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Nordic brothers before strange others: pan-national boundary making in the post-war naturalization policies of the Nordic countries

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Abstract

The naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway differentiate between non-Nordic and Nordic citizens. Nordic citizens can obtain citizenship in other Nordic countries by notification, and the residency requirement for naturalization by application is considerably lower for Nordic citizens than it is for non-Nordic applicants. The privileges of Nordic citizens in the naturalization policies of the Nordic countries is a heritage of nineteenth century pan-Scandinavianism, continued and expanded upon with post-war Nordism. Nordism, the idea of a common Nordic culture and community, has ideologically underpinned the establishment of a pan-national Nordist citizenship regime that constructs ethno-culturally close Nordic brothers as more belonging in the Nordic countries than alien, 'non-Nordic', others. The article explores change and continuity in pan-national Nordic boundary making by analysing the historical interplay between ideas on Scandinavian and Nordic kinship and naturalization policy in the Nordic countries.

Keywords: Nordism, scandinavianism, naturalization policy, pan-nationalism, boundary making, citizenship

Introduction

The naturalization policies of the four main Nordic countries, Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway, differentiate between Nordic citizens and non-Nordic aliens. Nordic citizens can obtain citizenship in other Nordic countries by notifying the relevant authorities (after a residency period between five and ten years depending on the country), and the residency requirement for acquiring citizenship through application is only two years. Non-Nordic aliens are not entitled to the acquisition of citizenship

through notification, and the residence requirement for acquiring citizenship through application is between five and nine years. Citizenship is, following Brubaker (1992), internally inclusive and externally exclusive, and functions as a powerful instrument of social closure that distinguishes those on the inside – citizens – from those on the outside – aliens. Modern political territory presupposes ways of making the distinction between those who belong and those who do not. The naturalization policies of the Nordic countries raises the question of how the Nordic countries, both as sovereign political territories and in close cooperation through supranational Nordic institutions, have presupposed ways of making distinctions not only between citizens and aliens, but between different types of aliens using a Nordist logic of belonging.

This article explores the ideas of Scandinavian and Nordic belonging that historically underpinned the establishment of the two-tiered naturalization policies of the Nordic countries following World War Two. How has this practice of Nordic boundary making been conceptualized and legitimized in official government reports and bills in the post-war period, an era of increased emphasis on universal rights and equality? I will show that Nordism, with its conception of a deep-rooted pan-Nordic community, has formed a firm ideological basis for the establishment and preservation of a Nordist citizenship regime that has continuously re-produced an ethno-cultural hierarchy of belonging in the naturalization policies of the Nordic countries. The Nordist citizenship regime that was introduced in the post-war period rests firmly on the presupposition that, on both an ethno-cultural and a civic basis, Nordic ‘brothers’ belong more naturally in the Nordic countries than do non-Nordic ‘others’. Following the taxonomy of ethnic boundary making developed by Wimmer (2013), I will historically plot and analyse the expansion and contraction, or more precisely in this case, expansion and stabilization of pan-national Nordic ethnic boundary making in naturalization policy. The article contributes to the empirical literature on ethnic boundary making by highlighting a case of modern pan-national boundary expansion (from Scandinavianism to Nordism) between sovereign nation-states, and continued pan-national exclusiveness (legal differentiation between Nordics and non-Nordics) on ethno-cultural grounds. The article also contributes to the study of pan-nationalism, a type of nationalism that has received scant attention in the literature on nationalism (Danielsson 2011).

Scandinavianism and the interwar naturalization policies of the Nordic countries

The twentieth-century concept of Norden (the Nordic countries as a culturally, socially and politically distinct region of Europe) and the ideology of Nordism grew out of the romantic ideology of nineteenth-century Scandinavianism. As a cultural movement, romantic Scandinavianism conceptualized the nations of Sweden, Denmark (including Iceland) and Norway (at the time in personal union with Sweden) as a family of brothers that shared the same cultural and linguistic heritage; a heritage that needed to be rediscovered and reconstructed in the modern age. As a pan-nationalist phenomenon, pan-Scandinavianism had the ambition of uniting the Scandinavian brethren in a Scandinavian federation or even a Scandinavian state. Like the other pan-nationalisms of the time, e.g. pan-Germanism and pan-Slavism, pan-Scandinavianism enlarged the meaning, influence and scope of nationalism in Scandinavia (Snyder 1990). The Scandinavians were grouped together on the basis of geography, religion and language, and were categorized as an in-group bound by ethno-cultural fraternity (Hilson 2006).

The idea of a politically united Scandinavia was discredited and lost political relevance in 1864, when the Swedish government refused to aid Denmark when Denmark was drawn into the Second Schleswig War with Prussia and its ally Austria over control of the borderlands of southern Denmark. From the latter half of the nineteenth century Scandinavianism did, however, give rise to the Scandinavian Monetary Union (in 1873; formally ended in 1924), a postal-union (in 1869) and extensive legislative cooperation, particularly in naturalization law. Here the idea of a specifically Scandinavian, later Nordic, commonality lived on. To make sense of the post-war development of Nordic naturalization policies, we must first analyse and compare the interwar naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark and Norway, which were the product of Scandinavian cooperation and imbued with Scandinavianism, as well as the naturalization policy of the young republic of Finland, which gained independence from Russia in 1917.

In the latter half of the nineteenth century and in the early part of the twentieth century migration to and from the Scandinavian countries was in general unregulated. In Finland, immigration control was stricter due to Russian policies on movement to and from the Russian Empire. The Nordic countries were at this time countries of emigration, and the United States was the preferred destination. Over two million emigrants left the Nordic countries for America between the mid-nineteenth

century and the closing of U.S. borders to European immigration in the 1920s. Immigration to the Nordic countries was miniscule in relation to emigration and the majority of the immigrants came from other Nordic countries. Legislation that regulated expulsion and supervision of foreigners was gradually introduced in Scandinavia, first in Denmark in 1875, then in Norway in 1901 and finally in Sweden on the eve of First World War. The primary aim of this legislation was, however, not to prevent foreigners in general from entering the Scandinavian countries, but to maintain control over potentially subversive foreign nationals and prevent the access of undesired aliens to poor relief. The Roma were especially targeted for exclusion and deportation (Engman 1997).

New naturalization policies were introduced in the Scandinavian countries in the interwar period: in 1924 in Sweden and Norway and in 1925 in Denmark. The policies were the result of intergovernmental cooperation between the three countries with aim of harmonizing the citizenship legislation of Scandinavia (SOU 1949). According to the preparatory work for the new pan-Scandinavian legislation, which functioned as a guide in later judicial praxis, citizens of the three Scandinavian countries were to be preferentially treated.

The new naturalization policies of Sweden and Norway stipulated that the minimum time of residency required for naturalization through application was five years, an increase from the previous requirement of three years. The five year minimum time of residency required for naturalization was, however, to be reserved for Scandinavians, including Icelanders. A considerably longer time of residency was to be required of persons 'who belonged to more distant peoples' (SOU 1949, 58). Norway required between seven and twelve years of residency for the naturalization of non-Scandinavian aliens, depending on the cultural closeness of the applicant's nationality to that of Norway's. In Sweden, only Scandinavian citizens and persons of Swedish descent – Swedish-speaking Finns and Estonian Swedes – were eligible for naturalization after five years of residency. At least seven years of residency was required of other aliens. Denmark did not change the time of residency required for application in its 1925 reform; the minimum residency time for naturalization remained fixed at fifteen years for aliens in general, and at ten years for citizens from Norway and Sweden (SOU 1949). The Act of Union between Iceland and Denmark in 1918 recognized Iceland as a

sovereign state in personal union with Denmark and granted Icelandic citizens in Denmark equal rights to those of Danish citizens in Iceland (Ersbøll 2013).

The first nationality act of the independent Republic of Finland was introduced in 1920; the act did not make any ethnically based distinctions between applicants. According to the act, any foreigner could be naturalized following a five-year residency period (Fagerlund and Brander 2013). The naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark and Norway discriminated between applicants according to the supposed ethno-cultural closeness of the applicant, and were markedly different from the universal naturalization policy of Finland in their nationalist and Scandinavianist framing. The ethnic boundary of the Scandinavian naturalization policies was most evident in the case of Sweden, where the residency requirement times discriminated not only on the basis of the nationality of the alien, but on his or her ethnic ancestry. Finnish and Estonian nationals of supposed Swedish descent were privileged over those Finnish and Estonian nationals who were considered not to be ethnically Swedish.

The naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark and Norway that were introduced in the mid-1920s were the product of Scandinavian cooperation that had been initiated at the end of the nineteenth century to streamline citizenship legislation and deepen Scandinavian unison. The aim was a pan-Scandinavian citizenship regime. The interwar period marked the peak of racialist and nationalist ideology in the Western world, and it is therefore hardly surprising that the naturalization policies of Sweden, Norway and Denmark were based on naturalized ideas of the nation as well as on the supposed biological superiority of the 'Nordic race' in its various iterations.

It would, however, be deceptive to characterize the ideological basis of the naturalization policies of the Scandinavian countries as simply nationalist as they in fact manifested a form of pan-nationalism that emphasized Scandinavian kinship. Pan-Scandinavianism was, to be sure, nationalist, but in a way that sought to overcome the particularism of Swedish, Danish and Norwegian nationalism by reconnecting to a pre-political past of ethno-cultural unity before the formation of the Scandinavian nation-states. Pan-Scandinavianism conceptualized Scandinavia as three states populated by the same category of people: a people who by the early twentieth century had been shown to belong together culturally and biologically, as members of the same race. Nordic and international race science added race to the mesh of 'Scandinavian-ness'. The Scandinavians, excluding the small populations of 'non-Nordic' Scandinavian citizens

such as the Saami, were conceptualized as exceptionally pure members of the superior 'Nordic/German/Aryan' race (Hammar 1964; Kemiläinen 1993; Kyllingstad 2014). Scandinavianist ethnocentrism was scientifically legitimized, and ethnic discrimination was included in both the national and the pan-Scandinavian citizenship regimes. A 'pure' Scandinavian citizen was not to be treated like any other foreigner of culturally and racially distant descent if he or she decided to make a new home in one of the neighbouring Scandinavian states.

From Scandinavianist to Nordist naturalization policies

The experiences of the Second World War provided new impetus to Scandinavian cooperation in the field of citizenship legislation. Even though Finland was not included in the immediate post-war discussions on naturalization policy reforms, the expectation of the Scandinavian citizenship commission of 1946 was that Finland would at some point join the jointly negotiated and reformed citizenship regime of Norden. Even though Finland was not directly and formally involved at this stage, it is evident that the outlook on citizenship in Sweden, Denmark and Norway had shifted from one that was Scandinavianist, i.e. including only the 'true' peoples of Sweden, Denmark and Norway and their 'descendants', to one that was Nordist, i.e. including Finland and the Finnish-speaking Finns. The explicitly racist logic of the Scandinavianist citizenship regime of the inter-war period was also discarded in the early the post-war period (Tjelmeland 2003; Jønsson and Petersen 2010; Boguslaw 2012).

The 1946 commission put forward proposals that, according to the commission, would further the goal of a common Nordic citizenship regime (SOU 1949). Following the joint draft on new legislation in 1949, the naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark and Norway were revised in 1950. The privileged position that persons of Scandinavian descent had enjoyed in the naturalization policies of Sweden and Norway was now expanded to include all (Nordic born) Nordics, including Finnish-speaking Finns. Section Six of both the Swedish and Norwegian naturalization laws of 1950 stated that an exception to the seven-year residency requirement could be made if the citizenship applicant was a non-naturalized Danish, Finnish, Icelandic or Norwegian citizen (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965).

Section Six of the Danish naturalization law of 1950 did not include the stipulations on facilitated naturalization of Nordic citizens included in Section Six of the

Swedish and Norwegian naturalization laws. The Danish law did introduce the joint Section Ten, which specified in detail under which conditions the special rules for Nordic citizens would apply, and for whom they would apply. Section Ten stipulated that under a Nordic agreement, the government could decide that one or more of the rules in Section Ten A-C should be applied in naturalization (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965); such an agreement between Sweden, Denmark and Norway came into force on 21 December 1950 (SOU 1949). Making Section Ten dependent on an agreed-upon treaty was introduced to make it possible for Finland and Iceland to later join the facilitated naturalization programme for Nordic citizens, and thus move the whole of Norden towards harmonization in naturalization policy: towards a Nordic citizenship regime in line with the pan-nationalist boundary expansion of Nordism.

According to Rule A in Section Ten, birth in an agreement country was equivalent to birth in the country of potential naturalization, and residency in an agreement country (until the declaring person's twelfth birthday) was equivalent to residency in the new country. According to Rule B in Section Ten, a citizen from an agreement country, who had acquired his or her citizenship by a mode of acquisition other than naturalization, could acquire citizenship in another agreement country through declaration after a residency period of ten years. The person acquiring citizenship through declaration had to be between the ages of 21 and 60, and with no history of imprisonment (or any state sanction equivalent to imprisonment). The introduction of the declaration rule was legitimized ideologically and instrumentally: it confirmed the close relationship between the Nordic countries, and would also ease the pressure on the countries' naturalization systems. Rule C of Section Ten furthermore stipulated that persons who had lost their original citizenship and had subsequently become citizens of another Nordic country could recover their original citizenship by submitting a declaration to that effect to the relevant authority, after having taken up residency in the original country of citizenship (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965).

All of the new rules were based on the idea of close-knit kinship between the Nordic peoples. The rules were underpinned by the explicit assumption that a person born in a Nordic country was more suited to life in another Nordic country than non-Nordic persons, and that becoming a citizen of another Nordic country was different in kind from becoming a citizen of a non-Nordic country. Because Sweden, Denmark, Norway and Finland were all part of the same transnational Nordic community the

connection to the country of birth would be not be severed if one chose to become a citizen of one the other Nordic countries.

The privileged naturalization rules for Nordic citizens that were introduced in the coordinated naturalization policy reforms of Sweden, Denmark and Norway were politically legitimized with reference to the importance of expressing the togetherness (*samhörighet*) of the Nordic countries, even if the rules would only apply to a small number of persons (SOU 1949). The proposal of the commission to facilitate naturalization for Nordic citizens presupposed the construction of a Nordic community, and was intended to facilitate the establishment of such a community. The commission also stressed that the common Nordic culture and way of life were factors that justified facilitated naturalization:

The common cultural and linguistic foundation of Norden and the likeness in regards to societal structures of course entail that the citizens of the Nordic countries as a rule grow into the social conditions of another Nordic country much quicker than foreigners from other countries. (SOU 1949, 58)

According to the commission, 'natural-born' Nordic citizens integrated faster than non-Nordic foreigners did. The instrument of political inclusion – citizenship – should therefore discriminate between Nordics and non-Nordics. The right to enter the inclusive sphere of the state with concomitant membership rights was coupled with the capacity to integrate, a connection that, after a period of reduced importance in the late twentieth century, has again grown in salience in contemporary Nordic immigration politics.

In comparison to the rationale of the interwar period, which drew the boundary of commonness and kinship according to 'Scandinavian-ness' and excluded Finnish-speaking Finland, the new post-war Nordic citizenship regime extended the boundary of community to include all Nordic countries and non-naturalized citizens, including Finnish-speaking Finns. The inclusion of the Finnish-speaking Finns in the category of Nordic citizens came with a provision, however: 'Concerning Finnish citizens of Finnish-speaking origin [it] should, in addition, be demanded that the applicant masters the language of the new country' (SOU 1949, 58). This provision was not included in the new naturalization legislation of the Scandinavian countries, but was to function as a guideline in the naturalization praxis of Sweden, Denmark and Norway.

The concept of Norden replaced the narrower concept of Scandinavia in the ideological legitimization of the new citizenship regime, but the ethno-cultural basis of Scandinavianism lingered on in the initial effort to introduce a pan-Nordic citizenship regime. Finns of 'Finnish-speaking origin' – a vestige of the racist distinctions between Finnish-speaking Finns, who were categorized as belonging to the 'East Baltic race', and Swedish-speaking Finns, who were considered to be of the 'Nordic race' (Kemiläinen 1998), – were now conceptualized as a Nordic people. Finnish-speaking Finns therefore gained the same naturalization privileges as Scandinavian citizens, but only if they could prove that they had mastered one of the Scandinavian languages. The Finnish-speaking Finns were now considered to be brothers of the Scandinavians in a reconstituted and expanded Nordic family, but the brotherhood was conditioned on the willingness of the new (step-) brothers to learn the language of the old core members of the family.

Post-war Nordism and the expansion of Scandinavian naturalization privileges

The scope of Nordic cooperation widened from the 1950s on when the political construction of Norden began in earnest. The Nordic Council (an arena for parliamentary cooperation) was established in 1952, and the Nordic Passport Union (which allows Nordic citizens to travel and reside in the Nordic countries without residency permits and passports) was implemented in 1954, as was the common Nordic labour market. These intra-Nordic reforms gave impetus to Nordic cooperation over citizenship legislation. Upon the formal initiation of the meeting of the Nordic ministers of justice, a commission of experts was called together in 1961 to overhaul legislation and give recommendations on the revision of naturalization policy in Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway. The directive of the joint Nordic commission stated that the commission was to investigate ways to further facilitate the naturalization process of Nordic citizens in the Nordic countries (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965).

According to the commission, the need for a revision of legislation and more liberal naturalization policies for Nordic citizens had become pressing in light of the advancement of Nordic cooperation and the general aspirations of the Nordic countries to further deepen cooperation. The aim of the Scandinavian citizenship commission of 1946 to make Nordic citizens feel at home in the whole of Norden also guided the Nordic citizenship commission of 1961. The 1961 commission reproduced the legitimization for the Scandinavian reforms of 1950; the new Nordic naturalization

policies were 'a judicial expression of the togetherness [*samhörighet*] that actually exists between the Nordic peoples' (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965, 13). By the beginning of the 1960s, the Nordic community that the 1946 commission had envisioned when introducing its reforms had taken shape, so when the 1961 commission began its work, the Nordic citizens shared membership in what could be characterized as a trans-Nordic community of free movement and social rights (Petersen 2006). The 1961 commission's revisions of the naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark, Finland and Norway had been introduced in all four countries by the end of the 1960s.

Finland formally joined the new Nordic agreement on citizenship legislation in 1969 when the country signed, together with Sweden, Denmark and Norway, the renewed agreement on the application of the rules in Section Ten of the citizenship acts of the respective countries (Boguslaw 2012). The most notable result of Finland joining Nordic cooperation in naturalization policy was the introduction of the declaration procedure for the acquisition of citizenship for Nordic citizens that was in place in the other Nordic countries (Fagerlund and Brander 2013). This meant that by the early 1970s, all non-naturalized Nordic citizens could become citizens of another Nordic country simply by notifying the authorities of their wish to acquire citizenship, provided that they had resided in the country for a minimum of seven years.

The rule stipulating that only non-naturalized Nordic citizens could become citizens of another Nordic country through declaration was a boundary making feature of Nordic naturalization policy that harkened back to the Scandinavianist differentiation between applicants on the basis of the ethnic and racial nearness to the Scandinavians. The residency times required of Nordic citizens for naturalization through application had also been lowered across the board by the end of 1960s. As in the case of acquiring citizenship through declaration, naturalized Nordic citizens were not considered to be 'true Nordics' and were subjected to the same residency time requirements as non-Nordic foreigners when applying for citizenship in another Nordic country (Nordisk udredningsserie 1965). The exclusion of non-naturalized Nordic citizens clearly discriminated between nationals of same state on the basis of descent, much in the same way that earlier Scandinavian naturalization policies had privileged applicants of 'Scandinavian origin' or other 'closely related' kinship groups.

Denmark made the largest reduction in required residency, lowering the residency time from ten to three years; Sweden and Norway reduced the time from five

years to three; and Finland introduced facilitated acquisition of Finnish citizenship for Nordic citizens in its 1968 Nationality Act (*Kansalaisuuslaki 1968*). By the early 1970s, the residency requirement for Nordic citizens was less than half the residency time required for non-Nordic foreigners (except in Finland, where the time of residency requirement was comparatively lower), and a two-pronged and privileged pathway to naturalization for non-naturalized Nordic citizens had been firmly established.

The key concept in the Nordist legitimization of the privileged pathway to citizenship of Nordic-born Nordic citizens was *samhörighet*. *Samhörighet* is a Swedish word that is defined in the following way in the *National Encyclopaedia of Sweden*: '[the feeling] of closeness and likeness in regards to another phenomenon, often on a deep and sometimes on a mystical level' (*Nationalencyklopedin* 2015). The equivalent words for *samhörighet* in Danish (*samhørighed*), Norwegian (*nærhet, fellesskap*) and Finnish (*yhteenkuuluvuus*) express the same meaning: togetherness, a sense and state of belonging together.

The racist and ethno-nationalist reasoning of superior and inferior, closer and more distant races and nations, was no longer explicitly used from the 1960s on, but the concept of Nordic *samhörighet* still cast the Nordics as an in-group – a family – of bounded, historically rooted solidarity. The Nordic naturalization policies of the late 1960s and early 1970s were, to be sure, a consequence of the rapid developments in Nordic cooperation that had earlier taken place. Post-war Nordic cooperation reached a high-water mark at the end of the 1960s when Nordek (a Nordic economic community; the Nordic version of the European Economic Community [EEC]) almost became a reality. Nordek was ultimately undone in 1970 when Finland rejected the project due to the stress that Denmark's aspiration to also become a member of the EEC put on Finland's precarious relationship with the Soviet Union (Aunesluoma 2006).

Post-war Nordic cooperation ideologically underpinned and legitimized the idea of Norden as a community populated by culturally similar and politically like-minded people(s) who shared the same model of citizenship. This constituted a more civic-based conception of brotherhood compared to the ethno-cultural and racial conceptualizations of Scandinavian brotherhood, but still it divided the world into those of the North – the Nordics – from those not of the North – the non-Nordics.

Enduring brotherhood in a time of divergence

Cooperation to harmonize the citizenship legislation of the Nordic countries was formally ended in 1979. Brochmann and Seland (2010) suggest that the reason for is to be found in the growing political salience of naturalization policy as it pertained to questions of nationhood in a time of rapidly changing international and migratory contexts. The different historical conceptions of nationhood of the Nordic countries that were partially subsumed in the era of Nordic cooperation have again reasserted themselves due to internationalization and immigration. In other words, the world (through economic globalization, the European Union and the establishment of an international citizenship regime) has encroached on Norden, and the Nordic countries have diverged in their response. The different positions taken up by the Nordic countries due to these changes have been manifested in their national citizenship regimes. The post-1979 divergence has been the most pronounced between Sweden and Denmark (Brochmann and Seeland 2010; Ersbøll 2013).

Since the end of the 1970s, Sweden has, in the spirit of multiculturalism and inclusiveness, liberalized its naturalization policy. Sweden abolished the practice of requiring language skills in Swedish for naturalization in the 1980s, and allowed for dual citizenship in 2001. Nordic citizens have, however, remained privileged in Swedish naturalization policy. According to the 2001 Nationality Act Nordic citizens who have not acquired citizenship through naturalization can be naturalized through application after a residency time of only two years, a reduction of one year in comparison to the act of 1968. The residency time requirement for naturalization through declaration for Nordic citizens was also further reduced, from seven years to five. The special rules for Nordic citizens were briefly discussed and legitimized within one historically prescribed sentence in the official government report that the 2001 Nationality Act was based on: 'The rule [section 11] expresses that in questions that pertain to citizenship one ought to be able to consider the togetherness (*samhörighet*) that exists between the Nordic countries' (SOU 1999, 101).

In the latest official government report on the Swedish naturalization policy (SOU 2013: 2012), written by the 2012 citizenship commission, the special rules are discussed in the following way:

The domicile requirement of two years for Nordic citizens must be seen in the light of historical ties and great cultural and societal similarities between Sweden and the other Nordic countries. It is of course not possible to draw any safe conclusions in regards to an individual's prerequisite to, for instance, learn Swedish conditions on the grounds that he or she is a Nordic citizen. The possibilities to gain foothold in Swedish society is also dependent on more factors than, e.g., historical ties and geographical closeness – this is at least the case in a globalized world. Nonetheless it is reasonable to assume that Nordic citizens in general need a shorter time period than other applicants to familiarize themselves with Swedish conditions. The fact that Sweden for a long time has facilitated the acquirement of citizenship for Nordic citizens must also be considered. (SOU 2013, 227)

In contrast to earlier commissions, the 2012 citizenship commission did not present the preferential treatment of Nordic citizens as a natural consequence of Nordic togetherness, instead it emphasized the point that it was reasonable to assume that Nordic citizens would adjust more quickly to Swedish society than non-Nordics. The commission also referred to tradition to legitimize the privileging of Nordic citizens. The term *samhörighet* was no longer used, and the commonplace references of earlier official government reports to the continuing advancement of Nordic cooperation and the making of a Nordic political community had shifted to references to a historical community. The 2012 commission supported the continuation of the special rules, but it could no longer accept that naturalized Nordic citizens were denied the right to acquire Swedish citizenship through declaration, and proposed that this provision be removed (SOU 2013). This marks an ideological shift away from the Scandinavianist heritage of ethno-cultural bias in Swedish naturalization policy, a move that Norway had already made.

Even though Sweden currently has one of the most liberal citizenship regimes in Europe (Papadopoulos 2011), the most critical stance on privileging Nordic citizens can be found in the Norwegian material. The official government report NOU 2000:32 (*Lov om erverv og tap av norsk statsborgerskap*) questioned the special rules for Nordic citizens:

The symbolic value [of the special rules] can in itself serve a good enough purpose even in the future. The importance of it in today's society can however be discussed. Questions related to the EEA [European Economic Area] agreements are for many more important than those that concern Norden. The EEA agreements have also contributed to the reduced importance of Nordic legislative co-operation—that which has happened to co-operation in naturalization

legislation is but one example of this. The fact that there the coordination of legislation is no longer stressed should also be of consequence to the joint Nordic rules of § 10—the section had a common regulation as its starting point....To conclude it is worth pointing out that the naturalization law of 1950 came into existence in a time when citizenship was much more important than it is today. (NOU 2000, 260)

In the eyes of the Norwegian commission, Nordism, in particular the naturalization privileges of Nordic citizens, was a historical convention that seemed redundant and out-dated in the new era of Europeanism. The commission viewed the facilitated access to citizenship for Nordic citizens as a relic that at most carried a symbolic value of Nordism. Nordic *samhörighet* was no longer a thriving political sentiment, but rather phenomenon of the past that path-dependently lingered on in naturalization policy. Tradition dictated that the rules were continued. The special rules were still upheld in the new Citizenship Act of Norway, but the Norwegian shift away from earlier forms of ethno-culturally based Nordism was manifested by making naturalized Nordic citizens eligible for the acquirement of citizenship through declaration in the mid-2000s (Ot.prp. nr. 41 [2004–2005]).

The Finnish Nationality Act of 2003 also maintained the naturalization privileges of Nordic citizens. The bill for the act legitimized the preferential treatment of non-naturalized Nordic citizens by referring to Nordic mutuality and the similarities between the Nordic societies. According to the government bill, a Nordic applicant could be expected to attain the skills to act independently in Finnish society in an extraordinarily fast way due to the similarities between the societies of Norden (RP 235/2002 rd). The bill legitimized the privileges of Nordic citizens instrumentally: Finland should uphold mutuality in the granting of privileges, and a Nordic citizen was more likely to integrate into Finnish society more quickly and successfully than a non-Nordic foreigner. Cultural closeness, historical ties and Nordic cooperation were not explicit arguments of the bill; neither the historically constituted ideological basis of Nordism nor the conception of Norden as a political community remained key points of reference in upholding the entitlement of Nordic citizens.

In Denmark, descendants of Nordic citizens were the only ones not affected by the restrictive turn of the Danish citizenship regime in the 2000s. The special rules for non-naturalized Nordic citizens governing entitlement (*infodelserett*) to Danish citizenship remained in place, with one exception: a provision on the special rules for

Nordic citizens was introduced in 2002 that stated that Nordic citizens who wished to acquire Danish citizenship should prove that they thereby forfeited their former citizenship. All Nordic countries had ordered the loss of citizenship in cases of voluntary acquisition of a foreign citizenship, although the situation changed in 2001 when Sweden accepted dual citizenship. By making Nordic citizens' acquisition of citizenship by declaration conditional on proof that any other citizenship will thereby be renounced, the new Danish provision neutralized the effects of Sweden's, and later Finland's, introduction of dual citizenship in Danish naturalization policy (Ersbøll 2013).

Denmark has upheld the principle of an undivided citizenship and continues to exclude naturalized Nordic citizens from the privileges granted to Nordic-born citizens. Denmark has also institutionalized language skill requirements in its naturalization policy. Language skill requirements were a common Nordic practice until Sweden abandoned the requirement in the 1980s, with Norway following suit shortly thereafter. Norway later reintroduced a language requirement for obtaining citizenship in 2005 (Brochmann and Seeland 2010). The new Danish language skill requirements even mark a return to a Scandinavianist conception of belonging in Danish naturalization policy: applicants who have received their primary education in Norwegian or Swedish are exempted from the language requirement. Furthermore, Swedish- and Norwegian-speaking applicants do not have to pass the citizenship test that was introduced in 2006 (Circular No. 9253/2013). The current Danish naturalization policies continue to privilege Nordic-born citizens, but differentiate between Nordics on the basis of language. Finnish-born applicants, for instance, are in principle differentiated on ethno-cultural grounds with the Swedish-speaking Finns given an automatic pass, and the Finnish-speaking Finns (again) having to prove their Danish (Scandinavian) linguistic and cultural credentials.

The divergence in naturalization policy between the Nordic countries since the 1980s has not lead to the discontinuation of the preferential treatment of Nordic citizens established in the early post-war period. The distinct policies regulating facilitated access to citizenship for Nordics have, however, been affected by the diverging policy paths of the Nordic countries. The liberalization of naturalization policy in Sweden and Norway has expanded Nordic privileges to naturalized Nordic citizens, while the language requirements of Denmark, the most restrictive of the Nordic states, favours speakers of Norwegian and Swedish.

From living *samhörighet* to historical tradition

The conception of Norden as a transnational community of destiny was, as Stråth and Sørensen (1997) have argued, a cultural construction with deep historical and ideological roots. In the post-war era the idea of a Nordic community was not only constructed discursively, it was also politically realized in national and intra-Nordic policy-making. The cultural construction of Norden and Nordic policy-making were intertwined parts of the same process: the making of Norden as a unique region of democracy, cooperation, prosperity, equality and fairness that would serve as a model for the rest of the world. The notion of Nordic superiority was an integral part of post-war Nordism.

In contrast to Scandinavianism, Nordism included Finland and the Finns as a 'brethren people' (*brödrafolk*) of the Scandinavians in an expanded conception of Nordic commonality. Scandinavian brotherhood had been manifested in the naturalization policies of Sweden, Denmark and Norway in the early twentieth century. Persons adjudged to be part of the peoples (or even people) of Scandinavia were privileged in naturalization, on the grounds that they were of the same Scandinavian stock and therefore possessed the same cultural affinities as the Scandinavian nation they wished to join as citizens. Persons of non-Scandinavian descent were conceptualized as 'distant others', i.e. they could become citizens, but their different heritage did not provide them with the same presupposed natural affinity for and distinctive features of 'Scandinavian-ness' that underpinned the introduction of Scandinavianist naturalization policies.

When Nordism expanded on the ideology of Scandinavianism and became the primary ideology of intra-Nordic relations, all non-naturalized Finnish citizens were granted the same privileges enjoyed by the Scandinavians in the naturalization policies of the Scandinavian countries. The construction of Norden was thus inclusive in regards to Finland and the Finns, in particular the Finnish-speaking Finns, but it also demarcated Norden as a bounded entity in relation to the rest of the world. The Nordic nations came together in a *samhörighet* that transcended former boundaries, but at the same time the conception of Nordic *samhörighet* divided the world into an exceptional Norden and a not as advanced, even inferior, non-Norden. The Scandinavianist exclusiveness in naturalization policy was thus continued, albeit articulated in a different way, in the expansion from a Scandinavian to a Nordic boundary. The privileges of Nordic citizens in

naturalization policy were, however, in the post-war age of Nordic cooperation and Nordism, legitimized with reference to the similar and exceptional societal models of the Nordic countries and to shared membership in a political community in the making. Preferential treatment of Nordics was no longer justified with explicit reference to racial kinship and a shared historical territory.

Nordism waned as a political ideology from the 1980s on, and the idea of Norden as a political community was eclipsed by the construction of a political community on the European level—namely, the European Union—which formally conceptualizes a shared membership among the citizens of the union in the form of EU citizenship. While the Nordic countries never formally introduced a ‘Norden citizenship’, the intra-Nordic social and political rights of Nordic citizens that were established in the post-war period have many of the trappings of a supranational citizenship.

The concept of *samhörighet*, with its connotation of living kinship, is no longer used to legitimize Nordic privileges in naturalization policy. The facilitated naturalization of Nordic citizens is still a part of the citizenship regimes of the Nordic countries, but has been legitimized with reference to tradition since the end of the 1990s. During the high tide of Nordism in the 1960s, the common culture and welfare model of the Nordic countries was conceptualized as a progressive force in the construction of an ever-closer Norden; since the end of the 1990s, Norden has been conceptualized as a historical legacy that needs to be recognized and honoured. As the examples from Norway and Sweden show, since the early 2000s the preservation of this tradition has been discussed in a defensive (in the case of Sweden) and outright critical (in the case of Norway) manner in official government reports on naturalization. At the same time non-Nordic immigration to the Nordic countries has grown considerably. For example, in 1961 immigration to the Nordic countries was mostly intra-Nordic. Fifty-one per cent of all immigrants to the Nordic countries came from another Nordic country that year (*Yearbook of Nordic Statistics* 1962). In 2013 intra-Nordic immigration only accounted for sixteen per cent of the total immigration to the Nordic countries (*Nordic Statistical Yearbook* 2014).

Even though immigration has become one of the most hotly debated topics in contemporary Nordic politics, the privileges of movement and naturalization of Nordic citizens have not generally been part of Nordic immigration debates. The populist radical right parties of the Nordic countries, in particular the Danish People's

Party, have, however, been critical of the right of free movement and settlement of Nordic citizens as a part of their pronounced resistance to immigration of 'non-Nordics' and 'non-Europeans', especially Muslims. In 2007 the Danish People's Party called for a Danish break with one of the basic pillars of Nordic co-operation, i.e. the right for Nordic citizens to settle in another Nordic country. The Danish People's Party argued that the scale of immigration to Sweden would break-down the Swedish welfare state, leading to a mass exodus of Swedish welfare dependents into the still standing Danish welfare state (*Politiken*, June 11, 2007). The populist right-wing parties are, to be sure, highly nationalist, but in a hierarchical way that overlaps with historical ethnic hierarchies of pan-nationalist Scandinavianism and Nordism. According to Jungar and Jupskås (2014), the Danish People's Party, the Sweden Democrats and the True Finns can be classified as a new and distinct Nordic populist radical right party family. It remains to be seen if this new party family will make efforts to expand the boundaries of Danish, Swedish and Finnish nationalism, and try to re-produce and build on the Nordic pan-nationalism of the twentieth century in the twenty-first century.

Since the early post-war period, the naturalization policies of the Nordic countries have provided a privileged path to citizenship for Nordic citizens; they will continue to do so for the foreseeable future. This path was initially legitimized with reference to the construction of a Nordic community, which included the previously racialized and excluded Finnish-speaking Finns. One might even argue that the privileged access to citizenship of all Nordic-born Nordic citizens that was established in the post-war period was a part of a drive towards Wimmerian (2013, 54–55) ethnogenesis on the basis of ethnoregional distinction that shifted the Scandinavian linguistic and blood-based boundary towards a more inclusive cultural, territorial and political level.

The concept of Nordic *samhörighet*—a concept imbedded with meanings of family and brotherhood—was the concept of choice in the legitimization process of the post-war pan-Nordic citizenship regime. By employing *samhörighet* and coupling it to the Nordic model of welfare as well as the similar societal cultures of the Nordic countries, the category of Nordic was judicially introduced as an intermediate, pan-national, category in the naturalization policies of the Nordic countries. Preferential access to citizenship on ethno-cultural grounds is common, but this is usually based on particular ethno-cultural relatedness to the dominant 'nation', ethnic group, of the

nation-state.¹ What is striking about the post-war naturalization policies of the Nordic nation-states is that they also privileged persons that were not of the nation in a *jus sanguinis* sense, but who were nonetheless conceptualized as ethno-culturally related to the nation through their birth in the territory of Norden, a form of pan-national Nordic *jus soli* dependent on the acquisition of citizenship in a Nordic country by birth. The non-Nordic naturalized alien could never be of Norden in the same way as Nordic-born Nordic even if he or she was a full citizen of a Nordic country, but the children of the naturalized alien could breach the boundary of Nordicism and be included in the Nordic community of brotherhood and *samhörighet*. The privileges of Nordic-born citizens in naturalization policy expressed a more exclusive conception of belonging than the inclusive universalism of the liberal Nordic welfare-states. National belonging was, in principle, accessible to all; pan-national fellowship in the form of naturalization privileges was a birthright. Citizenship is, as emphasized by Brubaker (1992), an instrument of social closure that distinguishes insiders from outsiders. In Norden citizenship was (and is) also used to differentiate those of Norden (insiders) from those not of Norden (outsiders), a case of hierarchical social closure in the service of pan-national boundary making.

The Nordic countries continue to favour Nordic citizens in their naturalization policies, but the Nordist legitimation of this practice is no longer expressed in a self-evident way. The apparent need to justify Nordic privileges marks a return in discursive practice to the time when the privileges of Nordic citizens were first introduced and institutionalized. At the time, the contemporary making of Norden was presented as both a natural course of history and as a topical political process; now, the privileges are presented as a historical heritage of that time. The notion of the superior integrative capabilities of Nordic Man (and before him Scandinavian Man) have, however, kept its relevance and continues to justify the privileges of Nordic brothers over strange others in Nordic naturalization policies. Nordic Man occupies one end of an increasingly salient scale of 'cultural closeness' that influences the politics of exclusion and inclusion at and within the borders of the Nordic countries.

¹ The Kola Norwegians, descendants of Norwegian nationals that settled in the Kola Peninsula in Russia in the late nineteenth century, are a Nordic case of this. The residency requirement for naturalization is two years for Kola Norwegians, making them as privileged as Nordic citizens in Norwegian naturalisation policy.

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