of liberalized access, in which being a full member of the nation state is reduced to “having rights without obligations, in itself *socially inconsequential*, and devoid of a particular cultural content” (2010: 33, emphasis added). He quotes legal scholar Spiro who says: “The real prize is legal residency, not citizenship” ([2008: 159] in Joppke 2010: 155). Citizenship light remains objectively significant in a world of growing economic disparities, yet its subjective value is decreasing. Contemporary attempts to upgrade the citizenship institution are merely cosmetic changes to an institution who’s meaning is bound to decrease, Joppke concludes (2010: 155-6). This perspective – seeing citizenship as subjectively irrelevant – is far from micro experiences of citizenship, which the coming subchapters will demonstrate.

## 4.2 Micro experiences of citizenship

Albeit offering different diagnoses of the citizenship institution – whether it is continuity (Brubaker), decline (Soysal), or change (Joppke) – the perspectives share some important commonalities. Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke evaluate the salience of citizenship entirely through the lens of the state. Their primary focus is on the *legal* dimension of citizenship (status and rights) while the subjective dimension of citizenship – “medborgerskap” in Brochmann’s (2007) terminology – is left out. Nevertheless, Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke do not refrain from speculating on what national citizenship means to immigrants. Citizenship is said to be “of modest import” (Brubaker 1992), of “peculiarly little importance” (Soysal 1994), and “subjectively” insignificant to immigrants (Joppke 2010). This tendency to “banalize” (Mouritsen 2012) citizenship is problematic because it overlooks crucial aspects of national citizenship that remain salient to immigrants.

Rather than decreasing, the material and subjective value difference between citizenship and denizenship remains significant and may be increasing (Mouritsen 2012: 92; see also Hansen 2009). Mouritsen (2012) points to at least three aspects of citizenship that remain important. Firstly, *mobility* and ease of movement. Particularly political refugees are vulnerable to immobility because they often lose their original citizenship and passport in the process of entrance. Secondly, *security of residence* remains one of the most basic privileges of citizenship that even permanent residence cannot ensure (Mouritsen 2012: 93-4). Thirdly, the *symbolical recognition* inherent in the concept of citizenship. The exclusivity and pathos rhetoric that surrounds citizenship makes it a valuable sign of recognition (Mouritsen 2012: 96).

Mouritsen’s (2012) emphasis on the “renewed significance of citizenship” is an important contribution to this thesis. However, Mouritsen’s point of view centers on the *macro-level*, akin to Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke. Therefore, he is unable to give an accurate analysis of how the three dimensions – mobility, security of residence and recognition – matter to immigrants in everyday life. For this reason, I look to theoretical perspectives and empirical studies that outline more accurately how mobility, secure residence and recognition matter in immigrants’ lives.

### 4.2.1 Mobility rights, visa policies and immigrant immobilities

States in the West have been increasingly preoccupied with the regulation of migratory movements. Securitization post 9/11, concerns about visa overstayers, irregular migration, and anxieties over the influx of “bogus” asylum seekers have resulted in comprehensive efforts to control mobility (Coutin 2015: 672-3; Mau 2010: 340; Peutz & de Genova 2010: 11). Deportation scholars Peutz and de Genova therefore argue that nation-state sovereignty and national citizenship has “become the conventional determinant of an individual’s liberty to move into, out of, or across various national, international and sometimes subnational spaces” (2010: 7). Membership, rights and mobility, in Peutz and de Genova’s perspective, are not *postnational*, like Soysal claims, but remain tightly within “the inescapable nationalist mantle of citizenship” (2010: 8).

Similarly, Mau (2010) suggests that mobility rights – crossing borders legally – have become a fundamental right complementing civic, social and political rights. Mobility rights are unevenly distributed between citizens from the “Global North” and citizens from the “Global South” (Mau 2010; Mau et al. 2015). Borders are rarely open or closed per se, but nevertheless remain open only to specific persons and types of mobility, and exist “wherever selective controls are to be found” ([Balibar 2002: 84-5] quoted in Mau 2010: 344).

According to Mau (2010: 345), *visa policies* are the major instrument for regulating international travel, and thus an effective form of selective border control. A visa is “a document affixed to passports or travel documents which *prima facie* permits the holder to arrive at the border of the issuing state and, subject to further checks, to pass that border for a period of time” (Guild [2001: 31] quoted in Mau 2010: 345). A standard visa is for short-term (usually 90 days), nonbusiness and non-employment purposes. Applications must be filed at embassies and consulates of their destination in their home countries, and can be denied without giving any reason.

Visa policies enables the regulation of mobility from far away by issuing visas to wanted travelers, and denying them to unwanted. As such, visa policies are a central solution to conflicting demands in a globalized world: The need for speedy border crossings for wanted forms of mobility, and the control of unwanted forms (Mau 2010: 345). To sort wanted from unwanted, some travelers are exempted from visa restrictions because they enjoy “generalized trust” as citizens from particular countries – that is rich democracies (Torpey 2000). Citizens of “suspect countries” (Shamir 2005: 203) – namely emigration-prone, poor and/or undemocratic states – are subjected to more intense individual measures to



filter out the unwanted migrants (Mau 2010: 345-6). Simply put: Passports have different values.

For immigrants coming from the Global South, gaining a *passport* in a wealthy and democratic country constitutes a central motive for changing citizenship (Mau et al. 2015: 1195). Leuchter found that Israeli citizens applied for a European citizenship to increase their mobility. They made a distinction between their Israel *citizenship*, replete with notions of identity and belonging, and their “European *passport*” as merely “a technical non-obliging document”, but nonetheless a powerful symbol of freedom (2014: 787). Exploring how Mexican immigrants in New York City conceptualize citizenship, Galvez (2013) underlines the centrality of (im)mobility in immigrant claims for citizenship. Immobility was a salient characteristic of the undocumented Mexicans’ everyday lives. Therefore, they claimed citizenship for the right to leave the nation – and come back (Galvez 2013: 729).

Similarly, Coutin (2010) examined how undocumented Salvadoran immigrants in USA were affected by current enforcement strategies. The securitization of immigration, entailing border enforcement, detention and deportation to control unauthorized movements, made movements across borders for unauthorized migrants more difficult. Undocumented and temporary migrants refrained from exiting their countries of residence out of fear of losing territorially conferred rights. In this way, national territories become “zones of confinement” (Coutin 2010: 205). American citizenship would free the undocumented immigrants of this confinement, and give them the possibility of visiting friends and family in El Salvador (Coutin 2010: 200-3). Leitner and Ehrkamp (2006) also found that immigrants in USA and Germany assigned great value to national citizenship in their host-states because it meant that their visits to their country of origins was eased, thus facilitating transnational connections.

#### **4.2.2 Safe residence and liminal legality**

The right to *genuine* permanent residence is one of the few remaining privileges of citizens, which separates them from settled non-citizens (denizens) in contemporary liberal states (Anderson, Gibney & Paoletti 2011: 548; Mouritsen 2012: 93). However, settled “non-citizens” is *not* a homogenous group, contrary to what Soysal (1994) and Joppke (2010) seem to presume. Immigration policies confer a wide range of legal statuses with varying levels of protections and other rights (Abrego & Lakhani 2015: 268).

To capture some of these “in-between-statuses”, Menjivar (2006) coined the term “liminal legality”. Liminal legality is the grey area between undocumented and documented legal categories, a tenuous legal position with more protections than undocumented status yet stopping short of permanent residency and citizenship (Abrego & Lakhani 2015: 265-6; Menjivar 2006: 1000). Menjivar’s case study centered around Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants in USA, with Temporary Protection Status or pending asylum cases. They moved in and out of lawful statuses over time, shifting between tentative lawfulness and more complete marginalization.

Originally, “liminality” refers to the condition of being between statuses; either cultural classifications or more formalized legal statuses (Hynes 2011: 2). The concept was originally developed by the British anthropologist Victor Turner ([1969] in Lambek 2008). Liminality captures the transitional and inherently ambiguous nature of a *rite de passage*, where the individual straddles two “relatively fixed or stable conditions”. Turner defines liminal individuals as “neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention and ceremony” ([1969] in Lambek 2008: 327). Liminality is not a space of permanent exclusion or full marginalization; it is a *temporary*, transitional phase that can be freeing and potentially empowering in a social transformation (Chacon 2015: 716; Thomassen 2009).

However, if liminality is extended indefinitely it can lead to enduring uncertainty. For many of the Central Americans Menjivar studied, the temporariness of their condition extended indefinitely and come to define their legal position (2006: 1008). Menjivar argues, “it is not simply an undocumented status that matter theoretically and analytically, but the long-term uncertainty inherent in these immigrants’ legal status” (2006: 1001). This legal ambiguity constrained the lives of Salvadoran and Guatemalan immigrants in several ways. They faced a wide range of legal obstacles, with multiple, confusing deadlines for applications and renewals of permits. These obstacles continuously reminded them of their precarious situation, temporally expanded for over two decades, leading to a state of “permanent temporariness” (Menjivar 2006: 1000-1). By exposing the grey area between undocumented and documented statuses and the legal issues they face, Menjivar goes against the postnational grain of Soysal (1994) and others, who declare nation-based citizenship on the wane (2006: 1004-5). It was precisely these immigrants’ lack of a *permanent* legal protection, such as citizenship, that created persisting uncertainty and a multitude of legal entanglements.

Legal scholar Chacon (2015) has developed a more rigorous theoretical framework of liminal legality. Based on Menjivar's (2006) iconic case, Chacon (2015: 717-8) identifies four taxonomical traits of liminal legality. Firstly, liminal legality is characterized by its inherent legal uncertainty. The legal assurances against full "illegalization" lack a definitive temporal scope, and are generally given as privileges, not rights. Thus, liminal individuals are reliant on administrative grace to evade deportation. Secondly, liminal individuals are often forced to pay their way to access status that formally protects them from deportation. Thirdly, they are subject to monitoring by governmental agencies; to be eligible for protection, they must regularly document presence and residence, and prove absence of criminal wrongdoings. Fourthly, heightened monitoring makes them vulnerable to discretionary decision-making of public and private actors.

Chacon (2015) also makes an important theoretical contribution by expanding the applicability of the term. Menjivar's (2006) account focused on the lived experiences of immigrants moving in and out of, and living on the *margins* of, legal statuses. However, experiences of liminal legality are not confined to immigrants living on the edges of legal immigration statuses, according to Chacon (2015: 710). Some empirical studies from USA demonstrates Chacon's point. Legal permanent residency (LPR), the legal category closest to citizenship in terms of rights and privileges, does not offer complete protection from deportation. Gilbertson and Singer (2003), for instance, found that many Dominican LPRs in New York City naturalized "defensively" in response to the state denying benefits to permanent residents. By scaling back the rights of permanent residents, legal permanent residency was rendered less attractive and thereby encouraged legal residents to naturalize. A comparative study of naturalizing immigrants in USA and Canada also found that the immigrants in USA sought the protection that citizenship would afford them in an "anti-immigrant policy climate" (Aptekar 2016). In her study of deported Jamaicans, previously legal permanent residents in USA, Golash-Boza (2016) argues that mass deportations of denizens have given renewed importance to territorial belonging and legal citizenship.

Chacon displays the commonalities in governance strategies in an American context, that *produce* liminal legal subjects across a range of formal immigration and citizenship statuses (2015: 711). Thus, individuals with lawful immigration status, like permanent legal residents and even certain *citizens* are not precluded from experiences of liminal legality. Therefore, scholars should not only analyze the *experiences* of liminal legality; they should also strive to identify the legal mechanisms that *produce* liminal legality (2015: 710).

Belton (2015) similarly used the liminality concept to analyze the peculiar situation stateless non-citizens are in. The stateless are either forced to be liminal subjects – detached from a national home – or forced to take on a nationality which they do not identify with. Lack of citizenship does not only immobilize the stateless in terms of life opportunities and enjoyment of rights, but it also deprives them of a “national home”. Even if they are physically rooted in the country of residence, persons stranded in the liminal state, are legally nonexistent (Belton 2015: 913, 916). Unlike other types of non-citizens, the stateless do not come from elsewhere. Yet they are prevented from belonging by practices of citizenship denial and deprivation. This affects their sense of identity and belonging as their place in the world becomes ambiguous, often even outright negated (Belton 2015: 916). In other words, this is a form of non-recognition, which the next subchapter brings up.

### **4.2.3 Citizenship and recognition**

As Mouritsen (2012) suggested, the recognition inhered in legal citizenship remains a significant aspect of the institution. T.H. Marshall, in his classic essay *Citizenship and Social Class*, characterized citizenship as “a kind of basic human equality associated with the concept of full membership of a community” ([1950] 1992: 6). Citizenship, in Marshall’s perspective, was an inclusionary institution that ensured every member of society equal civil, social and political rights, irrespective of social class. At the same time, citizenship is also externally *exclusive* to those who do not possess the status (Brubaker 1992). The status itself arguably makes citizenship desirable because it entails recognizing one as an equal member of society. Seen through the lens of philosopher Honneth’s (2005), an individual’s self-esteem and self-respect is contingent on *legal recognition*. Having full rights is a precondition to rank ourselves as equal with others in society (Honneth 2005: 118-120). Conversely, being deprived of full rights may entail sentiments of inequality and second-class membership.

Coutin’s (2000) term “legal nonexistence” is relevant to understand the quarrelsome notions of being deprived of citizenship. The denial of legal residence and citizenship, Coutin argues, forces people into a space of nonexistence (2000: 150). Nonexistence is produced through the exclusion of people, limiting rights, restricting services and erasing personhood (Coutin 2000: 28). Legal nonexistence directly emanates from the disproportionate relationship between physical presence and lack of (sufficient) *judicial recognition*. The undocumented Salvadorans in USA Coutin studied, claimed citizenship on three bases of

national belonging to their country of origin and host-state. Firstly, the idea that nationality is an “immutable fact of nature”, conferred by birth on Salvadoran soil and having Salvadoran blood. Additionally, national belonging was depicted as *subjective*, that is a sense of connection and being at home or not at home. Thirdly, *substantive actions* or social participation were a base of belonging that Salvadorans used to claim citizenship in USA: living in the territory, raising families, working, paying taxes etc. (Coutin 2000: 151-3). A sense of non-recognition was experienced when their birth, physical presence and social participation was not consolidated in legal recognition.

The ban on dual citizenship can also be seen through a recognition lens. Yanasmayan (2015) interview-study of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, Spain and Great Britain offers some helpful perspectives in this respect. She analyzes how these three countries’ differential policies on dual citizenship – the Netherlands strictly banning dual citizenship, Great Britain allowing it and Spain practicing a *de facto* allowance – impact the “affective selves” of the Turkish. Yanasmayan reads the Netherlands’ strict ban on dual citizenship as an intentional act of non-recognition of undesired emotions, such as multiple national identifications (2015: 789). This, she argues, leads to a decoupling of “affective” and “emotional” selves. After a long period of “self-bargaining” – debating back and forth whether to naturalize or not – the Turkish migrants in the Netherlands downplayed the identity-conferring role of citizenship status. The British example, on the other hand, shows how the process of “self-bargaining” can result in a widening of the emotional landscape, when dual citizenship is allowed.

A last perspective I draw on, is a social-psychological perspective on citizenship and recognition *outside* the legal sphere – the domain Hopkins and Blackwood (2011) calls “everyday citizenship”. Hopkins and Blackwood argue that everyday interaction is also an important domain in which citizenship is manifested or denied, recognized or misrecognized. Recognition broadly refers to people feeling their own sense of identity is affirmed. Conversely, non-recognition can entail people feeling positioned or constrained to act in ways that compromise their self-definition (Hopkins & Blackwood 2011: 217). Centering on Muslims’ experiences in Great Britain, they analyze the hurt and shock spurred by the realization of their vulnerability to categorizations divergent from their own.

### 4.3 The meanings of citizenship: mobility, legal attachment and recognition

Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke's macro diagnoses depict national citizenship as nearly irrelevant to immigrants. Brubaker sees citizenship as symbolically important to the nation-state as a "membership organization", but neglects its material (and symbolical) salience to immigrants. Soysal heralds the end of nation-based citizenship as most of immigrants' civil and social rights are based on "personhood", not "nationhood". For Joppke, citizenship remains objectively important in a global inequality perspective, but subjectively insignificant to those who hold the status.

Micro experiences of citizenship, however, portray another picture of the salience of citizenship. Summed up, three insights can be extracted from the foregoing micro experiences of citizenship. Firstly, mobility rights are intimately tied to national citizenship in affluent, liberal democratic countries. Secondly, an unconditional right to permanent residence remains a basic feature of national citizenship, in principle guarding immigrants materially and emotionally against "liminal legality". Thirdly, legal recognition, either by granting citizenship to immigrants or allowing dual citizenship, is vital to get one's identity affirmed and for a sense of equality. Building on these perspectives, I will now briefly delineate "the meanings of citizenship" identified in the data material: *mobility, legal attachment and recognition*.

Spatial *mobility* was a central feature of Norwegian citizenship, emphasized by all informants regardless of citizenship status and country of origin. As a valuable "travel document", a Norwegian passport facilitated international travels and transnational connections. The Russian informants, while holding a "valuable" European passport already, appreciated the "mobility bonus" of Norwegian citizenship. The Afghan and Somali interviewees, on the other hand, were much more reliant on a Norwegian passport to travel at all. The denizens without Norwegian passport – a few of them also lacking passports from their country of origins – were subjected to multiple travel restrictions, leading to a sense of being "confined within" (Coutin 2010) Norway.

The unconditional *legal attachment* inhered in Norwegian citizenship was also emphasized, especially by the denizens originating from Somalia and Afghanistan. These informants had resided in Norway between 12 and 18 years, while their applications for Norwegian citizenship had been turned down one or multiple times due to insufficient identity documentation (see requirements in chapter 3.2). The lack of legal closure

engendered a “permanent liminal legality” (cf. Menjivar 2006): A profound, seemingly indefinite uncertainty about their legal status and right to stay in Norway. Another instance, however, questioned the unconditional right of permanent residence in citizenship. Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed, three naturalized citizens originating from Somalia, faced possible citizenship revocation. This, I argue, invoked an “acute liminal legality” that put their right to residence in Norway at immediate risk.

Citizenship was conceptualized as an important legal *recognition*. For the Russian informants, retention of *Russian* citizenship was important for having their “Russian identity” affirmed. For the Afghan and Somali informants, the recognition inhered in Norwegian citizenship was more important than retaining their former citizenship. Full rights were usually accompanied by sentiments of equality, while deprivation of citizenship entailed notions of “second-class membership” and alienation. Legal citizenship was, however, no guarantee for *full* inclusion and equality. Social recognition – that is recognition in the *horizontal* sphere of citizenship – also mattered. This is where between legal and social equality, legal and substantive citizenship intersected and parted ways.

In the following three chapters, I scrutinize each meaning of citizenship, while I return to the disjuncture between macro diagnoses and micro experiences in chapter 8. In chapter 9, I discuss the implications of the findings for citizenship policies.





## 5 Mobility

Spatial mobility is central in immigrants' claim to citizenship (Coutin 2010; Galvez 2013; Leitner & Erkamp 2006; Leuchter 2014; Mavroudi 2008). While immigrants' "right to stay" has been comprehensively researched by citizenship and immigration scholars, less attention has been paid to "the right to leave" (Mau 2010: 340). The aim of this chapter is to analyze the connections between citizenship status, mobility rights and transnational inequalities.

For most of the informants, Norwegian citizenship was first and foremost valued because of its promise of spatial mobility; eased international traveling. When we talked about the decision to naturalize, some of the informants tended to link the Norwegian citizenship institution, *en bloc*, to the passport as a travel document. Here are three typical responses to why a Norwegian citizenship was perceived as attractive:

I heard that if you had lived in Norway for eight years, you could apply for Norwegian citizenship. So, I applied. Otherwise I could not travel anywhere, without a passport. (Amal, Somalia)

Because I knew that I would have better opportunities to travel, it would be easier. (Azim, Afghanistan)

(...) But then I started travelling a lot and it is much easier with a Norwegian passport. Then you don't need to apply for a visa in most countries. (Natasha, Russia)

Tellingly, immigrants from all three countries valued the "mobility rights" (Mau 2010) inherent in Norwegian citizenship. However, spatial mobility is unevenly distributed good in a global scale (Shamir 2005). The *degree* to which a Norwegian passport was valued thus varied between the Russian informants on one side, and the Afghan and Somali informants on the other. This difference arguably reflected the "global mobility divide" (Mau et al. 2015) between citizens from the Global North (Russians) and the Global South (Afghans and Somalis). The major instrument for regulating international travel – and thus people's mobility – is visa policy (Mau 2010). A Norwegian passport gives its holders visa-free access to 157 countries in the world.<sup>23</sup> By comparison, you can travel visa-free to 105 countries with a Russian passport, 33 with a Somali passport and only 24 with an Afghan passport (Passport Index 2017). The Russian informants, I argue, was interested in what I call the "mobility

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<sup>23</sup> Only citizenship from Germany (159), Singapore (159) and Sweden (158) gives visa-free access to more countries than Norway (Passport Index 2017).

bonus” given by the Norwegian passport, while the Afghan and Somali informants were much more reliant on a Norwegian passport to travel at all.

## 5.1 The mobility bonus

In terms of mobility, the relative difference between a Norwegian and a Russian passport is significantly smaller than the difference between a Norwegian and a Somali or an Afghan passport. Russian citizens can travel to large parts of the world without visa restrictions. In consequence, and put bluntly: They do not have as much to gain from naturalization as Afghan and Somali immigrants. Often, the Russian interviewees conceptualized citizenship acquisition as a “mobility bonus”. Igor was one of them. He came to Norway with his wife as students in the beginning of the 1990s, and explained their reasoning behind naturalization like this:

Igor: We had not thought of [Norwegian] citizenship at all, but the police notified us that it might be good to get it. Then they wouldn't have to process us [their applications] annually or every third year or something. And we were like – yeah, yeah, it's ok for us (...) as long as we got both Norwegian and Russian [citizenship], it was perfect for our situation.

Interviewer: Ok. Besides evading residence permits – were there other reasons?

Igor: Mainly no other reasons. The only thing I can point out is the freedom to travel.

Interviewer: How so?

Igor: To the world (...) Norwegian citizenship is not so important to me, but to travel and be free, that's the important part.

Igor espoused a neutral – slightly indifferent – attitude towards the acquisition of Norwegian citizenship, which was not untypical for the Russian informants. The fact that they were relatively mobile irrespective of obtaining Norwegian citizenship, is probably *one* explanation to why they tended to display more neutral attitudes towards naturalization than the Somali and Afghan interviewees. Nevertheless, Igor valued the chance to limit the hassle of constant renewals of residence permits, and particularly the *mobility bonus* Norwegian citizenship gave him: Visa-free access to more countries in the world.

According to Igor, a precondition for him to even consider naturalization, was the fact that he was able to retain his Russian citizenship. Igor wanted to keep Russian citizenship because losing it would entail visa restrictions in a substantial amount of countries in Eastern Europe. Interestingly, Igor's Russian and Norwegian citizenship were conceptualized in the same way, namely in terms of mobility. The citizenships seemed only to matter to him as travel documents that would make the world more open to him, while he abstained from investing emotional and symbolic currency in them. On a par, Vladimir, another Russian

(denizen), displayed a purely practical outlook on citizenship, both his Russian and a prospective Norwegian citizenship. He said: “In the same way as the Russian passport [is a passport], the Norwegian passport is [only a] passport to me”. Instead of saying “citizenship”, Vladimir consistently said “passport”. The choice of words is not coincidental in this case, I argue, but reflected a wider pattern among the Russian informants of equating citizenship with the passport.

Natasha was a dual citizen like Igor. She explicitly disparaged the value of Norwegian citizenship, except for its mobility aspect:

Interviewer: When did you apply?

Natasha: I applied twice (...) In the first letter they said I needed to renounce my Russian citizenship, and I did absolutely not want to do that. So, it took some time figuring out how I could retain the Russian citizenship (...) So, then they withdrew the possibility to get Norwegian citizenship. But it was fine by me because I had a residence permit... So, it wasn't a big problem. But then I started travelling a lot and it's much easier to travel with a Norwegian passport - then you don't have to get visas in most countries. So, I thought, ok, I guess I have to apply again.

(...)

Interviewer: (...) Can you say a little bit more about why you chose to apply for Norwegian [citizenship]?

Natasha: As I said, only [because of] travelling. Nothing special. I could stay here as long as I wanted since I had a permanent residence permit. Not because I wanted to vote for Fremskrittspartiet [the Progress Party] or something like that. No. Only travelling.

When I asked if belonging in Norway had anything to do with the naturalization decision, she replied:

No. I'll never be Norwegian – Norwegian like you are Norwegian, right. I can talk Norwegian fluently, I can... Have Christmas spirit at home, follow all the Norwegian traditions, but I'll never be Norwegian in here [points at her heart]. There are a lot of things that I strongly disagree with... [With] the Norwegian political elite. How they run the country. I mean, the country [Norway] in itself is good but the relationship they have with Russia, that's very.... I don't like it, to put it mildly. So, no, not like “I'm Norwegian, look at me”, never. No.

Natasha's main rationale behind naturalization, like Igor's, was obtaining a Norwegian *passport*, not the citizenship *per se*. In cultural terms, she did feel attached to Norway. According to Natasha, celebrating Christmas and following other Norwegian traditions were natural parts of her life. However, she outright rejected that naturalization made her Norwegian “by heart” or in a *political* sense. Her sarcastic dismissal of the significance of voting in general elections indicated a “desacralized attitude”, in which legal citizenship and political loyalty are divorced (Brubaker 1992: 78). In opposition to the “Norwegian political elite” she deliberately underplayed her newly acquired Norwegian “political identity”.

Much like Leuchter's (2014) informants, Natasha seemed to see her birth citizenship (Russian) in terms of identity and belonging, while the "other citizenship" (Norwegian) was merely a *passport* – "a technical non-obliging [travel] document" (2014: 781). Perfectly aware that citizenship acquisition encompassed a wider range of rights (e.g. suffrage) and duties, Natasha consistently referred to the strict function of the passport as an instrument of bureaucratic control over movement (see Torpey 2000). If she, hypothetically, had to give up her Russian citizenship she would do that because she "loves travelling", as she enthused. In this way, the challenge posed by naturalization – in terms of conflicting political loyalties – was neutralized (cf. Leuchter 2014). Thus, the bonus mobility outweighed the potential renunciation of her Russian citizenship. However, such a hypothetical legal transformation would not override her emotional and political belonging to Russia.<sup>24</sup> Natasha went against the official view of citizenship – as a symbol of political loyalty – and reconstructed it as merely a mobility bonus.

## 5.2 Travel restrictions and immobilities

While the Russian informants already held a valuable passport, the Afghan and Somali informants did not. Fleeing from war and unstable states, some of them did not have a passport when they arrived in Norway, and a few did not even have a valid travel document. To travel at all, they simply needed a passport. For instance, Muhammed explained his decision to naturalize by emphasizing the value of holding a Norwegian vis-à-vis a Somali passport:

If I had a Somali passport here (...) I might have gone to Somalia or neighboring Kenya. It is quite limited where I can travel and where I can experience the world. With a Norwegian passport I can travel anywhere. If I apply for visa in another country, I only get it because I have a Norwegian passport (...) it is simply an asset. That's why I applied. But I did not have any papers from before, so it was a double advantage. In addition to getting a travel document, I got one that is totally up there.

Correctly assessed by Muhammed, a Norwegian passport is not only a valid travel document, but also one of great value in the world; it gives access to virtually every corner of the world, and thereby invokes an immense sense of physical freedom. Compared to having a Somali or Afghan citizenship, a Norwegian citizenship, in terms of spatial mobility, is much more valuable. A citizenship in Norway and other Western democracies is, according to Carens

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<sup>24</sup> I will elaborate on the Russian informants' views on dual citizenship in subchapter 7.1.

(1987: 252), the modern equivalent of *feudal privilege*: “an [inherited] status that greatly enhances one’s life chances” – in this case the seamless movements across international borders. Hence, naturalization does not only give rights in the country of residence, but also a greater status within the global mobility hierarchy (Mau et al. 2015: 1195).

Since all the Russian informants (except Anna) held either Russian or dual citizenship, visits to Russia were not hampered by visa requirements. For them, unrestricted travelling abroad in general – the mobility bonus – was emphasized. Meanwhile, the Afghan and Somali informants (particularly those without passports from Afghanistan or Somalia) primarily wanted to acquire a Norwegian citizenship because it would ease visits to their country of origins. Bashir came to Norway as a refugee from Somalia. He stated that he naturalized primarily because:

(...) It [Norwegian citizenship] was a travel document (...) Earlier we had something called immigrant’s passport [*utlendingspass*]. And you could not travel everywhere [you wanted]. You could only travel to a few countries. And you could not travel to our home country (...) the biggest problem is that many wished to visit family and friends in Somalia (...) but they couldn’t travel, it was out of the question.

As Bashir indicated, the denizens originating from Somalia (and Afghanistan) seemed to have very limited opportunities of travelling. Without a Somali or an Afghan passport, they were reliant on UDI to issue a Norwegian immigrant’s passport for a “single journey” to their countries of origin. But in general, the immigrant’s passport cannot be used to travel to their country of origin (as Bashir referred to). According to UDI, only “exceptional cases” are valid grounds to use an immigrant’s passport for travels to the country of origin; funerals, visits to “acute life-threateningly ill” family members or for the expressed purpose of obtaining a passport in the country of origin (UDI 2017e).<sup>25</sup> In light of these restrictions, Yusuf, a denizen originating from Somalia, considered himself lucky as UDI had granted him two single journeys to Somalia in the last few years. However, Yusuf mentioned another restriction that inhibited non-Norwegian citizens from travelling to Somalia – corrupt visa processes in certain African countries:

Yusuf: (...) it [Norwegian citizenship] means a lot to me. Because (...) if you need to travel, you have to apply for visa if you have a foreign citizenship. (...) you can’t travel if you don’t have [Norwegian] citizenship. I applied several times for a visa in Kenya and Uganda. I got rejected. And I must pay money to get a visa. If you don’t pay, you don’t get it (...)

Interviewer: So, you have to pay even though you don’t get the visa?

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<sup>25</sup> See UDI (2017e) a complete list of the requirements.

Yusuf: Yes. Even though you don't get the visa, you must pay. And if you [really] need to get a visa, you have to pay double. You got to talk to someone who's there and can... You know, in Africa there's corruption (...) But Norwegian citizenship, it means something to me because I know what you can do with a Norwegian passport. Only with that I can travel to Somalia. (...) Last time I went to Somalia, relatives of mine asked me, "Why haven't you come to Somalia? You have been gone a long time." I said, "I can't. They asked why, and I said, "I don't have Norwegian [citizenship], it's impossible to get here when you have an immigrant's visa."

Facilitating visits back to Somalia was described as a strenuous affair by Yusuf. Leaping over UDI's bureaucratic hurdles were one thing, getting a visa in Somalia was another. Obtaining a visa entailed economic costs – through formal and informal channels – but with no guarantees of getting it. With Norwegian citizenship, Yusuf would circumvent UDI's travel restrictions and corrupt visa application processes. That is, according to Yusuf, one of the reasons why acquiring Norwegian citizenship meant so much to him.

If successfully obtaining a visa, non-Norwegian citizens faced a third mobility constraint: Selective border controls in European airports. Usually, holders of EU-passports go through one gate and non-EU passport holders through another. Even though one holds a valid visa, European Schengen countries can prohibit entry to non-EU passport holders in the airport (Mau 2010: 345). Saad shared his burdensome experiences, as a non-EU citizen, of the two last international travels he took:

Saad: (...) I travelled to Kenya. When I came back I was in transit in the Netherlands because there's a border there. A big screen there and here [points]: "EU passport" and "other passports". I have to go there ["other passports"], you know. Many of them [Somali immigrants in Norway] – maybe I have been here [in Norway] longer than them – but they go to EU passport control. And that's very easy. They just put their passport like this [in the machine] and the doors open automatically. But when I get there, they close. They ask a lot of questions. Because they think that I've just been here two or three years or one year. And there's a lot of questions – "Where do you live, what's your address, what are you doing there?" But those who are here [Norwegian citizens] just show or put the passport in the machine. I travelled to England, too. I waited four weeks to get a visa, but they gave it to me (...) I sat at Heathrow for four hours. They checked me because of that passport [immigrant's visa passport]. Everyone who has Norwegian [passport], EU passport, they just go right through. But I sat there for four hours. And they took my fingerprints because they believed I was seeking asylum in England (...)

Interviewer: So, you get checked all the time?

Saad: All the time. And you can't decide when you get out. Maybe people are waiting for you. (...) The first time I travelled was in 2008. I knew no one in London. Those who waited for me for four hours – they left. Afterwards I had to ask people to borrow a phone, so I could call them... I don't travel anymore. The last time was in 2008.

Davood, a denizen originating from Afghanistan, told me about similar restrictions:

Davood: (...) If you have an Afghan passport you get problems all the time. It's a problem. One time I travelled to Athens. They checked me way too much. It took approximately an hour to check the passport, how I got there etc. It's disturbing.

Interviewer: And that would've been easier with a Norwegian passport?

Davood: Of course. Easier. When you show a Norwegian passport, they trust you're from Norway.

Saad and Davood's experiences reflect broader trends of "selective border controls", in which distinctions between "risky" and "safe" travelers are made. The "risky" traveler is often identified on the basis of citizenship. Citizens of "suspect countries" are subjected to an additional level of control (Mau 2010: 344-5; Shamir 2005). While Saad's Somali acquaintances, holding Norwegian passports, easily could pass the border control at Heathrow with a simple swipe in the machine, Saad said he was held back for four hours and subjected to heavy security and control measures (comprehensible questioning and fingerprint recording). Instead of being categorized as a "trustworthy" citizen from democratic Norway, Saad was treated with suspicion, as a potential asylum seeker from an "unstable" third-world country. The closing of the automated passport gates can thus be interpreted as a physical and symbolical reminder of Saad's lack of formal membership in Norway.

Farhad, a denizen originating from Afghanistan, described how he faced the same kind of suspicion when he travelled with his wife and daughter:

Farhad: I live with my girlfriend who is Norwegian. My daughter is Norwegian, too. I am legally an Afghan. Every time we travel together we got a problem with that (...) For example I can't travel safely with my daughter any place. In passport control they ask why a Norwegian girl is my daughter and why we are travelling together (...)

Interviewer: So, are they suspicious or skeptical, or what...?

Farhad: Yes, that skepticism is always there. For example, if I need to travel to England, I must get a visa, but my wife and daughter don't need to.

Since England is not a part of the Schengen Area, Farhad's girlfriend and daughter – as Norwegian citizens – did not have to apply for visa there. Farhad on the other hand, as a citizen of a non-Schengen country, had to apply. In these travel situations, the distinction between "trustworthy" and "suspicious" travelers were drawn *internally* in Farhad's family; freeing his wife and daughter in virtue of their Norwegian citizenship, and constraining Farhad as a citizen of a "suspect country" (Shamir 2005).

The various travel restrictions – acquiring an immigrant's passport from UDI, and navigating corrupt visa application systems and extensive border controls – immobilized the

Afghan and Somali immigrants. In fact, Saad claimed he had not travelled since his last trip to London in 2008. However, Saad's lack of Norwegian citizenship did not only immobilize him; his wife and children seemed to be affected as well. According to Saad, family vacations abroad were occasionally cancelled due to his limited travel opportunities:

I have children here, you know. When they are supposed to go on vacation during school break, I cannot travel with them, because I need a visa (...) two times they wouldn't give me a visa. And I lost the ticket[s]. And the children will not travel without me, you know, so they have to be here. When they came back to school, they [teachers, staff] asked, "How was it [the vacation]?", and they [Saad's children] said nothing – because of me. My children ask me, "Why is it like this?" and I don't know what to say to them.

Similarly, Sahra said:

(...) I have Norwegian kids – kids with Norwegian citizenship – and a husband with Norwegian citizenship. And that means that I can't travel with my kids, where they want [to go]. So, every time they ask me questions I cannot answer. "Why can't mommy come with us? Why can't we take mommy with us? What's the difference between mommy and us?". I can't find answers.

Vacations, ideally a time for relaxation, mental recharging and family time, seemed to turn into distress, self-blame and family division for Saad and Sahra. Saad's children were stuck in Norway at a time when their peer students went abroad for summer vacations. The fact that his wife and children were immobilized due to his legal status seemed to weigh heavily on his shoulders. The summer holidays were Saad's "dark days", he said. In this way, vacations reminded him of his legal inequality.

### **5.3 Citizenship and transnational inequalities**

The differential travel restrictions made up a hierarchy of mobility rights between the informants. On top of the hierarchy was the naturalized Norwegian citizens, who enjoyed virtually unrestricted mobility across the world, including Afghanistan and Somalia. Next were the Russian citizens, who could travel visa-free to most countries in the world, and most importantly their country of origin, Russia. On the bottom of the mobility rights hierarchy, were the Afghan and Somali citizens, who found their spatial freedom severely restricted by UDI, visa policies and selective border controls. Faced with this wide range of travel restrictions, they were effectively "confined within" (Coutin 2010) Norway. It seemed like they could rarely – or at all - travel to Somalia or Afghanistan. Therefore, visits to see family and friends were hard to facilitate. This statement from Sahra was one of the clearest expressions of this spatial immobility:



I left Somalia in 1997 and since I haven't been back. I haven't seen my father in almost 19 years. 19 years. And he's old, and he doesn't hear [the ring tone] when I call him (...) That's my biggest problem.

The stratification of mobility rights resulted in significant “transnational inequalities” (Mau 2010) between the informants. Ironically, the interviewees that were *least integrated* in a legal sense, lacking Norwegian citizenship, were the *most spatially grounded* in Norway. Amal made a tragicomic remark about this paradox when we talked about the immigrants in Denmark that were ineligible for Danish citizenship: “You know, when you don't have a passport, you can't go where you want. They must stay in Denmark their entire life. And that is not good. You got to have some spare time”. Similarly, Sahra explained to me what she saw as the main difference between permanent residence and citizenship: “With permanent residence permit you can live in Norway as long as you want but you cannot travel where you want. You have to live [here] forever”. Conversely, then, the interviewees that were fully integrated members of the *national* community, as Norwegian citizens, were able to maintain stronger *transnational* bonds (cf. Conway et al. 2008; Coutin 2003; Galvez 2013; Gilbertson & Singer 2003; Leitner & Ehrkamp 2006).

Anna, a naturalized citizen from Russia, summed up the relationship between national citizenship and global mobility rights concisely:

Why did I do it [naturalize]? I wanted to be a part of the world. It is easier to travel abroad. (...) I can freely get out in the world with a Norwegian passport, with a Norwegian citizenship. Then nothing is holding you back in Norway. You are a *world citizen*. (Emphasis added)

To paraphrase Arendt ([1951] 1979): to be a Norwegian citizen entails having “the right to *global* rights”. This implies two paradoxes. Firstly, a point that transnationalism scholarship noted a long time ago: Nation-states are not – if they ever were – territorial “people containers” (Hirst & Thompson 1992) anymore. People increasingly move in and out of national spaces. However, this does not impart “fluid boundaries” (Soysal 1994). The reliance on national citizenship, as the primary guarantor of spatial mobility, testifies to the continuing salience of the nation-state (system) (Peutz & de Genova 2010). As a result of “state monopolization of legitimate movement”, individual travelers are dependent on the state to give them mobility rights (Torpey 1998: 256). This was amply demonstrated by the Afghan and Somali denizens' dependence on UDI (to provide them with a travel document),

and the caprice of visa policies and selective border controls. In these instances of immobility, Torpey's assertion may be true: "people have to some extent become prisoners of their identities, which may sharply limit their opportunities to cross jurisdictional spaces" (1998: 256).

Mobility rights are highly stratified by citizenship status. A Norwegian passport is one of the most valuable travel documents in the world. Most of the informants assigned meaning to the Norwegian citizenship as a symbol of vast spatial mobility. The Russian informants already held a valuable passport, but nonetheless conceptualized Norwegian citizenship as a mobility bonus. The Afghan and Somali immigrants, coming from less affluent countries in the Global South, had very limited opportunities to travel without a Norwegian passport. Their mobility depended on a multitude of factors, such as UDI's travel restrictions, corrupt and unpredictable visa policies in their countries of origin, and selective border controls at airports. Thus, the mobility rights of Norwegian *and* Russian citizens stood in stark contrast to the spatially grounded citizens of Afghanistan and Somalia. While Norwegian and Russian citizens were able to traverse borders in a free and unrestricted manner, Afghan and Somali citizens were largely "confined within" (Coutin 2000) Norway. This form of physical confinement seemed to impede the possibility of facilitating transnational bonds to their countries of origin.

While the Somali and Afghan denizens were physically *grounded* in Norway, their legalities were *fluid*. *De jure*, non-citizens lack an unconditional *legal attachment* to Norway, rendering some of the denizens uncertain about their legal status and right to stay in Norway. This is the theme of the next chapter.

## 6 Legal Attachment and Liminal Legalities

Norwegian citizenship was not only conceptualized as a right to *leave* Norway and get around freely in the world; it was also perceived as an unconditional right to *stay* in Norway. It has been posited that the right to genuinely permanent residence is one of the few remaining privileges of formal citizenship (Anderson et al. 2011). Generally, the Afghan and Somali denizens, lacking this unconditional legal attachment, felt fundamentally uncertain about their legal status and future in Norway. I employ the term “liminal legality” (Menjívar 2006) to capture the legal instability of these informants. After struggling for many years to acquire Norwegian citizenship, they were stranded in what I call “*permanent* liminal legality”, a state characterized by enduring uncertainty and mental strain.

Moreover, I focus on a second form of legal instability, what I term “acute liminal legality”. This form of liminal legality was experienced by three naturalized citizens originating from Somalia, who faced an imminent risk of citizenship revocation. The fact that not even the legalities of naturalized citizens were completely “stable” proves a central point in this chapter: Contrary to Menjívar’s (2006) conceptualization, liminal legality is not necessarily a direct reflection of a marginal legal status. UDI’s ongoing revocations of residence permits and citizenship tended to blur legal categories, and create uncertainties in entire immigrant communities, regardless of the legal status of individual members (cf. Chacon 2015). Responding to Chacon’s (2015) theoretical call, I analyze how liminal legality is not only experienced, but also *produced*.

### 6.1 Permanent liminal legality

According to UDI, holding a permanent residence permit entails the right to “reside and work in Norway indefinitely”, while also giving an “extra protection against expulsion” (UDI 2017f). However, denizenship – or legal permanent residence (LPR) in US parlance – *can* categorically be understood as liminal, according to Chacon (2015). Denizens are neither in the legal periphery of undocumented or temporary immigrants – groups who are most likely to be deported – nor are they included under the “safe haven” of citizenship. The Afghan and Somali informants did not perceive their permanent residence permit as giving them an “indefinite” right to reside in Norway. In terms of legal attachment, none of them seemed to view denizenship as an end station in their legal integration process. Rather, they regarded it

as merely as a means to an end: A liminal phase that hopefully would lead to formal citizenship. Maryam, a naturalized citizen from Afghanistan, described feelings of being “betwixt and between” (Turner [1969] in Lambek 2008) prior to naturalization:

(...) Now that I have citizenship I know something have changed inside myself. Even though before I had it [Norwegian citizenship], I thought, “is it really going to change me?” But of course, it changes you. There are some feelings... You become proud by the fact that you are a citizen of this country (...) before it was sort of – I’m still not [a citizen] ... I am just a person who lives here. I don’t know if I am here, if I will stay or not. That is a question inside you. But now I know that I am here. And no one can – I can stand up for all my rights without thinking that I am not a part of society. I am. Even though I had permanent legal residence, it’s not the same as being a citizen (...) A strong attachment [*tilknytning*] to a country is better than being *loose*. It has something to do with feelings. (Emphasis added)

Maryam conceived herself as a “just a person who lives here” with a “loose” attachment before she obtained Norwegian citizenship. Her accounts resemble the state Coutin (2000) called “legal nonexistence”: To be physically present and socially active, but lacking legal recognition. Even though Maryam had a permanent residence permit, citizenship acquisition gave Maryam the final legal recognition that she needed: “now I know that I am here”, both physically and legally. This legal closure seemed to alleviate her of the ambiguities that characterized the former legal status she held. Paralleling Turner’s original assertion, Maryam’s liminal phase (denizenship) served as an empowering and a positive social transformation (Menjívar 2006: 1007). By receiving legal closure, she became a proud citizen that could stand up for her rights and feel a genuine attachment to Norway.

A crucial precondition for liminality – a *temporary* phase by definition – to be a positive transformation, however, is that it comes to an end (Menjívar 2006: 1007). The legalities of the Afghan and Somali denizens had yet to be given final closure. Over the years, they had been denied Norwegian citizenship one or multiple times due to insufficient identity documentation.

Saad’s multiple, failed attempts to obtain citizenship over the years seemingly left him in a *permanent liminal legality*. Fleeing from the civil war in Somalia, Saad came to Norway in 1999 to seek protection. He spent a year in an asylum reception center before he was granted temporary residence, and later permanent residence. His first application for Norwegian citizenship was filed in 2005, but, according to Saad, he received a rejection in 2006 because UDI did not accept his identity papers from Somalia. In 2014, Saad tried again. Eighteen months of waiting, however, left him disappointed, as his second application was denied on the same grounds. Saad said he had hired a lawyer to appeal his case to UDI, but

this was nonetheless a futile attempt as UDI firmly held their ground. Seemingly, Saad had spent a considerable portion of time, money and mental energy to acquire Norwegian citizenship. Because of these negative experiences, Saad expressed concerns for his legal attachment in Norway:

Saad: When you don't have citizenship, you feel worried. Maybe I'm not secure [*sikker*]. I've lived here for almost 17 years. I have family here (...) When I go to sleep, I await the police will come through the door and send me to Mogadishu.

(...)

Interviewer: So, citizenship gives you protection?

Saad: More protection.

Interviewer: That's the main reason you want to have it?

Saad: Yes. Because what I got, it's only two years, then you have to renew it (...) You don't know what will happen. But if you're a citizen you're here all the time. It is a little bit psychological. I [would] think, ah, you're good now, you can contribute.

Saad's everyday-life seemed to be shaped by a profound uncertainty about the future, as he felt situated on shaky legal grounds. Repeatedly subjected to renewals of residence permits reminded him of the – perceived or factual – *temporariness* of his legal status (cf. Menjivar 2006: 1000). Saad continuously repeated how hard it was for him to wait for a legal closure, and to be deprived of it. He described his current life situation as a mode of “indefinite imprisonment”:

I want to say that my situation must have a boundary. I think this is like *indefinite imprisonment* (...) You can't say how long it is going to be like this. Is it 20 years or 25 years? You become a senior citizen and lose many rights. And really... I am worried. When I came here I was happy. I thought, now I am safe, the place you're in now. But now, from 2005, I'm unsafe. I'm not stable (...) In Norway, there is no punishment. No punishment. If you do something wrong, you must be punished. But the punishment should have limits (...) but my punishment is for life (...) I think that I am just losing time here. 17 years without a confirmation (...) It's unfair. (emphasis added)

2005 refers to the year he applied for citizenship for the first time, and the subsequent rejection. This constituted a turning point life in Norway, according to Saad: He went from happy and safe to worried and unstable. It was not only the denials themselves that seemed to cause his sense of instability. It was the temporal uncertainty, expressed by Saad here, that stands at the center of the experience of liminal legality (Chacon 2015: 723). Ten years had gone by since he applied for citizenship the first time, and nothing had changed since then. Saad's current legality was neither entirely rejected – he was, in fact, still a permanent resident in Norway – nor was it completely confirmed as his claims for citizenship was denied. He said he would rather receive some form of concrete and finite punishment because

this would at least provide him with a time frame that would make it emotionally tangible. Saad's experience of being subjected to a diffuse and temporally boundless punishment was also shared by Yusuf, who had the same problem with identity documentation. Yusuf said: "(...) I must say that 17 years... It's not easy being in a country without getting any [real] punishment."

Failed attempts to obtain citizenship and lack of legal closure was not the only factor that seemed to influence the Afghan and Somali denizens' sense of instability. Another cause of concern for them was the ongoing revocations of various residence permits at the time. Permits were retracted from au pairs, family migrants, work migrants, visa stayers, permanent residents and citizens. In 2016, a total of 1425 permits of were revoked by UDI, compared to 917 in 2015 (Aftenposten 2017). This upscaling was an effort from UDI to dig up cases where people had used fake identities to claim Norwegian citizenship. Several of the informants originating from Afghanistan and Somalia referred to these permit withdrawals, and expressed concerns about their own security. For instance, Saad said:

Am I staying in Norway or am I going out? (...) I've lived here almost half my life, but still I'm 50-50. I don't know what will happen tomorrow. Maybe Norwegian authorities come and say, "Everyone with immigrant visa [*reisebevis*] is going back". I don't know if you heard but 1600 Somalis are being returned to Somalia (...) I don't know... Am I with them or not? Still I am *temporary*. (Emphasis added)

Yusuf and Sahra (the two other denizens from Somalia) also referred to ongoing instances of residence withdrawals from Somali immigrants without Norwegian citizenship:

Yusuf: You don't know about the future. You heard now... There are many who are sent back. You don't know what will happen.

Sahra: (...) There are many that has received [a letter] saying they must leave the country. And anytime they can send me a letter and say that I must leave the country. I know a girl from Somalia (...) She has Norwegian kids, [her] husband is Norwegian [citizen]. She came through family reunification. She has a job. She has the same problem as me, they won't give her a passport. She has a work permit. Then she received a letter saying she must leave the country.

Yusuf and Sahra were, like Saad, long-term residents in Norway (17 and 19 years, respectively). Yusuf said he had applied for Norwegian citizenship twice and Sahra three times, but nonetheless without success. The fact that Sahra's acquaintance, holding the same legal status as Sahra (permanent residence), was deported from Norway, seemed to make Sahra uncertain about how safe she herself could be. The retractions of *various* residence

permits blurred the lines between different immigration categories. Since immigrants across a multitude of legal statuses got their permits retracted, different permits were suddenly perceived to be worth just as much – or just as little. Maybe “Everyone with immigrant visa” – that is every immigrant with foreign citizenship – were to be deported, like Saad said. Possibly, that is why he termed his legal status in Norway as “temporary” and “50-50”, despite the legal fact that he was a permanent resident. Later, Saad said: “I don’t have status”. This statement may be symptomatic of the current devaluation of the permanent residence permit (denizenship). In this way, the retractions created “grey areas of incertitude” (Menjívar 2006: 1002), inhabited by Saad, Sahra and Yusuf.

The sense of *powerlessness* seemed to be one of the most significant sources of frustration for the Afghan and Somali denizens. Over the years, they themselves said they had done pretty much everything in their power to prove their identities to the authorities; travelled to Afghanistan or Somalia to get birth certificates, school certificates and other identity papers, engaged lawyers and appealed to the Immigration Appeals Board (UNE). Saad emphasized that they could *choose* to obey the law, to fulfill the requirements for permanent residence, to live in Norway for seven years and to meet all the other citizenship requirements; those were all within their scope of action. What seemed to be beyond the confines of their power was to give valid proofs of their identities. Convincing UDI to accept identity papers from a Somali (or an Afghan) state that they did not trust, as a rule, appeared to an impossible task to them. Yusuf asked rhetorically:

They [UDI] say vi must give proof [of identity]. [But] how do you prove your identity? It’s impossible in Somalia. If you [go] get papers, they say, “We don’t trust [this]”. So, what can you do?

Yusuf said he had sent letters to the Labor Party (Arbeiderpartiet), the Socialist Left Party (Sosialistisk venstreparti) and the Conservative Party (Høyre) – even the King – pleading for help with his case. The King actually wrote back, saying that he was unable to help Yusuf as only UDI or the government had the power to do something about the issue. All Yusuf could hope for was a change in the rules, but that seemed far-fetched to him at the time. It seemed like Yusuf, Sahra and Saad saw no current solution to their legal situations. Saad’s hair had turned grey, he said, because of constant worrying. He conceptualized his legal situation as an incurable disease:

If you get sick, you go to a doctor, right? And the doctor examines you. Afterwards the doctor says what you got and prescribe medicine so that you get well, right. But this thing I got... I got no doctor for the Norwegian citizenship. No one can help me. No medicine. No get-well in this situation.

In Saad's eyes, no medicine could alleviate them from their legal, mental and physical abscesses. Much like the refused asylum seekers in the UK interviewed by Griffiths (2014), Saad and the other refused citizenship applicants, seemed to live with a dual uncertainty of time; both fearing absent *and* imminent change. On the one hand, they remained stuck in a permanent liminal legality, characterized by seemingly endless waiting for legal closure and a sense of powerlessness. On the other hand, dealing with an omnipresent fear of deportation; Waiting for the police to come barging through the doors (Saad) or receiving a deportation order from UDI in the mail (Sahra). Thus, they feared both eternal stasis – never getting citizenship – *and* sudden change – deportation. For others, however, permit retraction were not just a constant fear hanging over their heads; it was an acute reality.

## 6.2 Acute liminal legality

Naturalized citizens were not exempted from UDI's permit retractions, as even Norwegian citizenships were revoked by UDI. Around the time the interviews were conducted (the fall of 2016) UDI were investigating 500 persons who they believed had been granted Norwegian citizenship on "false grounds". In these cases, UDI suspected that applicants had provided a false identity in order to get asylum. Palestinian and Somali immigrants were particularly targeted. UDI believed that quite a few applicants claiming to be refugees from Palestine and Somalia actually originated from Jordan and Djibouti, two countries deemed to be peaceful by UDI (Aftenposten 2017).

In the fall of 2016, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed were subjected to such suspicion. Muhammed came as a refugee to Norway in 1994, while Amina and Jamilah were granted residence around 2000 on the basis of family reunification. Muhammed acquired Norwegian citizenship in 2002, while Amina and Jamilah naturalized in 2008. In November 2016, they received a letter from UDI, which stated that they were looking into certain "irregularities" in their original asylum applications. Muhammed, Jamilah and Amina were therefore summoned to an interview at the local police station where they were given the opportunity to clarify the alleged irregularities. If they failed to back up their original stories in a credible way, their Norwegian citizenships would most likely be revoked. If so, the next step could be deportation. After residing in Norway for 22 and 16 years, the letter from UDI drastically



reduced their sense of security in Norway. As the following dialogue indicates, UDI's letter engendered an *acute* form of liminal legality:

Muhammed: Yes, we... Now we don't know, we're uncertain. We don't know that they [UDI] got [on us], we don't know who has said what to whom. And we're just standing there in some kind of *no man's land*. We don't know what will happen after the interview. We have seen many Somalis now, on television, in the newspapers – everywhere – that are being stripped of citizenship, even though they have proved that they are from there [Somalia]. Without evidence, they have been deprived [of citizenship] because of a [political] directive... "They are going to lose it", "If they don't say this and that, they are going to lose it", right. It is just a directive that has been given. So, it's a political game, maybe to win the election next year. I don't know. We feel they are playing with human destinies. And that's why we're uncertain. What's going on? Even if nothing happens now, we go there and they say, "No, it's just a misunderstanding, sorry". What do we know in ten years? We can get another letter because a new game is set in motion. We are *shuttlecocks* [*kasteballer*] *without belonging*. We no longer feel that we're... Tomorrow they can delete our identity numbers [*personnummere*] and then *we're no longer here*.

Amina: *We don't exist*.

Muhammed: It's up to us. The burden is on us... "Tell me where you're from" – "Yes, but I told you I'm from there!" But they don't believe you. And then you're just *there* [original emphasis] ... We have jobs, all of us, we have children, we went to school [here]... But everyone is losing their places at school [*skoleplasser*], we're losing our jobs. Everything we own, all our estates, right. And we're just *there* [original emphasis] ... And that is frightening and we cannot sleep. It's terrible. After so many years as a citizen, I feel like I'm on really thin ice. *I no longer know where I belong*. It's sad. But that's the way it is, that's how we feel. Until now we have been happy. (Emphasis added)

Unlike the "permanently liminal" Afghan and Somali denizens, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed claimed to have received no signs of legal ambiguity until now. None of them had experienced first-hand to get their citizenship applications questioned or rejected. Quite the contrary, their legal integration processes – from asylum seeker and family migrants to naturalized citizens – had gone bureaucratically smooth, according to themselves. Therefore, the letter suddenly turned Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed's lives upside-down. Abruptly, they realized that the lives they had made for themselves and their children in Norway hinged on a piece of paper. They risked losing their jobs, their places at school and their real estate. On a more fundamental level, the letter seemed to make them question their entire existence. "We're in no man's", "we are shuttlecocks without belonging" and "we're no longer here" are vehement expressions of this legal and existential liminality. Seemingly, they did not know where they belonged anymore. The prospective of revocation and statelessness (as they had renounced their Somali citizenships when they naturalized) was as though their place in the world became ambiguous, or even negated (cf. Belton 2015: 917); it was like they did not "exist" anymore, as Amina put it.

Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed's trust in the Norwegian authorities seemed to decrease after receiving the letter from UDI (an aspect of the *vertical* dimension of citizenship). But it also seemed like their sense of belonging and identification with Norway and other Norwegians deteriorated as well (aspects of *horizontal* citizenship). Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed conceptualized themselves as full members of the Norwegian society prior to the revocation entanglement. According to themselves, they felt a strong sense of belonging and identification as Norwegians; they were citizens in a *thick* sense (Brochmann 2002). For instance, Jamilah said that she used to defend Norway every time one of her Somali friends would criticize the country, and highlight all the goods provided by the Norwegian welfare system. She said: "All my friends know how proud I was to be in Norway. I was so proud and happy to be in Norway that you have no idea!" But this had changed after receiving the notice from UDI, according to Jamilah:

Jamilah: It [UDI's notice] has changed me, I think. After I got the letter I see my colleagues in a different light.

Muhammed: Yes. Everything looks different.

Jamilah: Seriously, before I was one of them. We went out together, we were together, we sat next to each other, I visited them... But now... When I'm at work, if a person talks to me, that I used to be very fond of, I think, oh my god, she's the same.

Amina: You're on the outside.

Jamilah: Yes, I feel... That I don't need it [the social interaction] anymore.

Muhammed: Alien [*fremmed*], you're alien to her.

Jamilah: And that's not good. Then I come home to my husband [Muhammed] and say, "Oh my god, I think she is like that", and then he says to me, "No, this is politics, those are your colleagues! They're not the same people don't think like that". But I can't (...) I see them just like the woman who sent me that letter. I think that they [colleagues] see me as an alien [*utlending*]. But I have never thought of it like this before. But now I do. I don't want to sit with them anymore in the lunch breaks (...) I don't want them... Don't want to have anything to do with Norwegians anymore. But they are not the problem. They are not the ones who sent me the letter. (...)

Interviewer: So, you feel it's a bigger distance between you and "ethnic Norwegians" now – more than before?

Jamilah: Mm, mm. You feel that they don't want you. They're just faking, they don't have a choice since I'm their colleague.

Jamilah construed a "before-and-after" narrative of the revocation letter. *Before* she used to be fond of her colleagues and spent time with them in nearly every lunch break. But *after* receiving the letter she viewed her colleagues in a different light, considering them to be the "same woman who sent [her] the letter". Jamilah thus conflated the vertical (legal) and horizontal (social) dimensions of citizenship: As an alien to the state, she became an alien to her colleagues as well.

Muhammed separated the two dimensions (vertical and horizontal citizenship), reminding Jamilah that UDI and her colleagues were “not the same people”. The revocation was purely “politics”, according to Muhammed. However, Muhammed also underlined how UDI’s notice altered his feelings of belonging to Norway. He told me that he used to watch the Norwegian national football and handball teams play, and even spent weekends cheering for Norwegian cross-country skiers – arguably one of the most stereotypical expression of “Norwegianness”:

Muhammed: That’s more Norwegian than you could ever be, right. We sat there cheering for Johaug and Marit Bjørgen [Norwegian cross-country skiers]. Now you watch it and suddenly you think, ok, maybe it was just an illusion. It just... Didn’t happen. All that time didn’t happen. It’s painful.

(...)

Amina: It’s unfair. (...)

Interviewer: Yes, because you are, in fact, Norwegians “on paper” [making air quotes] – I mean Norwegian citizens.

Muhammed: Yeah, *on paper* [ironically]...

Interviewer: But not for real?

Muhammed: No, now it doesn’t feel real. It was just a temporary thing. I have lived here more than half of my life, right... There is no other country, not even Somalia, that I that I belong to in the same way as in Norway. Everything is here.

Like the stateless interviewees in Belton’s (2015) study, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed were emotionally stripped of what they themselves regarded as their “national homes”. In some ways, this reminded them of the outbreak of the civil war in Somalia, when they were forced to flee:

Muhammed: Now you see how much Norwegian citizenship means.

Amina: Yes, how much it means.

Jamilah: Right.

Muhammed: How much it protects us. How much is at stake. How much it means in terms of life frames [rammer], safe frames to live in. The lack of that... It is rootlessness. It’s just like what happened in Somalia. The war happened, everything just disappeared. There was nothing. People didn’t know where they were going. People had a lot, suddenly you have nothing (...)

Once again Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed were possibly detached from their national home and stripped of their belongings. But like Muhammed said, they had grown much more attached to Norway than they were to Somalia, because they had lived most of their grown lives Norway. Therefore, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed seemed to have more to lose this time, making the detachment from Norway in this way worse than the time they were forced to leave Somalia. Unlike the time they fled to Norway, they had no obvious place to go now.

According to Muhammed, they felt no similar connection to Somalia or any other place in the world, both legally (as they were no longer Somali citizens) and emotionally.

UDI's letter made Muhammed see the past in Norway in a new light. Now Muhammed conceptualized their time of residence in Norway as an "illusion" and "a temporary thing", not unlike the way Saad perceived his legal status in Norway (see quote on page 60). It was like the time in Norway suddenly didn't count for anything in Muhammed's eyes. With a stroke of the pen, they seemed to go from citizens in a thick sense – expressing sentiments of identity, loyalty and belonging to Norway (Brochmann 2007) – to liminal subjects, stripped of legal and social belonging. Displaced in this liminality, they lacked a "secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of [their position] in the order of things" (Relph [1976: 38] quoted in Belton 2014: 917). In short, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed's lives seemed rootless.

To them, UDI's letter had left them in a legal limbo that they did not know the outcome of. Even if the investigation would not materialize into actual revocation, the letter profoundly impacted their sense of future security in Norway. Like Muhammed said above: "what do we know in ten years?". Jamilah and Amina elaborated later in the interview:

Jamilah: (...) Even if I got to the interview next week and the police says, "it was a mistake, sorry", I don't know if I will [be allowed to] stay here much longer.

Amina: (...) Can't trust them [UDI]. And they can come back with the same letter in five years.

If the case hit a bureaucratic "dead end", and they could retain their Norwegian citizenships after all, it was, according to Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed, unlikely that they would ever feel safe in the same way again. Due to the lack of "statute of limitations" concerning citizenship revocation, their case could be re-opened anytime. The letter could come back, in five or ten years, making them pawns in a new "political game", as Muhammed put it. Thus, even though they were able to keep their Norwegian citizenships, they were cast into the same permanent liminal legality that shaped the lives of the Afghan and Somali denizens. Now that the Norwegian citizenship – perhaps something they had taken for granted before – was *at risk*, Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed realized the full scale of what democratic citizenship *can* mean, in terms of protection, legal attachment and belonging. At the same time, they were reminded how precarious their legalities were in the current immigration policy climate. From now on, they appeared to be living on the administrative grace of UDI.

### 6.3 The proliferation of liminal legalities

The residence permit withdrawals blurred the lines between different legal categories, including the line between permanent residence and more temporary statuses. Arguably, this created a stronger incentive to naturalize, since citizenship was conceptualized as an unconditional legal attachment in Norway. This dynamic resembles what Gilbertson and Singer (2003: 26) termed “defensive naturalization”: When immigrants naturalize in direct response to the state scaling back rights of “partial membership”. In this sense, the value of Norwegian citizenship increased.

The practice of citizenship revocation can be seen as an attempt to make citizenship more exclusive and valuable (Jensen, Fernandez & Brochmann 2017). It is meant to sanction “bogus” asylum seekers and to stipulate that “cheating” one’s way to Norwegian citizenship is not going to be rewarded (Nettavisen 2017). However, the effects of the revocations were not confined to the individuals subjected to the practice. The ongoing permit retractions seemed to create uncertainty among several of the informants, despite that they were not personally affected by the retractions. Selina, a Russian citizen, had applied once for Norwegian citizenship but the application was denied since she had not released herself from her Russian citizenship. She said she was considering applying again, but hesitated because she was anxious about renouncing her Russian citizenship. In Selina’s point of view, Norwegian citizenship did not offer the unconditional legal attachment that it was supposed to give:

Selina: (...) when it comes to those who get Norwegian citizenship – if you do anything wrong, if something happens, then they lose their Norwegian citizenship. So, then I [would] lose my Norwegian citizenship and I [would] not have the Russian citizenship. I don’t usually do any bad things [laughs]... But I don’t like that situation.

Interviewer: I see.

Selina: Then I lose everything. Despite that I don’t plan to do anything wrong, to break the laws. But still, you can lose it [Norwegian citizenship] if something happens.

Interviewer: So, is there some kind of unsafety about that [naturalization]?

Selina: I don’t know. I’m one of those who think a lot. I have humanitarian background, it’s like... (...) It’s like that, if they [UDI] say that, “if we [UDI] find out certain things, then you lose your claim to Norwegian citizenship”.

The revocation cases indicated, in Selina’s perspective, that the threshold for losing a Norwegian citizenship was being lowered. She assured me that she was not going to do anything illegal, but still “something could happen” or UDI could find out “certain things” that would make her vulnerable to revocation. If she renounced Russian citizenship, and lost the Norwegian citizenship, she risked “losing everything”, Selina said, and end up in the

situation Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed were in. Therefore, if dual citizenship was not an option, keeping the Russian citizenship was the safest thing to do. Selina's reasoning, implicitly *disparaging* Norwegian citizenship, is therefore a paradoxical outcome of the attempt to *bolster* the value of Norwegian citizenship. Rather than "defensive naturalization" (Gilbertson & Singer 2003; Aptekar 2016), "defensive retention" was the preferable strategy for Selina in the current immigration policy climate in Norway.

Selina's account indicates that the revocation cases were capable of producing uncertainty among the immigrants interviewed. However, not all immigrant groups were affected in the same way or to the same degree. Selina was an anomaly in the Russian group, as the other Russian informants did not seem uncertain about their legal status in Norway, regardless of whether they were Russian, Norwegian or dual citizens. Natasha's earlier statement (page 49) epitomized the sense of security among the Russian informants, and their comparably privileged legal standing: "I could stay here as long as I wanted since I had a permanent residence permit". Maybe Selina stood out because, unlike the other Russian informants and similar to the Afghan and Somali immigrants, she came to Norway on humanitarian grounds.

The Somali interviewees, on the other hand, seemed to be significantly more uncertain and anxious over the ongoing citizenship revocations (plausibly because UDI explicitly targeted them as "bogus claimants"). Citizenship revocation obviously had a detrimental effect on the sense of legal attachment of those subjected to it (Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed), but it also seemed to produce uncertainties in the entire Somali immigrant community, regardless of citizenship status (cf. Chacon 2015). Muhammed interpreted the revocation practice as a "witch-hunt" against Somali immigrants. Amal was worried that she was being monitored by UDI, and therefore said she limited her use of social media:

You can't do anything now. You think about what you do [constantly], Facebook, Instagram, all social media. You can't use them. Because if you say you're from Southern Somalia and have contact with [people in] in Northern Somalia, they [UDI] are going to say, "No you're not from the south, you're from the north because you have contact with people who lives in the north". I may very well be in touch with people from (...) the north, but it does not mean that I'm from the north. But they [UDI] believe so. (...) So, it's a little like prison now. You cannot do anything, you don't have freedom.

Saad seemed to be afraid to say something that would jeopardize his wife and children's citizenships. Like Amal, Saad argued that the widespread legal uncertainty in the Somali community affected their sense of freedom:

You become a Norwegian citizen and you're *not formal yet*. You're afraid that it will be revoked. And they say you've given wrong information back in time... Many think about this situation now. Before you thought you were free, you're Norwegian [norsk], you're Norwegian [nordmann], you can do anything (...) but many are afraid now. (emphasis added)

Nominally they were free, but felt subject to high levels of state monitoring and control, another feature of liminal legality (Chacon 2015). In fear of getting their permits revoked – whether it was permanent residence or citizenship – their practical and emotional sense of freedom seemed to be constricted. After being a Norwegian citizen for more than one and a half decade, Amal perceived herself to be legally liminal. She was not “formal yet”, as Saad expressed it. What Aas (2013: 247) writes about aliens in Norway may be increasingly true for (some) naturalized citizens as well: “They are (partial) citizens on trial, and their membership can be annulled or suspended” (author’s translation).

What this chapter has demonstrated is a simple, but important theoretical point: That more “privileged” immigration categories, such as legal permanent residency, and even full-fledged citizenship have increasingly become infused with liminal legality. Thus, the “grey areas of incertitude” are inhabited not only by marginal noncitizens, who moved in and out of temporary protections over time (cf. Menjivar 2006). The denizens interviewed in this study did not move back and forth between different immigrant categories, but were permanently stranded in *one*: legal permanent residency. Instead of being “citizens-in-the-waiting”, the application denials highlighted their continuous legal and emotional instability. Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed, on the other hand, experienced an acute form of liminal legality to which change was much more imminent. The liminal legalities analyzed in this chapter seemed thus to be produced through personal experiences (like application denials and citizenship revocation) and via “spillover effects” (Chacon 2015) of permit retractions, citizenship revocations and deportations. Such experiences appeared to have some negative effects on broader forms of citizenship and belonging. In the next chapter, I examine the relationships between citizenship legislation, belonging and recognition further.





# 7 Recognition: Vertical and Horizontal Spheres of Citizenship

The Norwegian citizenship legislation seemed to affect the interviewees' sense of identity and equality. I argue that it affected them in two ways. Firstly, the ban on dual citizenship was conceptualized as a legal *non-recognition* that constricted the Russian informants from fostering dual identities. Secondly, the denial of Norwegian citizenship to the Afghan and Somali denizens generated sentiments of second-class membership and alienation. Seemingly, there was a disjuncture between their physical presence, social participation and feelings of belonging to Norway on one side, and the lack of legal recognition on the other (cf. Coutin 2000).

While legal recognition seemed necessary for sentiments of equality and belonging, it was insufficient when *social recognition* was lacking. In everyday social life – the horizontal sphere of citizenship – formal status could be irrelevant in negotiations over national membership. These social encounters, I argue, led to a decoupling of legal and substantive citizenship

## 7.1 Single citizenship, dual identities

Although most Somali and Afghan interviewees wanted to retain their original citizenship, the ban on dual citizenship was not something that inhibited them from naturalizing. Plausibly, mobility rights and legal attachment outweighed the loss of their former citizenship. Like Bashir said: “The advantages [of naturalizing] were much greater than the thought of not being a Somali citizen anymore.”

Thus, the ban primarily affected the Russian interviewees. They claimed it was problematic for them for several reasons. Practically and financially, renouncing their birth citizenship entailed visa restrictions on visits to Russia, and losing inheritance rights and properties on Russian soil. To keep their Russian citizenship, the informants either found a way to retain it (Igor and Natasha), were currently trying to find a loophole (Selina and Vladimir), or refrained from naturalizing (Tatiana). Anna was therefore the only interviewee from Russia who had renounced her former citizenship. Unlike the other Russian informants, Anna experienced the ban not only in theory but also in practice. The decision to naturalize and give up her Russian citizenship was not taken lightly by Anna:

The process took a very long time (...) It took close to two years, the whole process. I applied two, three years ago. I got Norwegian citizenship. Actually, I kept away from it [a long time] – should I apply, should I not? What should I do? But I decided to do it. I had to travel several times to my home country to get the papers straight (...) To ask for another citizenship and renounce my own, it was... Degrading... Or that's not the right word. But it was sort of like giving up a part of your identity. And I dreaded that part all the way. I think it's unfair that I was involuntarily stripped away from a part of me that is Russian. That I wasn't allowed to keep my own little identity... I don't feel a hundred percent Norwegian anyway and I never will either. So that put the brakes on the process all the way. (...) Last time I went to the Russian embassy, I got the papers that stated that I no longer had Russian citizenship. I got a note from the embassy [saying] "You're not a Russian anymore. Congratulations!". That was a shock. Suddenly you were not a part of the society that you had known for such a long time.

The whole process was rife with both bureaucratic and emotional difficulties. Like Yanasmayan's (2015) Turkish informants in the Netherlands, the decision to naturalize was wrought with inner negotiations. Anna debated back and forth for almost seven years – *after* she was eligible to naturalize – if she should apply or refrain. The naturalization dilemma stirred up deep questions about Anna's identity and future belonging; who and what she was – Russian or Norwegian – and whether to stay in Norway or possibly move back to Russia. The ban on dual citizenship can – and was by Anna – be conceived as an intentional act of non-recognition of undesired emotions, namely multiple national identifications (Yanasmayan 2015: 789). Anna seemed to experience the renunciation requirement as a constriction of her Russian identity, feeling forced to *choose* between being Norwegian or Russian, legally *and* more substantively. Travels to Russia would confront Anna with her "choice" of becoming Norwegian, as she had to apply for a visa as a foreign citizen in her "own country":

I think it's ridiculous to apply for a visa in my own country, the country where I come from. To apply for visa and be *allowed* to go there. I think that's quite weird. Because you don't feel Russian anymore, right. I'm not... How do you say it? I'm an immigrant in my own country. (original emphasis)

Later, she said she was deprived of "being a Russian in Russia". At the same time, she did not see herself as a hundred percent Norwegian either:

I don't feel [completely] Norwegian anyway. I'm Norwegian on paper, like you say, right. [But] I am very much Norwegian, 75 percent, 70 percent, since I have lived here for so long. I am used to the norms, the culture, I try to adapt, right. But still there's approximately 20 percent left, those are the 25 [first] years of my life. There is something different, I got it in me. I got it in my blood. That's just the way it is. I can never give that away, no matter what. But that's my choice. Some say, "Now I am not Russian anymore, I am Norwegian". I feel

that they're not... Honest with themselves. On that note, I am honest with myself. I say, "I have Norwegian citizenship but my nationality is Russian". That is something Norway [the state] should think about. I still have problems with that. When I fill out forms, they ask me about citizenship and they ask me about nationality. Then I never get it right. I always ask myself – am I Russian or am I Norwegian? [laughs]

To Anna, the ban on dual citizenship formally denied her the opportunity to foster dual identities. To cope with this formal non-recognition, she made a distinction between "citizenship" and "nationality". Anna's membership in Norway was, however, not just rooted in citizenship, but contained at least two more layers: her substantive actions – residing, working and adhering to the cultural norms in Norway – made her "very much Norwegian"; and her substantive "feeling" of belonging to Norway (cf. Coutin 2000). Anna's Russian "nationality", on the other hand, was rooted in an immutable, biological fact; something "in her blood" – and thus not something she could or *would* give away. So, even though her identity was formally constrained by renouncing her Russian citizenship, naturalization was not completely "identity-changing" (cf. Aptekar 2016). She could never be a hundred percent Norwegian because she was born and raised in Russia, had Russian family and felt she had Russian blood running through her veins. Naturalization, in terms of identity, did not add anything, it only took away.

Around 2006, when the single citizenship regime was reinforced (Brochmann 2013), Anna considered refraining from naturalizing in opposition to the restrictions on dual citizenship. She said: "If that's the way it's going to be, I don't want it. If I can't get dual [citizenship] I don't want the Norwegian [citizenship] either!". As Coutin (2000: 152) remarks, feelings as a base of belonging can change. Suggested by Anna's comment here, a strict enforcement of the ban may lead to a decoupling of "legal" and "emotional selves" (cf. Yanasmayan 2015). The ordeal of renouncing a legal status that one is sentimentally attached to fosters a thin understanding of citizenship, in which emotional and legal bonds are separated. Anna's separation between (Norwegian) "citizenship" and (Russian) "nationality" may very well be an expression of such a decoupling.

## **7.2 De jure and de facto belonging**

While retaining the Russian citizenship was an important legal recognition of Anna's "Russianness", gaining Norwegian citizenship was imperative for the Afghan and Somali non-citizens to feel like equal members of society. Claiming full rights seemed to be a precondition to rank themselves as equal with others in society (cf. Honneth 2005). Farhad's

claim for Norwegian citizenship had been denied twice due to “invalid” identity documentation. In the following, he described how this legal non-recognition affected his everyday-life and mentality:

It [citizenship] gives me possibilities that get me closer to equality [*likeverdighet*] with all the others in society. Now I’m sort of a secondary citizen [*samfunnsborger*]. If I for example apply for a job, they always require that I enclose my work permit. Of course, they won’t do that with you or other citizens. If I contact a public institution, such as NAV [the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration] or another place, they always say, “You have to show that you have a permit”. When I get – if I get citizenship – I avoid all those things. [Now] I have to collect documents all the time, show up again and again because I am treated different than others. In addition, I have to renew my permit card all the time. And when it comes to rights... Now I have lived here since 2003. I should have a citizen right to have a say, to participate in politics.

Interviewer: So, applying for jobs, having contact with administrative bodies, voting and equal rights. Those three things are...

Farhad: Yes, those things. Anyway... I live in Norway, so it would be very nice if I felt equal [*likeverdig*] with the others. When you feel secondary, it affects you mentally and in everyday-life.

Interviewer: How is that?

Farhad: It’s like you don’t feel that you’re a part of society. Even if you want to contribute, you think – no, you’re Afghan. And those things... They make a difference.

Farhad’s lack of formal citizenship entailed material constraints, such as renewing his residence permit every second year and having to disclose his work permits to the Norwegian Labor and Welfare Administration and prospective employers. The fundamental problem, however, seemed not to be the material constraints *per se*. The material constraints bothered him because they reminded him of his legal *inequality*. Being treated differently than others in these situations made him conceive of himself as a secondary “samfunnsborger”.<sup>26</sup> In Norwegian terminology, he was a “medborger”, but not a “statsborger”. Farhad’s experiences illustrate the duality of legal constraints; they are both objective and subjective, ascribed and felt (Sayad 2004: 253).

Furthermore, Farhad elaborated on how the citizenship deprivation affected his sense of being Norwegian:

Interviewer: The fact that you’re legally Afghan, does that affect... The feeling of being Norwegian? Do you feel Norwegian, even though you’re not Norwegian “on paper” [making air quotes]?

Farhad: In cultural terms, I can think that I am Norwegian. Because large parts of my socialization were here in Norway. But otherwise I feel like an Afghan. What the law says affects me very much mentally. That’s all I think – no, I’m Afghan. Even though I feel culturally more Norwegian. (...) Every time someone asks me where I am from, naturally, I

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<sup>26</sup> The Norwegian equivalent of the English “citizen” (Brochmann 2007)

say I'm from Afghanistan. If I travel to another country I can't say I'm from Norway. Because legally, that is correct. That's why I feel Afghan. (...) but of course, if I get Norwegian citizenship I will feel like a Norwegian. The [emotional] attachment will get stronger. But today, this is not the case. Even if I try. But that's what the papers say. (...) I think it's differential treatment, or a kind of soft discrimination. It's only because I'm born in Afghanistan that it's like this, that I'm not a [Norwegian] citizen. If I had been born in a place with a government, which had bureaucracy with documents and all those things, then maybe I would've been a [Norwegian] citizen a long time ago.

“In cultural terms”, Farhad identified himself as a Norwegian. In addition to claiming legal citizenship on the basis of feelings of belonging and cultural attachment, he also claimed it by substantive actions: he followed the Norwegian laws, worked and contributed in society, Farhad said later on. However, there was a disjuncture between these bases of belonging and the letter of the law, which stated that he was an Afghan citizen. In the end, his *de jure* “Afghanness” seemed to matter the most to his sense of self. He explained this identity constraint succinctly: “If you don't have the right to be [Norwegian], you don't feel Norwegian”. So, according to Farhad, obtaining Norwegian citizenship would not only rid him of material constraints, it would also make the emotional attachment to Norway grow stronger.

Sahra, like Farhad, also faced everyday-constraints that reminded her of her legal inequality. According to Sahra, she was unable to open an account in the bank she wanted and faced restrictions in certain online shops where Norwegian citizenship was required. The most problematic constraint, however, were the mobility restrictions, preventing her from visiting her father in Somalia and travelling with her family (see chapter 5.3). These constraints, perhaps “deleterious” by themselves, *conjointly* seemed to generate sentiments of inequality. Sahra stressed more than once throughout the interview that she “felt different” from others:

I feel different, like I am not with the others. Someplace else. A little different. Although I have lived more than half my life in Norway, I feel like an alien [*fremmed*] here, because I don't have the same rights as the others. And when I travel, I long after Norway. So, I feel I belong there [in Norway], but at the same time, when I get back, I feel like an alien here [in Norway].

This sense of alienation seemed to be legal by nature, not so much social. Sahra conceptualized herself as an active member of the local community, by cultivating her relationships with her “ethnic Norwegian” neighbors. They celebrated both the Muslim festival Eid-al-Fitr and the Norwegian Constitution Day together, according to Sahra. But

akin to Farhad's situation, there was a clear disjuncture between her physical presence (19 years of residence), sentiments of belonging, social participation, and the lack of legal recognition. Even though Sahra was not "legally *absent*" (Coutin 2000) – having considerably more rights than undocumented immigrants – she nonetheless conceived herself as an "alien" in Norway. She was "someplace else", as she put it. Arguably, this was an expression of the legal inequality Sahra experienced.

Saad also seemed to have a nebulous feeling of being "different" from citizens in Norway. Sometimes this vague feeling would come to the surface, as he pointed out here:

Interviewer: What does that [denial of legal citizenship] do to your feeling of inclusion in society? Do you feel less accepted or equal to other Norwegians in any way?

Saad: I think it's differential treatment. I'm integrated a hundred percent. I have a lot of buddies. We eat together, we're happy together. But when it comes to some things, I'm not *with them*. When it comes to travelling, when it comes to applying for jobs that I can like. Because the job I have now is quite tiresome. I need a flexible job. But I think – *you're not with them*.

Interviewer: So, you don't feel equal to other Norwegians?

Saad: No, no, no... (emphasis added)

In most everyday-life situations, Saad did not consider himself to be any different from his friends. But like Farhad's accounts, there were certain contexts wherein legal reality was superimposed on Saad's life, such as travelling and applying for jobs where citizenship was required. In everyday interaction, legal citizenship is not a visible trait, like skin color, ethnicity or religion (e.g. expressed by religious symbols). However, Yusuf and Saad highlighted interactions where legal inequality appeared to turn into social inequality:

Yusuf: If you go to public services and they ask you, "Are you a Norwegian citizen?" and you say no, and they know you have been here for more than 17 years, they immediately think you're criminal or a bad person.

Saad: When we [Saad and his colleagues] talk, they ask, "What have you done?", "No, no, I haven't done anything". But in my heart, I feel discomfort. I can't say to people that I don't have a passport. Really [it's] bullying... I think like that.

Interviewer: Why do you feel like that?

Saad: Because the Norwegian rule is that you can apply for Norwegian citizenship after seven years. But when people ask me, and they know I have lived here for 17 years, they think I've done a lot of strange things, maybe crime and such things. But I can't say what's in my heart. (...) I say, "Yes, yes, I'm a Norwegian citizen". That's only baloney. [But I say it] because I want to be happy, to defend myself from bullying [*mobbing*]. (...) Occasionally, we fill out forms at work. And I write Somali. [Colleagues say] "Oh, really, you? Still? What's up?" They talk a lot and ask you. It's ok to ask me, but other people do not ask me. Maybe they don't want to see me again, because they think I'm a criminal. That I have a knife and... Many Somalis have knives, you know. They think stuff like that.

Yusuf and Saad said they felt subjected to suspicion and stigma in encounters with public services, such as NAV and at work. Remarkably, Saad said he lied to some of his co-workers to avoid uncomfortable questions, judgment and prejudice. The fact that they had been residents in Norway for 17 years without naturalizing – when the minimum requirement is 7 years of residence – seemingly subjected them to allegations of criminal behavior (which disqualifies one from acquiring citizenship). In these situations, the disjuncture between prolonged physical presence and the absence of (full) legal presence amounted to these “cognitive biases”: Non-citizenship was associated with criminality and “bad actions”. Perhaps Somalis are especially vulnerable to such cognitive biases since they are frequently depicted as “criminals” in the media (see Fangen 2008). And perhaps tellingly, none of the Afghan and Russian non-citizens mentioned such prejudices based on their legal status.

Saad’s lack of legal recognition seemed to be a problem to him objectively (restricted freedom to travel and fewer job opportunities), subjectively (sentiments of legal inequality) and intersubjectively (social stigma). When asked what “Norwegianness” meant to him, he elaborated on the subjective side of the legal non-recognition:

Interviewer: What does it mean to be Norwegian?

Saad: You must have citizenship [*nasjonalitet*]. You have to be Norwegian [*nordmann*], Norwegian [*norsk*].<sup>27</sup> When I fill out forms, I write my [legal] nationality. Then I think about how long I have been here in Norway. 17 years. When I fill it out, I don’t agree that I am from there [Somalia].

Interviewer: Because then you write Somali?

Saad: Yes.

Interviewer: But you don’t agree with that?

Saad: No. But really, I have to write it.

Interviewer: Do you feel more Norwegian than Somali?

Saad: I feel Norwegian, but still I am not a citizen. But the food [I eat] and my kids, the clothes, the cafés and restaurants... I live in Oslo. I use Kroner. I have a MasterCard, bank card. I go to Oslo City [a shopping mall]. I feel Norwegian.

According to Saad, most aspects of his life were grounded in Norwegian society. He underlined multiple times that he had worked ever since he came to Norway (except for the first year in the asylum reception center), that he paid a substantial amount of taxes every year, and relatedly, he asserted his economic independence and lack of reliance on welfare services. His bases of belonging thus inhered in both feelings and substantive actions. He fundamentally disagreed with his *de jure* Somali identity. In other words, he saw himself as

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<sup>27</sup> “Norwegian” has two separate meanings: “norsk”, as an adjective describing someone or something, and “nordmann” as a noun denoting a Norwegian man or woman.

emotionally and *de facto* Norwegian. Similarly, Davood stressed the such a *de facto* belonging to Norway:

(...) So, we must be [accepted to be] from Norway because we live here, we work here, pay our taxes here, buy apartments here, maybe we die here. We are now from Norway. Norway has accepted us, but it's bad that they accept us and then punishes us.

When I asked him if he felt Norwegian, he replied:

“No (...) I can never be Norwegian because if I become Norwegian, then the authorities won't accept me as a Norwegian man. So, it's hard.

Presumably, what Davood meant was that it was impossible for him to feel Norwegian since the Norwegian authorities did not accept him as a “Norwegian man”. Claiming a “Norwegian identity”, then, seemed very much contingent on the letter of the law in these cases. The denizens could *feel* like Norwegians and be *de facto* Norwegians, but *de jure* they were aliens. And in the end, that legal non-recognition seemed to matter the most for their sense of equality. As Saad said, Norwegian citizenship is “the stamp, the confirmation of being Norwegian”. For the Afghan and Somali denizens, the symbolical aspect of naturalization seemed to be vital for their sense of equality. However, this need for *symbolic* recognition is unintelligible without considering their lack of rights, such as mobility and safe residence. Rights and recognition are treated as two distinct levels analytically, but in reality they were very much intertwined. It was the lack of rights, and the everyday constraints accompanied by this lack, that highlighted the gap between their *de facto* sense of belonging and the *de jure* non-belonging.

### **7.3 Everyday citizenship**

The notion that legal recognition – either by granting citizenship or formally recognizing dual identities – leads to full equality between immigrants and the majority population is not entirely accurate. Recognition (and non-recognition) in the horizontal sphere – the domain of citizen-to-citizen relations (citizen in a non-judicial meaning) – also played a vital role in shaping immigrants' sense of equality or inequality. In daily life situations, national membership is governed by ordinary people, employing tacit understandings of belonging and non-belonging (Brubaker 2010: 65). In the domains of “everyday citizenship” (Hopkins & Blackwood 2011), membership seemed to be contested not on the basis of legal status, but ethnicity, religion, skin color and foreign accents. This subchapter illuminates some instances



of social non-recognition that arguably led to a decoupling of legal and substantive citizenship.

The informants seemed to experience various degrees of inclusion and exclusion, membership and non-membership, in everyday life. Usually, the national membership of the Afghan, Russian and Somali interviewees was contested on different grounds. The Russians, despite of “whiteness” and “cultural proximity” to Norwegians (as Natasha pointed out), were not exempted from getting their Norwegian membership questioned from time to time. For instance, Anna and Vladimir said that it was quite common among Russian immigrants to change their last name to a Norwegian-sounding one in order to blend in more smoothly with the majority population. Moreover, Anna believed that her Russian accent sometimes made “ethnic Norwegians” dispute her Norwegian membership. This was also a part of the reason why she could “never be Norwegian” (in addition to her self-categorization as a “Russian national”, see subchapter 7.1).

For the Afghan and Somali immigrants, ethnicity and skin color were the most salient markers of non-membership and inequality, it seemed. The following anecdote from Ibrahim shows how legal and substantive citizenship, and legal and social recognition, were *explicitly* separated:

Ibrahim: Can I tell you something? One of my friends – after we acquired Norwegian citizenship – he came from abroad and when he came to the airport in Norway, the custom officers checked him. They said, “Come”, and he took out his passport and said, “Look, I’m Norwegian”. Do you know what he [the friend] said? He said that they [the custom officers] told him, “*No, the passport is Norwegian, not you*” (...) I said to him [Ibrahim’s friend], “It’s true, it is a red passport and it’s Norwegian, but the difference is that you are Somali.”

Interviewer: What do you mean by that? What do you mean [by] the passport is Norwegian, not the person, not your friend?

Ibrahim: I think that it is wrong that they said that [to him]. But if I give a passport [to you], and I say *that*, you must accept it. If I give you this [gives me his cellphone] and after two months I say, “It’s mine”, then you have to remember that I gave it to you, right? (emphasis added)

Even though Ibrahim’s friend was a full-fledged member of society – as a naturalized citizen – he was not recognized as a Norwegian by the custom officers. “The *passport* is Norwegian, not you” is a forceful statement that disconnected “Norwegianness” in a formal sense from “Norwegianness” in a more substantial, presumably “ethnic” sense. In the custom officers’ point of view – and remarkably Ibrahim concurred with this – the Norwegian passport and the identity that accompanies it – is not something an immigrant can claim unconditionally. Rather, it is an identity that the state confers on its citizens and, *legitimately*, can retract, like Ibrahim’s friend experienced. Norwegian identity, symbolized by the passport, was

something that belonged to the state. “Norwegianness” was thus a property that could be “loaned”, like a cellphone, and ultimately be retracted by the “owner” whenever they saw fit, according to Ibrahim.

After 22 years in Norway, and 16 years as a citizen, Amal still did not perceive herself as a full member of society. In terms of belonging, she felt most at home in Somalia, and planned to move back if the political turmoil one day would cease. Unlike the Somali non-citizens interviewed, she tended to *devalue* Norwegian citizenship, consistently referring to it as a *passport*. For Amal, legal recognition was not what she missed, but social recognition. In this dialogue, Amal talks about her children’s experiences of non-recognition in school:

Interviewer: (...) What do you associate with Norwegianness? What does it mean to be Norwegian? Generally speaking.

Amal: They say that you have “Norwegian citizenship”, but no one is going to say to us, “You are Norwegian”. No. So, I don’t think I’m Norwegian even though I have a Norwegian passport.

Interviewer: Ok. Why not?

Amal: Because they call you “Somali” or “Norwegian citizen”. They can’t say that you are Norwegian. (...) Even though my children are born here, they say, “I’m Somali”. And my kids ask me, “Are we Norwegian or Somali?”

Interviewer: Mm. What do you say then?

Amal: I say, “What do you think?”. I told them, “You are Norwegian, but your parents are from Somalia”.

Interviewer: So, do they feel Somali or Norwegian? Or both?

Amal: They feel – now that they’re big, they know that they’re not Norwegian. Because of school and (...) Because they are in the same class as [“ethnic”] Norwegians. Every time they [teachers, staff] say to them, “Those who are not Norwegian, are taking extra Norwegian lessons”. Despite that they are born here. So, my son got angry. He said, “I’m born here. I haven’t seen my home country. My first language is Norwegian. Why do they say, “You foreigners are taking extra Norwegian lessons?””

(...)

So, I feel Somali, even though I have a Norwegian passport. [The] passport is *only paper*.

Interviewer: So, it [citizenship] has nothing to do with Norwegianness?

Amal: They don’t treat me like [they treat] you. No.

(Emphasis added)

The formal and informal dimensions of citizenship were decoupled on a discursive and practical level in these everyday experiences. Discursively, by terming Amal and her children as either “Somali” or “Norwegian citizens”. Practically, by assuming that Amal’s kids need extra Norwegian lessons, despite being born and raised in the country. As a young adult, Amal’s son seemed to have internalized this view: Now he “knew” he wasn’t Norwegian. Thus, despite being born and raised in Norway (Amal’s son) and living and working in Norway (Amal), their *feelings* of belonging were discouraged by their surroundings’ reluctance to recognize them as Norwegians in more than a formal sense. Juxtaposed with the

visibility of ethnicity, legal citizenship was reduced to an insignificant “piece of paper” (cf. C Jensen 2014; Lynnebakke & Fangen 2011).

The Somali interviewees seemed very much aware of the fine line between “Norwegian citizen” and “Somali Norwegian” on the one hand, and “Norwegian” on the other hand. Sahra, although mostly concerned with obtaining legal citizenship, also noted this discursive distinction:

(...) after I get a Norwegian passport, they call me Norwegian Somali or Somali Norwegian. There is a difference.

Interviewer: But you would still be a Norwegian Somali, not a Norwegian?

Sahra: No. You can never be a Norwegian [laughs].

Acquiring Norwegian citizenship was important to get legal recognition, but she would still be categorized as “Norwegian Somali” or a “Somali Norwegian”, according to Sahra. For some of the informants, this type of categorization was not necessarily experienced as acts of non-recognition, since they themselves identified as “Norwegian Somali”, “Norwegian Russian” or “Norwegian Afghan” – or “citizens of the world”. As noted earlier, it was not important for every informant to “feel Norwegian” and to be identified as such.

Categorizations like “Somali” is likely to be more at odds with the self-definition of *immigrant descendants* than immigrants.<sup>28</sup> Amal’s son seemed to construe the school’s definition of him as a foreigner as a non-recognition of his Norwegian identity. Calling him “Somali” discursively placed him outside of the citizenry. Saad pointed to the media as a complicit in these instances of non-recognition:

If you look at the media, you see that multiple generations [of immigrants] ... “Background from there, from there, from there” ... It’s not like in America or Canada or Sweden. They only talk about Swedes. But here it’s a little... Many immigrants [i.e. with immigrant background] don’t feel they’re Norwegian. They’re born here. Second generation – “background from Pakistan, background from Somalia”. They talk like that, the media. That’s why many don’t feel Norwegian. (...) “Norwegian Somali”, they can’t [just] say Norwegian.

Bashir, also used the American citizenship institution as a positive frame of reference:

Bashir: I know an American-Somali. (...) I talked to him. He had lived in the USA shorter than I had lived in Norway at the time. (...) They say, “We Americans”. “We Americans”, right. Most of us immigrants – Norwegians with immigrant background... I often say Norwegian Somali. (...) They don’t say, “Somali Americans”, they say, “We Americans”, right.

(...)

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<sup>28</sup> To be clear: No *immigrant descendants* have been interviewed, only *immigrants* (ref. Statistics Norway’s definition).

Interviewer: Why do you think it's like that?

Bashir: Because it's easier to be accepted there. Because the system is like when you get American citizenship, then you're an American. And everyone feels American from the start, right. But here it's different. Really, you are Norwegian, but still... You don't feel accepted. You still feel that you are – I say that I am Norwegian, but still there are certain situations where I have to express that I am Norwegian Somali. I don't get it, but that's just the way it is.

(...)

Interviewer: Do you have any ideas about why it's like that? Why is it hard to be accepted even with Norwegian citizenship?

Bashir: I think it's because Norway was a homogenous society (...) It's only the latter 25 years [that] people from other countries have come here. And that is [why] the media, society is still like that. In America, they only talk of Hispanics (...) and Afro Americans. Other than that, everyone calls themselves Americans. But here [Norway] has been a homogenous society for many years so ethnic Norwegian is Norwegian. The other people are Norwegian Pakistani, Norwegian Poles, Norwegian Somali, Norwegian Vietnamese... Those are still words we hear in the media.

In Brubakerian fashion, Bashir delineated how the two countries' different historical trajectories of immigration – USA popularly conceived as the “nation of immigrants”, and Norway as an “ethnically homogenous” nation – continues to shape how national identity, citizenship and immigrants are construed. In USA, immigrants constitute a central part of the national self-conception, wherein distinctions between “ethnic Americans” and “Somali Americans” would be anomalous, according to Bashir. While in Norway, a country with comparatively less experience with immigration, separating “ethnic Norwegians” and “Somali Norwegians” are more in line with the national self-image. In Bashir's perspective, an American is an American citizen, while a Norwegian is still an *ethnic* Norwegian.<sup>29</sup>

Bashir explained the reluctance to recognize immigrants and immigrant descendants with Norwegian citizenship as “Norwegians” as a sort of “cultural lag”: The language and categories used in the Norwegian media and in the society, are based on an “ethnically homogeneous past”, in which *Norwegian* was equated with *ethnic* Norwegian (cf. Lynnebakke & Fangen 2011). In the meantime, Norwegian society – and the citizenship institution – has been significantly pluralized as a result of postwar immigration (Brochmann 2007; Joppke 2010). Anachronistic constructions of Norwegianness in an increasingly multicultural society may then turn into such instances of non-recognition. Characterizing naturalized citizens and descendants as Norwegian Somali may compromise their self-

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<sup>29</sup> This distinction between an “American citizen” and an “ethnic Norwegian” indicates a “civic” understanding of the American nation, and an “ethnic” understanding of the Norwegian nation. “Civic nationalism” is defined as liberal, voluntarist, universalist and inclusive; “Ethnic nationalism” as illiberal, ascriptive, particularist and inclusive (Brubaker 1999: 56). See Zimmer (2003) and K. Jensen (2014) for critiques and refinements of the idealtypical ethnic-civic distinction.

definition as Norwegians. For Bashir, there were situations where he internalized this view of him, and felt pressured to label himself as “Norwegian Somali”.

Implicitly referring to the same “cultural lag”, Hussein, a naturalized citizen originating from Afghanistan, claimed that the Norwegian society had yet to fathom that Norwegians now have “multiple colors with distinct accents”. He was still confronted with his “Afghan ethnicity” from time to time. In certain situations, for instance in border controls and at job interviews, his Norwegian membership was openly questioned:

The first question you get at work or other places are, “Where are you from?”. If I say, “Ok, I’m from Norway”, then there’s going to be a big discussion. I don’t want to bring up that discussion every time, so just to get done with it, I say, “ok, I’m from Afghanistan”.

The persistence of such non-recognitions as well as social inequalities between majority and minorities, made Hussein launch a critique of citizenship ceremonies and the ideology of the citizenship institution:

(...) Emotionally, I did not have any need to do it [participate in the ceremony]. I didn’t feel comfortable coming there to prove that “Now I’m a Norwegian citizen (...) You can get a job, but there are only certain job opportunities you got. It’s not like you have possibilities of climbing in the system. To me a ceremony seems fake (...) that you become an equal citizen. (...) it’s a form of political statement. Even though there are many laws and rules that hinders discrimination and racism, *on paper*, in the law, it says... But *in practice* (...) I don’t see much to this attitude. I think it’s pretty obvious that if you and I – when we are done with school – apply for a position (...) I think you have much greater chances than I do. Not because you’re better [qualified] than me, but it’s about appearances (...) (emphasis added)

Hussein emphasized the contentious relationship between equality *on paper* and *equality in practice*: The disjuncture between the ideals of equity and fairness inherent in democratic citizenship, and the reality of ethnic discrimination in the labor market. If equality on paper does not translate into equality in practice, citizenship seemed to be nothing but a veil covering over persisting social inequalities, in Hussein’s perspective.

Legal citizenship demonstrably mattered in terms of recognition. The citizenship legislation impinged on the Russian, Afghan and Somali informants’ lives in two different ways. Formal non-recognition of dual identities was detrimental to the Russian informants’ sense of identity and equality, while denying Norwegian citizenship to Afghan and Somali individuals spurred sentiments of alienation and second-class membership.

However, everyday experiences also constitute sites of contest, where *substantive* membership are affirmed or denied (Hopkins & Blackwood 2011). The Somali and Afghan

categorizing themselves as Norwegians faced acts of non-recognition when people construed their identities as Somali or “Norwegian *citizens*”, in the strictly legal sense. In these instances, the boundaries and the breadth of Norwegian citizenship – as a “membership association” (Brubaker 1992) – was entrenched. Everyday acts of non-recognition were “social closures”, in Weber and Brubaker’s (1992) terminology, but in the *horizontal* domain of citizenship. Thus, it illustrates that citizenship and membership is not only contested in law-making processes (vertical citizenship) but also in everyday practices (horizontal citizenship). While legal citizenship mattered to the informants lacking it, the naturalized citizens tended to emphasize the lack of social recognition. In the horizontal sphere of citizenship, formal citizenship seemed to matter less a symbol of belonging.

Analyzing the relationship between the two spheres of citizenship – vertical and horizontal – is something macro diagnoses are unable to do, since they focus exclusively on the legal, vertical dimension. This is one of the points in the next chapter, which discusses the compatibility between the micro experiences in this and the macro diagnoses of citizenship.

# 8 Macro Diagnoses Meets Micro Experiences

Citizenship was important to the informants as a guarantor of spatial mobility, as a stable legal attachment to Norway, and as a symbolical recognition of identity and legal equality. How do these micro experiences of citizenship fit with macro diagnoses of citizenship?

Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke's diagnoses portrayed the citizenship institution as nearly irrelevant to immigrants. Brubaker argues that citizenship offers "marginal advantages" (1992: 181). Soysal asserts that "formal nationality status itself is not the main indicator of rights, membership and participation" (2012: 392). Finally, Joppke stridently emphasizes that citizenship matters in the global distribution of wealth, "yet strangely *not* for the people who hold it or have access to it" (2010: 145, emphasis added). The findings in this thesis question the validity of Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke's macro diagnoses of citizenship. The tendency to "banalize" (Mouritsen 2012) citizenship is problematic because it neglects crucial features of the institution that remain important to immigrants. Based on the findings in this study, I highlight the disjuncture between macro diagnoses and micro experiences in terms of the three dimensions of citizenship: (access to) status, rights and identity.

## 8.1 Ease of access?

According to Joppke (2010), the access to citizenship has generally been liberalized in the postwar era. *Jus soli* has complemented *jus sanguinis* for immigrant descendants, dual citizenship has been increasingly accepted, and naturalization requirements have been reduced. However, Joppke also notes the "re-nationalization" of citizenship, primarily targeting "first generation" immigrants. But the introduction of civic integration requirements is coined on an *individual* rather than on *group* level, Joppke says, which every immigrant "irrespective of origins" can meet (2010: 63, 68).

In a Norwegian context, Joppke's assertion that every immigrant, regardless of national background, can meet the naturalization requirements is questionable. A significant barrier to Norwegian citizenship, highlighted in this thesis, is the identity documentation requirement. Albeit identity documentation may not be included under Joppke's umbrella term "civic integration requirements", the ability to provide valid identity papers is not

“irrespective” of ascriptive traits, such as nationality. While group level discrimination based on race and gender in a legal sense have been removed in Europe generally (Joppke 2010: 43) and Norway specifically (Brochmann 2013), immigrants from bureaucratically dysfunctional countries in the Global South are more at risk when it comes to (re)enforcement of the identity documentation requirement. For instance, the majority of Afghans and Somalis get their applications for Norwegian citizenship approved (UDI 2017g), but not *all* applicants are granted citizenship. The Afghan and Somali denizens interviewed all had a difficult time getting their identities confirmed by UDI, because UDI put little emphasis on the documents they brought from Afghanistan and Somalia.

Access to citizenship is thus partially stratified on country background, in which some immigrants generally enjoy easier access than others. Joppke’s notion of “easy access” – irrespective of ascriptive traits – is thus not in line with the findings in this thesis. Anyway, “liberalization of access” does not automatically render the status less meaningful, like Joppke claims; arguably, it makes it *even more* valuable to those to which citizenship remains within their tangible, yet unachievable reach.

The difficulties of some immigrants to get their identities confirmed problematizes another tenet of Joppke’s “liberalization of access-thesis”: That states have moved away from “discretionary” to “as-of-right naturalization”. According to Joppke, the “as-of-right” component in European states’ naturalization rules have curtailed nation-state sovereignty in this domain (2010: 45-7). Norway also followed this trend when the discretionary power to deny citizenship to immigrants was removed with the 2006 law (Brochmann 2013).

However, multiple refusals of the Afghan and Somali denizens’ applications suggest that *some* discretionary power remain in the hands of the immigration authorities. UDI still exert discretionary power when they decide if the applicant’s identity is established with “over 50 percent probability” (Statsborgerforskriften, chapter 1). The fact that these denizens were ineligible for Norwegian citizenship due to lack of valid identity papers illustrates a point Coutin (2000: 55) made regarding “paperless” immigrants in USA: “[legal] *status inheres in papers, not persons*” (original emphasis). Put differently: Papers *give* status rather than reflect it (Coutin 2000: 60). In this case, Afghan and Somali denizens lacked valid *papers*, which consequently barred access to citizenship *status*. This directly contradicts Soysal’s idea of rights solely emanating from *personhood*, not nationhood. The Afghan and Somali immigrants were barred from full rights in Norway because they came from two nation-states that were unable provide them with the papers they needed to acquire



Norwegian citizenship. In other words, the rights of these individuals hinged on nationhood, rather than personhood.

## 8.2 Marginal rights?

The interviewees – denizens included – enjoyed civil, social and some political rights (such as voting in local elections). In this way, denizens are significantly more privileged than immigrants with temporary or undocumented statuses (cf. Coutin 2000; Griffiths 2014; Menjivar 2006). It is precisely the relatively privileged position of denizens that makes Brubaker (1992), Soysal (1994) and Joppke (2010) render this legal category as nearly equal to citizenship in terms of rights. However, denizens may be *close* to citizens, but they are not equal. To lump denizens and citizens together, like Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke tend to do, is arguably the result of employing macro perspectives, which fails to capture the nuances “on the ground”. Denizens’ lack of spatial mobility and legal attachment clearly challenges Soysal’s contention that rights are “increasingly matters beyond the vocabulary of national citizenship” (1994: 165), and Joppke’s claim that citizenship rights make “very little difference” (2009: 11).

Spatial mobility may be conceptualized as a fundamental right complementing civil, social and political rights (Mau 2010; Peutz & de Genova 2010). The right to go where you want is arguably an integral aspect of individual autonomy: It is “a core aspect of what it means to be free”, according to Bauböck (2009: 7). However, this is a highly stratified right in a global perspective. Differential abilities to move across space, as demonstrated in this thesis, are by and large products of *citizenship* status. Naturalized Norwegian citizens and Russian citizens enjoyed visa-free access to most countries in the world by virtue of holding valuable, European passports. The Afghan and Somali denizens, however, faced considerably higher barriers to international mobility than their *naturalized* counterparts. UDI’s travel restrictions, unpredictable and corrupt visa policies, and selective border controls effectively confined the Afghan and Somali citizens within Norway.

Seemingly, the fact that immigrants claimed *national* citizenship to engage in *transnational* practices may be interpreted as a devaluation of the institution in practice. Such a “postnational” interpretation, however, would be misleading. I argue that the relationship between national and transnational practices is not a zero-sum game, but rather mutually dependent processes. This view of national citizenship and transnational practices as interdependent, questions Soysal’s dichotomy of the “national citizenship model”, which she

associates with “bounded territories”, one the one hand, and the “postnational membership model”, with “fluid boundaries” as its hallmark on the other hand (1994: 140). This is a false dichotomy. Neither is the national citizenship model bounded – in the sense that there is a complete congruence between membership and territory – nor have we arrived at an era of postnational membership where membership and territorial boundaries are fluid. What may be more attuned to the realities today – at least for immigrants from the Global South – is that national citizenship in the Global North is a crucial precondition to engage in transnational practices. If someone came close to Soysal’s postnational “guestworkers”, it was the Russian informants, but even they sought a second citizenship to get the inherent “bonus mobility” of Norwegian citizenship.

The intrinsic connection between national citizenship and transnational mobility also challenges Spiro and Joppke’s argument that globalization *decreases* the importance of space and territorial boundaries – and thus the state “as the one institution defined by space and territory” ([Spiro 2008: 4] in Joppke 2009: 10). In conjunction with increasing acceptance of multiple citizenship and strengthened alien rights, citizenship in that “diminished institution, the state, must mean less than in the past”, according to Joppke (2009: 10). Akin to Soysal, Spiro and Joppke tend to view globalization forces and national citizenship as a zero-sum game. Put bluntly: *More* globalization means *less* citizenship. But as noted above, globalization, transnationalism and national citizenship are not necessarily mutually exclusive entities.

Moreover, empirical evidence suggests that rather than *decreasing*, the importance of territorial borders is *increasing*. Mau (et al. 2015) documented an increasing “global mobility divide” between citizens of the Global North and the Global South, in terms of visa policy barriers. While citizens of OECD countries (including Norway) have maintained their spatial mobility in terms of visa-free access to most countries in the last 40 years, non-OECD countries (e.g. Afghanistan and Somalia) are falling behind. Restrictive visa policies are only one symptom of the retrenchment of boundaries and territorial nation-states. Surveillance, identification technologies (e.g. fingerprints and retina scans), policing tactics and deportation are other measures designed to reconfigure physical space in ways that guide or prevent movement (Coutin 2015: 673). Thus, borders are back, making immigrants from less affluent countries dependent on national citizenship in their country of residence to facilitate spatial mobility. If the “global mobility divide” (Mau et al. 2015) continues to grow in the years to come, it seems likely that the popularity of national citizenship should increase, not decrease, contrary to Spiro and Joppke’s assumptions.

Another crucial feature of national citizenship that particularly postnational scholars have tended to “banalize” is the right to safe residence (Hansen 2009; Mouritsen 2012). I argue that the liminal legalities outlined in this study is a consequence of restrictive citizenship and immigration policies in Norway. By the means of increasing denials of citizenship applications, comprehensive retractions of various residence permits and increasing deportations of non-citizens (Aas & Mohn 2015), Norwegian immigration authorities have provided foreigners with strong incentives to naturalize. In this way, the value of citizenship in terms of legal attachment, has been reinforced, not unlike the development in USA in the mid-1990s (Gilbertson & Singer 2003). Addressing immigrants’ uncertainties “on the ground” highlights the persisting difference between permanent legal residents and citizens. Legal permanent residence must be treated as categorically liminal since denizens are *non-citizens* per se, and thus ultimately subjected to deportation (Anderson et al. 2011; Chacon 2015; de Genova 2002).

The blurring of legal categories rendered the denizens just as emotionally vulnerable to deportation as more “legally marginalized” immigrants. The prolonged periods of waiting for legal closure and omnipresent fear of deportation made them reliant on the Norwegian state to give them safe residence and peace of mind. The fact that the permanent legal residents in Norway seemed to share the same sentiments of uncertainty, anxiety and precariousness as *undocumented* immigrants in USA (Abrego & Lakhani 2015; Coutin 2000; Menjivar 2006) and *refused asylum seekers* in the United Kingdom (Griffiths 2014) indicates a devaluation of denizenship (legal permanent residency). The permanent residence permit did not offer significantly more protection than other, more temporary legal categories, according to some of the Afghan and Somali interviewees. This devaluation of denizenship stands in stark contrast to Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke’s tendency to equate denizenship with citizenship in terms of rights.

Despite the fact that denizenship is *categorically* liminal, the findings of this thesis challenge the notion that citizenship and immigration law is uniform and experienced in the same way by all immigrant groups (cf. Menjivar 2006: 1006). Not all permanent residents are necessarily liminal. Much of the disjuncture between micro experiences and macro diagnoses may be explained by the tendency of macro diagnoses to either conflate different immigrant groups, or to focus on privileged groups. For instance, Soysal operates with the generic category “guestworkers”, which she defines as all “noncitizen migrants” (1994: 138). Joppke’s (2009: 12) “citizenship light” diagnosis – drawing on Spiro (2008) – is based on a “legal immigrant elite” who can *choose* between permanent residence and citizenship.

Studying a diverse group of immigrants in Norway, however, portray a more nuanced picture. The refugees and family migrants from Afghanistan and Somalia expressed vulnerability to permit retractions and deportation, while the Russian informants generally seemed unaffected by increasingly restrictive immigration laws. As with mobility rights, the Russian informants were more privileged than the Afghan and Somali informants. The “citizenship light” and “postnational membership” diagnoses may be accurate on “privileged” immigrant groups, already holding citizenship in an affluent country – such as the Russian immigrants – but it was very far from the realities of less affluent immigrants from Afghanistan and Somalia.

Citizenship revocations, however, complicate the argument of a delineating line between “stable citizens” and “liminal non-citizens”. Revocations demonstrate that even full-fledged citizenship is not exempted from liminal legality (cf. Chacon 2015). Menjivar (2006: 1008), although not having citizenship revocations in mind, notes that legal integration processes are neither unidirectional nor linear. Both non-citizens and naturalized citizens may move back and forth between legal, liminal spaces. Access is thus not given once but may also be retracted, as Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed experienced. Arguably, with their entire lives invested in Norwegian citizenship they embodied a radical outcome of the “politics of citizenship” (Joppke 2007: 40). The practice of citizenship revocations illustrates the continuing and *absolute* sovereignty of the nation-state to regulate membership (cf. Brubaker 1992). The absence of “statute of limitations” gives Norwegian authorities a large scope of action to revoke citizenships, and thereby to produce uncertainty in entire immigrant communities. As demonstrated, the sense of freedom among the Somali informants, both citizens and non-citizens, seemed to be constricted because they feared citizenship revocations.

Citizenship revocations can be seen as the most extreme expression of the “restrictive trend”, attempting to make national citizenship more exclusive. The current tightening of access to citizenship shows that the restrictive trend is far more than a symbolical gesture towards an uneasy majority population, like Joppke frames it (Mouritsen 2012: 92). Joppke interprets the attempts to upgrade citizenship basically as a rhetorical ploy to pacify “ill-disposed natives” who are negative towards immigration (2009: 13-14). While *symbolic* politics may be an important part of the restrictive trend, it is certainly not void of material consequences. By conceptualizing the restrictive trend as mere “citizenship talk” (2009: 14), Joppke disregards the real-life consequences it has for immigrants subjected to it, such as citizenship revocations. The *intention* of revitalizing the citizenship institution may primarily

be to calm “sedentary natives”, as Joppke suggests, but the *consequences* of increasingly restrictive policies are nonetheless no less real for the “hapless immigrants” (Joppke 2010: 72).

### **8.3 Decoupling identity from citizenship?**

Political rhetoric stressing the exclusiveness of citizenship elicits the third meaning of citizenship analyzed in this thesis: Legal recognition. The findings suggest that Mouritsen (2012: 95) is right in asserting, “where citizenship is increasingly difficult to get and also politically presented as worth having, the social stigma and self-doubt in not having it is bound to increase”. To some of the informants, citizenship acquisition was important as a recognition of their legal equality. This symbolical recognition is arguably most important for individuals who *want* citizenship but are barred from getting it.

“Domestic closure” against non-citizens is vital to the state, Brubaker (1992: 28-9) argues, because it entrenches the boundaries of the state as a “membership organization”. However, what Brubaker does not address is what domestic closure means to those excluded from the “membership organization”. For the Afghan and Somali denizens in this study, application denials and revocations of citizenship – “domestic closure” in practice – entailed sentiments of second-class membership and alienation. In other words, denizens were “symbolical foreigners” (Soysal 1994: 135). However, denizens are not symbolical foreigners by virtue of “cultural otherness”, like Soysal assumes; they are symbolical foreigners because they lack full rights. This linkage between *material* (rights) and *immaterial* (sentiments of equality) sides of citizenship is an aspect that macro diagnoses so far have ignored.

Deprivation of citizenship indirectly brought out the identity aspect of national citizenship as well. It has been posited by both Soysal (1994) and Joppke (2010) that national citizenship and identity have parted ways. Joppke (2010), for instance, contends that state campaigns for unity, social cohesion and national identity are bound to fail because the possibilities of promoting particular identities are tightly limited by rules of non-discrimination and a positive evaluation of diversity. The findings in this study supports the assertion that citizenship ceremonies and other requirements upon naturalization are futile when it comes to encourage immigrants to take on a “Norwegian identity” (whatever that means). For instance, none of the interviewees claimed that they wanted to naturalize in order to “show they were Norwegian”, or displayed similar sentiments. This identity aspect of naturalization was either rarely mentioned, or explicitly rejected.

However, while identities cannot be regulated by naturalization requirements, such as citizenship ceremonies, language courses and civic classes, as suggested by Joppke (2008), denial of citizenship can. As demonstrated, denying citizenship to immigrants can discourage them from identifying themselves as Norwegian. In this perspective, the Norwegian state has a certain power of “regulating” people’s sense of selves. The ban on dual citizenship, formally denying dual identities, is another expression of an effective regulation of identity. The emotional desire to retain a former citizenship illustrates the fundamental need of getting one’s identity affirmed, not only socially but legally as well. Thus, it was primarily the denial of citizenship, either Norwegian or Russian – and *not* naturalization requirements – that elicited the connection between national identity and citizenship. The findings, then, suggest that it is premature to decouple formal citizenship and identity entirely (cf. Miller-Idriss 2006). National identities *can*, in fact, be legislated – albeit only *negatively* by formal non-recognitions.

Summing up, neglecting the meanings of citizenship to immigrants, like Brubaker, Soysal and Joppke tend to do, obscures the continuing salience of the institution. New barriers to access to citizenship status have emerged, making it more difficult to immigrants from less affluent countries to naturalize; mobility and safe residence are two indispensably rights of citizenship; and citizenship and national identity seem to remain intertwined properties.

## **8.4 Implications for citizenship theory**

What are the implications of my findings for citizenship theory? There is a significant disjuncture between macro diagnoses and micro experiences of citizenship. Individual meanings of citizenship cannot be fully understood by examining citizenship laws and policies (cf. Miller-Idriss 2006). By focusing on the *addressee* rather than the *addresser* of citizenship legislation and policies, two implications for citizenship theory can be outlined.

Firstly, addressing micro experiences of citizenship may help us gain more nuanced knowledge of the salience of citizenship and citizenship legislation. Classifying citizenship legislations as “liberal” or “restrictive” is an important part of evaluating different regimes, but it tells us nothing about the social processes, practices and interpretations that influence how immigrants understand the meanings of citizenship, and how they make decisions to naturalize (Gilbertson & Singer 2003: 27). For instance, Norwegian citizenship may

*principally* be easy to acquire, but *practically* not, which immigrants struggling to fulfill the “identity documentation” requirement experienced.

Relatedly, citizenship law is not uniformly “restrictive” or “liberal”, but more or less strict to different groups (cf. Menjivar 2006). Employing a micro approach to citizenship may help us delineate more accurately to whom citizenship law is “restrictive”, and to whom it is “liberal”. For instance, the Afghan and Somali immigrants, facing problems with identity documentation and citizenship revocations, clearly interpreted the law as more restrictive than the Russian immigrants who did not experience such problems.

Secondly, scholars should pay more attention to the current restrictive trend in citizenship policies. Even though access has been liberalized, new hurdles to citizenship have emerged (Mouritsen 2012). Heightened language requirements, citizenship tests (recently implemented in Norway) and citizenship revocations are measures to make citizenship more valuable and exclusive (Brochmann & Seland 2010; Jensen et al. 2017). Instead of framing the revitalization of citizenship as rhetoric and symbolic politics alone (cf. Joppke 2010), researchers should also examine what effects the restrictive trend has for citizens and prospective citizens. The proliferation of liminal legalities, I argue, is one consequence of the current tightening of access to citizenship and other privileged legal categories. Yet, more research is needed to document how legal mechanisms produce liminal legality, which immigrant groups are susceptible to increasing restrictions, and what the consequences of legal instability are for immigrants’ belonging, participation and identification with the national community.

A special case in point is citizenship revocations. Future research should be more attuned to such exclusionary practices because they are also a matter of access (Herzog 2011). How will increasing revocations affect the meanings assigned to citizenship by immigrants? Will it make legal citizenship even more valuable, or lead to paradoxical outcomes, like that of “defensive retention”? These are important questions that needs to be addressed in further research that centers on micro experiences of citizenship.





## 9 Concluding Remarks

Citizenship matters to immigrants in Norway in material, emotional and symbolical terms. Generally, the informants assigned three meanings to citizenship: mobility, legal attachment and recognition.

*Materially*, citizenship enables spatial *mobility* – albeit not *any* citizenship. Norwegian citizens enjoy a high degree of mobility by virtue of holding a valuable, European passport. Russian immigrants, although being relatively mobile with a Russian passport, sought Norwegian citizenship to obtain a “mobility bonus”. The mobility of Afghan and Somali citizens, however, was constrained by UDI’s travel restrictions, visa policies and selective border controls. To them, acquiring Norwegian citizenship would mean greater opportunities to move across international borders, and thereby to maintain transnational connections. Mobility rights, therefore, truly remains within the ambit of nation-based citizenship. Holding a national citizenship in a democratic country arguably entails greater access to the most basic human right of all: “The freedom of movement” (Peutz & de Genova 2010).

In principle, national citizenship gives an unconditional *legal attachment* that may be *emotionally* reassuring to immigrants in precarious legal and social positions. According to my findings, lack of citizenship engendered a substantial amount of uncertainty among the Afghan and Somali immigrants interviewed. Thus, while the physical mobility of Afghan and Somali denizens were characterized by *stasis*, their legalities were *liminal*. Norwegian citizenship was, according to them, capable of freeing them from emotional and temporal instability. The right to genuinely permanent residence remains a main feature of national citizenship that even permanent legal residency cannot fully ensure. Denizens, like all non-citizens, are ultimately “deportable” (Anderson et al. 2011; de Genova 2002). Nevertheless, citizenship revocations, which cast Amina, Jamilah and Muhammed into an *acute liminal legality*, challenge the notion that all naturalized citizens are safe from legal ambiguity and deportation. Perhaps it is safe to say that naturalization ensures the right to permanent residence for some, but not everyone.

Finally, citizenship is ultimately a matter of *symbolical recognition*. Formal recognition of dual identities mattered to the Russian informants, while the Afghan and Somalis claimed *de jure* recognition of their *de facto* belonging to Norway. The lack of full rights, especially spatial mobility and legal attachment, was materially consequential, but also

served as symbolical reminders of “second-class membership”. Even though legal citizenship does not ensure recognition in the horizontal sphere of citizenship, it is a *prerequisite* to true, full-fledged membership in society. Thus, rights are necessary, but not sufficient for *full* citizenship, that is both legally and substantially (Brochmann 2002: 59).

In short, citizenship and citizenship legislation is capable of impinging on immigrants’ sense of space (mobility), time (legal attachment) and selves (recognition). Thus, like every institution, citizenship is both “enabling and constraining” (Giddens 1984): It mobilizes and immobilizes; it attaches and detaches; and it recognizes and misrecognizes.

## 9.1 Implications of an ambiguous legislation

The current Norwegian citizenship law is highly ambiguous. On the restrictive end, the single citizenship principle remains in place, naturalization is conditioned on requirements for language proficiency, a citizenship test has been introduced and citizenship revocations have been enforced. On the liberal end, all those fulfilling the naturalization requirements are entitled to citizenship (Jensen et al. 2017; Midtbøen 2015). Jensen (et al. 2017: 612) points out a striking “motivational duality” at play: The Norwegian government wants new permanent residents to naturalize, while at the same time they stress the exclusivity of the Norwegian citizenship. What are the implications of this state-level ambiguity for immigrants “on the ground”? There seems to be a significant discrepancy between principles and practice in the Norwegian citizenship law. This discrepancy become particularly evident in two policies: the ban on dual citizenship and citizenship revocation.

Single citizenship remains the main principle in Norwegian citizenship law. However, dual citizenship is *de facto* widely tolerated. A recent report from Statistics Norway suggests that approximately 40 percent of immigrants have dual citizenship (Pettersen 2017). The *de facto* toleration of a considerable number of applicants, while the banning of others, is capable of engendering sentiments of inequality. At least, Anna, forced to renounce her Russian citizenship upon naturalization, conceived it like this. The formal non-recognition of her “Russian self” resulted in less “emotional investment” in the decision to naturalize – and almost made her refrain from acquiring Norwegian citizenship. Contrary to the intention of the current single citizenship principle, which is to strengthen a unitary bond between citizens and the state, a strict ban can be counterproductive. If one of the rationales behind the ban is to prevent “multiple national identifications” (Yanasmayan 2015), it is arguably a rearguard action against an increasingly transnational society.

Possible emotional costs of renouncing one's former citizenship should be weighed against the arguments for retaining the single citizenship regime. Based on the findings in this study there are few reasons to believe that dual citizenship leads to "less integration" or "less loyalty" towards the Norwegian state. Generally, integration and citizenship policies were detached from one another by the informants. Either citizenship policies were viewed as irrelevant to integration, or positive outcomes of dual citizenship allowance were emphasized, for instance when it was argued that dual citizens can "build bridges" between two countries. However, there may be good reasons to retain the single citizenship regime, albeit in a more principled manner. The discrepancy between *de jure* prohibition and *de facto* allowance of dual citizenship, expressive of the "motivational duality", is a breach of one of the fundamental aspects associated with democratic citizenship: Equal treatment.

The enforced revocation practice also send contradictory signals if the principal aim of the government is to naturalize as many foreign citizens as possible. Revocations clearly signal the exclusiveness of Norwegian citizenship. As the immigration spokesperson of the current government party Fremskrittspartiet (the Progress Party), Mazyar Keshvari, said regarding revocations: "To get a Norwegian citizenship should not be easily obtained and those who cheat their way to citizenship should of course lose it" (Nettavisen 2017, author's translation). Revocations serve the purpose of reaffirming "the standards of the citizenry" as an exclusive and valued body (Anderson et al. 2011: 554; Jensen et al. 2017: 615). In other words, its "sacred" character.

Signaling citizenship's exclusiveness may, nevertheless, have counterproductive effects. The proliferation of liminal legalities outlined in this thesis is one of them. Revocations does not only affect so-called "bogus claimants" by stripping them of rights, rendering them stateless and deportable; it leaves wider segments of immigrant communities uncertain as well. Such legal uncertainties can have detrimental effects on immigrants' sense of belonging to Norway. The symbolical message of revocations is that citizenship – as a symbol of "Norwegianness" – is a property immigrants can loan, but never own (see Ibrahim's quote, page 79). Ultimately, the state can revoke citizenship if they see it fit. In this way, the current policy climate may make some immigrants feel like "eternal guests" (Kanström 2007) in Norway, deprived of legal stability and a "national home".

Another counterproductive result of the revocation policy is what I called "defensive retention". Selina's hesitation towards naturalization as a way of protecting her against citizenship revocation – her "defensive retention" – is a telling expression of the current policy practice. Remarkably, obtaining citizenship in Norway, one of the world's most

developed liberal democracies, priding itself to be a strident defender of human rights, made her prone to *statelessness*, a practice usually associated with despotic and totalitarian regimes (Herzog 2011: 83). While immigrants in the mid-90s in USA *naturalized* defensively to protect themselves from the scaling back of rights of partial citizenship (Gilbertson & Singer 2003), immigrants in Norway holding “valuable” citizenships may have reason to do the opposite: Defensively *retaining* their original citizenship. If the overall *aim* of the current revitalization of citizenship is to *increase* social cohesion and foster integration, the *means* employed may lead to the quite the opposite result. My findings suggest that citizenship revocations led to *decreased* trust in UDI, Norwegian authorities in general and politicians. However, sentiments of distrust, suspicion and hostility towards the Norwegian authorities may also infuse immigrants’ social relations with their Norwegian peers as well. As such, citizenship policies end up tearing down what they are supposed to engender: Social cohesion.

If citizenship policies reflect “nationhood” (Brubaker 1992), a presentation of the national identity, the Norwegian state need to ponder on what *ideas* of nationhood policies and practices should express. At present, the message of the Norwegian state is ambiguous: Encouraging immigrants to naturalize, yet at the same time emphasizing the exclusive nature of citizenship. Such contradictory messages may create areas of legal incertitude in which an increasing number of immigrant non-citizens *and* citizens may find themselves. This is problematic not only for immigrants; it is also problematic for the Norwegian state if it wants an active and loyal citizenry.

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All sources in this thesis have been referenced above.

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# Appendix A: Original Interview Guide and English Translation

## A1: Original interview guide

### Intervjuguide for norske statsborgere

#### Brifing

Forteller litt om oppgaven, konfidensialitet, anonymisering (eller ber dem lese igjennom informasjonsskrivet) og gangen i intervjuet.

Har du noen spørsmål før vi begynner?

#### Åpningsspørsmål

Først vil jeg stille deg noen spørsmål om din bakgrunn i Norge.

1. Kan du fortelle meg litt om når du kom til Norge, hvilket land du flyttet fra og hvorfor du flyttet til Norge?
2. Hvilke(t) statsborgerskap har du?
3. Kan du si litt om søknadsprosessen? Hvor lang tid tok det, hvordan fikk du svar, var det noen krav som var spesielt vanskelige å innfri, var du på seremoni osv.

#### Grunner for å søke om statsborgerskap og betydningen av statsborgerskapet

Nå går vi over til å snakke litt mer om hvorfor du valgte å søke om norsk statsborgerskap og hva og når det norske statsborgerskapet betyr for noe deg.

4. Hvorfor søkte du om å få norsk statsborgerskap?
  - Hadde beslutningen om å søke noe med tilhørighet å gjøre?
5. Er det noen situasjoner hvor statsborgerskapet er viktig for deg? Når tenker du over at du er norsk statsborger? Har du eksempler?

#### Oppfatninger om dagens regelverk

Det neste jeg vil ta opp, er kravene for å bli norsk statsborger i dag, og hva du tenker om dem.

6. Kjenner du til kravene for å bli norsk statsborger? Kan du fortelle meg litt om dem?

7. Her en liste som viser kravene for å bli norsk statsborger i dag (**viser liste over dagens krav**). Hva tenker du om disse kravene? Rimelige, vanskelige?
8. I Danmark og Sverige har de litt andre krav for å bli statsborger, som du ser i denne tabellen (**viser tabell over de ulike regelverkene**). Hva tenker du om de norske reglene når du sammenligner dem med reglene i Danmark og Sverige?
  - Tror du det er en sammenheng mellom statsborgerkrav og integrering? Hvis ja: hvilket regelverk tror du bidrar til best mulig integrering av innvandrere?

#### Spesifikt om forbudet mot dobbelt statsborgerskap

9. Dobbelt statsborgerskap er tillatt i Sverige og Danmark, men ikke i Norge. Hva tenker du om det?
10. For de som har **gitt fra seg tidligere** statsborgerskap: Hvordan opplevde du å gi fra deg ditt tidligere statsborgerskap?
  - For de som har **beholdt opprinnelige statsborgerskap**: Gjorde vissheten om at du kunne beholde ditt gamle statsborgerskap det lettere å søke om norsk statsborgerskap? Hvorfor vil du gjerne beholde det opprinnelige?
11. En viktig begrunnelse for at Norge ikke tillater dobbelt statsborgerskap, er at myndighetene tror at innvandrere vil bevare et sterkt bånd til hjemlandet dersom de får beholde sitt opprinnelige statsborgerskap. På den måten kan det stå i veien for integrering i det norske samfunnet. Hva tenker du om denne begrunnelsen? Har statsborgerskap noe å si for båndene til hjemlandet og for integrasjon i Norge?

#### Tilhørighet og tilknytning

Fint, nå vil jeg gjerne høre litt om hvor du føler deg hjemme i verden og tilknytningen din til Norge.

12. Hvor føler du deg hjemme, hvor ”hører du til”? Hvorfor?
13. Hva legger du i norskhet, hva innebærer det for deg?
14. Føler du deg norsk?
15. Føler du at du er en del av det norske samfunnet? På hvilke måter?
  - Har statsborgerskapet noe å si for dette? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

#### Om statsborgerskap og norskhet

Før vi avslutter ønsker jeg å stille noen spørsmål om det å være innvandrere i det norske samfunnet i dag.



16. Ved å bli norsk statsborger blir man en del av det politiske fellesskapet i Norge, det vil si at man blir norsk «på papiret». Men blir man norsk ved å bli norsk statsborger?
17. Hva skal til for at en innvandrere kan føle seg norsk? Hva skal til for at ”etniske nordmenn” aksepterer innvandrere som norske?
- Er det i det hele tatt mulig for en innvandrere å bli akseptert som norsk?

### Debrifing

Er det noe du vil spørre om eller legge som vi ikke har snakket om i intervjuet?

Informerer om hva som vil skje med personopplysninger og intervjumaterialet.

## **Intervjuguide for ikke-norske statsborgere**

### Brifing

Forteller litt om oppgaven, konfidensialitet, anonymisering (eller ber dem lese igjennom informasjonsskrivet) og gangen i intervjuet.

Har du noen spørsmål før vi begynner?

### Åpningsspørsmål

Først vil jeg stille deg noen spørsmål om din bakgrunn i Norge.

1. Kan du fortelle meg litt om når du kom til Norge, hvilket land du flyttet fra og hvorfor du flyttet til Norge?
2. Hvordan opplevde du å komme til Norge? Kan du si litt om hvordan den overgangen var? Hvordan var prosessen med å få oppholdstillatelse osv.
3. Hvilke(t) statsborgerskap har du i dag?

### Grunner for å unnlate å søke om norsk statsborgerskap

Nå går vi over til å snakke litt mer om hvorfor noen søker om norsk statsborgerskap og andre ikke.

4. Har du søkt om å få norsk statsborgerskap?
  - **HVIS NEI:** Hvorfor har du ikke søkt?
  - Har det valget noe med tilhørighet å gjøre?
  - Kommer du til å søke i fremtiden? Hvorfor?  
**HVIS JA:** Hvorfor søkte du?
    - Hvorfor fikk du ikke statsborgerskap? Hva tenker du om det?
5. Er det noen situasjoner du tenker du over at du ikke er norsk statsborger? Har du noen eksempler?

### Oppfatninger om dagens regelverk

Det neste tema jeg vil ta opp, er kravene for å bli norsk statsborger i dag, og hva du tenker om dem.

6. Kjenner du til kravene for å bli norsk statsborger? Kan du fortelle meg litt om dem?
7. Her en liste som viser kravene for å bli norsk statsborger i dag (**viser liste over dagens krav**). Hva tenker du om disse kravene? Rimelige, vanskelige?
8. I Danmark og Sverige har de litt andre krav for å bli statsborger, som du ser i denne tabellen (**viser tabell over de ulike regelverkene**). Hva tenker du om de norske reglene når du sammenligner dem med reglene i Danmark og Sverige?
  - Tror du det er en sammenheng mellom statsborgerkrav og integrering? Hvis ja: Hvilket regelverk tror du bidrar til best mulig integrering av innvandrere?

### Spesifikt om forbudet mot dobbelt statsborgerskap

9. Dobbelt statsborgerskap er tillatt i Sverige og Danmark, men ikke i Norge. Hva tenker du om det?
10. Er forbudet mot dobbelt statsborgerskap noe som gjør at du ikke vil eller kan søke om norsk statsborgerskap?
11. Hvorfor vil du beholde det opprinnelige?
12. En viktig begrunnelse for at Norge ikke tillater dobbelt statsborgerskap, er at myndighetene tror at innvandrere vil bevare et sterkt bånd til hjemlandet dersom de får beholde sitt opprinnelige statsborgerskap. På den måten kan det stå i veien for integrering i det norske samfunnet. Hva tenker du om denne begrunnelsen? Har statsborgerskap noe å si for båndene til hjemlandet og for integrasjon i Norge?

### Tilhørighet og tilknytning

Fint. Nå vil jeg gjerne høre litt om hvor du føler deg hjemme i verden og tilknytningen din til Norge.

13. Hvor føler du deg hjemme, hvor «hører du til»? Hvorfor?
14. Hva legger du i ”norskhet”, hva innebærer det for deg?
15. Føler du deg norsk?
16. Føler du at du er en del av det norske samfunnet? På hvilke måter?

- Hvis negativt svar på to foregående sp.mål: Tror du et norsk statsborgerskap ville endret på disse tingene? Hvorfor/hvorfor ikke?

#### Om statsborgerskap og norskhet

Før vi avslutter ønsker jeg å stille noen spørsmål om det å være innvandrere i det norske samfunnet i dag.

17. Ved å bli norsk statsborger blir man en del av det politiske fellesskapet i Norge, det vil si man blir norsk «på papiret». Men blir man ”norsk” ved å bli norsk statsborger?
  18. Hva skal til for at en innvandrere kan føle seg norsk? Hva skal til for at ”etniske nordmenn” aksepterer innvandrere som norske?
- Er det i det hele tatt mulig for en innvandrere å bli akseptert som norsk?

#### Debriefing

Er det noe du vil spørre om eller legge som vi ikke har snakket om i intervjuet?

Informerer om hva som vil skje med personopplysninger og intervju materialet.

## A2: English translation of interview guide

### **Interview guide for Norwegian citizens**

#### Briefing

Information about the thesis, confidentiality and anonymization is given (or ask them to read through the consent form), and the structure of the interview is described.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

#### Opening questions

First, I would like to ask you some questions about your background in Norway.

1. Can you tell me when you came to Norway, which country you came from and why you came to Norway?
2. What citizenship do you hold today?
3. Can you tell me a little about the application process? How much time did it take, how did you get a response, was there any requirements that were difficult to fulfill, did you attend the ceremony etc.

#### Reasons to apply for citizenship and the salience of citizenship

Now we're going to talk about why you chose to apply for Norwegian citizenship and what it means and when the Norwegian citizenship matters to you.

4. Why did you apply for Norwegian citizenship?
  - Did the decision have anything to do with belonging to Norway?
5. Are there situations in which Norwegian citizenship is important to you? When do you think about the fact that you are a Norwegian citizen? Any examples?

#### Perceptions about current legal framework

The next thing I want to bring up is the requirements to become a Norwegian citizen, and what you think about them.

6. Do you know the current requirements? Can you tell me a little about them?
7. Here is a list of the requirements to become a Norwegian citizen (**shows them a list of current requirements**). What do you think about the requirements? Fair, difficult?

8. Denmark and Sweden have different requirements for citizenship, as you see in this table (**shows them a comparative table**). What do you think about the Norwegian rules if you compare them to the rules in Denmark and Sweden?
- Do you think there is a connection between citizenship requirements and integration? If yes: which legal framework do you think contributes to best possible integration of immigrants?

#### The ban on dual citizenship

9. Dual citizenship is allowed in Sweden and Denmark, but is not allowed in Norway. What do you think about that?
10. For those who **have renounced their former citizenship**: How did you experience to give up your former citizenship?
- For those who **have kept their former citizenship**: Did the fact that you knew you could keep your former citizenship make it easier to apply for Norwegian citizenship? Why do you want to keep your former citizenship?
11. An important rationale behind the ban on dual citizenship is that Norwegian authorities believe immigrants will preserve a strong bond to their country of origin if they are allowed to keep their former citizenship. In this way, it can stand in the way of integration into the Norwegian society. What do you think about this reasoning? Does citizenship have anything to do with bonds to the country of origin or integration in Norway?

#### Belonging and attachment

Good. Now I would like to hear a little about where you feel you belong in the world and your attachment to Norway.

12. Where do you feel at home, where do you belong? Why?
13. What do you associate with “Norwegianness”? What does that entail to you?
14. Do you feel Norwegian?
15. Do you feel you are a part of the Norwegian society? In what ways?
- Does citizenship matter to these things? Why/why not?

#### Citizenship and Norwegianness

Before we conclude the interview, I want to ask you some questions on what it is like to be an immigrant in the Norwegian society.

16. When you become a Norwegian citizen you become a part of the Norwegian political community. You become Norwegian “on paper”, so to speak. But do you become *Norwegian* by becoming a Norwegian citizen?
17. What does it take for an immigrant to feel Norwegian? What does it take for “ethnic Norwegians” to accept immigrants as Norwegians?
  - Is it possible at all for an immigrant to be accepted as Norwegian?

### Debriefing

Is there something you would like to add that we have not discussed?

I give information about what will happen with personal information and the interview material.

## **Interview guide for non-Norwegian citizens**

### Briefing

Information about the thesis, confidentiality and anonymization is given (or ask them to read through the consent form), and the structure of the interview is described.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

### Opening questions

First, I would like to ask you some questions about your background in Norway.

1. Can you tell me when you came to Norway, which country you came from and why you came to Norway?
2. What was it like coming to Norway? Can you say something about that transition? How did the process of acquiring residence permit proceed etc.
3. Which citizenship do you hold today?

### Reasons for non-naturalization

Now I would like to talk about why some apply for Norwegian citizenship, while others do not apply.

4. Have you applied for Norwegian citizenship?
    - **IF NO:** Why not?
    - Does the decision have anything to do with belonging to Norway?
    - Are you going to apply in the future? Why?
- IF YES:** Why did you apply?

- Why was the application rejected? How do you feel about that?
5. When do you think about the fact that you are not a citizen? Any examples?

#### Perceptions about current legal framework

6. Do you know about the current requirements? Can you tell me a little about them?
  7. Here is a list of the requirements to become a Norwegian citizen (**shows them a list of current requirements**). What do you think about the requirements? Fair, difficult?
  8. Denmark and Sweden have different requirements for citizenship, as you see in this table (**shows them a comparative table**). What do you think about the Norwegian rules if you compare them to the rules in Denmark and Sweden?
- Do you think there is a connection between citizenship requirements and integration? If yes: which legal framework do you think contributes to best possible integration of immigrants?

#### The ban on dual citizenship

9. Dual citizenship is allowed in Sweden and Denmark, but is not allowed in Norway. What do you think about that?
10. Is the ban on dual citizenship something that makes you refrain from applying for Norwegian citizenship?
11. Why do you want to keep your former citizenship?
12. An important rationale behind the ban on dual citizenship is that Norwegian authorities believe immigrants will preserve a strong bond to their country of origin if they are allowed to keep their former citizenship. In this way, it can stand in the way of integration into the Norwegian society. What do you think about this reasoning? Does citizenship have anything to do with bonds to the country of origin or integration in Norway?

#### Belonging and attachment

Good. Now I would like to hear a little about where you feel you belong in the world and your attachment to Norway.

13. Where do you feel at home, where do you belong? Why?
14. What do you associate with “Norwegianness”? What does that entail to you?
15. Do you feel Norwegian?

16. Do you feel you are a part of the Norwegian society? In what ways?

- If negative response on the two foregoing questions: Do you think a Norwegian citizenship would change any of these things? Why/why not?

### Citizenship and Norwegianness

Before we conclude the interview, I would like to ask you some questions on what it is like to be an immigrant in the Norwegian society.

17. When you become a Norwegian citizen you become a part of the Norwegian political community. You become Norwegian “on paper”, so to speak. But do you become *Norwegian* by becoming a Norwegian citizen?

18. What does it take for an immigrant to feel Norwegian? What does it take for “ethnic Norwegians” to accept immigrants as Norwegians?

- Is it possible at all for an immigrant to be accepted as Norwegian?

### Debriefing

Is there something you would like to add that we have not discussed?

I give information about what will happen with personal information and the interview material.



# Appendix B: List of Citizenship Requirements and Comparative Table

## Krav for å bli norsk statsborger ved søknad:

- Ha dokumentert eller klarlagt identiteten sin
- Være bosatt i Norge og ha tenkt til å bo i Norge i framtiden
- Ha permanent oppholdstillatelse
- Ha bodd i Norge i minst 7 år
- Ha gjennomført 600 timer norskopplæring, inkludert 50 timer samfunnskunnskap
- Ikke være straffedømt
- Gi fra seg sitt opprinnelige statsborgerskap

## Krav for å bli statsborger i Sverige, Norge og Danmark

<b>Krav</b>	<b>Sverige</b>	<b>Norge</b>	<b>Danmark</b>
Botidskrav	5 år	7 år	9 år
Statsborgerseremoni	Frivillig	Frivillig	Obligatorisk
Språkkrav og krav om samfunnskunnskap	Ingen	Indirekte gjennom norskopplæring	Ja, språktest og samfunnskunnskapstest
Krav om økonomisk selvforsørgelse	Nei	Nei	Ja
Dobbelt statsborgerskap tillatt	Ja	Nei	Ja

# Appendix C: Consent Form

## Forespørsel om deltakelse i forskningsprosjektet

*”Statsborgerskapets betydning for innvandrere i Norge”*

### Bakgrunn og formål

Denne studien er en masteroppgave i sosiologi ved Universitetet i Oslo. Oppgaven handler om statsborgerskapets betydning for innvandrere i Norge. Formålet med oppgaven er å undersøke hvilke grunner innvandrere i Norge har for å søke eller ikke å søke om å få norsk statsborgerskap, og hva et norsk statsborgerskap betyr for innvandrere i dag.

### Utvalg

Deltakere i studien består av innvandrere med og uten norsk statsborgerskap, med bakgrunn fra, Afghanistan, Russland og Somalia. For å delta i studien må du ha bodd i Norge i minst syv år.

### Hva innebærer deltakelse i studien?

Deltakelse i studien innebærer å bli intervjuet i ca. en time om egne erfaringer, opplevelser og oppfatninger rundt å ha eller ikke å ha et norsk statsborgerskap. Spørsmålene vil handle om tilknytning og tilhørighet til Norge, grunner for å søke eller ikke søke om norsk statsborgerskap og tanker om dagens krav for å bli norsk statsborger. Intervjuene vil bli tatt opp på lydbånd, med din godkjennelse.

### Hva skjer med informasjonen om deg?

Alle personopplysninger og lydopptak vil bli behandlet konfidensielt. Det betyr at jeg er den eneste som vil ha tilgang til personopplysningene. Lydopptak vil lagres på min private, passordbeskyttede datamaskin. Du vil bli anonymisert i oppgaven, det vil si at jeg aldri vil bruke navnet ditt eller andre personidentifiserbare opplysninger i masteroppgaven eller senere publikasjoner. Indirekte personidentifiserbare opplysninger som kjønn, tidligere statsborgerskap, innvandringsgrunn og botid i Norge kan bli brukt i oppgaven eller senere publikasjoner.

Prosjektet skal avsluttes 30. juni 2017. Intervjuopptakene og øvrige personopplysninger vil bli makulert (slettet) ved prosjektslutt.

### Frivillig deltakelse

Det er frivillig å delta i studien, og du kan når som helst trekke ditt samtykke uten å oppgi noen grunn. Dersom du trekker deg, vil alle opplysninger om deg bli anonymisert.

Dersom du ønsker å delta eller har spørsmål til studien, ta kontakt med meg, Simon Roland Birkvad, på e-post [simonrb@ulrik.uio.no](mailto:simonrb@ulrik.uio.no) eller telefon 90190489. Du kan også ta kontakt med hovedveileder på masteroppgaven og forsker ved Institutt for samfunnsforskning, Arnfinn H. Midtbøen, på e-post [ahm@samfunnsforskning.no](mailto:ahm@samfunnsforskning.no) eller telefon 92082553.

Studien er meldt og godkjent av Personvernombudet for forskning, NSD - Norsk senter for forskningsdata AS.

**Samtykke til deltakelse i studien**

Jeg har mottatt informasjon om studien, og er villig til å delta

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(Signert av prosjektdeltaker, dato