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### **Practising Citizenship and Heterogeneous Nationhood: Naturalisations in Swiss Municipalities**

Helbling, Marc

*Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press (2008), 216 p., ISBN 978-90-8964-034-5.*

With its decentralized practice of naturalization policies, Switzerland provides an arguably unique and certainly highly interesting case of a country where the admission to the formal status of national citizenship is decided almost completely at the municipal level. At the end of his theoretically and empirically rich book about heterogeneous nationhood, Marc Helbling rightly poses the question about the fairness of the Swiss citizenship procedure where the access to citizenship is contingent on the place where non-citizens, perhaps accidentally, happen to live. Moreover, apart from the normative issue about inclusion, what does it actually mean to be a Swiss

citizen, if membership attribution is so extremely decentralized? The answers to these pertinent questions are clearly not straightforward, and largely beyond the scope of this book, but there is no doubt that Helbling's admirable study provides important material for broader debate.

Marc Helbling, however, is not so much occupied with *normative* debates in this book, but primarily with studying the *empirical* causes of divergent local practices: *why* do some Swiss municipalities pursue more restrictive policies than others? His answer to this comparative question, which has not yet been studied so systematically and extensively before, is basically one about local power struggles: how important municipal actors think about belonging strongly influences the way in which they decide about who may belong. This may, to a relative outsider, not come as such a big surprise, but Helbling is careful to set his understanding of citizenship practice against the literature on nationhood and citizenship, which has for a long time suffered from essentialism, or what Roger Brubaker termed "groupism". This literature, following Kohn's classic distinction of civic and ethnic nations, for a long time at least, but perhaps to some extent still today, sees nations as "groups" framed by some kind of core idea about nationhood, which in turn influences the way in which admission to the group is regulated. In a wide ranging discussion of the state of the art, in the first chapters of the book, Helbling dismisses this approach for its analytical ambiguity as well as for its inherent assumption of endurance of these core ideas. On the first point, Helbling rightly criticizes the notions of civic and ethnic nations for being conceptually unclear and also highly burdened by normative connotations. On the second point, as citizenship policies haven't proven much more contingent, certainly in recent years, it becomes increasingly problematic to associate citizenship policies with supposedly relatively permanent ideas of nationhood. Instead, building on Bourdieu's notion of "field", Helbling proposes a model of contingent citizenship policies, where ideas about belonging are being continuously contested and, as a result, strongly depend on the specific political and temporal "field" in which citizenship is practised.

In the empirical part of the book, Helbling tests this model in a mixed-method comparative analysis of naturalization policy in Swiss municipalities. The empirical analysis consists of three distinct approaches, which very nicely complement each other. First, in a large-N study of 103 municipalities, Helbling measures the causal impact of a number of cultural, political and socio-economic factors, and shows that in particular the presence of a popular vote, the strength of the SVP, and a restrictive "understanding of

citizenship” tend to lead to higher “rejection rates” in naturalization procedures. Second, in a comparative study of fourteen selected municipalities, with varying rejection rates, Helbling is able to bring out the power factor better, by asking which actors are politically most relevant, and shows that in particular *their* understanding of citizenship has most explanatory power. Thirdly, in two in-depth studies of “mirror” restrictive and liberal municipalities from two cantons, Helbling is able to illustrate the general findings, by describing in more detail the naturalization processes and attitudes of the municipal actors that are involved in decision-making. Overall, the depth and extension of the empirical analysis, together with the laudable effort to combine different methodological approaches, deserve great praise and respect.

From a more critical perspective, and by no means withstanding the praise expressed above, one could point at perhaps two shortcomings and one missed opportunity. First, the important concept of “understanding of citizenship”, which is used in both the large-N analysis and the comparative study, and despite an extensive theoretical first part of the book, appears somewhat without notice in the empirical part. At times, the reader would have been better off with a less encompassing review of the literature, and with more specific hypothesis-building, more precise operationalisation of variables, and more straightforward description of the empirical variation on dependent and independent variables. Second, on methodological choices, the use of regression techniques for the analysis of the fourteen municipalities in the comparative study, certainly a bit unusual given the limited number of observations, is done without much explanation. The use of specific methods for medium-sized datasets, such as Boolean or fuzzy-set analysis, would perhaps have been more intuitively plausible. Thirdly, and partly related to the previous point, is that it is to some extent a pity that the whole analysis is presented without knowing which municipalities are actually being described. As a result of a promise of anonymity to the interviewees, the author uses fake names to describe all the cases. True, perhaps without this promise the author would not have obtained this amount of material, but at the same time I disagree with Helbling “that we are not interested in naturalization politics of specific municipalities” (p. 71). Particularly when making inferences on the basis of a relatively small number of cases, as in the comparative study of fourteen municipalities, knowing about which cases we talk not only adds empirical richness to the analysis, but also prevents one from overlooking important local particularities.

In the end, however, this is an exemplary comparative study of the contested issue of citizenship policy, in the highly interesting case of Switzerland. Helbling convincingly shows that, at least in the Swiss case, a single “national” model of citizenship is not useful to interpret the way in which naturalization is regulated. Perhaps more importantly, by proving a model to explain significant variation at the local level, Helbling’s study contributes greatly to the comparative study of citizenship attribution.

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### **New Public Management im Parlament: Auswirkungen auf die Steuerungsfähigkeit in den Kantonen**

Schmidt, Nicolas

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Das New Public Management hat seit den achtziger Jahren des vergangenen Jahrhunderts eine weltweite Verbreitung gefunden, wie kaum ein anderes Verwaltungsführungsmodell zuvor. Obwohl sich die Terminologie und die Rhetorik in den meisten Ländern gleicht, ist die konkrete Praxis ausgesprochen unterschiedlich. Erwartungen, das NPM könne zu einer weltweiten Konvergenz der Verwaltungsführung führen (Kettl 1997), wurden weitgehend enttäuscht (Pollitt 2002). Viele prophezeien schon seit längerem das Ende des New Public Management. Dennoch bricht international gesehen der Strom neuer wissenschaftlicher Beiträge zum NPM nicht ab, und entsprechende Instrumente und Führungsansätze sind mittlerweile vielerorts Selbstverständlichkeit.

Im internationalen Vergleich gilt die Schweiz als ein “late mover” und wird fälschlicherweise oft im allgemeinen deutschsprachigen Raum eingebettet, gemeinsam mit Deutschland und Österreich. Hierzulande hat jedoch eine eigenständige (und konsequentere) Entwicklung stattgefunden, die in den frühen neunziger Jahren eingesetzt hat. Etliche Texte verschiedener Autoren analysieren, kommentieren und beschreiben diese Entwicklung (u.a. Schedler 1995; Mastronardi and Schedler 1998; Kettiger 2000; Steiner 2000; Rieder and Lehmann 2002; Ritz 2003; Lienhard, Ritz et al. 2005; Ladner, Cemerin et al. 2007; Proeller 2007), und die Fülle an Lite-