

Immigrants' Citizenship and Social Rights in Liberal Democratic Countries: A Special Focus on Norway

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Abstract

This paper attempts to examine immigrants' access to citizenship and their social rights in liberal democratic immigrant welcoming states, especially in Norway. Based on secondary information, this paper finds that immigrants need to acquire citizenship through naturalization process in order to get equal chances to participate in various social rights, full accesses into labour market, contributory social program, non-contributory social program, and social investment program. Acquiring citizenship depends on several conditions, qualifications and requirements. For example, in many liberal democratic countries, immigrants are required to reside in a country for various periods of time, between 2 and 12 years depending on a country's citizenship policies. In addition, immigrants must also fulfill a series of condition such as passing a Language test; maintaining Loyalty and Commitments to the country; maintaining Good Character, etc. to become citizen. Likewise, in the case of Norway, immigrants are required 7 years legal residence in order to naturalize. In addition, they have to participate in the mandatory 300 hours Norwegian Language course, including a 50 hours information course on Norwegian society and politics.

Introduction

In liberal democratic theory, citizenship is defined as an institution which provides political cohesion and creates a status of citizen that seems inclusive and opens to all (Castle and Davidson, 2000:84). Likewise,

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T.H. Marshall (1950:6) argues in his inventive work ‘*Citizenship and Social Class*’ that basic human equality is associated with the concept of full membership of a community. Thus, citizenship provides equality among citizens. Based on this principle- full membership of community- contemporary Western liberal democratic countries are offering equal benefits and entitlement to their citizens. However, immigrants in these countries are not entitled to receive an equal status as that of a citizen. Immigrants with legal residence for many years generally achieve a special status and are granted some social rights, but they are often denied some political rights. Castle and Davidson (2000:95) propose the term *quasi citizen* to define the status of these migrant people. Besides, many long term immigrants who do not have legal status such as illegal migrants, unauthorized family entrants, refused asylum seeker, former legal residents, etc. are not entitled to most social rights that legal residents enjoy. Martiniello (1994, as cited in Castle and Davidson, 2000, p.97) proposed the term *margizens* for this group, who are marginalized in the liberal western world. Thus, to get full access in rights, immigrants need to acquire a citizen status because this is the only way for immigrant to achieve equal chances to participate in various areas of society like politics, work, welfare system and other cultural aspects.

Therefore, one of the most current significant discussions in migration studies is Citizenship. Bauböck (2007:9) argues that citizenship has emerged as an important area of research since the 1980s due to changing migration and settlement pattern in Europe. At the same time, from the perspective of equality principle, immigrants equal access in citizenship right and entitlement have emerged as an important debate as they pay taxes, obey the law and abide by other social and community level obligations in modern liberal states (Fix and Laglagaron 2002:1). In these circumstances, the present paper attempts to examine immigrants’ access to Citizenship and their social rights in liberal democratic countries¹, especially in Norway. Hence, the main research question of

¹ Liberal democracy is understood a form of government in which representative democracy operates under the principles of liberalism, i.e. protecting the rights of the person, which are generally enshrined in law. A liberal democratic country is affiliated with numerous factors. Huntington notes that perhaps the most important factor is economic development which leads to more widespread literacy, education, and urbanization, a larger middle class, and the development of values and attitudes supportive of democracy (Huntington, 1991). In this study we used the term liberal democratic countries to mean welfare countries of Europe, North America and Australia those are practicing principle of liberalism. For instance, Germany, the UK, Australia, Canada, the USA.

this paper is *how do immigrants acquire citizenship status and what type of social rights are being offered for immigrants in modern liberal democratic countries, including Norway?* In attempting to answer the research question, the first section of this paper is concerned with a theoretical discussion on citizenship and social rights. The second section of this paper focuses on results and discussions. Finally, in the last section, a conclusive remark is presented on the research questions of this study.

Theoretical Discussion of Citizenship

Citizenship: Meaning and Dimension

The meaning of citizenship has been proliferated and undergone through many transformations over the time. It has been argued that though the time of Athenian Democracy and Roman Republic, the core meaning of citizenship was a status of membership in a self governing political community (Bauböck, 2007:15). This meaning has been revived later, especially in the transition of authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes (Ibid). In recent time the governmental discourse about citizenship has emphasized on virtues of self-reliance and the responsibilities of individuals that aim to ensure the contribution towards wider society, which is recognized as more than active participation of political life (ibid).

However, it has been shown that originally the word of citizen has come from the Latin word ‘*civis*’ or ‘*civitas*’, which used to mean a member of an ancient City State (Bachmann and Staerklé,2003: 14). In addition, it has also been found that the word ‘*civitas*’ was a Latin interpretation of the Greek term ‘*Polites*’ that used to mean a member of a Greek polis. Nevertheless, the first accurate definition of citizenship has been found in Aristotle’s famous book “Politics”, where he defines a citizen as a participator in the republic, or democratic politics, as a full member of a city life. As it is defined by Aristotle (as cited in Waldron, 1993:283) “A citizen is one who has a share in both ruling and being ruled”. It is argued that his definition is based on a we/they dichotomy, as his definition emphasizes the distinction between the individuals who are members of the demos and who are not (Ivic, 2011). Moreover, in a broad sense, citizenship used to refers to a membership and participation in a community (Marshall, 1950). It represents, according to the Kofman (1995, as cited in Currie, 2008), both entitlement and responsibilities of

citizen who belong to the nation state. Likewise Bellamy points out (as cited in Currie, 2008) that the key components of contemporary citizenship are rights, participation and solidarity.

With regard to the dimension of citizenship, by reviewing the evolution of western definition of citizenship, Bloemraad and et al (2008:155-156) argue that western citizenship stands on four dimensions: i) legal status, ii) rights, iii) political participation, and iv) a sense of belonging that can complement or stand in tension with each other. First, the legal status basically examines the entitlement of the status of citizenship, which can be achieved on the basis of place of birth, parental origin, or both. According to this dimension, however, immigrants, are not entitled to acquire citizenship through birth and parental origin, they usually acquired citizenship through a naturalization process (ibid). Second, rights are related to liberal understanding that examines the relationship between individuals and the state². Here, states guarantee basic rights to individuals, and in return individual are obliged to pay taxes, complete compulsory education, and obey the laws of the country (ibid). Moreover, the proponents of third dimension explain that citizenship can be defined as political participation and other types of social and economical inclusion³. Finally, the fourth dimension is based on the philosophies of ‘republican citizenship and communitarianism to the study of nation building’ (ibid).

Citizenship and Social rights: Theoretical framework

According to Marshall (1950) Citizenship is a process of social inclusion and membership which ensures full access in rights, as he points out:

“Citizenship is status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which status is endowed. There is no universal principle that determines what those rights and duties should be, but societies in which citizenship is a developing institution create an image of an ideal citizenship against which achievement can be measured and towards which aspirations can be directed”(Marshall,1950: 18).

² This dimension is derived from the study of Baubock, 1994); Janoski,1998; Somers,2006; Tilly, 1996; and Yuval-Davis,1997 (Bloemraad and et al, 2008).

³ Baubock (2005) and Somers (2005) viewed this dimension as political participation. However, it is also explained as social and economic inclusion by Marshall, 1950; Somers, 2005; and Yuval-Davis, 1999 (Bloemraad and et al, 2008).

Marshall (1950) argues that citizenship is a unified concept that abides to the three types of rights- civil, political, and social rights. Here, civil right are associated with individual freedom and liberty, political rights refer to those rights that enable an individual’s participation in the exercise of political power, and finally, social rights ensure a certain level of economic wellbeing and security of individuals in the society. Each of the right has a distinct evolution period, which happened in a double process: a *process of fusion* which was geographical, and a *process of separation* which was functional (ibid).

The Table 1 elaborates the elements of citizenship explained by Marshall (1950). First, according to the Table 1, citizenship evolved with the attainment of civil right in the eighteenth century, followed by political and social right in the nineteenth and twentieth century respectively. Indeed, with regard to civil rights, Marshall argues that the most mentionable act which contributed to the development of civil right are the Toleration Act and the abolition of censorship of the press in England (ibid). In addition, Marshall argues in terms of economic concentration, basic civil rights indicated the right to work, i.e., choice of occupation. Thus, it created the concepts of customs and status. However, the barriers to the full and equal exercise of civil right had been tried to abolish by the establishment of Country Courts in England, to provide cheap justice for ordinary people in 1846 (ibid).

Table 1: Elements of citizenship by T.H Marshall

Types	Definition	Formative periods
Civil	Composed of the rights necessary for individual freedom-liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts and the right to Justice.	Eighteenth century
Political	Right to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or an elector of the members of such a body.	nineteenth century
Social	Right to a modicum of economic welfare and security and the right to share to the fill in social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in society.	twentieth century

Source: Authors’ elaboration based on Marshall’s (1950) discussion

In contrast, the formative period of political rights [Table 1] began in the early nineteenth century, through the attachment of civil right with the status of freedom. It was mostly related with the granting of old rights to a new section of people rather than introducing new rights, for example, the reform of 1832 in England was an expansion of the franchise by adding leaseholders and tenants of sufficient economic substance (ibid). However, this was politically meaningful though it was an infantile initiative, as Marshall argued “it did not confer a right, but it recognized a capacity” (ibid, 13). Nevertheless, it was not until 1918 that political citizenship was recognized by the act, after shifting the right from economic substance to personal status.

Moreover, with regard to social rights, though the formative period was the twentieth century, there are some overlapping which have been observed with political rights. According to Marshall, whereas the original sources of social rights are related with the membership of local communities and functional association, these sources were transformed and replaced through the poor law and wage regulation system. For example, elementary education was free and compulsory during end of the nineteenth century in England; this is recognized as a first decisive step to the reestablishment of social rights. As Marshall argued “The right to education is a genuine social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during child hood is to shape the future adult” (ibid, 16-17). According with that statement Marshall argues that the social inequalities, which originated from the market economy, can be reduced by ensuring social rights. Likewise, he argues that in the twentieth century, the state secured social rights by providing social services such as medical care, shelter, education, pension and others benefit, which played a role the equalization of society (ibid, 32-33).

However, analyzing Marshall Citizenship Approach, Castle and Davidson (2000) have argued that social rights are a key aspect of Marshall Theory because without a certain level of social rights full civil and political rights would be meaningless. According to them, in the twentieth century, social rights developed through either ensuring the rights to work or welfare provision, where citizen had been granted a minimum social and economic wellbeing by the state (ibid). Based on Marshall’s explanation, they categorize social rights into four types of rights, as follows: i) the right to work; ii) equality of opportunity in many sectors such as education, labour market, etc.; iii) an entitlement to health services, welfare benefits, and social services; iv) entitlement to certain standard of education (ibid) .

Nevertheless, in the case of immigrants, Fix and Laglagaron (2002:3-4) argue that immigrants do have access to the following social rights:

1. Labour Markets that includes freedom of choices of a career, work place, and self employment.
2. Non-contributory social welfare programs such as cash transfer, child assistance, housing assistance, health care and health insurance programs.
3. Contributory social insurance programs such as pension programs and unemployment insurance.
4. Selected social investment programs such as job training, grants and loans for higher education, integration assistance, and elementary and secondary education.

Based on the above theoretical discussion, we present the following framework [Figure 1] to analyze immigrants' citizenship procedure and social rights. According to this figure, we analyze first the acquiring process of immigrants' citizenship status on the basis of the naturalization process that exists in several liberal democratic states, including Norway. Second, we elaborate on immigrants' entitlements to social rights in these states by focusing on four features, mainly access to labour markets, contributory social programs, non-contributory social programs, and social investment programs.

Figure 1: framework of immigrants' access in citizenship and social rights



Source: Authors' elaboration based on above theoretical discussion

Results and Discussions

Immigrants' Citizenship and Social rights in Liberal Democratic Countries

Becoming a Citizen

According to Castles and Davidson (2000:84), in many immigrant receiving countries, acquiring citizenship is complex procedure that has undergone considerable changes in recent times. It has been shown that citizenship rules of modern states are based on a combination of two principle, *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli*, where one or other may be predominating in the case of acquiring citizenship status. Here, '*ius sanguinis*' (literally, law of the blood) is based on descent from a national of the country concerned and often linked to an ethnic or folk model of the nation state, and the second one, '*ius soli* (literally, law of the soil) is based on birth in the territory of the country and generally relates to nation states where a diverse group are incorporated in a single territory (ibid). In addition to these principles, Brochmann and Seland, (2010:433) also explained another principle '*jus domicilis* to explain the citizenship rules in modern liberal states, which is based on residence and also closely related to the above explained second principle.

However, in the case of immigrants, liberal modern democratic countries have taken naturalization process to make immigrants citizen, which is based on, as Brochmann and Seland (2010:433) argue, the *jus domicilis* principles, under which foreigners can claim citizenship because of their residence and job in a host country. However, immigrants have to face a series of condition to achieve this status, as immigrant receiving countries introduces many requirements. First, a period of legal residence in the host country is required; this varies from country to country. For instance, in Australia, immigrants need to reside in the country for a very short period of time before they can apply for citizenship (two years), whereas the requirement in the USA, Canada, Belgium, France, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK is five years. The five year period is the most common one, however, some countries require even longer periods, in Austria and Germany ten years are required, and in Switzerland twelve years of residency are required (Castle and Davidson, 2000). Second, many countries introduce other requirement. For example, Germany, France, and the USA introduced good character as requirement which usually relate to convictions of crime. Nevertheless, sometimes it also includes diverse meanings; in the USA good character is not used to mean drunkards, polygamist, gamblers and former members of the communist party (ibid). Moreover, some countries require mandatory language tests (e.g. Denmark), loyalty to the country (e.g.: in Australia, loyalty towards the Republic of Australia is a citizenship requirement), diverse commitments (e.g. in Germany to the

constitution), giving up original nationality are also mentionable requirements along with others (ibid).

Social Rights of Immigrants

It has already been mentioned that immigrants with regular status receive social rights in liberal democratic countries. Especially in most of the immigrant receiving countries, immigrants are usually entitled to public education, health and housing, and financial benefits in the case of unemployment, sickness, work accident or retirement (Bauböck 2007). However, a disparity exists as immigrants are frequently excluded in the need based public welfare system and they receive reduced benefits (ibid). Therefore, members of a society with immigrant status are still far from achieving full social citizenship.

For instance, first, in regard to equal access to the labour market, it has been found that citizenship status is still vital for third country nationals⁴ in public service jobs. For example, in France jobs in the railway, postal service, and hospital jobs are restricted only to EU citizens. Similarly, Germany has restriction for third country nationals in Governmental services, including public transport and kindergarten's jobs (Fix and Laglagaron, 2002). Besides, in many of these immigrant receiving countries, available data shows that immigrants with permanent residence have equal access to the private sectors labour market, just as citizens do. For instance, in Australia, Britain, Canada, and the United States, immigrants have open access to the labour market and self employment immediate after their admission. However, discrimination has been observed in EU countries, whereas citizen from EU countries have free access in other EU countries' labour market and third country nationals are not entitled to this opportunities because they are entitled only to work in their EU state of residence (ibid). On the other hand, whereas naturalized immigrant have full access in self employment, non-citizen immigrant in various countries face bars in many sectors of self employment. For example, according to Faist (2000), as cited in Fix and Laglagaron (2002:17), in order to open a French liquor or tobacco store one must be a citizen, and in Britain non-citizens have to demonstrates that they are capable of providing employment for at least two people if they want to open their own business.

Second, with regard to non-contributory welfare benefits, it has been found that still in some liberal democratic countries only immigrants with permanent residence, and naturalized immigrant, are entitled to receive

⁴ Foreign and native-born residents who hold non- EU citizenship

all types of non-contributory benefits, whereas newly arrived immigrants (for example in the United States) have been denied federal health insurance, nutrition benefits, etc. until they naturalize (Fix and Laglagaron, 2002). This is also evident in the case of Austria and Britain, for instance, in five out of the nine Austrian provinces, third-country nationals have not been able to access many social assistance programs, and in some of the others provinces lower benefits have been provided to immigrants than to citizens (ibid). One can cite similar examples from Britain; according to the Asylum and Immigration Act of 1999, permanent immigrants from third country nationals are excluded from non- contributory social benefit (ibid). In this case, and in others, it is evident that various liberal democratic courtiers are practicing indirect exclusion procedures. In Germany and Austria, if a non-citizen immigrant becomes dependent on public benefit then the states authority sometimes cancels their work or residence permit (ibid). However, in regards to access into contributory social insurance programs, it has been shown that immigrant's in most countries have access to these as they are usually related to their status of employment.

Third, in the case of access to social investment such as job training, education, and integration assistance, most of the welfare democratic countries have different policies for immigrants and citizens. Temporary immigrants do not receive the same benefits compared to naturalized immigrants, or permanent residence. For instance, Australia has large programs set up to help naturalized citizen or permanent resident, they receive integration assistance, education for themselves and their children, and they are also provided with vocational training (Fix and Laglagaron, 2002). On the other hand, temporary migrants receive very little access to similar programs, there are no educational programs for them or their children and there is no vocational training provided for temporary migrants. They, however, do receive the same integration assistance from the state. This is also the case in Austria, Canada, The Netherlands, and France where citizens with immigrant background are entitled to grants for higher education, and education and vocational training. In this regard, statistics shows that these countries are more liberal in providing education for immigrant children (ibid).

In this section it has been revealed that only immigrants with citizenship have equal access to social rights. In many cases, the non-citizen immigrant, especially third country nationals faced bars to full access to social rights. As Castle and Davidson (2000:118) explain the scenario of immigrants' social rights in the following way:

“...the majority of immigrants and their descendants do not live in ghettos, nor do they find employment in workplace completely separate from those of the majority populations. Yet their position is frequently precarious: the combination of only partial incorporation into mainstream economic and social system with continuing process of racialization makes them vulnerable to social exclusion. This category may be referred to as Social Segmentation....”

Citizenship and immigrants' Social rights in Norway

Becoming a Citizen

Citizenship rules in Norway have undergone considerable changes overtime. The first Norwegian Citizenship Act was formulated in 1988, this replaced the former institute of *innfødsrett*, (native rights). Later, this act was revised in 1999 and passes the final citizenship bill in 2005 (Brochmann and Seland, 2010). In Norway's case, as in other Scandinavian countries the '*ius sanguinis*' principle is predominant in the citizenship act. However, immigrants are granted citizenship through a naturalization procedure that is based on the '*jus domicilis*' principles, just as in other Scandinavian countries (ibid).

As to the requirements of naturalization, according to the Norwegian Act of 2005, 7 years of legal residence are required for naturalization (Brochmann and Seland, 2010:434). This required residence period is larger compare to many others liberal democratic countries. As it has been stated in previous sections, many countries' requirement of residency are lower than Norway's, for example, Australia requires only 2 years. Second, in order to acquire Norwegian citizenship through the naturalization process participation in the mandatory 300 hours Norwegian Language course, including a 50 hours information course on Norwegian society and politics, are also required, according to the Norwegian Citizenship Act of 2005. Moreover, Norway does not permit dual citizenship (ibid). Thus, immigrants have to relinquish their original citizenship in order to naturalize Norwegian.

Social Rights of Immigrants

Naturalized immigrants, who are citizens in Norway, have equal rights to other citizens in the population. However, according to the regulations of the Social Services Act in Norway, non naturalized immigrants have access to social rights which are based on years of residence, and in some cases job experience. Consequently, immigrants have attained individual

rights to welfare benefits and services, for instance old age benefits, unemployment benefits, disability benefits, education, health services, through the legal development of some institutional obligations such as social assistance, social care, housing policies, health policies, etc. (Magnussen and Nilssen, 2011). It is worth mentioning that although Norway offer basic social rights for all legal immigrants, irregular immigrants have very limited access into the welfare social rights system (Hagelund, 2009). Immigrants' access to social rights is discussed in the following section and it is divided into Labour Market rights, rights to contributory and non-contributory social benefits, and into social investment rights.

First, the Norwegian Labour and Welfare Administration (NAV) is responsible for implementing the labour market policies, where they work jointly with the municipal social assistance services by taking the main goal: *to achieve greater inclusion of immigrants in the labour market through ensuring high employment in order to reduces social differences and poverty* (SOPEMI report for Norway, 2010:60). Accordingly, the Norwegian government presented a plan of action in 2007; here the goal is integration and social inclusion of immigrants into the labour market (ibid). In Norway, immigrants with citizenship and permanent residence have the open access to the labour market [Table 2], however, temporary immigrants with background ranging from refugee, labourers, and students have limited access. According to Migration Policy Index-MIPEX (2010a), labour migrants and members of their families are partially restricted to immediate access to employment and self-employment, but are reported to face no difficulty in eventual access to self-employment and employment in both the public and private sectors. Nevertheless, restrictions apply to labour migrants and members of their families according their country of origin. Thus, EU/EEA nationals have the same rights for employment in Norway as Norwegian citizens, whereas third countries nationals require work permits/visas before starting to work or arriving in Norway (ibid). Moreover, the state does not support newcomers to access public employment services, for the right to resource person, mentor, and coach linked to public employment service as it is not part of the integration policy for newcomers (ibid). In this background, according to the calculation of MIPEX (2010), Norway rank is 7 in the Labour Market mobility with score 77 among the 31 MIPEX countries, whereas the best case is Sweden with score 100. Thus, though Norway have the position among the top 10 immigrant receiving countries, yet it not fully in a way to providing best labour market mobility to immigrants.

Second, the Table 2 shows that in the case of non contributory and contributory social benefits, naturalized immigrants and permanent residence have full access, just as native Norwegian. Namely, they have equal rights in social assistance, housing assistance, child benefit, health care and insurance, old age pension, and unemployment benefits. However, in the case of temporary immigrants, such as refugees, labour migrants and student migrants, these benefits are not available, most of these are restricted. For instance, with regard to non-contributory social welfare benefit, social assistance is provided as income support to those immigrants who do not meet the criteria of other welfare programs, and have no private savings. Besides, refugees are offered social assistance in their first five years after arrival, which this income has been determined to be their main source of income (Ekhaugen, 2005:6). However, in recent time just as in other immigrant receiving countries, Norway has also discouraged immigrants to become dependent on social assistance. This is highlighted in the MIPEX (2010a) report “*Since Norway’s 2010 Immigration Law, work or family migrants who need to use social assistance can have their permit withdrawn. The stated goal is to discourage social dumping*”. On the other hand, disability pension is given to immigrants on the basis of the length of their residence and previous work experience, this can usually be attained after 5 to 10 years of arrival. Immigrants are also required to wait between one and four years in order to be eligible to receive medical and occupational rehabilitation in Norway (Ekhaugen, 2005). Furthermore, with regard to housing assistance, the Norwegian policy (white paper no. 23:2003-2004) is centered around an adequate and secure housing situation for all residents, where this policy is equal for all, including immigrant and refugee (Soholt and Wessel, 2010). Thus, a refugee is entitled to get municipal housing assistance because of their lack of finance. However, regular immigrants only receive housing assistance if they are not capable of managing their own housing situation (ibid). With regard to birth and child benefits, all children with parents who hold a residence permit status have equal access to all benefits offered by the government. For instance, statistics of *My Little Norway* (2010) show that all babies born in Norway received at least kr. 30,000 in their first year of life if the mother of the baby is unemployed for more than one year. Otherwise, all babies receive less than kr. 1000. In addition, if the father/mother stay at home then they receive another kr. 3000 from 1 year to 3 year of the baby’s life. With regard to medical benefits, though all residences have an entitlement to medical benefits, in the case of newly arrived immigrants this benefit is conditional. Here, they need first to contribute at least 12 months to the national insurance scheme that is taxable through income before claiming medical benefits (ibid).

With regard to contributory social benefits, in the case of unemployment and sick benefits, immigrants are required to sustain paid work for at least a substantial part of a calendar year among the three calendar years prior to the claim of unemployment benefits (Ekhaugen, 2005:). In the case of sickness benefits they are required at least two weeks of experience of paid work (ibid). Besides, labour migrant cannot access unemployment benefits in the first 12 months of his/her stay and work in the country, and pension benefits are only granted to those immigrants who have permanent residence and citizenship (My Little Norway: 2010).

Therefore, citizens with immigrant backgrounds and permanent residence holders have full access in contributory social benefits, as well as in non-contributory social benefits.

Third, Table 2 shows that naturalized immigrants and immigrants with permanent residence have the full rights, just like native Norwegians, in regards to the rights of social investment. However, this is limited for temporary migrants such as refugee, labourers, and students. Indeed, with regard to social investment related rights, in the case of education, in Norway, state controlled educational institutions provide education at no cost, however, one must cover the costs of living himself. Nevertheless, student from citizen's and permanent residence holder's family have access to educational loans which are at least kr. 80,000 per year for a university education (My Little Norway: 2010). Several other groups are able to apply for these loans, including political refugee, those married to Norwegian citizen, family reunification permit holders, and children who are under 19 and who had studied already in Norway as self payee student for at least three years (ibid). On the other hand, training is only allocated for immigrants with citizenship and permanent residence holder. However, for newly arrived refugees, introductory programs have been taken by all Norwegian municipalities, these can last up to two year. During the program all refugees receive 300 hours of language training as well as information about Norwegian society (Valenta and Bunar, 2010). In addition, job seeking, applying for educational courses, and other individual assistance are also provided to refugees (ibid). However, with regard to country of background, only those third country residents who hold long-term permits and some categories of those with temporary work-permits (excluding seasonal permits) have equal access to education and vocational training, including study grants (ibid).

In terms of social rights, the conditions of immigrant in Norway are well explained in the following ECRI (European Commission against Racism and Tolerance) report:

“Person of immigrant background are still lagging behind in vital areas. The Unemployment rate among young people of immigrant background is reported to be twice that registered among the rest of the same age group, and a disproportionately high drop-out rate from secondary education is registered among students of immigrant background. Imbalance, although being slowly reduced, are furthermore to be found in the housing sector, with rates of homelessness six times higher among persons of immigrant background than in the population as a whole” (ECRI 2009:8, as cited in Valenta and Nihad, 2010: 471).

Conclusion

This paper has attempted to provide insights about the process of acquiring citizenship and social rights of immigrants in liberal democratic countries, a special focus on Norway has been taken. Thus, in conclusion, with regard to the research question, the results and discussion of this study indicates the following. First concerning liberal democratic states, it has been showed that immigrants in liberal democratic countries do not enjoy equal social rights to those of their native people. To achieve equal access to social rights immigrants must naturalize citizens. The procedure to acquiring citizenship is based on several conditions, qualifications, and requirements. Therefore, in this paper it has been argued that in many liberal democratic countries immigrants can achieved citizenship through a naturalization process by fulfilling several criteria. For example, immigrants are required a certain period of residency that can vary between 2 to 12 years depending on the citizenship policies of a country. In addition, many other requirements such as a language test, loyalty and commitment to the country, and good character, are also found as necessary conditions. Second, in the case of Norway, immigrants are not given full social citizenship rights when compared to citizens. Nevertheless, immigrants have equal access to social rights when they become citizen through a naturalization process, or when they acquire a permanent residence status by fulfilling a certain requirement. Especially, they required 7 years legal residence in order to naturalize, this is longer than in many other liberal democratic countries. In addition, they have to participate in the mandatory 300 hours Norwegian Language course, including a 50 hours information course on Norwegian society and politics.

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Table 2: Immigrants' social rights in Norway

Status		Access to Social Rights								
		Labor Market	Non-Contributory Social Welfare Programs				Contributory Social Insurance		Social Investment	
			Social Assistance	Housing Assistance	Child Benefit	Health Care and Insurance	Old Age Pension	Unemployment Benefit	Job Training	Loan for Higher Education
Citizen		Open	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Permanent Resident		Open	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Temporary Resident	Refugee	Limited	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Limited	Yes	Limited
	Labour	Limited	Some	No	Yes	Limited	No	Limited	Limited	Limited
	Student	Limited	No	No	Yes	Limited	N/A	No	No	Limited

Source: Authors' elaboration based on data from Ekhaugen, 2005; Lotherington and Fjørtoft, 2007; Hagelund, 2009; Valenta and Bunar, 2010; Migration Policy Index, 2010; My Little Norway, 2010; SOPEMI report for Norway, 2010.