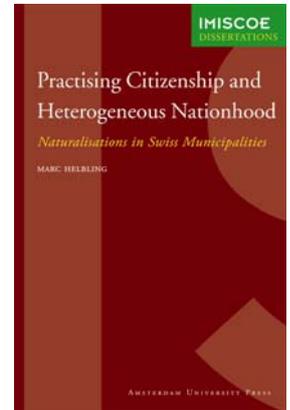


Practising Citizenship and Heterogeneous Nationhood: Naturalisations in Swiss Municipalities

By Marc Helbling

The Book

Switzerland could well have the most peculiar naturalisation system in the world. Whereas in most countries citizenship attribution is regulated by the central state, each municipality of Switzerland has the right to decide who can become a national citizen. By transcending formal citizenship models, the Swiss case thus casts citizenship politics in an entirely new light. This book explores naturalisation processes from a comparative perspective, explaining why some Swiss municipalities pursue more restrictive citizenship policies than others. Through quantitative and qualitative data, this study shows how negotiation processes between political actors produce a large variety of local citizenship models. Integrating Bourdieu's political sociology, the theoretical framework innovatively combines symbolic and material aspects of naturalisations and underlines the production processes of ethnicity.



The Author

Marc Helbling is a Lecturer in Comparative Politics at the University of Zurich. He has studied political science in Lausanne, Paris, Zurich and New York. His research fields include immigration and citizenship politics, nationalism, national political conflict and public policy analysis.

“This study takes research on citizenship onto a new level of analytical rigour and empirical precision. It shows that naturalisation practices are the result of a political negotiation process between actors that hold different conceptions of the nation and its boundaries.”

-- Andreas Wimmer, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Los Angeles

“By focusing on the small and poorly understood case of Switzerland, Marc Helbling provides a major contribution to the study of citizenship. His meticulous study is theoretically informed, empirically balanced and it reaches bold and convincing conclusions that should be of broad interest to this growing field.”

-- Marc Morjé Howard, Associate Professor of Government, Georgetown University, Washington, D.C.

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