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Article:

When stripped back, de Waal's central argument is compelling. Firstly, European states have placed more and more conditions on individual migrants attaining permanent residence and citizenship rights. These conditions are broadly speaking 'integration requirements'. Secondly, that theories of liberal nationalism are permissive of integration requirements but fail to provide limits on what conditions are permitted. This means that the imposition of integration requirements are vulnerable to misuse by governments, primarily as a means of appeasing the anti-immigrant right by forever extending what it means to be 'integrated' for the purposes of attaining permanent residence and citizenship rights. Thirdly, that a more ethical approach would be to limit 'integration' policy to wider public policy actions which require action by the state, the community as a whole, as well as the individual migrant.

However, the argument is weighed down by theory; both in the books' continual engagement with multiple existing theories, and the generation of the books' own. In generating her thesis that there has been 'a conceptual shift in Europe regarding the notion of 'integration' from a more societal concept to a more individualised and selectively applied notion' (p40), de Waal's analysis struggles with the apparent contradictions in European "integration" policies. In particular, although the individual is subjected to a variety of integration tests (e.g. language, life in the host state quizzes, etc) these are frequently designed to signal and/or facilitate the exclusion of 'non-Western, non-EU', and particularly Muslim, immigrants. De Waal presents plenty of examples of how the increase in individualised integration tests appear aimed particularly at Muslim communities in their content and accompanying rhetoric, yet strangely finds Joppke's argument that Muslims are targeted 'difficult to substantiate because this is…not made explicit in policy documents' (p35). This is a strange position to take, given de Waal's reflection elsewhere that 'a growing body of research indicates that mainstream parties…often adapt their immigration policy positions in response to the rise of anti-immigrant parties' (p67) and that 'integration requirements are often not primarily enacted to benignly facilitate the successful societal incorporation of [third country nationals]…Rather they convey the political message towards the electorate that the government is "taking care of migration"' (p74).

This book has all the ingredients of a compelling analysis based on critical race theory. De Waal's discussion of the implications of the individualisation of integration (p37-40) identifies that 'it creates an image of society in which certain persons may be perpetually *physically* present in society, but…

As persuasive as this analysis is, by failing to place this in a context of racial/religious exclusion the analysis lacks punch because the theoretical analysis does not form a cohesive whole.

In the context of the rest of her argument, a potentially much stronger analysis would argue that an 'individualised' turn in integration policy is consistent with the general neoliberal turn in Western political policy across the board, which emphasises the importance of individual action. By placing the burden of integration on the individual as a condition of citizenship, long term residents who do not, or cannot, meet integration requirements can be identified as "failed citizens": a personal failure which is entirely the responsibility of the individual rather than through any faults in the receiving state. Because the neoliberal state casts failures to integrate as an individual failing, the state can then justify withholding of the benefits of citizenship (e.g. welfare, family migration rights, etc) from the failed citizen: which is de Waal's central concern later in the book.