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### CITIZENSHIP TEST AS A MIGRATION POLICY PROPOSAL IN TURKEY

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#### Abstract

This article focuses on proposing a citizenship test as a tool in Turkey's migration management policies. Despite making new implementations to adjust and accommodate the highest level of migration in its republican history, Turkey needs a more comprehensive and systematic approach to the issue in the long run. As migration leads to naturalization in most cases, many countries prefer to regulate migration and naturalization with citizenship criteria as well as citizenship tests for their prospective citizens. For this study, citizenship test examples are taken from The United States (US) and the United Kingdom (UK) practices since they have been among the most popular countries for immigration throughout history. While the former has a relatively long experience in citizenship tests, the latter supports a new and more elaborated model. To what extent does Turkey take any of these countries as a model in the design of its own citizenship test? The question of why Turkey needs such regulation and what kind of test would be plausible will be discussed in this article. A proposed testing model will be given systematically specific to the Turkish case.

Keywords: Citizenship, Naturalization, Migration, Integration, Turkey.

# TÜRKIYE'DE GÖÇ YÖNETİMİ POLİTİKA TASARISI OLARAK VATANDAŞLIK SINAVI

Öz

Bu makale Türkiye'nin göç yönetimi alanında vatandaşlık sınavı uygulanması tasarısına odaklanmaktadır. Cumhuriyet tarihinde alınan en yüksek göçü düzenlemek için yapılan düzenlemelere rağmen, Türkiye uzun vadede daha kapsamlı ve sistematik bir yaklaşıma

ihtiyaç duymaktadır. Göçün vatandaşlığa öncülük yaptığı düşünüldüğünde, birçok ülkenin göçü ve vatandaşlığa kabulü vatandaşlık kriterleri ve sınavları ile düzenlediği görülmektedir. Bu çalışma için vatandaşlık sınavı örnekleri, tarih boyunca yaygın olarak göç alan ülkeler olmaları sebebiyle Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Birleşik Krallık uygulamalarından alınmıştır. İlki vatandaşlık sınavlarında görece tecrübeli iken, ikincisi daha yeni ve detaylı bir model benimsemektedir. Türkiye'nin neden bu düzenlemeye ihtiyacı olduğu, kendi vatandaşlık sınavı tasarımında bu ülke örneklerinden ne ölçüde faydalanabileceği ve ne tür bir sınavın Türkiye için daha uygun olacağı bu makalede tartışılacaktır. Türkiye için tasarlanan sınav modeli sistematik bir biçimde verilecektir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Vatandaşlık, Vatandaşlığa kabul, Göç, Entegrasyon, Türkiye.

#### INTRODUCTION

Naturalization policies have been related to migration trends and policies. Countries develop different policies according to their national policies and traditional practices. Beside the residence in the country, migrants eventually get involved in the pursuit of citizenship during their life course. At that point, citizenship symbolizes a transition process for migrants to "shift from being temporary to permanent" (Yildiz, 2017: 38). According to the EU/OECD Indicators of Immigrant Integration, the more time spent in the host country increases, the more citizenship take-up starts (EU/OECD, 2015).

Turkey was unprepared to host the massive number of refugees following the 2011 Syrian War migration wave to its territory. This change forced Turkey's position to an immigrant-receiving (destination) country from a transit country. The number of international migrants in Turkey raised from 1.281.000 (in 2000) to 4.882.000 in 2017, which constituted 6 percent of the total population (UN, 2018). In 2018, Turkey was the most refugee-hosting country with almost 4 million refugee population (UNHCR, 2018). Apart from Syrians, there are 1.134.279 international migrants who hold residence permits in Turkey as of 25 March 2020 (DGMM, 2020b). Consequently, regulations need to be revised according to the recent changing dynamics.

Naturalization of these migrants as Turkish citizens takes place at some stages during their settlement period in Turkey. For example, as of 30 December 2019, 110.000 Syrians obtained Turkish citizenship (Refugees Association, 2020). The aim of this article is not just pointing out the procedure of Syrians' acquisition of Turkish citizenship, but indeed proposing a generalized formulation for Turkey that can be used in all naturalization practices. Even though the emphasis heavily leans on the Syrian refugee<sup>1</sup> influx, the discussed model in this article represents a naturalization tool for applicants from all origin countries who seek to naturalize as Turkish citizens regardless of the type of acquisition of citizenship.

The reason for introducing a citizenship test can vary among different states, depending on their modes of drafting and their relationship to policies of immigration and multiculturalism (Adamo, 2008: 24). The merging idea of bringing a citizenship test into the agenda of Turkey can be related to the changing components of the population since Turkey is facing with the highest number of

Turkey, as a signatory country to the 1951 Refugee Convention, maintains geographical limitation to the Convention. Refugee status is only given to people who flee as a consequence of events occurring in Europe. Therefore, Syrians in Turkey have the status of temporary protection. However, in this article, the term refugee is used to describe Syrians who are under temporary protection.

migrants in its Republican history (Ministry of Interior General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs, NVI: 2015). Although the debate of granting citizenship to Syrians has been widely discussed by scholars (Yildiz, 2017; Bostan, 2018; Akcapar-Koser, Simsek, 2018; Tumtaş, 2018; Ark Yildirim, Özer Yürür, 2019) and politicians in Turkey, citizenship test is a very brand-new term in Turkish political life.

Therefore, this research aims to spark an academic interest on the issue as well as establishing a ground for discussions in the field of naturalization and migration policy development in Turkey. It also provides a basis both for academics and policymakers as they can benefit from the findings of this study. Since amendments on citizenship policies require a more systematic way, the proposed model discussed in this article can constitute an already constructed scheme for further studies.

This article addresses the issue the following way: First, the ideal of citizenship and the practice of citizenship tests will be explained. Example tests will be briefly discussed in the practices of the US and the UK models. Later Turkey's current naturalization system will be described and the proposed citizenship test model for Turkey will be presented with its highlights. The focus is given both on the designation and implementation of the proposed model for Turkey. Michalowski's (2009) citizenship question typologies method is employed to design the Turkish citizenship test.

#### DEFINITIONS AND THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Citizenship can be defined as a 'collection of rights and obligations' that give individuals a formal legal identity; these rights and obligations are put together historically as a set of social institutions as in the the jury system, parliaments, and welfare states (Turner, 1997: 5). Another approach sees citizenship as "an institution that guarantees the workers a modicum of civilized life by protecting them from the unpredictable vagaries of accident, sickness and unemployment" according to T.H. Marshall (Isin & Turner, 2007: 7). Some may argue that this definition smack of the social welfare state. A post-cold war definition by Brubaker discusses citizenship as a combination of six dimensions: egalitarian, sacred, nation-membership, democratic, unique, and socially consequential (Brubaker, 1990: 380).

Naturalization can be analyzed both on political and legal grounds. Starting from a very basic right, on juridical grounds, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Article 15 states that; i) Everyone has the right to a nationality, and ii) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the *right to change* [emphasis added] his nationality (Assembly, U. G., 1948). Consequently, nationality is granted autonomously by states and thus each state sets down its own domestic nationality laws (Wollman, Vonk & de Groot, 2015: 308). When this right to change one's nationality is a matter of concern, for "those who are not born as members who wish to obtain the security and dignity associated with the basic right to have rights must seek naturalization as derives from its etymological root of 'to be born'" (Shachar, 2014: 118). Followingly, this process needs to be supported by a "worthiness test" as Shachar states that "they must prove their 'worthiness' of the ultimate prize of membership" (2014: 118). In the most general sense, this worthiness is tested through citizenship examinations. The usage of the word "membership" as a component of citizenship is frequently used in citizenship theories, and its further definitions will be given below. A point to mention is that the term 'citizenship' is preferred in this article rather than 'nationality'

since the article mostly focuses on proposing a citizenship test. The term 'state' and 'country' are also used interchangeably within the text considering the scope of the most applicable meaning.

Citizenship and its acquisition procedure consist of rights, duties, and meanings for a state and its citizens. According to Bauböck (1999: 5) citizenship consists of three dimensions: rights, membership, and practices. At the heart of citizenship, "membership" status is located as many scholars put forward. This is because, without the presence of membership, other factors do not merely exist on their own. It can also be likened to a golf club membership as Bellamy (2008) argues. Members of an exclusive golf club can use its greens and facilities while non-members cannot, thus possessing the status of a citizen gives someone access to the advantages of being a member of a given political community (Bellamy, 2008: 52). Such *golf clubs* do not test their prospective members before accepting their 'membership applications', yet obtaining citizenship from a certain state brings out some requirement criteria. Similar to the design of a golf club membership, states regulate their "membership" by law referring back to Bauböck's three dimensions of citizenship.

Another categorization for citizenship is stated by Joppke (2007) dividing it again into three dimensions: i) status, ii) rights, and ii) identity. 'Status' dimension comes as the primary feature among others similar to Bauböck's membership dimension. As a result, regardless of ethnic and religious lines, the citizenship status brings a diversification (Joppke, 2007: 38). The 'rights' dimension is seen as a package that comes with the elements of a welfare state. Lastly, in the 'identity' dimension, membership of a state turns not to be part of a specific identity as membership and identity start following different paths.

#### What are citizenship tests and what do they target?

Citizenship tests were first to come into usage in 1887 in the USA and 1901 in Australia (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009: 148). Their main aim was to discourage uneducated Southern and Eastern Europeans and then Asian and non-European migrants from migrating to the abovementioned countries (Jupp; McNamara & Roever, as cited in Löwenheim & Gazit, 2019: 148). The initiative was given to non-standardized officials and the exams were not operated in a fixed model. Year by year, in line with the changing composition of the migrants, the formation of the test and the required qualifications to apply have been changed. Etzioni argues that "citizenship tests are mainly used as tools to control the level and the composition of immigration rather than establishing qualifications" (Etzioni, 2007: 353). This argument reflects the idea of seeing these tests as a control mechanism in migration. Orgad (2011) also puts forward that citizenship tests 'spell out what states want other people to think they are' (1229). Similarly, Byrne (2017) suggests that citizenship tests are designed to ensure new citizens have the knowledge required for successful integration (323).

Citizenship tests on country bases have been studied by Joppke (2013) comparatively for the USA, Australia, and Canada, and by Michalowski (2009) on five case countries (the USA, Austria, the Netherlands, the UK, Germany). Etzioni (2007) and Park (2008) pointed out the "principle-based" citizenship ideology and construction specifically for the US test. Brooks (2012) criticized the "Life in the UK" test and examined its need for reform. White (2008) compared 2004 and 2007 versions of the Life in the UK test, Turner (2014) analyzed the test in the context of security and self-improvement. As a collaborative act, UNESCO's International Journal on Multicultural Societies

dedicated its eighth volume in 2008 to the subject of citizenship tests. Contributors discussed the liberal perspective of the citizenship tests and citizenship policies for the country cases of the Netherlands, France, Denmark and the United Kingdom.

Principally, citizenship tests consist of civics component and language parts. While the US does not merely examine language, most European countries and the UK require some language criteria. Beside written and oral tests, some countries also opt to require prospective citizens to watch a video introducing the state. To illustrate, the Netherlands, in addition to its citizenship test, introduces the country to its prospective citizens with a series of short video clips (Rosez, 2014). These video clips display Dutch history, social structure, core values, and lifestyles.

Examples from two countries of immigration will be briefly introduced below. The reason they are chosen is whereas the US represents a more experienced and concise model, the UK has a relatively new and elaborate testing system. These tests are explained with their outstanding features in an effort to provide a base for the Turkish case.

### Main features of citizenship tests: The USA and the UK examples in brief

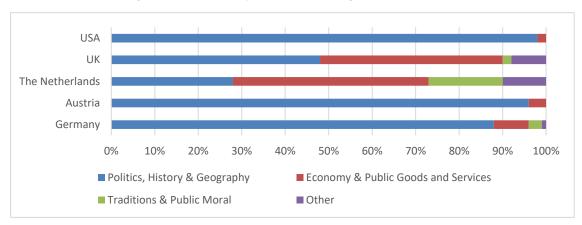
Citizenship tests consist of questions that are formulated by states according to their priorities. These questions mainly reflect the historical, cultural, values and economics of countries. Michalowski (2009) collects the question types in the citizenship tests under four thematic categories. These are i) Politics, history, and geography, ii) Economy and the provision of public goods & services, iii) Traditions and public moral and iv) Other. The first three thematic categories have their own subcategories as given in Table 1.

Table 1. Thematic Categories and Subcategories of Citizenship Tests Questions

Politics, History and Geography	Economy, Public Service and its Financing	Traditions and Public Moral	Other
Political system, democracy, rights	Education	Lifestyles (referring to social norms)	General knowledge
History, geography,	Economic order, finances	Traditions, cultural specificities of	
national symbols Church & state freedom of religion	Work & self-employment	the host country  How-to guide on  Etiquette	
Administrations & formalities  Lifestyles (referring	Public service, and its financing Health (system)		
to laws)			

Source: Adapted from Michalowski (2009: 5, 6).

This classification in Table 1 provides a general scheme in the analysis of citizenship test questions. The proportion of applying these categories into citizenship test questions depends on countries' preferences. Graphic 1 describes this proportion for the US, the UK and three European countries. Whilst the US and Austrian tests show resemblances in terms of the civics component, the UK and the Netherlands give more importance to the economic values of the country.



Graphic 1. Percentage of Questions by Thematic Categories

Source: Adapted from Michalowski (2009: 12).

The United States has a long experience in citizenship tests and prefers to conduct an oral test method. The US *Naturalization* test dates back to the 1980s (Löwenheim & Gazit, 2009: 150). This oral test consists of two components: The English language and civics. In ten questions, minimum of six correct answers are needed to be successful in the civics portion of the *Naturalization* Test. These questions require basic knowledge of Civics (Principles of American Government, System of Government, Rights and Responsibilities), History (Colonial Period and Independence, the 1800s, Recent American History and Other Important Historical Information), Geography, Symbols, and Holidays (USCIS, 2019). All questions (civics and English portion) are available online and freely accessible to the public on the website of the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Language level is assessed on speaking, writing and reading bases. The applicant's ability to speak English is tested by the USCIS officer during the eligibility interview. For the reading evaluation, the applicant needs to read aloud one out of three sentences that are from a vocabulary list (USCIS, 2008a) already published on the USCIS website. Finally, for the writing ability, the applicant needs to write one out of three sentences correctly from a vocabulary list published on THE USCIS website as well (USCIS, 2008b).

Being successful in the test is followed by an oath of allegiance to officially gain citizenship and complete citizenship ceremony. The oath of allegiance of the US includes religious expressions such as "help me God" and "on oath". Yet, it gives choice to applicants to modify these phrases caused by belief-related or political reasons (USCIS, 2014). Additionally, it includes some phrases as "I will bear arms on behalf of the United States when required by law". These parts can also be left out for those who are unable or unwilling to bear arms or perform noncombatant service because of religious training and belief (USCIS, 2014).

On the contrary, The United Kingdom supports an elaborated model of citizenship test which has a written form (for the detailed comparison, see Istif, 2017). The need for the test emerged in 2002

in the Government White Paper 'Secure Borders, Safe Haven: Integration with Diversity in Modern Britain' (Home Office, 2002). It aimed to emphasize on the need for potential new citizens to have a good grasp of English (Byrne, 2017: 327) stating that "those coming into our country have duties that they have to know in order to facilitate their acceptance and integration" (Home Office, 2002).

The *Life in the UK* test consists of 24 multiple choice questions and a minimum of 18 correct answers are needed to be successful in the test. Its question typologies also differ from the US model. Topics of the UK test taken from "The Life in the United Kingdom: A Guide for New Residents" (2013) book are as follows: Values and Principles of the UK, What is the UK?, A long and illustrious history, Modern and thriving society, The UK government, the law, and your role. Although the real exam questions are not published, the subjects are told in detail in the guide. Language is tested separately, based on a recognized English test qualification from an approved test center (Home Office, 2020). The required level is B1 which sets the bar higher compared to the US.

Similar to the US practice, the UK oath of allegiance starts with the phrase "swear by Almighty God". Thus, it gives applicants to replace these words with "solemnly, sincerely and truly declare and affirm" (Home Office, 2019). Therefore, while the former is called the oath of allegiance, the latter is called "affirmation of allegiance".

In the design for The Turkish citizenship test, basic features from the practices mentioned above can set examples. Turkey can adopt some basics from these tests and harmonize them with its own civic education style. Several recommendations are given in the following sections.

### CURRENT POLICY IN TURKEY: HOW TO BECOME A TURKISH CITIZEN?

Naturalization as a Turkish citizen is regulated under Turkish Citizenship Law No 5901 (TCL). The current version of the law draft dates to 2009. The Ministry of Interior General Directorate of Civil Registration and Citizenship Affairs (NVI) carries out services regarding the acquisition and loss of Turkish citizenship (TCL, Art. 4).

Acquisition of Turkish citizenship primarily takes place on two grounds: *jus sanguinis* (based on blood) and after birth as stated in TCL Article 5. The focus is given on 'after birth' practices in this study. The acquisition of Turkish citizenship by the decision of the competent authority is stated in article 10 and 11 of TCL explains the conditions for application as follows:

- a) being within the age of majority and have the capacity to act either according to his/her own national law or, if he/she is stateless, according to Turkish law,
- b) having been a resident of Turkey without interruption for five years preceding the date
- of his/her application,
- c) verifying his/her determination to settle down in Turkey with his/her manners,
- d) having no disease causing an obstacle in respect of public health,
- e) being of good moral character,
- f) being able to speak a sufficient level of Turkish,
- g) having income or profession to provide for maintenance for himself/herself and his/her dependents in Turkey,

h) having no quality constituting an obstacle in respect of national security and public order<sup>2</sup>.

Moreover, there is 'exceptional case' status regulated under article 12 of TCL which enables foreign investors, athletes and immigrants to naturalize as Turkish citizens by the decision of the President of Turkey. Beside the exceptional case status, Article 16 regulates the acquisition of Turkish citizenship by marriage. Marriage to a Turkish citizen does not automatically grant citizenship to the spouse. They need to have been married for at least three years and the marriage should continue at the time of the application.

Considering all the cases mentioned above (regular, exceptional, and by marriage) none of them requires a language or citizenship test in the acquisition of Turkish citizenship. Even though the acquisition process may differ, the same procedure is applied to all who apply for naturalization as a Turkish citizen.

#### HOW CAN TURKEY BUILD ITS OWN MODEL?

Prior to sorting out answers to this question, why this kind of test is needed for Turkey needs to be explained. According to the Ministry of Interior Directorate General for Migration Management (DGMM), Turkey hosts 3.587.779 Syrians under the status of temporary protection as of 19 March 2020 (DGMM, 2020a). Even though Turkey hosts Syrian refugees under the status of temporary protection based on the Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013) and Temporary Protection Regulation (2014), in media and daily usage, they are called "Syrian refugees" or solely "Syrians" (Kaya & Eren, 2015: 10). Article 25 of the Temporary Protection Regulation defines the "right to stay in the country". Temporary protection identification gives right to stay in the country, but it cannot be taken into consideration as a time period when the applicant applies for the citizenship. However, the final part of this article has not blocked Syrians' acquisition of Turkish citizenship.

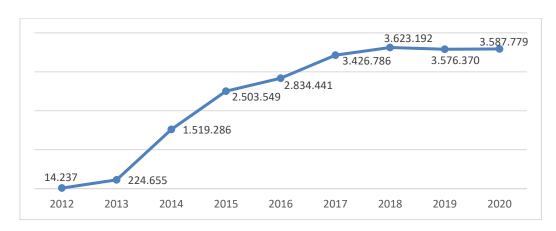


Table 2. Syrians Under Temporary Protection in Turkey

Source: Ministry of Interior DGMM

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<sup>2</sup> Turkish Citizenship Law, translated by Mustafa T. Karayigit, Available at: https://www.legislationline.org/download/id/6585/file/Turkey\_citizenship\_law\_2009\_en.pdf

The debate of granting Syrians Turkish citizenship has firstly been sparkled by politicians. It has been articulated in 2016 by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan stating that Syrian medical doctors, academicians, engineers who can contribute more to Turkey will be given priority ("Erdogan's statement on citizenship to Syrians", 2016; Yeter, 2016). Secondly, it will target unaccompanied children who have no one left behind if they plan to return their home country in the future.

Granting citizenship to Syrian refugees has been collected under nine headings being announced as "their homeland will be Turkey" (Yeter, 2016; "Citizenship to Syrians under 9 headings", 2016). These nine headings' first item indicates that Syrians will be granted citizenship gradually, giving the priority to jobholders of which are needed in the country and this number was set between 30.000 and 40.000 ("Syrian teachers will get Turkish citizenship first", 2017). Following ones are: i) It is aimed to grant 300.000 people citizenship in total and in case of having family members in Turkey, they will also be granted automatically, ii) Naturalized citizens will not be able to vote in the elections following one year, iii) Even though the current law requires five years to reside in Turkey to apply for citizenship, this rule can be negotiated for Syrians, iv) security investigation for those who obtain citizenship will be done by the Turkish National Intelligence Organization (MIT), v) It will be helped to Syrian businessmen who have funds but cannot investigate, vi) Critical people who rebelled against the regime will be maintained life security, these people may also be used for intelligence, vii) Campaigns will be held to prevent emerging of negative perceptions towards Syrians' Turkish citizenship obtainment. Within this scope, a campaign that highlights historical moments achieved together such as Dardanelles (Çanakkale) spirit, viii) Further steps include real estate selling, trying to keep those who have enough money live in Turkey via investment opportunities.

Although the projected number was given as 50.000 in the beginning, the current situation shows the number did not remain on 50.000. It has been targeted to grant 2.746.000 Syrians Turkish citizenship in total after integration is provided ("First condition of citizenship to Syrians is integration", 2016). Nonetheless, there have not been many details given about what kind of integration plan it would be. Number of Syrians that acquired Turkish citizenship increased each year and has almost doubled in 2019.

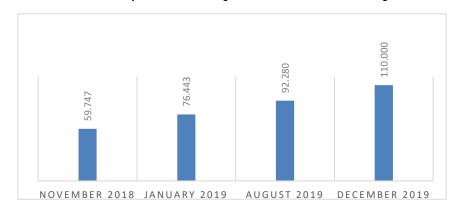


Table 3. Number of Syrians that Acquired Turkish Citizenship (2018-2019)

Source: Adapted from the Ministry of Interior DGMM Data

The proposed citizenship test does not only target Syrians but indeed all migrants from different origin countries who wish to naturalize as Turkish citizens. Even though the discourse is mainly focused on Syrians' acquisition of Turkish citizenship in the media and academic field, Turkey hosts 1.134.279 international migrants (with residence permit) as of 25 March 2020 (DGMM, 2020b) and their naturalization as Turkish citizens would likely happen at some stage.

Considering all the above, as EU/OECD points out, the time spent in the host country leads to naturalization eventually. At the threshold of citizenship acquisition, countries have expectations from prospective citizens to be acquainted with their *new* country. Within this context, the proposed model for Turkey is explained under four headings: i) question typology, ii) language assessment, iii) oath of allegiance and iv) operating body of the exam.

### Civics Question Typologies

As citizenship tests' questions are formulated according to each state's own requirements and expectations from their prospective citizens, Turkey is expected to follow the same trend. Before classifying question typologies for Turkey, two main questions are needed to be addressed: i) What values should be held in high regard? and ii) How to classify chapters of the test? In order to provide answers to these questions, thematic categories and subcategories from Table 1 are adopted. Recommendations for each thematic category are discussed below.

Under the first category "Politics, History and Geography", secondary school course level geography and history knowledge can be taken into account. The challenging point here is which part of history should be included. If an elaborate test is planned, it will be much easier to expand subjects. On the other hand, if a brief test like the US model is considered, then many subjects are needed to be discarded. The civics portion of these tests mainly constitute the major part. Turkey already has a profound database in terms of a question pool. One of these sources is the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) that constitutes the first step of applying for a job in public institutions in Turkey. The KPSS exam consists of two major parts: General Ability (Turkish-Maths) and Liberal Education. In the liberal education part, there is a subsection called "citizenship". Subtitles and subjects of the citizenship section include i) fundamental concepts of law, ii) constitutional developments, iii) fundamental rights and liberties, iv) executive, legislative and judicial powers, and administrative structure, v) current events. Some parts can be taken from the KPSS test to be adopted for the civics portion of the Turkish test. However, the planned test should be neither as advanced as KPSS exam questions nor as simple as pre-school level when the language competency of the applicants is considered.

"Economy and the Provision of Public Goods & Services" category should be dealt with expecting from prospective citizens to have some basic knowledge of economic order, health system, work and self-employment of the country which they aim to be citizens of. Michalowski also includes "education" under this category since it is considered as a basic right. For Turkey, this category can cover an information package ranging from health care and banking system to the public education system. Work and self-employment information can be taken from the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR) and the Vocational Qualifications Institution (*Mesleki Yeterlilik Kurumu*) which are under

the Ministry of Family, Labour and Social Security. The designation of the questions should be composed by the experts in the field.

"Traditions and Public Moral" consists of traditions and customs of a country, lifestyles in society and how-to guide on etiquette. Michalowski (2009: 27) explains these three subcategories along these lines. Traditions and Customs enclose cultural specificities of the host country as well as traditional holidays and the way they are celebrated. 'Lifestyles' subcategory is about family and children referring to marriage and gender equality. 'How-to guide on etiquette' engages in how to behave suitably in the country of immigration and considering a guide to adequate social relations with neighbours, colleagues and friends. Within this context, this heading shows a reflection of concerns of adaptation to social norms for the newcomer. Yet, not all citizenship tests deal with this concern. The US Test does not include any questions under this heading. The applicability of the questions for each country may differ from one to another. In the case of Turkey, implementation of this part may appear as the most challenging one after history questions. Social norms, as well as national values, bring about common values, sense of belongings and moral values. The definition of a "national value" is generally vague to bound. As Hobsbawm sees national traditions' claim to be old is often quite recent in origin and sometimes invented (Blackledge, 2009: 67), investigating this relationship remains controversial. Hobsbawm's theory of values and norms indicates "repetition and continuity" of the norm/activity (Hobsbawm, 1983). In Turkey, the question source for this subcategory can be taken from the "values education" course module that is being taught as a course on primary and secondary school levels. The module which has been decided by the Turkish Ministry of National Education (MoNE) consists of following topics: affection and respect, understanding, responsibility, being gentle and fair, hospitableness, mutualization and solidarity, patriotism, neighborliness, importance of the unity of family, industriousness, humbleness, mercifulness, conservation of cultural heritage, cleanliness (Ministry of National Education, 2015). Besides these topics, additional subjects can be added or removed with the decision of field experts and the MoNE.

For all subcategories mentioned above, DGMM booklets on "A Guide to Living in Turkey" can also be used as a source to design questions. Topics of these booklets are education system, healthcare system, finance system, accommodation, Turkish culture and social life, work life, law and justice (DGMM, 2019).

### Language Assessment

Language testing is used as one of the required parts of naturalization processes. Many countries choose to test it via oral or written examinations. While the level may differ from one country to another, in a very general sense, European citizenship tests' criteria are assessed under the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR) standards (Extra, Spotti & Avermaet, 2009: 24-29). Having taken by the National Contact Points on Integration of the EU, a series of common basic principles gives importance on language criteria as listed below (Extra et. al, 2009: 13):

- integration is a dynamic two-sided process,
- integration presupposes respect for the basic values of the EU,
- basic knowledge of the language, history, and institutions of the country of settlement is indispensable for integration,

- employment plays a key role in the integration process.

While the UK requires B1 level of English (Khan, 2019: 28), some European countries set their criteria on the same level or lower (e.g. The Netherlands A2, Germany B1) for naturalization (Tjaden, 2010: 13). Differently, the US model follows an oral and relatively short assessment for language testing. This model can be adopted for the language assessment in the Turkish naturalization system.

Current criteria of naturalization in Turkey requires being able to speak Turkish at the level of "accommodating to social life" (NVI, 2018). Beside the ambiguity of this criterion, governorships<sup>3</sup> in Turkey require a language certificate from the MoNE or a certificate that shows education from an institution in Turkey (NVI, 2019). This criterion is only applied to the general acquisition of Turkish citizenship, exceptional case applicants do not need to provide a language document. As no specific level is mentioned by NVI, it shows the need to standardize it. When standardized, it will not only help officials to evaluate applications more easily but also fasten the process. To this end, US style language assessment seems more applicable to Turkey. The proposed language testing method, as listed in Table 4, aims the assess the level during the interview. The official asks the applicant basic questions and assesses the applicant's ability to 'read, write, and speak simple words and phrases in ordinary usage<sup>49</sup> in the Turkish language. The word list can be published as course material.

### Oath of Allegiance

As seen in the US and the UK practices, they require an oath after the successful completion of the citizenship test. Generally, this oath consists of allegiance to the new country and renouncing foreign allegiances. Although Turkey currently does not have an oath of allegiance, this has been brought into the question in 1999 due to two parliamentarians (Merve Kavakçi and Oya Akgönenç) who held US citizenship. That planned regulation aimed to combine Turkish parliamentary oath and US oath of allegiance. It included phrases such as "bearing true faith to the secular Republic, Ataturk's principles and reforms", "defending the Republic of Turkey and the interests of the almighty Turkish people under all circumstances" ("Oath of Allegiance of Turkey is on the way", 1999). However, it has never been signed into law. The proposed model in this study suggests a combination of words from the US, UK and Turkish parliamentary oaths.

Consequently, the legislation of such an oath remains controversial for the Turkish case in the near term. Within the scheme of this study, an oath for Turkey is not completely articulated at this stage.

## Operating Body of the Exam

Similar to the test operator institutions in the US and the UK, NVI in Turkey can potentially be the responsible body for the *Turkish Naturalization* Test. Regarding the preparation of the test questions, sociologists, linguists and civic education teachers should be involved. The same path was followed in the process of redesigning the US *Naturalization* Test by considering the views of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Citizenship applications are made to the governorships in Turkey.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Criteria adopted from USCIS (2019).

professors and experts in history and government, teachers of English to speakers of other languages, experts on adult learning (Kunnan, 2009: 93).

In terms of operation of the proposed test, the Assessment Selection and Placement Center (ÖSYM), a body responsible for preparing most of the examinations in Turkey, presents a good model. ÖSYM is the most experienced testing center of Turkey which is responsible for preparing and operating about 50 exams (on category) per year. One of these exams is the Public Personnel Selection Examination (KPSS) that is given as a source to retrieve questions on civics.

### The Proposed Model for Turkey

Considering all the features discussed above, the proposed model is summarized in Table 4. In terms of naming the test, "The Turkish Test" or "Turkish Naturalization Test" can be preferred. Their Turkish translations can be "Türk Sınavı", "Türk Vatandaşlığı Sınavı", or "Vatandaşlık Sınavı".

Table 4. The Proposed Model of the "Turkish Naturalization Test"

	Language	Civics
Examination type	Oral	Written*
Required level	A2	10/15 correct answers
Subjects	- Places	- Fundamental rights
	- Holidays	- Republican history
	- Civics	- Geography
	- People	- Economy and public service
	- Question words	- Social norms

<sup>\*</sup>In cases where the applicant is illiterate, an oral version can be applied.

Since 33 percent of the Syrian population in Turkey is illiterate (The Ombudsman Institution of Turkey, 2018: 70), applying an oral test seems more implementable. However, the test should be designed in a 'literate' format initially. In total, ten correct answers in fifteen multiple-choice questions are needed in order to be successful in the civics portion of the test.

Course materials for the Turkish Test could be available on the NVI website. Regarding the language of the course materials beside Turkish, English, Arabic and Russian can be provided. As an example, the US *Naturalization* test publishes its preparation materials in six languages (Arabic, Chinese, Korean, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese) beside English (USCIS, n.d.).

Considering the categorical content, the Turkish Test can adapt more from the US *Naturalization* test model compared to *Life in the UK* test. Only the 'social norms' category and multiple-choice system in the civics portion of the Turkish test have similarities with the UK model. The feasibility of the proposed test in Turkey will highly depend on its applicability and reactions upon practices. Policymakers' determination to use the test as an important instrument will also play a key role. Eventually, long term outcome will definitely appear at a later stage.

#### CONCLUSION

"In addition to demonstrating all kinds of internal and external efforts to allow for the return of Syrians to their homeland, it is necessary to emphasize the development of integration policies for the possibility of permanence."

(The Ombudsman Institution of Turkey, 2018: 31)

Integration policies are inevitable for immigrant-receiving countries. Turkey's current position complies with Peucker's argument that says "every industrial country that has experienced large-scale immigration has developed more or less explicit nation-specific policies and strategies for the incorporation of immigrants into the socio-political community" (Peucker, 2008: 241). As a result, the above-mentioned regulations present an inevitable task for many states. Among these regulations, employing a citizenship test can be considered as the first step in integration policies.

Naturalization of migrants is believed to foster integration. Citizenship can be seen as a tool to strengthen the social, economic and political integration of migrants (Yildiz, 2017: 60). The concern of whether newcomers can comply with the law and social life at an adequate level is shared by most immigrant-receiving countries. Therefore, integration policies play a significant role in the society of such countries.

Citizenship tests are believed to regulate migration via promoting "civic integration," "political allegiance," "social cohesion," and/or "social harmony" (Kunnan, 2009: 89). If naturalization could be assisted by some level of integration, this kind of examination is supposed to help fasten this process relatively. Habermas's theory supports the role of integration as well: "adoption of the idea of nationhood that creates bonds of mutual solidarity between *former* [emphasis added] strangers and motivates the extension of democratic citizenship" (2000: xxii). These bonds can create strong links for the new citizens in the society.

In this sense, Turkish authorities prefer to use the word "harmonization" rather than "integration". The Department of Harmonization and Communication under DGMM is the responsible body operating such integration programs. To this end, application of a citizenship test has already been reinforced implicitly by the article 96 of Law on Foreigners and International Protection (2013): "Foreigners may attend *introductory courses* [emphasis added] in which the political structure, language, legal system, culture and history of the country as well as their rights and obligations are explained".

However, granting citizenship to Syrians in Turkey has been criticized by the opposition firmly (Koylu, 2016; the Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2017) and there have also been concerns raising from Turkish society (Cunningham & Zakaria, 2018). According to the Dimensions of Polarization in Turkey Survey (2017), 86.2% of Turkish citizens think that Syrians should return their homeland. On the other hand, Syrians claimed that they demanded Turkish citizenship by 74% according to the Human Development Foundation (INGEV) and Ipsos (2017). This rate increases to 80% when asked to 15-17 age range. These demands of both sides (migrants and society) pose a dilemma for policymaking.

Beyond the specific Syrian refugee case, amendments on the acquisition of Turkish citizenship by investment in 18.09.2018 also accelerated Turkish citizenship applications. With the amendment

(TCL, Art. 12) foreign investors who can make a fixed capital investment for at least 500.000 US Dollars or purchase an immovable property for at least 250.000 US Dollars in Turkey can apply for Turkish citizenship (NVI 2020)<sup>5</sup>. This amendment caused an increase in house sales to foreign nationals. While 22.234 houses were sold to foreign nationals in 2017, it doubled to 45.483 in 2019 (TurkStat, 2020). Ministry of Interior Suleyman Soylu stated that 5111 foreign investors obtained Turkish citizenship as of 28 February 2020 through this investment criteria and additional 1382 investors have successfully completed their applications (Over 5,000 foreign investors granted Turkish citizenship, 2020).

These recent examples demonstrate that naturalization policies should draw more attention to Turkey's migration management today. In this regard, this research, from a citizenship test standpoint, contributes both to the existing and future debates of naturalization in Turkey. Besides the academic field, policymakers and legislative bodies can benefit from the findings of the research. Moreover, when the discontent among Turkish society towards Syrians' acquisition of Turkish citizenship is considered, a citizenship examination can be seen likely to lessen these tensions to some extent.

As stated by the Turkish authorities, Turkey should not approach to its migration policy "as if Syrians are going to leave tomorrow" (The Ombudsman Institution of Turkey, 2018: 31). There is no doubt that this "as if" perception might cover the reality of the situation and restrain policy development on migration.

Considering all these, state introduction through a citizenship test is expected to provide benefits both for the naturalized citizen and the state in the long run. Yet, a sole citizenship testing system will certainly not bring full integration. Naturalized citizens in their "new" land and society gradually connect and integrate as long as they become more involved in many ways of social life.

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Further conditions are available in five languages on the NVI website https://www.nvi.gov.tr/istanbul/yabanciyatirimci

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