

**Review symposium: Contested Citizenship:  
Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe by  
Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham, Marco Guigni and  
Florence Passy (published 2005, pbk/hbk)**

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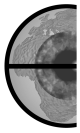
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**Review Symposium: *Contested Citizenship: Immigration and Cultural Diversity in Europe* by Ruud Koopmans, Paul Statham, Marco Guigni and Florence Passy (published 2005, pbk/hbk)**

**Through a looking glass, darkly**

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Mohammed B., the 26-year-old Moroccan who ritually murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004, was anything but the typical high school dropout that has become emblematic for the failure of Dutch multiculturalism. In fact, Mohammed B. had finished his secondary education with excellent results, had studied accountancy and social work at one of the Amsterdam polytechnics and was active as a social-pedagogical volunteer in a youth work organization in his neighborhood in the western part of Amsterdam. This potential success story of multicultural integration turned into its exact opposite only after the 9/11 attacks. One can only imagine what the mixture of frustration because of bureaucratic obstruction, post-9/11 religious and ethnic polarization, and increasing socioeconomic isolation from Dutch society must have been like – Mohammed B. was unemployed and received social security benefits – and how this contributed to the gradual radicalization of Mohammed B. and his friends. After the broadcasting of the film ‘submission’ – written by Dutch MP Ayaan Hirshi Ali and directed by her friend and incorrigible *agent provocateur* Van Gogh – in which parts of the Koran were being projected upon a naked but veiled woman, the religiously highly charged Ramadan provided the immediate context for Mohammed B.’s gruesome deed, which,

in the eyes of the rest of the world (and those of many Dutch themselves), marked the bankruptcy of Dutch multiculturalism.

One cannot but wonder what the authors of *Contested Citizenship* would have made of this dramatic story of religious conversion and subsequent radicalization. On the one hand, it clearly fits their tale of the perverse effects of accommodating claims for cultural group rights that is supposed to be the hallmark of multiculturalism, Dutch style. On the other hand, it also suggests that the cultural dimension of integration is only part of the story and that the perversity may not be due so much to the segregationist effects of granting group rights per se but rather to the absence of an effective anti-discrimination policy in the sphere of labor market insertion. What is striking about *Contested Citizenship* is that the latter possibility is not even considered.

The authors set out to present the first ever *empirical* investigation of the way in which citizenship regimes affect quantity and quality of the political activities of immigrant organizations, the extreme right as well as native pro-immigrant advocates. To do so they use two different data sources. In order to reconstruct the nature of the citizenship regimes in France, the UK, Germany, the Netherlands and Switzerland, the countries that are the subject of this book, they have used primary and secondary literature on: (1) the criteria of the acquisition of nationality in the different countries; (2) the extent of citizenship rights granted to foreigners; (3) the anti-discrimination policies in the different countries; (4) the cultural requirements for naturalization; (5) the extent to which group rights are seen as legitimate; (6) the different state–church relations; (7) the political rights granted to non-nationals; and (8) the presence of affirmative action policies. Adding a cultural pluralism versus cultural monism axis to Brubaker's civic-territorial versus ethnic axis (1992), the authors construct a four-slot typology consisting of segregationist, assimilationist, universalist and multiculturalist regimes that promises better empirical adequacy in the sense that it incorporates in more detail the determining characteristics of the policy fields in question, to wit: immigration and integration policies. Moreover, the authors include among their independent variables a discursive dimension that encompasses nationally specific modes of framing migration and integration issues, which impinges on the way in which collective identities are being constructed. Data on the dependent variable – public claim making by immigrants, the extreme right and 'advocates' – is based on each and every textual trace of public claim making within five leading newspapers of the countries in question.

The thesis that the political behavior of claim-making agents is largely determined by national citizenship configurations and is hence not ethnically determined, as the culturalists claim (see Chapter 4), and is not moving in either a postnational (Chapter 2) or a transnational direction (Chapter 3), as, respectively the transnationalists and the postnationalists claim, is

quite convincing. Koopmans et al. clearly demonstrate that both quality and quantity of public claim making by immigrants differs across countries. The number of public claims by immigrants in countries with ethnically based conceptions of citizenship is much lower than in countries with civic-territorial conceptions of citizenship and is, moreover, much more home directed. Alternatively, among the countries with a civic-territorial conception of citizenship, there are huge differences with regard to claims for group rights, which can easily be explained by the monist versus pluralist axis. In other words, in France, where cultural monism predominates, hardly any claims for group rights can be observed, while in the UK and the Netherlands, which are the most explicitly multiculturalist, claims for group rights are much less rare. As such, by combining a reconstructed collective movement perspective with a political discourse analysis perspective, and hence empirical rigor with theoretical sophistication, *Contested Citizenship* has clearly brought the empirical research on citizenship a step forward, while at the same time debunking a number of highly fashionable claims concerning the end of the nation state that predominate in migration studies.

Of course, there are always one or two things one can quarrel with. For instance: is the postnational claim falsified if one observes that the European Union (EU) is not a prominent addressee of immigrant claim making in national papers? The literature on multilevel governance is currently in the process of replacing a simple multilayered conceptualization of postnational regulation according to which each level, following good old subsidiarity theory, has its own tasks and responsibilities for a more complex one in which the different layers are intertwined differentially in the case of different policy fields (Marks and Hooghe, 2004). While there is no consensus on what is the nature of this beast – some preferring to call it a ‘consortio’ or a ‘condominio’ (Schmitter, 2000), others a ‘Sektoralstaat’ (McCormick, 2006) – what is clear is that this more variegated and differentiated conceptualization of multilevel governance requires a different assessment of the impact of the EU on national and subnational regimes, namely as being much more indirect and less visible. Hence, what in the first instance seems to be addressed to national policy makers is actually, when the whole policy trajectory is unraveled, co-produced by national and supranational agents alike. Lacking such a more detailed process, tracing the postnational claim is perhaps liquidated too soon.

Of similar (insignificant) weight is what the authors have failed to discuss. Part and parcel of the literature on multilevel governance is the claim that national policy responsibilities and prerogatives are increasingly being devolved to lower-level regulatory bodies too. Patrick Ireland is perhaps the one best known for making this claim in the field of migration studies. His work clearly demonstrates that integration policies – much more at least than migration policy – are increasingly determined at the

local level, implying quite large policy differences even within ostensibly highly centralized and strong states such as France (Ireland, 1994, 2004). Since the dependent variable is studied through the lens of *national* newspapers, the *subnational* dimension is by definition left out of consideration, suggesting that the authors have missed out on a domain of policy making and hence claim making that, if Ireland's suggestions have any veracity, is of growing importance for both immigrants and natives. Moreover, it is not the case that the method of political claim analysis is unsuitable for investigating this dimension. Local media as well as the internet can be fruitfully investigated in this manner. It is not only policy making that has become ever more fragmented, but luckily for the political discourse analysis, the public sphere too. We can only surmise what the outcome would be of a study of claim making within these kinds of media, especially the internet, where the increasing popularity of blogs and messenger interfaces has created an alternative and highly fluid public sphere that does not conform to the logic of the media of yesteryear. Given the dramatically declining circulation numbers of daily newspapers, it could well be that the kind of analysis undertaken in *Contested Citizenship* is decreasingly representative of political claim making *tout court*.

But this is small beer. I have a more substantial quarrel with a number of much less substantiated claims scattered throughout the book. On a large number of pages, the authors make statements concerning the perverse effects of multiculturalism, and multiculturalism of the Dutch stripe in particular. On p. 144, for example, the authors state 'that the strong facilitation of cultural difference has insufficiently stimulated migrants to orient themselves toward and to participate in Dutch society.' And on p. 164, it reads: 'Dutch liberal multiculturalism lets community groups take precedence over the national community. Such an approach takes Dutch society in a direction that may reproduce parallel and divided rather than cohesive societies.' And on p. 245, the authors state in relation to Dutch multicultural policies that 'too much state sponsorship for multiculturalism appeared to have led to the fragmentation of migrant communities along ever smaller ethnic and religious group lines, resulting in an institutionalization of inequality'. Despite the qualifications and the explicit claim to be 'not normative' in this respect (p. 240), it is hard not to see these and similar passages (see pp. 80, 88, 107–8, 125, 157, 160ff., 175, 178, 240) as cryptonormative propositions. For what is taking place here is an unwarranted empirical slippage from the political dimension of social reality to the socioeconomic one.

*Contested Citizenship*, I said above, contains a very precise, robust and rigorous analysis of the textual traces of political activities, including speech acts, of a number of collective agents on migration and integration issues in five western European countries. Given the lens it uses to shed light on these issues, namely claim making in national newspapers, it can only say

something robustly about the way these claims are pre-structured by national configurations of citizenship. What it definitely does *not* contain is an extensive comparison of the actual socioeconomic incorporation of different immigrant groups across the five countries. So, each and every statement concerning socioeconomic outcomes is unwarranted and carries the suspicion of being prejudiced against a certain outlook, in this case multiculturalism *à la* Dutch. In my opinion, the authors would either have had to refrain from making general statements on the state of affairs of immigrant incorporation in Dutch society or they should have written another book, used different methods and should have built on different empirical materials. As it stands, they have done neither, rendering their statements crypto-normative.

That is not all there is to my quarrel. *Contested Citizenship* does not only betray unwarranted slippages, it also falls prey to what I call a causal fallacy. For the (unwarranted) claim is that Dutch multicultural policies are to blame for the difficult incorporation of Islamic immigrants. Even if it is granted that immigrants in the Netherlands do worse on a number of relevant socioeconomic and political criteria (which is not a foregone conclusion either, but that will have to wait for another occasion), it is open for debate whether that is primarily due to Dutch multiculturalism. In fact, Dutch multiculturalism never amounted to much and mainly concerned education policies, while the socioeconomic part of integration was largely left to the labor market, whose regulations were mainly aimed at protecting insiders. The so-called affirmative action-policies, of which the authors make so much (p. 66), was a paper tiger that was widely circumvented by employers and employees alike. What I want to suggest here is that successful integration is best seen as a multicausal phenomenon that is only partially influenced by ostensive integration policies and much more by the unintended positive and negative effects of the larger institutional framework of the political economy. Koopmans et al. instead postulate a direct, unilinear causal relationship between policy outputs and social outcomes, which, in the light of the more reflective public administration literature, is naive to say the least. Between outputs and outcomes stand different, countervailing as well as reinforcing, causal mechanisms, which forbid easy conclusions concerning the exact cause of societal developments or problems. By restricting themselves to legal documents and the scientific reflection thereupon to describe and distinguish different national configurations of citizenship, the authors commit a form of 'legal fetishism' that stands in stark contrast to their sophisticated analysis of immigrant claim making.

This brings me back to my initial question: what would the authors have made of the case of Mohammed B? Following the reasoning underlying this review, it might well be that the case of Mohammed B. does not so much demonstrate that Dutch multiculturalism had gone too far, as the authors of *Contested Citizenship* so confidently assert, but rather that there was not

*enough* multiculturalism in the Netherlands. The lesson could just as well be that the combination of enforced cultural assimilation, as is the course the Dutch have taken since the rise and fall of Pim Fortuyn in 2002, and malign neglect in the socioeconomic sphere are a sure recipe for Islamic radicalization.

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## Contested Citizenship

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This book is a systematic and solid cross-national comparative analysis in the domain of immigration, integration and cultural diversity. Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passy (hereinafter KSGP) have brought together their data (collected in France, Germany, Netherlands, UK and Switzerland), and their reflections on issues related to citizenship, nationalism, post-nationalism and transnationalism. Brubaker's typology of citizenship and