Multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship : public views on national belonging, equality and cultural distinctiveness in the Netherlands

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Chapter 1
Introduction

1.1 Background and purpose of this study

Since the end of World War II, Western societies have grown increasingly diverse ethnically and culturally as a result of international migration. This growing diversity has given rise to issues that Kymlicka (1995: 1) calls 'potentially divisive'. Generally, these issues concern the rights and identities of ethnic and cultural minorities in immigrant-receiving societies. The contents of and responses to public, political and scientific debates reflect the disagreements about the content of various concepts central to inter-ethnic relations, such as citizenship, multiculturalism, national identity and immigrants' integration and loyalty to the nation-state. In particular, these debates concentrate on aspects of social equality, including government policies and regulations to achieve equality for citizens of different ethnic backgrounds. Concerns have been expressed about the need and effectiveness of these policies, and about the impact of social inequality on disadvantaged groups as well (Joppke 2007; Vermeulen 2010). Other debates concern aspects of immigrants' cultural and ethnic identity. Volatile public and political discussions have flared up in various European countries, for example, on whether Muslim immigrants should be allowed to wear a headscarf in school or at work (Lettinga 2011), and whether the multiple citizenship status or transnational ties of immigrants and their descendants could undermine their loyalty to the nation-state (Faist 1999). In the last two decades, these debates have increasingly tended to focus on the practices, norms and values of Muslim immigrants in particular (Ogan, Willnat, Pennington & Bashir 2014; Vermeulen 2010). More generally, the increased ethnic and cultural diversity has been challenging the old concept of national identity in Western European societies, which is based on ethnic descent (cf. Gozdecka, Ercan & Kmak 2014: 53; Fenton 2011).

This study explores the views on these issues prevalent in Dutch society. As in other Western societies, ethnic and cultural diversity has increased in Dutch society since the 1950s as the result of decolonization, the recruitment of labour migrants and their subsequent family reunification in the 1970s and 1980s, and, mostly since the 1980s, asylum migration (Castles & Miller 2009; Lucassen & Lucassen 2011).[1] In 1972, 9% of the Dutch population consisted of *allochthons*, a term used by Statistics Netherlands (CBS) to designate individuals of whom at least one parent has been born outside the Netherlands.[2] This percentage increased to 21% in 2013. The largest increase, from 1.2% in 1972 to 11.7% in 2013, is seen in the number of *non-Western allochthons*: persons of whom at least one parent was born in Africa, South America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey.[3] Part of these non-Western immigrants are Muslims, mainly originating from Turkey and Morocco, who constituted around 5% of the Dutch population in 2012 (Maliepaard & Gijsberts 2012).

These debates have been accompanied by a growing number of scientific studies of how Western societies have responded to immigration and the resultant ethnic and cultural diversity. A central issue in these studies is whether and to what extent these responses have been 'multicultural', an adjective which generally means that the cultural distinctiveness of immigrants is being taken into account. However, a distinction has to be made between two uses of this adjective (cf. Shadid 2009; Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 5-8). In the first, the adjective 'multicultural' is used as a demographic variable to describe a society which is culturally diverse. In this sense, Dutch society, as are most other societies, can be described as multicultural, as it consists of various ethno-cultural groups. In the second, it is used to describe specific normative responses to the (cultural) diversity in society, often referred to as policies of multiculturalism. Although many varieties of multiculturalism exist, most proponents agree on the importance of three central aspects: national unity and the social cohesion in society, the recognition of cultural distinctiveness of the various groups in society, and non-discrimination principles which not only concern social equality on grounds such as gender and sexual orientation but also the social equality of ethnic minorities (Vermeulen &

[1] However, Dutch society has always been culturally diverse. In past centuries, groups of various ethnic origins have settled in the Netherlands, including labour immigrants and refugees who fled other European countries for political or religious reasons. The Netherlands received a relatively large number of immigrants in the 17th century. Between 1850 and 1950 the number of immigrants settling in the Netherlands was low (Lucassen & Lucassen 2011).

[2] This definition is in use since 1999 (CBS 1999).

[3] CBS Statline, accessed February 3, 2014, http://statline.cbs.nl; CBS (2003). The term *allochthon* was not used by the CBS before 1989. However, in the publication *Allochtonen in Nederland 2003*, the CBS uses the term to describe statistics concerning 1972 (CBS 2003).

Slijper 2003: 8-11; cf. Van de Vijver, Schalk-Soekar, Arends-Tóth & Breugelmans 2006: 104).[4]

These three aspects are closely related to fundamental debates on citizenship, and therefore Shadid (2009) describes these aspects as the central dimensions of multicultural citizenship (see also Castles 1994; Modood 2010). The relationship between citizenship and the equality of citizens is clear, as legal citizenship in Western countries invariably entails the right to equality, as well as other rights and obligations including the right to participate in the country's political institutions and the obligation to obey the country's laws (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008).

The dimension of social cohesion relates to the recognition that individuals of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds who have legal citizenship belong to the national group. This recognition is fundamental to debates on citizenship as well, as the latter concept 'entails a tension between inclusion and exclusion' of individuals (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008: 155). Despite the clear legal boundaries circumscribing citizenship, citizens' views about who fully belongs to their national group are socially constructed, and consequently the nation itself is a social construct (Anderson 1991; Pehrson & Green 2010). In some studies, a distinction has been made between concepts of the nation in which either exclusive or inclusive criteria are considered important to belonging to the national group. Exclusive criteria, also referred to as 'ethnic', include common descent and religion, while inclusive criteria, often referred to as 'civic', include respect for institutions and laws and a sense of national belonging (for references see Bakke 2000).

Nevertheless, the most defining aspect of multiculturalism is the recognition of cultural distinctiveness. Several authors argue that it is necessary to give formal recognition to such group distinctions as gender, culture and religion, in order to achieve citizen equality (e.g. Kymlicka 1995; Parekh 2000; Shadid 2009). When these distinctions are not recognized, these authors argue, policies are often biased towards the interests of the majority group and consequently can cause inequalities or perpetuate existing inequalities (Leydet 2011; Modood 2010).

In these above-mentioned studies of how Western countries have responded to ethnic and cultural diversity resulting from immigration, the Netherlands is described by many authors – including opponents of multiculturalism – as a country which has represented or still represents a 'multicultural model', implying that its immigrant integration policies have been or still are multicultural (e.g.

[4] In other words, diversity in society raises two general questions: (1) who belongs to which group and (2) how should diversity be dealt with. The recognition of belonging relates to national unity and social cohesion, while the issue of dealing with diversity relates to equal treatment and the recognition of distinctiveness (cf. Verkuyten 2006: 5).

Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005; Sniderman & Hagendoorn 2007). However, this assertion has been criticized by other authors, who argue that opponents of 'multicultural' integration policies often fail to explain what they mean by a 'multicultural' policy or country (Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 7), or that they have been describing policies as 'multicultural', when these policies obviously have not fitted the criterion. Indeed, an analysis of Dutch integration policies by Duyvendak and Scholten (2012) indicates that these policies 'were not that multicultural at all', especially when it came to dealing with the aspect of the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness.

Leaving aside this criticism for the moment, it has to be said that most studies of whether countries have adopted a 'multicultural model' are limited, as they focus narrowly on regulations, policies and the political discourse of the societies concerned. In this respect, Shadid (2009) argues that, in order to characterize a society as multicultural, the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship discussed above have to be *publicly* recognized as well (cf. Van de Vijver, Breugelmans & Schalk-Soekar 2008: 95). In other words, Shadid proposes using these three dimensions of the concept of multicultural citizenship to assess the normative responses of both a country's institutions *and* its citizens to the (cultural) diversity of society.

Despite the large number of studies on multiculturalism, few studies have yet been done of public views on the three said dimensions of multicultural citizenship.[5] Especially rare are studies about public views on the national belonging of (new) citizens of various ethnic and cultural backgrounds (cf. Díez Medrano & Koenig 2005).[6] To paraphrase the researchers Devos and Banaji (2005): there is surprisingly little research on a fundamental aspect of citizen equality, which in the Netherlands is the degree to which society attributes the quality 'Dutch' to Dutch citizens of varying ethnic origins. Consequently, studies in which relationships between public views of national belonging and the public recognition of the social equality and cultural distinctiveness of citizens from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds are explored are rare as well (cf. Hjerm 1998).[7]

[5] Notable exceptions are studies by Van de Vijver and his colleagues (e.g. Breugelmans & Van de Vijver 2004; Van de Vijver, Breugelmans & Schalk-Soekar 2008; Breugelmans, Van de Vijver & Schalk-Soekar 2009). However, these studies focus on attitudes towards cultural diversity and equality, and not on national belonging.

[6] Examples of research on national belonging in the United States are Devos & Banaji (2005) and Theiss-Morse (2009).

[7] A rare example is an ethnographic study of national identity in Denmark by Jenkins (2011).

Apart from these knowledge gaps, to date there has also been little empirical research on the relationship between immigrant's ethnic identity or multiple citizenship status and their loyalty to the nation-state, a specific aspect of the recognition of national belonging which has been increasingly debated and problematized in the last few decades. Both scientific and political debates on this issue were and still are largely theoretical and hypothetical, and lack empirical basis (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008; De Hart 2005b).

The purpose of this study is therefore to explore Dutch citizens' views on all three of these dimensions of multicultural citizenship, including loyalty to the nation-state. By exploring these views, this study hopes to contribute to the understanding of how the social construction of national belonging is related to various aspects of attitudes towards cultural diversity, including views on equality, prejudice and cultural distinctiveness. By assessing these relationships, this study will also make an empirical exploration of whether the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship are indeed distinct, as theorized by Shadid (2009). Furthermore, by exploring the views expressed by both natives and first- and second-generation immigrants about loyalty to the nation-state, it is hoped that this study will strengthen the empirical basis for scientific and political discussions on this issue. More generally, the intention behind exploring these various aspects of multicultural citizenship in this study is to gain insight into factors which affect the incorporation of new citizens into society which can be used in the development of policies concerning immigrant integration. (*Nota bene:* the goal of this study is to explore public *views* on multicultural citizenship, and *not* to examine whether individuals would pass a civic integration test or are eligible for citizenship.)

A word of caution, the reader should bear in mind that this study is exploratory in nature, and that its wide scope has limited the depth to which each of the issues could be researched. Furthermore, this study is synchronic and does not explore changes in public views over time, as the data were collected within a limited time frame (2012-2013). To put the findings of this study into a historical perspective, each chapter contains a brief review of the development of the political debates on the issue at hand. Finally, this study does not address the question how these public views are shaped in society or influenced by institutional processes such as education and the development of school curricula. This does not mean that such processes are not influential. On the contrary, see, for example, studies by Anderson (1991), Bakke (2000), Schiffauer, Baumann, Kastoryano and Vertovec (2004), and Vertovec (2011).

The wide scope of this study has also led to specific methodological choices. In order to facilitate the exploration of relationships between all these views and also

to be able to include such background variables as political preference, educational level and gender in the analysis, both quantitative and qualitative data were collected using a survey (n=710) and semi-structured in-depth interviews (n=66). Both 'native Dutch' and first- and second-generation immigrants – holding Dutch citizenship – were interviewed. The design of the questionnaires was based on a study of the literature, including the literature on public and political debates.

1.2 Structure of this study

This study consists of 7 chapters, including this introductory chapter. In Chapter 2, aspects of the research methods and techniques and the sample used in this study are described, including the composition of the sample, the development and conduct of the questionnaires, and the analysis of data. Furthermore, the limitations of the study are discussed in relation to possible directions for future research. In Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6, the results of the analyses are presented. Each of these chapters consists of a concise review of the relevant literature, a brief overview of regulations and political debates on the issue at hand, and an analysis of the empirical data.

The theme of Chapter 3 is public views about national belonging, one of the dimensions of multicultural citizenship as discussed above. More specifically, this chapter examines the strength of belonging felt by citizens of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and explores the criteria deemed important when considering which fellow-citizens of various backgrounds do belong to the national group.

Another aspect of national belonging, namely loyalty to the nation-state, is the subject of Chapter 4. In this chapter, public views on loyalty to the nation-state are examined, as well as relationships between these views and such specific characteristics of citizens as multiple citizenship status, descent and political preference.

Chapter 5 examines public views on another dimension of multicultural citizenship: the equality of citizens of various cultural and ethnic backgrounds. To this end, views on several topics will be explored, including immigrant integration, prejudice and discrimination, and positive action. Immigrant integration is examined in this chapter because 'integration' has been used by the Dutch government as a central concept in describing the relationship between equality on the one hand and ethnic and cultural diversity of society on the other.

Public views on the third dimension of multicultural citizenship, the recognition of cultural distinctiveness, will be explored in Chapter 6. As mentioned above, in the last two decades political debates on this issue have increasingly focused on religious practices, norms and values of, in particular, Muslim

immigrants and their descendants. Therefore, the examination of public views on cultural distinctiveness in Dutch society will be mainly concerned with religious distinctiveness.

Finally, Chapter 7 contains the general conclusions and theoretical considerations. In this chapter, the main results of the previous chapters will be integrated. Part of this integration concerns the questions of how the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship are related, and whether they are indeed empirically distinct. Finally, some recommendations for policy measures will be discussed.

1.3 Some key terms: 'natives', 'immigrants' and 'descent'

Various terms are (and were) used in the Netherlands to describe immigrants and Dutch citizens of different origins. In the period after World War II, the term 'guest workers' was widely used to designate labour migrants. When it became clear in the 1970s and 1980s that many of these labour migrants were not guests but were settling in the Netherlands permanently, policy makers began using the term 'ethnic minorities'. This term was replaced in the 1990s by the term *allochthons*, which, as mentioned above, is defined by Statistics Netherlands (CBS).[8] In this regard, a distinction is made between Western and non-Western *allochthons*, where, as mentioned above, the latter category includes persons of whom at least one parent was born in Africa, South America, Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey.

It is important to realize that this distinction is based not on analytical considerations but on the political view that the integration of one group (non-Western) presents more challenges than integration of the other (Groenendijk 2007: 103-104). Furthermore, the distinction between *allochthon* and autochthon has been politicized (cf. Geschiere 2009: 130-168). This became clear in recent discussions about the future use of the terms. According to the current definition, a person who is born of parents born in the Netherlands is an autochthon, even when his or her grandparents were born outside the Netherlands. To be able still to make a distinction between descendants of (relatively recent) immigrants, some have decided to replace the term *allochthons* with the term 'immigrants and their descendants'.[9] Others, notably members of Parliament for the PVV (right-wing

[8] See CBS (1999).

[9] See for example some reports published by The Netherlands Institute for Social Research (SCP) since 2007 (available at http://www.scp.nl).

populist Party for Freedom), have argued that the children of second-generation immigrants have to be considered and defined as *allochthons* as well.[10]

This indicates that the question of who is an autochthon and who is an *allochthon* is more than a matter of definition. It is an ongoing social construction, based on such criteria as origin and how long ago someone's ancestors migrated to the Netherlands.

To prevent confusion, in this study the terms 'native Dutch' and 'immigrants' (or 'immigrants and their descendants') will be used. Unless otherwise stated, the term immigrant in this study indicates no more and no less than that at least one parent was born outside the Netherlands. Similarly, the term native is only taken to mean that both parents have been born in the Netherlands. However, as this study will make clear, it takes more than that to be described as a fellow native by many Dutch citizens. Finally, the variable 'descent' will be used, containing the aforementioned values 'native Dutch', 'non-Western immigrant' and 'Western immigrant'.

[10] See Snel (2011).