



# **(How) Does Citizenship Matter?**

## Theorizing Mechanisms & Methodology

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# Background

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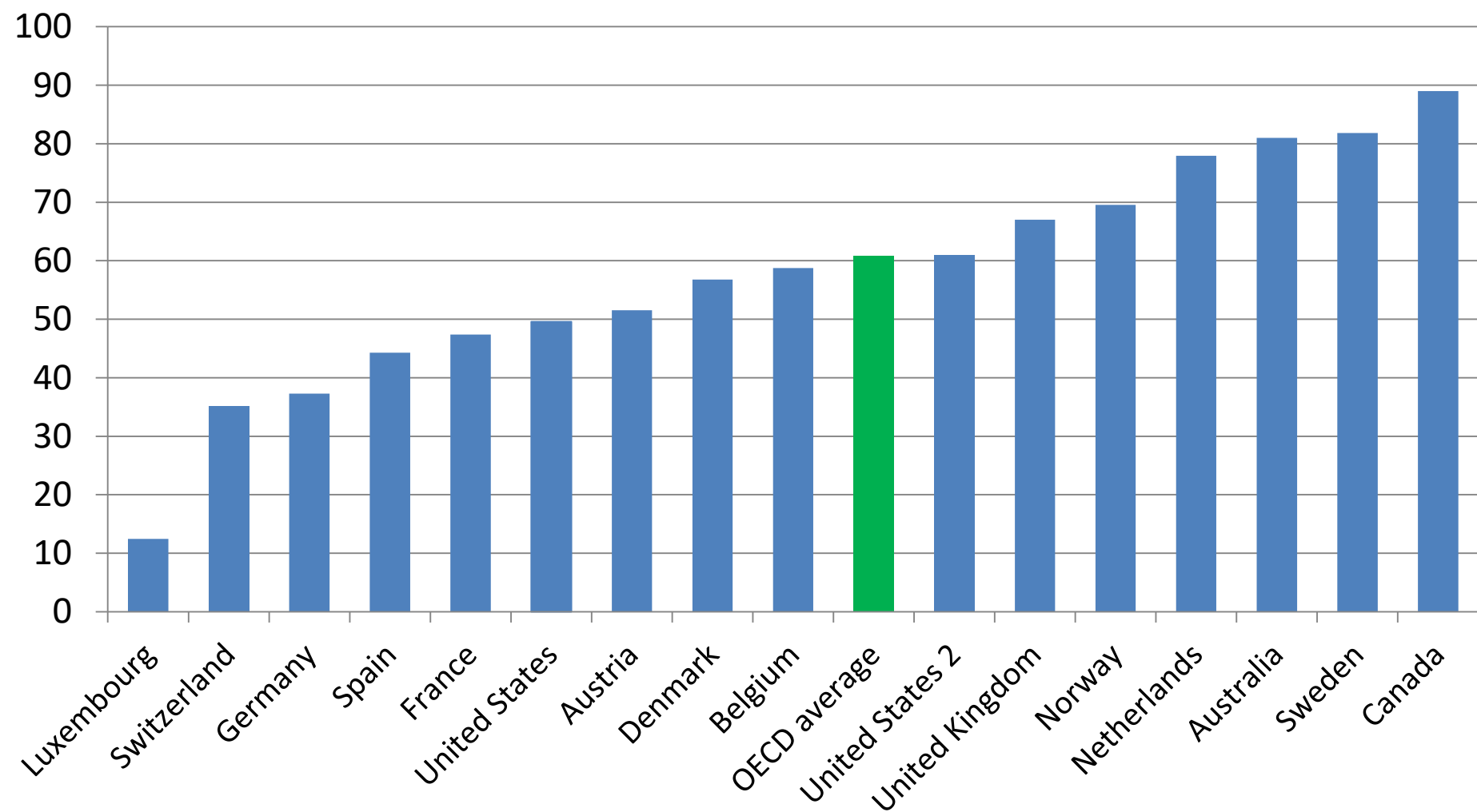
## Explaining laws

- (Europe): 'civic' and 'ethnic' nationalism → citizenship

## Explaining individual naturalization

- (N. America): individual and group variation based on skills, motivations, resources, etc.

# Comparative Naturalization Levels: Working-age immigrants with at least 10 years of residence



Source: OECD 2011

# Background

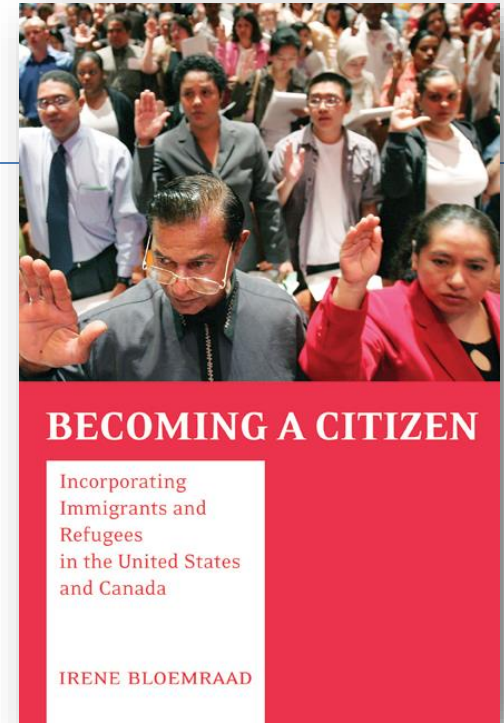
## Explaining laws

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## Explaining individual naturalization

- (N. America): individual and group variation based on skills, motivations, resources, etc.

➤ **But, does citizenship actually matter?**



# Of course it does, for those without

## Without any citizenship

- A person has no secure residence, no protection against expulsion;
- Int'l travel is very hard.



- UN push for a legal 'right' to nationality (1954 and 1961 Conventions), and moral suasion, e.g., "I Belong" campaign

# But what about for secure migrants?

**“The real prize is legal residency,  
not citizenship.”**

- Peter Spiro  
(2007: 159)



House speaker John Boehner,  
proposing legalization without a path to citizenship



# “postnational” critique<sup>+</sup>

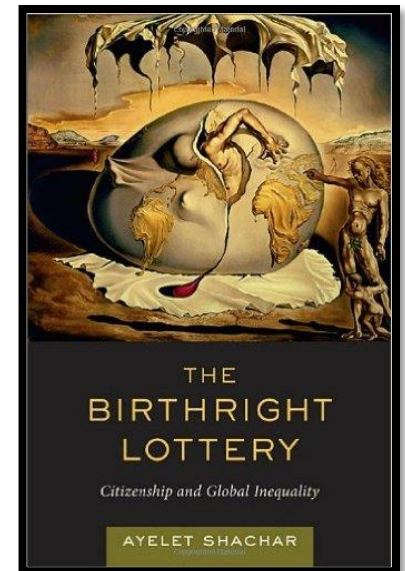
Human Rights



- Rights based on common humanity, legal residency, or social/economic contribution.
- Identity more local and transnational, rather than in nation-states

# “hollow promise” critique

- **failed promise**: substantive citizenship – defined as equality of rights, participation and outcomes – varies so widely, formal citizenship is irrelevant
- **outright deflection**: citizenship divides those in structurally vulnerable positions, hindering mobilization to true equality





# Surveying the (limited!) evidence:

- **Political and civic engagement**
  - **Socio-economic integration**
  - **Social integration/ cohesion**
- Modest 'yes' for all, but no big effects.

# Methodological challenges:

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- **Data limitations**

- Cross-sectional vs. longitudinal data
- Lack citizenship, immigration variables, timing

- **Causal identification**

- **“selection” into citizenship** [law, indiv. action]
- across countries: endogeneity

- **Responses**

- Multiple regression, IVs, diff.-in-diff. analysis, Heckman selection, fixed effects, quasi-experiments

# “Treatment” comparisons:

- narrow ‘loss’ or ‘win’ in Swiss citz vote
  - change in German citizenship law (2000)
- **Matters more for ‘non-Western’ immigrants**

# (Why) Does citizenship matter?

Beyond experimental treatment...

- narrow 'loss' or 'win' in Swiss citz vote
  - change in German citizenship law (2000)
- Matters more for 'non-Western' immigrants

**For whom, in what contexts and why does citizenship matter?**

# Theorizing Mechanisms

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- **Access** – laws restrict rights, benefits, access
- **Investment/ socialization** – by individuals (in job training, language, civic norms)
- **Social psychological effects** – well-being, identity
- **Signaling** – to others (employers, teachers...)
- **Standing/ legitimacy** – for claims-making
- **Mobilization** – invitations to participate



# Being American: rights and respect

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## What does it mean to be an American?

[*pause*] Well, what can I say? It means a lot because you have a lot of rights. Voting, a lot of things. ...for Americans, it is always better, more respect. And we, us Mexicans, there is a lot of discrimination. Even if they have fixed their residency, I still feel I am being discriminated that way. Rejected. Even if we have papers. I think that it is better to be a citizen like my children, all the boys. Maybe... they were born here and they feel much better.

(Mexican-born legal permanent resident)

# Signaling Americanness

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In your mind, what does it mean to be American?

Um... I guess, just if they have a job, a house, a family, I guess they are American. ...I guess you're only American if you were born here... If you are a naturalized citizen then you're just a person who came here.

Do you think of your parents as American?

Not really.

Why not?

Because, I don't know, they don't do anything American. They are just Asian. ...I mean 'American' is like anything a white person does. Basically, you know, have dinner with the whole family at the dinner table. Yeah. Just anything a white person does. And my parents don't do any of that. (US-born Vn-Am teen, natz parents)

# Birthright Citizenship & Legitimacy

## 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment

*Section 1: No state may abridge the privileges and immunities of any of its citizens, or deny them due process of law or equal protection of the laws.*

*Section 2: When any state denies the right to vote at any election to any of its male citizens of voting age, its representation in elections for national offices will be reduced in the same proportion.*

### Congressman Calls for End to 'Birthright Citizenship'

Says policy encourages  
illegal immigration



May 26, 2009 1:00 PM CDT

I: What does it mean, to be American?

...most people picture Americans with money, white... [but] we are all 100% Americans, we were born here. No matter what people say. We are Americans.

(US-born Mexican American)



Questions? Suggestions?  
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