Nation-freezing: Images of the Nation and the Migrant in Citizenship Packages

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Introduction: New nationalism as nation-freezing

In the early years of the nation-state model, the imposition of the national language and the official version of the national history, myths and icons was an essential part of the process of nation-building. These were efforts to create unity out of the diversity that the nation-states found within their borders. As nationalism acquired a negative connotation through the WW2, national symbolisms faded to the background until globalisation and migration brought national identities back into the front stage. Discussions on national norms and values, historical blueprints, the national flag and anthem are hot issues in Europe again: After long discussions on the historical canon in the Netherlands, the country's first national history museum will exhibit the nation's history. On his first Commons statement as British Prime Minister, Gordon Brown has ordered all government buildings to fly the British flag all year long (instead of 18 fixed days per year) as a 'patriotic gesture to help create a new sense of Britishness' (Jones 2007). After incidences of whistling during the singing of the national anthem at football matches of the French national team, the French Minister of Immigration, Integration, National Culture and Solidarity has asked the High Council on Integration (*Haut Conseil à l'Intégration*) to bring

an advice as to what kind of measures the government could take to raise the awareness and respect for the French national anthem (Haut Conseil à l'Intégration 2009: 8).

The signs are manifold, but this article zooms into one manifestation of resurgent nationalism in the form of 'citizenship packages' for migrants. Studying the citizenship packages of three Western European countries, the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom, allows us to decipher the national variations in framing national identities in response to comparable global pressures and migratory histories. By focusing on the images of the nation and the migrant presented in them, the aim is to acquire a closer understanding of how nationalism is played out in the arena of citizenship. Theoretically, the article aims to contribute to the debate on new nationalisms by comparing it with classical nationalisms and coins a new term to conceptualise new nationalism: *nation-freezing*. I first introduce my theoretical framework and the term 'nation-freezing'. Then I analyse the discourses in the citizenship packages. I conclude with a discussion of the findings and the extent to which the term nation-freezing is successful in capturing the empirical cases.

Citizenship and nationalism

Citizenship in its current form, defined as membership of a particular state, is intricately tied to nationalism understood as an ideology of building nation-states. The birth of nation-states did not automatically lead to national citizens. It was nationalism, as an ideology establishing (and maintaining) the congruence between culture and polity (Gellner 2006: 107) that transformed subjects into citizens. During the 18th-20th centuries nation-states engaged in activities of nation-building through 'inventing traditions'

(Hobsbawm 1983) of the 'nationally imagined community' (Anderson 1994). This meant creating national histories, languages, traditions, myths and symbols and establishing new traditions in order to mark and celebrate the nation. The unique combination of these elements has formed a part of the national identity, assumed in turn to be an 'essential' identity of a nation/people which is 'internally unified and different from all others' (Calhoun 1997: 7). Nationalism thus partially rests on the claim that the nation-state embodies citizens who are committed to an integrated whole (the nation) which has an overarching (national) identity (ibid: 77).

Whereas the birth of nations is characterised by explicit appeals to national identity and unity, once a nation-state has been successfully built, the emphasis on national markers moves to the background and becomes taken for granted. Banal nationalism (Billig 1995) refers to this state of the state where national identity is viewed as the 'normal' and 'natural' frame of reference. Civic nationalism can be linked to this state where the nation and its identity are not challenged and where the citizens are assumed to voluntarily belong to the nation-state and its governing institutions, as if through a 'daily plebiscite' (Renan 1990). Civic nationalism is typically coupled with a *jus soli* citizenship regime that enables the national community to expand by acquiring new members through the addition of new citizens whose commitment to the state is thought to emerge by birth or long residence. In this conceptualisation, individuals are assumed to *be* or *become* citizens by the virtue of being present within the borders of the nation-state and by being exposed to its institutions, symbols and values.

Individualisation, globalisation, mobility, and migration have challenged these core assumptions of the nation-state, especially with regard to a homogenous national identity. The new nationalisms of today lead the state to revert to a renewed emphasis on the building blocks of national identity and to look back to a glorious pre-globalisation period of the nation with a taken-for-granted cultural homogeneity (Kaldor 2004). Yet, as

the history of nationalism shows, nation-states were rarely built upon a homogenous culture. National homogeneity often had to be constructed through the efforts of the state-controlled institutions of compulsory education, the army, national radio and television, which were the primary socialisation agents of nation-building projects. As alternative agents such as media and internet have multiplied and challenged the state's dominance in socialisation, the assumption of a homogenous national identity has become increasingly more difficult to make. It is against this backdrop that the rise of current nationalisms have been identified and labelled by scholars as cultural nationalism (Delanty 1996), new nationalism (Kaldor 2004), or neo-nationalism (Schinkel 2007).

Though new nationalisms partly resemble classic nationalisms, the difference lies in the logics. Classical nationalisms referred to nation-building projects that consisted of creating unity out of diversity and constructing a new national identity by selecting elements of the local elite and folk cultures. Though new nationalisms partly resemble classical nationalisms, they are characterised by a significantly different logic which I will call *nation-freezing*. Practically, nation-freezing involves activities of the nation-state to reconstruct national identity through a new nationalist discourse which defines the elements of this 'national culture' as if it was (ever) unitary and static. The new nationalisms thus stand in sheer contrast to the diversity and fluidity of the current social reality of West European societies. Yet, the state aims to revive and preserve national unity as if 'to return to an earlier period of "innocence" when the state was dominant' (Kofman 2005: 461) and when it was assumed that the state could effectively impose a unique national identity which would remain fixed for generations.

I propose that we now speak of nation-freezing *if* the national imaginary depicted by the state is one in which:

- the existing diversity and societal change are ignored,

- 'the nation' and 'the national identity' are fixed as homogenous and stable entities and

- the national community is (discursively) closed for additions and transformations.

As the metaphor suggests, nation-freezing implies a stiff conceptualisation of the nation which would like to conserve itself in a particular idealised form. As such, new nationalisms differ from classical nation-building nationalisms since the aim is not to build a new nation.

Citizenship, which is historically tied closely to 'nationhood' (Brubaker 1992), matches this new nationalism by increasingly becoming *culturalised*. The focus turns to 'citizenship as identity' (Joppke 2007b), whereby belonging to a nation-state and having right to citizenship is increasingly linked to the ability to adapt on the basis of cultural traits individuals are assumed to possess or not (Kofman 2005, Schinkel 2007). Hence, *cultural citizenship* upholds a predefined national identity to which new citizens are required to adhere to. As such, it rests on the idea of culture as a 'home' to which one belongs and to which one is loyal (Verkaaik 2009: 11). The acquisition of citizenship is thus transformed from being a legal status with political, economic and social rights into a question of 'cultural integration' into society (Schinkel 2010).

Besides its content, new nationalism also differs from classical nationalism in terms of its focus. Whereas classical nationalism distinguishes itself from other nation-states in defining its national identity, new nationalism distinguishes the 'native' national identity from that of its current and prospective citizens who tend to be migrants.[1] The terms of integration thus become conditions of membership of the national community. Accordingly, citizenship and integration policies emerge as central arenas where the discourse of new nationalism unfolds. How citizenship is presented, i.e. the public portrayal of 'us', turns into an important mechanism of exclusion and misrecognition of minorities or newcomers (Lægaard 2007: 38).

Discourses are crucial in drawing political frontiers between 'insiders' and 'outsiders' (Griggs and Howarth 2002: 102). This study looks into the discourses of cultural citizenship by studying the content of 'citizenship packages', which consist of the official material assigned by states in order to welcome its newcomers and assist them in their integration. I employ the term 'citizenship packages' to stress the fact that becoming a citizen is increasingly being framed as an issue of integration. Whereas the growing scope of citizenship requirements and citizenship tests have received much scholarly attention recently (Etzioni 2007, Joppke 2007c, Beaujeu 2008, Hansen 2008, Kiwan 2008, Van Oers 2008, Wright 2008, Carrera and Wiesbrock 2009), the actual content of these new citizenship packages has hardly been analysed critically.[2] The information included in these packages offers us valuable insights into how the receiving state presents itself and the country to its new members. *What kinds of images are depicted of the nation-state and the migrant in the citizenship packages of the Netherlands, France, and the UK and (how) do these images freeze the nation?*

Naar Nederland (To the Netherlands)? Welcome to the Small, Cold and Difficult Netherlands

Ever praised for its liberal migration regime, the Netherlands currently has one of the strictest regimes in Europe in terms of the demands newcomers have to fulfil for a successful immigration and integration process. In 2006, the Netherlands has added a pre-integration package to its policy repertoire for those who wish to obtain a visa to enter for family formation and reunification and for performing religious services. The government's official aim is to 'promote the integration of this group of people by beginning with civic integration in the country of origin' (Adviescommissie normering

inburgeringseisen 2004: 5). The pre-immigration package contains the preparation film *Naar Nederland* (Going to the Netherlands), together with the practice book and questions on the basis of which the migrant has to pass an exam to demonstrate her/his basic knowledge of the Dutch language and society. Once in the Netherlands, migrants also have to complete an integration course and pass an exam.

The Dutch government has for a long time given the impression that one 'cannot study to become Dutch' by not providing information and learning materials for the Dutch citizenship exam (Joppke 2007c: 5). Yet, recently the era of secrecy has partially ended since practice material has been posted on the official integration website www.inburgeren.nl. The practice questions are grouped under Education, health, and upbringing; Work; and Knowledge of the Dutch society. The questions are on bureaucratic procedures (such as registering birth or opening a bank account) but also on how to handle in social situations at work or in the neighbourhood. The questions test the language level, but, in some questions, a linguistically good answer is not the right answer. This is the case for the questions on etiquette which expect the applicants to give the socially desirable answers according to Dutch social norms which stresses that there is only one acceptable way to behave in the Dutch society.

Before the practice questions were published, however, the pre-integration package *Naar Nederland* (Ministerie van Justitie 2005) was the only publicly available official publication.[3] Since one can presumably pass the pre-integration test with mere memorisation of the answers, the test does not seem to require an internalisation of the knowledge on the Dutch society. In contrast, the content of the pre-integration film is unequivocal on the necessity of adopting the norms of the Dutch society. This demand is literally underlined in the film, such as in the words of one of the migrants remarking that the migrant should undertake an 'internal relocation' (*interne verhuizing*). In 105 minutes, the film summarises the knowledge newcomers are expected to possess on the following

eight themes: Geography and accommodation; History; Politics and the Constitution; Dutch language and how to learn it; Upbringing and education; Healthcare; Employment and income; How to do the test at the Embassy.

At face value, the choice of themes looks quite practical. Indeed, the film does provide some helpful information on the particularities of the Dutch health and education system which may not be so obvious to adults grown up in other countries. Yet the film does not only transfer knowledge on the basics of the institutional and practical context of the Netherlands. It also has a normative content projecting a particular view of the Dutch society that the migrant is confronted with as a precursor to her/his physical and emotional relocation to the Netherlands.

In the film, there are a few positive aspects the Dutch are proud of: the dykes, the bikes, the public transport, the Golden Era, the welfare state and the sexual revolution. The overwhelming image that is portrayed, however, is negative: The Netherlands is cold, wet, small, overcrowded and expensive. The image of the Netherlands as a host country of immigration is set by the opening scene shot at the Amsterdam Airport. First, migrants, who throughout the film express their views on aspects of life as an immigrant in the Netherlands[4], tell about their first impressions of the Netherlands. Remarkably, the first sentences of the film are voiced by two black women:

> *'When I arrived here it was incredibly cold. I didn't really have a warm coat with me.'*
> *'I got quite a shock of course. I thought, "My goodness, they really are white."'*

In the first sentence, the North-South difference is immediately marked with the reference to the Dutch weather. Next, the Dutch race is indirectly marked as being white (as opposed to the black migrants). Other migrants then continue with their first impressions about the Netherlands as being cold, orderly and clean. Then, two natives warn the prospective migrant:

'It's not exactly, "Hi there, welcome, come in, sit down!" you know. "Good to see you here!" It's not like that.'

'I think you have to expect as a foreigner, as a newcomer to the Netherlands, that Dutch people really have very little patience.'

The first native voices we hear in the film thus emphasise the fact that the migrants should not expect a welcoming attitude. To the contrary, Dutch people are defined as being impatient without making it clear in which context and thus homogenising the Dutch.

The introductory section is closed with a migrant saying that she has suffered from a 'culture shock'. This in itself can be seen as a way of referring to the usual effect of moving to another country, but by choosing an account that frames this process as a 'shock', the extent of the cultural difference between what is assumed to be the migrant's culture and the Dutch culture is dramatised. As such, the text creates a binary opposition between the Dutch culture and that of the migrants. Simultaneously, the migrants and their culture are positioned outside the Dutch society (Schinkel 2007).

The theme of cultural difference is a recurring theme in the film. Throughout the film, reference is made to the postulate that different cultures and different languages lead to a lack of comprehension between people. Ironically, the image that appears on the screen whilst making this argument consists of a group of adults speaking with each other in the garden and a multicultural group of children playing together at the playground. It is as if the mere presence of different cultures is assumed to cause miscommunication. This understanding is very much in line with the current dominant understanding of the multicultural society in the Netherlands and with the emphasis on learning the Dutch language. This is reflected in the recent government campaign titled '*Het begint met taal*' (It begins with language), with an advertisement spot showing migrants who speak their native languages and are not able to communicate with each

other. The official idea lying behind the enhanced language requirements is that citizens cannot make full use of their rights and obligations without sufficient knowledge of the national language (Van Oers 2008: 43). However, this policy also echoes a broader assumption of nationalism that learning the language constitutes a precursor to belonging to the national community, i.e. the '"one nation, one language" ideology' (Bjornson 2007) which originates in 19th century nationalism (Wright 2008: 3).

National history-telling is crucial in distilling the self-image of nations. For the purpose of this article, it is particularly interesting to look into how immigration is framed in citizenship material. The Dutch immigration history begins with the 17th century, referred to in Dutch history as the Golden Era. The Dutch are proud of this part of their immigration history which becomes also evident in the classification of the migrants in this era as having contributed to the welfare of the Netherlands. Whereas post-colonial immigration is presented in its (simplified) historical context, the migration of the 1960s and 70s is not framed as an economic contribution as the case of immigration of the Golden Era is. Instead, the guest workers are presented as having arrived to the Netherlands for doing low-skilled work – referred to as 'simple work' (*eenvoudig werk)*. The fact that these guest workers were actually invited to fulfil the economic needs of that period is not mentioned, thus downplayed.

One of the most interesting chapters of the film in terms of highlighting the culturalisation of citizenship is that on 'Politics and the Constitution'. The chapter begins with a factual introduction to the Dutch political system where the voting system and political parties are introduced. Then, the film touches upon features of the Dutch political system which have been controversial issues of public debate on the integration of migrants. First, freedom of speech and religion are highlighted as important bulwarks of the Dutch democratic system. These freedoms are followed up by an explanation of the limits of freedom. This discussion is predominantly reserved for making it clear that the

Dutch law is particularly strict in domains related to - what is framed in the Dutch public debate as - the equality of the sexes. The only topics that are mentioned are Dutch laws against honour killings, domestic violence and female genital mutilation, which is a very selective treatment of gender equality that reflects the image of the target audience in the eyes of the Dutch state. The following excerpt is illustrative of the discourse used in handling these topics:

A woman reports her husband to the police because he beats her at home. 'That's private', he says. 'That's abuse' says the police. Proof of the abuse shows he's guilty, so punishable by law. [Flashed newspaper headline:] *Jail term for domestic abuse*

This is one of the most moralistic chapters of the film and speaks with a stern, authoritative and preaching voice. The presentation is supported by newspaper headlines which again highlights the fact that the selection of these topics highly reflects the Dutch public debate. Though this excerpt does not explicitly refer to migrants, against the backdrop of the Dutch public debate on these issues and the target audience of this film, it can be concluded that it is highly gendered and essentialist in its imagination of 'the non-Western migrant woman'. Almost echoing the image of the Oriental woman of the colonial age (Said 1995), the migrant woman is portrayed as passive and submissive and the Dutch state as the paternal saviour of oppressed women with its legislation. It is also in this chapter that we see the images of a kissing homosexual couple while introducing the Dutch law legalising homosexual marriages. Both the national image as well as the image of the migrant is thus homogenising as this chapter defines the Netherlands as a liberal democratic society which stands in contrast to the 'traditional migrant' who needs to be informed on secularism, democracy, freedom and women's rights.

Even though the official aim of the film is to initiate integration before entering the Dutch soil, the overwhelming focus on the negative and difficult aspects of immigrating

to the Netherlands, suggests that the foremost aim is to select immigrants. The conveyed message is that the migrant should be prepared to accept all these aspects of the Netherlands before they embark. In case they do come to and stay in the Netherlands, they should be prepared to adjusting to the norms of the Dutch society. These norms, however, are not limited to rights and duties of the citizen but extend to sphere of daily behavioural norms. Going beyond gender issues, the film also explains how one is expected to react to nudity or how one should behave at a birthday party. In sum, the definition of the Dutch national identity and the integration demands of the Dutch state expand to the private sphere.

*Vivre ensemble, en France (*Live together, in France*)!* Welcome to Beautiful France, the Country of Liberty-Equality-Fraternity

France has also introduced a pre-integration package for migrants of family unification. Put into force in 2008, the pre-integration test evaluates the migrant's knowledge of French and the Republican values. Migrants with insufficient knowledge are to receive a short language course and an introduction on the values of the Republic in the country where they are applying for the visa. Once in France, the migrant begins with her/his integration process by signing the Contract of Reception and Integration (*Contrat d'accueil et d'intégration*) which requires that the migrant complete a three-module integration package, consisting of the sub-modules French language (where needed), civic formation and living in France.

For the analysis of the French case, I use two publicly available pieces produced by government agents: excerpts of the introduction film *Vivre ensemble, en France* (Live together, in France) (ANAEM 2006) and the welcome booklet *Livret d'Accueil* (Ministère

de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire 2008). Taken together, the film and the welcome book correspond to the Dutch pre-integration film in terms of the kind and amount of information included. Yet the uses of communication media are different. In this sense, it is difficult to arrive at a direct comparison in terms of the images used, as film and written text offer different possibilities for presenting information.

The French film material I analyse is a part of the integration contract (CAI). The film is shown during the first activity of the civic integration program. In contrast to the extensive Dutch film, the French government has chosen for a short film which lasts 16 minutes and consists of six sub-sections: Introduction; Liberty, Equality, Fraternity; Equality between men and women; Learning French; Interview with Nejma Belhadj; The contract of welcome and integration. The choice of topics thus partly resembles the Dutch film. Due to its conciseness, the French film is particularly interesting to analyse as to which images and texts have been chosen for this presentation of France to newcomers in a nutshell.

The underlying tone and images of the French film are bright and sunny. Whereas the Dutch film has been filmed in autumn (except for the famous scenes with the topless woman and the kissing gay men), the French film has been filmed in the summer. The film begins with the image of the Eiffel Tower shining brightly and welcomes the newcomers to France. The images of France that have been chosen for the film show the beauty of France in sharp contrast to the dark images of the Dutch ghettos. The snapshots are those of happy people sitting and walking in parks and socialising with friends. The conveyed message is thus more one of pride. In contrast to the efforts of the Dutch film to counter the image of the Netherlands as paradise on earth, the tone of the French film is rather congratulating and welcoming of the migrant who has chosen France as a country of destination. Textually, the film opens with the following sentence:

> *Each year, like you, almost 140,000 foreigners coming from different cultures settle down in France.*

The sentence addresses the newcomer directly and puts the migrant at ease by referring to the fact that there are thousands of others who choose to settle down in France. A similar approach is also to be seen in the recently founded institution, *Cité de l'immigration* (City of Immigration) which aims to display that the construction of the French state has historically incorporated different waves of immigration (Beaujeu 2008: 31).

The second sentence of the film excerpt moves directly to the importance of national identity:

> *Like all countries, France and the French people are attached to their culture and fundamental values. To live together, it is necessary to understand them and to respect them.*

The attachment to one's culture and values is normalised by defining it as a trait of 'all countries'. Billig (1995) would view this as a typical feature of the discourse of banal nationalism wherein individuals are presumed to be socialised into the nation-state system and to relate to the assumptions underlying it, such as the fact that every nation has its own culture and values. In the French case, the focus on French values is not a recent phenomenon. French citizenship has always presupposed a moral component of what it means to be French (Favell 2001: 66). By the virtue of defining the contours of this *citoyenneté* (citizenship), nationality laws have occupied a central space in debates on immigration and integration and have been closely linked to the concepts of nation and national identity (ibid: 63).[5] Becoming French has assumed having internalised the core

values of the French Republic, echoed in the term *nationalité réussite* (succeeded nationality) with reference to immigrants who have fulfilled the moral and legal criteria for integration (ibid: 159). In this sense, one can speak of continuity in the development of the French concept of citizenship. What is significant, however, is that the assimilative power of the French state is not taken for granted anymore, but that the process of integration is codified and monitored through tying residence and citizenship entitlements with the contract of integration. Now, France also chooses for films and courses to convey its fundamental values to its newcomers.

The inclusion of a whole chapter on the French national motto 'Liberty, Equality, Fraternity' is not that surprising since these principles are considered as the cornerstones of the French republic and as 'France's gifts to the world' (Brubaker 1992: 44). The French state seems to be also occupied with the position of the migrant woman though, as the film includes a whole chapter on the equality of the sexes. In the framework of integration, the equality of the sexes seems to have been added to the Republican motto as it is mentioned separately. This principle is visually portrayed with the images of a female member of the parliament (MP) and a female bus driver. Simultaneously, the audio fragment tells us that women in France do not need any man's permission to work or to go outside and that they equally participate in the decisions concerning the family. This image is as homogenising as in the Dutch film. Whereas the French women and men are presented as being equal and emancipated, the migrant woman is implicitly assumed to face limitations with regard to her mobility and choices. The images of the female MP and bus driver are, however, far more emancipated than the images of working women in the Netherlands who are either working in the education, health, or sanitation sector, which reproduce the presence of women in the typically female dominated sectors.

Learning French is also attributed a separate chapter, but the tone of the French film is quite different from the Dutch film. It is presented more as a skill that will make the individual autonomous and help her/him find a job. This represents the labour market approach to language as an integration requirement (Bjornson 2007). France is actually one of the least demanding European countries in terms of the language level migrants are required to attain. This is partly due to the fact that France predominantly receives immigrants that already speak the language due to the French colonial legacy (ANAEM 2006: 11). Language does not constitute a high hurdle in France whereas it is a big issue in the Netherlands where most immigrants do not speak the language and have to follow extensive language courses to be able to reach a basic level that enables them to participate in the labour market (Joppke 2007a: 9-10).

In terms of the level of detail and content, the French welcoming booklet *Livret d'Accueil*, resembles the Dutch film. The booklet is divided into the following sections: France; Professional Life; Family Life; Educational Life; Health, Social Life and Practical Life. The booklet covers the main aspects of practical life and the content is highly reflective of the French debate on integration. Just like in the short film, the equality of the sexes is treated as a separate section in the chapter 'France' where it is presented as a 'fundamental principle of the French society'. The topics that are dealt with are: the equal rights and duties of women and men, liberty of marriage (as opposed to forced marriages and polygamous marriages), domestic violence and genital mutilation. The [French] women are described again as equal partners in decisions concerning the family. The liberty of marriage is introduced as a right stemming from international treaties.[6]

This section is followed by an explanation of the unacceptable practices with regard to marriage and domestic life. As in the Dutch film, the legal sanctions against domestic violence and genital mutilation are explicitly mentioned. This chapter

resembles the style of the Dutch chapter on the equality of the sexes, as France is presented as a country with emancipated women and liberal marital lives. The use of the simple present tense frames these as a normality of French life. The explicit reference to practices such as forced and polygamous marriages targets the migrants who are thus implicitly assumed to uphold traditional, patriarchal values. These are then the 'essential attributes' which migrants are homogenously taken to possess *because* they come from and therefore belong to other national communities with Other national identities. Indeed, such practices have been referred to previously in reports of the French High Council on Integration as cultural specificities of Muslim or African populations that '*challenge the fundamental principles of the French society*' (Streiff-Fénart 2009: 220-1, emphasis in original). However, later in the booklet, in the chapter on 'Family Life', domestic violence is acknowledged as a phenomenon that concerns 'all social classes and cultures' (Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire 2008: 26), which makes the message of the French booklet more universalistic and less externalising, thus not consistently essentialising it as a practice of other cultures and people.

Though the French booklet does not have any section on history which lends itself for direct comparison with the Dutch and British citizenship material, the concluding section of the chapter 'France' includes a sentence which signals the outlook towards migration and inclusion in the French national community in terms of history-telling. The following sentence is included in the sub-section on applying for French citizenship:

> *Becoming French is an important choice which is a strong engagement for you and your children and involves an adherence to the values of the Republic and willingness [to accept] that the future of this country but also its past is from then on yours* (Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire 2008: 18).[7]

This excerpt highlights the voluntary aspect of French citizenship (Brubaker 1992) by defining the acquisition of French citizenship as an important choice. At the same time, the loyalty aspect is also emphasised, which is then further explained as subscribing to the values of the French Republic and owning the past and the future of France. As such, this excerpt gives two messages: on the hand, the prospective citizen needs to internalise French values and the history of the French nation; on the other hand, s/he is also included in this history. Here, we see an assimilationist and universalist approach to citizenship (Brubaker 1992, Geddes 2003, Preuss et al. 2003) which is discursively inclusive of its migrants.

On the whole, though the French film and booklet do stress 'fundamental values', the emphasis is predominantly on the values of the Republic, by which the French understand the legally codified rights and duties. As such, the French texts are rather legalistic and state-centred. The highlighting of the equality of the sexes and the sections of the booklet on family life, however, diverge from this discursive pattern since they assume emancipated women as 'the French norm'. These sections also pertain to behaviour in the private sphere and are the most preaching in the way they address the reader, for example, by prescribing the ideal temperature of the room in which a baby should sleep (Ministère de l'immigration, de l'intégration, de l'identité nationale et du développement solidaire 2008: 43)..Hence the French citizenship package defines both public and private elements of the French national identity.

A Fair and Factual Welcome to *Life in the United Kingdom*

In terms of the timing and the scope of integration demands, the United Kingdom can be considered the least demanding of the three countries since only those who wish to apply for British citizenship or permanent residence are subject to formal integration tests or courses. For migrants who have a sufficient level of English, the requirement is to pass the *Life in the UK Test*. Those with a lower level of English need to attend combined English language and citizenship course (UK Border Agency 2010). The Home Office has published preparatory books for the *Life in the UK Test*: a textbook encompassing the required knowledge on Britain and a test book with examples of questions. These two books correspond to the citizenship material in the two other countries in terms of content. For the comparison of visual material, I rely on the pictures in the preparatory textbook.

Life in the UK test includes quite detailed questions as well as general questions on 'important aspects of life in Britain today' (Home Office 2007: 4). The preparation book consists of the following sections: The Making of the United Kingdom: history; A changing society; UK Today: A profile; How the United Kingdom is governed; Everyday needs; Employment; Knowing the law; Sources of help and information; Building better communities. The last three chapters are not included in the examination. Chapter 1, which is the chapter on the British history, was initially also excluded from the test. Recently, the government has announced plans to 'tighten' the procedures further by introducing a new two-stage system (Kelly 2009). According to the new system, the first test will focus on practical information about life in the United Kingdom and will be taken during the probationary citizenship stage, and a final test will include the 'more challenging topics' including history and politics (idem).

In terms of national history-telling, the British citizenship book can be characterised as reflexive since the history chapter begins with the explicit statement that:

Any account of history … is only one interpretation. Historians often disagree about what to include and what to exclude in historical accounts (Home Office 2007: 4).

The book thus admits the fact that this is the take of the British state on national history. The history chapter in the British book is quite comprehensive and includes a lot of dates, names and factual details. This probably explains why the historical part was initially not included in the citizenship test. The relativist stance regarding history is also reflected in the sections on identity:

In the United Kingdom, national identity and citizenship do not always mean the same thing (Home Office 2007: 7).

In this statement, citizenship is separated from identity, indicating that the British state recognises that these two need not overlap. This is partly due to the multinational composition of the UK where the Scottish, Welsh and Irish identities are institutionally recognised as separate national identities next to the English national identity under the umbrella of British citizenship. The plurality of recognised identities in the UK thus diverges from the theoretic assumption of nationalism equating the nation-state with one national identity. As such, the French and British nationhood differ from each other: 'Whereas in the Republic, nation, state and individual identity are necessarily conflated, the emptiness of modern UK constitutionalism determines that the national polity has no identity-forming primacy, so that "Britishness" remains a natural or social construct.' (Everson 2003: 79)

Others have argued that the combination of this 'nation-neutral' view on nationality and the sovereignty of the British Parliament as opposed to the British citizens have facilitated the inclusion of newcomers and the establishment of a multicultural

society (Preuss et al. 2003: 11). The inclusion of migrants in the national imaginary is also reflected in the *Life in the UK* book by explicitly recognising minority identities:

> *In addition to national diversity, there is a very long tradition of ethnic and religious diversity in the United Kingdom* (Home Office 2007: 7).

This excerpt owns the national, ethnic and religious diversity in the UK. The pictures included in the book also mirror this diversity as all but one picture show multicultural/multiracial groups of people. This is in line with the British discourse on citizenship and the British integration model which are commonly characterised as multicultural (Berthoud and Beishon 1997, Favell 2001, Geddes 2003, Vasta 2007). This is also the self-description of Britain which is made once more explicit towards the end of the history chapter:

> *The UK is … a more pluralistic society than it was 100 years ago, both in ethnic and religious terms. Post-war immigration means that 10% of the population has a parent or grandparent born outside the UK…. The UK has been a multi-national and multi-cultural society for a long time, without this being a threat to its British identity, or its English, Scottish, Welsh or Irish cultural and national identities* (Home Office 2007: 25).

In this excerpt the pluralism of the British society is linked to post-war immigration and the ethnic and religious diversity. The last sentence of the history chapter, however, is somewhat ambiguous. On the one hand, it defines the UK as a multicultural and multinational society. On the other hand, the British, English, Scottish, Welsh and Irish identities are separately mentioned to point out that multiculturalism does not threaten these identities. As such, it is not that clear what the 'British identity' refers to. Is it a separate (national) identity? If the multicultural and multinational character of the British

society were the defining characteristics of the 'British identity', it is not clear why it would be threatened in the first place. This could be also interpreted as a move away from a multicultural definition to a 'stronger sense of Englishness (or Britishness) to which immigrants must conform' (Kumar 2006: 424). Yet the British do not seem resolute on what this identity is, as the citizenship book consistently refers to diversity and change.

In terms of migration history, the British narrative highly resembles the Dutch one. It offers and explanation of each wave of immigration, which either stems from the needs of the migrant group or the UK. The Irish migrants are the only group who are explicitly praised for their contribution to creating Britain's industrial infrastructure (Home Office 2007: 20, 27), both in the 'History' and 'Changing Society' chapters. The post-war immigration is described as having occurred due to the lack of labour power, as a result of which people were 'encouraged' or 'invited to come and work'(Home Office 2007: 27). The contribution is further not commented upon.

The British book also presents a diversified picture as to the position of women in British society. The section, 'The changing role of women', uses labour market participation statistics as an indicator for the equality of sexes, even though the sharing of responsibilities of the household is also briefly mentioned. The text is nuanced with regard to women's position in the labour market: Whilst mentioning that women are now active in a wide range of activities, it also points to the fact that they continue to be employed in traditional female areas, to have the main responsibility for childcare and housework and to earn less then men (Home Office 2007: 29). The 'British women' are thus not homogenised and presented as being all emancipated which is the case in the Dutch and French citizenship material. Furthermore, room for change is also allowed, not only by focusing on the 'changing role of women' but also by explicitly referring to the changing attitudes in this area. Also, the use of words such as 'today' or 'now' highlight the fact that the book gives a snapshot of the current situation and refrains from

generalising and essentialising. On the other hand, the reference to the present time could alternatively be interpreted as a distancing from the past and from practices which are assumed to belong to the past, such as patriarchal conceptions of the division of labour between the sexes. The fact that some women stay at home and do not work is also mentioned as an alternative. Again, statistics are used to show that this is not so common:

> *Research shows that very few people today believe that women in Britain should stay at home and not go out to work. Today, almost three-quarters of women with school-age children are in paid work* (Home Office 2007: 29).

In this excerpt, women who do not have paid work are described as a minority of the society with the help of statistical evidence. Statistics can indeed be used by policy-makers as tools to highlight the 'statistical difference' of certain groups in society which in turn reinforces the essentialisation of these groups (De Zwart 2009). Even though it might be argued that there is a subtle mechanism of marginalisation present here, given the general relativism which predominates the British citizenship material, I interpret as a way of showing diversity of opinions whilst avoiding confrontation or direct value judgement.

The section of the *Life in the UK* book on 'Children, family and young people' is also demonstrative in terms of the discourse adopted by the British. As in the section over the equality of the sexes, the descriptions of family life in the UK refer to the diversity of practices by referring to statistics as well as the changing nature of them. Values are not made absolute but are described as a product of societal dynamics. Furthermore, minority practices are also recognised: Whilst referring to the practice of young people leaving their family home when they reach adulthood, this is qualified by the use of the word 'many' and by adding that this is not the practice in every community. The text on 'forced marriages' under the 'Knowing the Law' Chapter, however, is more absolute:

No one can be forced to get married regardless of how strong the wishes of their family may be (Home Office 2007: 94).

This is the closest the British citizenship book gets close to the Dutch and French texts. Forced marriages are controversial in the British context as honour killings are in the Netherlands and polygamy in France. In all cases, women who are assumed to be the subjects of these practices are presented as incapable of agency, operating on the stereotypical assumption that men or parents from particular cultural groups are coercive and women submissive (Philips 2007: 9). Except in the case of forced marriages, however, the British text does not use a moralising but descriptive tone whilst speaking of divergent social practices, as opposed to the Dutch and French texts which create a binary of normal vs. unacceptable practices with regard to gender relations and family life. If we can speak of cultural citizenship in the British case, we should be speaking of multicultural citizenship since the British citizenship package emphasises multiplicity instead of unity.

Discussion

This article aimed to assess whether and how national imaginaries are depicted in citizenship packages of the Netherlands, France and the United Kingdom. To distinguish new nationalisms from the nation-building nationalisms of the 19th century, I have coined the term *nation-freezing* to make sense of new nationalisms. Whereas classical nationalism tended to focus on establishing a discourse of unity at the level of symbols and institutions of the public sphere, new nationalism intrudes in the private sphere. This observation supports the argument made earlier by Gerard Delanty (1996) who

characterised cultural nationalism as being more diffuse, focusing on less obvious reference points and pervading everyday life. I observe this trend the strongest in the Netherlands. This can be see as a manifestation of the large role the Dutch state assumes in the field of immigrant integration – in Michalowski's words, 'even the details of social interactions are considered to fall under the scope of state action' (Michalowski 2009: 21). The French approach mixes an emphasis on state symbols with a focus on the private sphere. Though the British material also refers to the practices in the private sphere, the discourse is not moralising.

The concept of nation-freezing fits the Dutch case the most. Not only does the citizenship material assume a unitary national identity, but it also does not offer any space for divergent practices and at times strongly qualifies these practices as unacceptable. The message given to the migrant is that s/he is expected to adjust to the 'liberal' Dutch societal norms as defined by the state in its integration material. Not only is the Dutch national identity pictured as a monolithic entity, the migrant and her/his 'culture' is also addressed throughout as traditional and in need of adjustment to Dutch norms. Furthermore, the Dutch integration film adopts a 'clash of cultures' hypothesis whereby difference in cultures is persistently referred to as leading to lack of communication, understanding and to problems. According to critics, the Dutch approach can be described as 'social hypochondria' (Schinkel 2007) as the state increasingly focuses on social problems infecting the national body as a way of reinventing itself in the global world order. In order to fix social ills, the state directs its attention increasingly on the private sphere. Furthermore, the national imaginary that the Dutch state freezes is exclusive of the present diversity whereby the migrant is placed as 'outside the Dutch society' or at best seen as a problematic part of the national whole (idem).

The French case occupies a middle position in terms of nation-freezing. To begin with, the French new nationalism resembles classic nationalism the most by referring to and reviving national symbols of the state which have been adopted in the nation-building era. On the other hand, the French citizenship material also defines norms with regard to the private sphere by referring to the dominant French norms, especially in the field of gender roles. Where the French material differs from the Dutch material, however, concerns the definition of the French nation and citizenry as the discourse on these issues is inclusive of migrants in the history of France. In that regard, the new French nationalism is willing to extend the borders of its national community.

The British citizenship material, however, does not fit the nation-freezing concept I have introduced in this article. The discourse employed in the citizenship book, including the section on British history is reflexive and recognises the constructedness of national history. Furthermore, the text explicitly refers to the diversity of cultures and cultural practices and diverges from the image of a unitary national identity. By emphasising the changing nature of societal norms and practices, the material does not make claims to fixing a static identity. This is in line with the British approach to citizenship, which has been characterised as being pragmatic and without a sense of cultural mission (Turner 2006: 612). The increased focus on raising the demands placed on prospective citizens, as in the plans to include the history chapter in the citizenship test, are representative of the trend of making the British immigration regime tougher than of a move towards cultural citizenship. In comparison with the Dutch and French cases, the British new nationalism is hardly cultural. If it is to be defined in cultural terms, it is multicultural.

Even though the contents of the national imagery used in the citizenship packages vary, there is also a major point of convergence, namely that the frozen national imaginary presented to the newcomers is a 'liberal' one. This is paradoxical in and of itself as liberalism as an ideology stresses individual freedom in the choice of

personal values and behaviour.[8]   Liberal values imposed as civic integration are in practice 'instances of repressive liberalism' (Joppke 2007a: 12) and can be typified according to Joppke as 'Foucauldian liberalism' as they resemble 'workfare policies, seeking to make people both self-sufficient and autonomous by illiberal means' (Joppke 2007a: 16). The demands placed on prospective citizens in terms of adjusting to pre-defined liberal norms framed as national identity are an essential feature of new nationalisms. And this is where nation-freezing new nationalisms deviate the most from classical nationalisms.

Notes

[1] For a similar point, see Delanty 1996.

[2] Exceptions are: Michalowski 2009, Wilton 2009.

[3] The actual content was prepared by a consultancy firm, CINOP, and produced by a film company Odyssee Producties, both commissioned and supervised by the Dutch Ministry of Justice.

[4] It needs to be further researched to what extent the views expressed in the film have been orchestrated.

[5] This was also manifested in the recent national debate on the French national identity.

[6] Joppke (2008: 537) interprets this framing of French national symbols and values in universalistic terms as a sign of French particularism.

[7] The original French text is: "... *devenir Français est un choix important qui vous engage fortement vous et vos enfants et qui suppose une adhésion aux valeurs de la République et une volonté que l'avenir de ce pays mais aussi son passe soit désormais le votre.*"

[8] I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this point up and inviting me to reflect further on this issue.

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