

# **Citizens and Citizenship – the Rhetoric of Dutch Immigrant Integration Policies**

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## **Abstract Proposal**

Despite EU attempts to promote uniform practices regarding immigrants' integration in Europe, consensus has been far from reached around the original intention of the EU/EC to establish practices for migrants considered as equal candidates for citizenship. Instead, restrictive policies have been articulated, notably in The Netherlands and France, where under the influence of right-wing populist parties both governments took radical positions against migrants and distanced themselves from multiculturalism.

The new rules have functioned as mechanisms for filtering against, not least, unwanted 'Others' from Eastern *Europe* [some of them classified in Dutch statistics as Other Europeans] and for differentiation and segregation against the non-Western allochthons – sometimes referred to in the literature as citizens with an integration deficit or dis-citizens [Wodak, 2013] – people deemed now as not possessing the required cultural knowledge or the language competencies to (deserve to) enjoy fully their citizenship rights.

Using tools from lexical analysis, argumentation analysis, category analysis and rhetoric analysis, we explore Dutch immigration and integration policies. We look in particular at problematization and its political rationality, and at whether and how manipulation of knowledge through power shapes migrants' given identities, allocates and re-allocates positions in society, and can render migrants as subjects of marginalization and exclusion.

Attention will be paid to: the concept of citizenship as a mechanism that regulates migrant exclusion [Brubaker, 1992] and to its contextual meanings and connotations; and to discursive strategies of ethnicization and exclusion with regard to two targeted groups/*constructed categories: the non-Western allochthons and Other Europeans.*

We investigate two key Netherlands government documents on immigrants' integration, a policy formulation document from 2011 and a policy implementation agenda from 2013: *Integratie, Binding, Burgerschap* [16.06.2011] and *Agenda Integratie* [24.03.2013]. We focus on the following questions:

- Who are the subjects of the immigration policy and how are they described/constructed as citizens? How are they framed as passive/active receivers of citizenship? Who are the citizens with a 'citizenship deficit' and how are they portrayed?
- Based on which rhetorical means are identities and purported communities constructed? What in/out grouping strategies are used? How is the logos constructed around these categories [structures of argumentation; coherence of the discourse]? What can be said about the voice of authority embedded in the text? Does a text appeal to feelings and emotions? How and with what effects?
- Do the texts use techniques of punishment, prohibition or exclusion? To which extent do they include moralization, assimilation, and correction of the candidates for citizenship?

By using a repertoire of tools from discourse studies and perspectives from governmental studies, political economy and cultural psychology, we will investigate whether and how the concept of citizenship can sometimes be used to contribute to migrants' marginalization and exclusion.

Brubaker, R. (1992) *Citizenship and Nationhood in France and Germany*.  
Cambridge/London: Harvard

Wodak, R. (2013) Dis-citizenship and Migration. A CDA perspective, *Journal of Language, Identity & Education*, 12: 3,173-178.