Governing Diversity. Dutch political parties' preferences on the role of the state in civic integration policies

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Abstract

This paper analyses political debates about civic integration policies in the Netherlands, so as to identify different conceptions of the role of the state in ensuring social cohesion by governing diversity. Drawing on the literature on party systems, it presents an analysis of political party positions on the role of the state in civic integration along two dimensions: economic distribution on the one hand, and socio-cultural governance on the other hand. We find that while the large majority of Dutch political parties adopt authoritarian positions on the socio-cultural axis in favour of state intervention to protect Dutch culture and identity, their positions diverge significantly on the classic economic Left-Right dimension. The most contentious issue in Dutch civic integration politics is whether the state, the market, or individual migrants should be responsible for financing and organising courses. Thus, this paper proposes an innovative model for analysing the politics of citizenship, which enables us to comprehend how citizenship policies are shaped not only by views on how identity and culture relate to social cohesion, but also by diverging perspectives on socio-economic justice.

Keywords

Civic integration; party politics; state; the Netherlands

Introduction

The mushrooming of civic integration policies is one of the most remarkable trends in migration and integration policies in Europe today. While language and integration requirements have long been part of many European naturalization procedures, formalised civic integration programs made their appearance in Europe in the 1990s. In recent years, a growing number of EU countries have made entry and residence rights conditional on participation in or successful completion of civic integration courses (Goodman 2010, Jacobs and Rea 2007, Van Oers *et al.* 2010).

Civic integration policies reflect the assumption that state intervention is necessary to safeguard the cohesion and regulate the diversity of contemporary European societies. Policymakers perceive the consequences of past and present immigration flows as a societal problem which the state is to solve. As Ines Michalowski (2009a, p. 23) rightly argues, civic integration policies reveal 'the competence that a state attributes itself in the management of cultural and religious diversity'. Studying debates and policies of civic integration allows us to identify different conceptions of the role of the state in ensuring social cohesion by governing diversity.

Political parties are crucial actors in decision-making processes about citizenship policies. However, party politics have been by and large neglected in citizenship studies so far. This paper analyses the positions adopted by political parties as to the role the state should play in civic integration policies, i.e. in regulating diversity. It does so by drawing on the literature on party systems, applying in particular political scientists' work on issue divides. As we shall see below, the analysis by Herbert Kitschelt (2004) of political preference distribution among political parties along two issue divides – economic distribution on the one hand, and socio-cultural governance on the other – offers important insights when applied to political debates about civic integration policies.

This paper focuses on political debates in the Netherlands, which was the first European country to introduce civic integration policies in the 1990s. These policies have served as a model to policymakers throughout Europe. Moreover, in recent years the Netherlands has embarked upon reforms which redistributed the responsibility for civic integration among individual, state, and other

actors in more radical and innovative ways than any other European country. This paper analyses the political debates in which these reforms were shaped, i.e. the parliamentary history of the Law on Civic Integration *(Wet Inburgering)*, which Dutch parliamentarians have been debating from 2002 until the present day. The data consists of 367 documents selected from the parliamentary records through keyword search, including government memoranda, legislative proposals, records of commission meetings and plenary debates, as well as parliamentary motions, questions and amendments. This data was analysed in two complementary ways. First, all statements by political parties about the role of the state in civic integration policies were scored, so as to identify their overall position in the two-dimensional space of Kitschelt's model. Second, a qualitative content analysis of debates was performed to sustain and refine our interpretation of the positions adopted by the different political parties, and to relate these positions to policy changes.

The next section provides an overview of the literature on the role of the state in civic integration policies and proposes an original perspective on this question drawing on the party systems literature. The second section sketches a short history of Dutch civic integration policies, while the third section presents the empirical analysis of political party positioning in debates on civic integration policies. The fourth concluding section highlights how a party politics approach can contribute to our understanding of citizenship policies in Europe.

I. The role of the state in civic integration policies: theoretical approaches

The proliferation of civic integration courses and tests for immigrants in Europe in the course of the last decade has attracted a great deal of academic attention. Many studies offer comparative analyses, exploring questions of convergence and divergence, explaining national specificities, or proposing modes of categorisation (Bonjour 2010, Carrera 2006, Goodman 2010, 2011, Groenendijk 2011, Jacobs and Rea 2007, Joppke 2007a, Van Oers *et al.* 2010 – see also the PROSINT and INTEC projects[1]) .

The particular question of the role of the state in civic integration policies has mainly been addressed from a normative perspective. There is a lively on-going debate in the literature as to

whether or not these new policies of integration and citizenship should be considered 'liberal' (Joppke 2007a, 2007b, Guild *et al.* 2009, Michalowski 2011, Joppke and Bauböck 2010). Contributors to this debate seek to identify the limits of legitimate state intervention in the forging of new citizens. Emphasis has mostly been put on the content of civic integration courses and tests, investigating what migrants are supposed to learn and whether these requirements transgress the liberal dictum that the state respect citizens' private lives, thoughts and opinions.

A second line of inquiry in the literature asks not only *what* but also *how* migrants are expected to learn, i.e. which roles and responsibilities are ascribed to the state, to migrants, and to other actors in the process of acquiring the required knowledge and skills. Michalowski (2009b) has looked into the privatisation of integration policies in France, Germany and the Netherlands. She observes the most far reaching delegation of integration provisions from the state to private actors in Dutch policies. Because of this shift of responsibilities from the state not only to the market but also to individual migrants, Joppke (2007b, p. 248) and Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010, p. 700) have interpreted Dutch civic integration policies as 'neo-liberal' policies. Inspired by the governmentality literature, these scholars show that while the Dutch state is governing neo-liberally, it is still governing. Joppke (2007a, p. 7-8) states that 'the Dutch state has engaged in a paradoxical double move of withdrawal from and increased presence in the integration process', pushing out responsibilities to market and migrants while increasing state coercion. Likewise, Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010) describe Dutch citizenship policies since 2000 as an example of 'repressive responsibilization' which 'involves the moral education of citizens deemed unable to assume responsibility'.

From these scholars I take the valuable notion that governing 'neo-liberally' does not mean governing *less*, but governing *differently*. Indeed, civic integration policies are based on the notion that state intervention is required to govern diversity. Nothing could be further from the Dutch debates and policies of civic integration since the turn of the century than a laissez-faire approach to migrant incorporation. Government and parliamentary discourse is punctuated with references to the 'ambition' and 'decisiveness' that state policies should reflect. What is at stake in political debates

about civic integration is not *whether* the state should intervene, but *how*. However, the analyses of Joppke as well as Schinkel and Van Houdt suffer from a weakness that is common to both the governmentality literature and the citizenship literature: a neglect of the party politics through which policies are shaped. This failure to identify and account for the different positions adopted by political parties obscures the view to crucial dynamics of the decision making process, thereby weakening our ability to explain policy change.

To illustrate the insights we stand to gain by taking party politics into account, the analysis of this paper focuses on the positions of Dutch political parties on the role of the state in civic integration policies. Political debates about civic integration policies reflect disagreement about how diversity should be governed. I contend that the model deployed by Kitschelt (2004) to conceptualise the distribution of political preferences allows for identifying with precision what is at stake in these political debates, while opening up possibilities for comparison and generalisation.

Kitschelt (2004, p. 1-2) identifies two 'lines of issue divides' which structure the political preferences in party systems in postindustrial democracies. The first line concerns economic distribution, and refers to what is usually thought of as the classic Left-Right divide: at one extreme lies the preference for authoritative redistribution of economic resources among citizens by the state, and at the other extreme the preference for economic distribution through voluntary, spontaneous market mechanisms. The second line concerns socio-cultural governance and runs from libertarian preferences at one extreme to authoritarian preferences at the other extreme. The libertarian position puts forward individual autonomy in moral matters, tolerance of socio-cultural differences, and individual participation in political processes. The authoritarian position on the other hand calls for collectively-shared and uniform norms of conduct and moral codes enforced by a higher authority. Norms pertaining to gender, sexuality and family – emphasising individual choice at the libertarian end, and conformity to dominant norms at the authoritarian end – are a crucial element in this issue line. Both issue lines boil down to preferences about the role of the state, more precisely the extent of state intervention or the 'size' of the state. The first line of preferences runs from big state to small state in matters of economic distribution, while the second line runs from small state to big state in

matters of morality and social conduct. As I shall show in the third section, these are exactly the lines of conflict which structure debates among Dutch political parties about civic integration policies.

Kitschelt's model is different from the two-dimensional model which Pellikaan *et al.* (2007) deploy to analyse the positions of Dutch political parties. Pellikaan *et al.* position political parties along the 'classic' axis of economic redistribution on the one hand, and along a new 'cultural line of conflict' between those who favour a monocultural or a multicultural society on the other hand. In my view, Kitschelt's libertarian-authoritarian axis is a better analytical tool than this cultural conflict line. Pellikaan *et al* argue that the 'ethic line of conflict' between political parties who favour a 'moral state' and those who favour a 'neutral state', a core axis in the Dutch political system, has become redundant since the 1990s, as progressive issues such as euthanasia and same sex marriage became subject to almost consensual political support. However, as I shall show in the third section of this paper, even if there is substantial consensus on progressive values, the divide among Dutch political parties regarding whether the state should intervene to impose these values is empirically still highly relevant (cf. Duyvendak 2011). Furthermore Kitschelt's model, in which both axes pertain to the role of the state, is more theoretically coherent.

II. A short history of Dutch civic integration policies

In the early 1990s, the Netherlands started to move away from the 'ethnic minorities policies' that had given rise to its reputation of a multicultural country. The government opted for an 'integration policy' that aimed primarily at individual socio-economic independence, rather than at emancipation of groups. Cultural matters were considered a private rather than a government concern. The neoliberal ideology of 'individual responsibility' that had started to shape the reforms of the Dutch welfare state since the mid-1980s was now also applied to the field of migrant incorporation, leading to a new emphasis on the duties that should accompany rights (Bonjour 2009, p. 192-198, Entzinger 2003, Scholten 2007, p. 82-85).

As part of this shift, the first civic integration policies for newcomers were introduced in 1996 and laid down in the Law on Civic Integration of Newcomers (*Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*) of

1998. Immigrants – other than labour migrants – were obliged to participate in a Dutch language course as well as in societal and professional orientation programs. The municipalities contracted the semi-governmental Regional Education Centres (ROCs) to provide the courses, which were free of charge for the participants. Failure to participate was sanctioned with a fine. In parallel to this obligatory program for newcomers, a voluntary program was set up for so-called 'oldcomers' (*oudkomers*), i.e. people of migrant origin who had been living in the Netherlands for some time (Commissie Blok 2004, p. 118-124).

While it is important to note that the introduction of obligatory civic integration policies predates the turn of the century, current Dutch civic integration policies can only be understood as part of the political response to electoral successes of populist anti-immigrant parties, i.e. of the Lijst Pim Fortuyn which obtained 26 out of 150 Lower House seats in 2002, and of Geert Wilders' Freedom Party which obtained 24 seats in 2010. All political parties have since adopted a much more restrictive line on migration and integration, so as to let their electorate know that their discontent had been heard and understood (Bonjour 2009, p. 243-244).

In the second Balkenende government – consisting of Christian Democrats, Conservative Liberals and Liberal Democrats – which entered office in 2003, the task of responding to what was interpreted as the electorate's call for radical change in the domain of migrant integration was entrusted to Rita Verdonk, Conservative Liberal minister of Foreigner Affairs and Integration. She first presented her plans for a fundamental revision of civic integration policies to Parliament in April 2004.[2] The legislative proposal for the Law on Civic Integration followed in September 2005 and was adopted in November 2006.

The new Law replaced the obligation to participate in the course by an obligation to pass the exam. Failure to pass the exam was sanctioned with a fine and with the denial of a permanent residence permit. Also, the target group of obligatory civic integration was expanded from newcomers to an estimated 250 thousand 'oldcomers'. All foreigners who were not educated in the Netherlands were obliged to pass the exam, regardless of their length of residence in the Netherlands.

Most importantly in the context of this paper, the Law on Civic Integration brought major changes to the role and responsibility attributed to the state in implementing civic integration policies. The provision of courses was opened up to the 'free market': the monopoly of the semi-public Regional Education Centres was abolished, so that any organisation or company was allowed to provide civic integration courses. In addition, 'personal responsibility' was to be a leading principle. As a rule, individual participants were to decide for themselves how to prepare for the exam – e.g. in which institution to follow courses – and to pay for the courses themselves. Those who could not afford to do so could borrow money from the government. Part of the costs (70% with a maximum of 3000€) would be reimbursed if the exam was passed within three years. Thus, as a general rule, the role of the state would henceforth be limited to drafting and administering the exams, and providing certain financial facilities. Only for specific groups – unemployed, housewives[3], religious ministers and newcomers admitted on asylum grounds – were municipalities allowed to select and finance the course program. Even these groups were to pay a contribution of 270€ to the costs of the course.

In the Lower House, there was broad and warm support for fundamental reform of civic integration policies. While there were concerns among the opposition about the costs and obligations imposed on migrants, all the 150 members of the Lower House eventually voted in favour of the government proposal, except for one member of the Liberal Democrat party.[4]

Nevertheless, the change of government in 2007 led to significant changes to the Law on Civic Integration. The centre-Left cabinet Balkenende IV[5], composed of Christian Democrats, Social Democrats and the small reformed ChristenUnie, maintained the obligation for newcomers and oldcomers to pass the exam, as well as the principle of a free market for civic integration course providers. However, the Social-Democrat minister Ella Vogelaar, who replaced Rita Verdonk, significantly softened the interpretation of 'personal responsibility'. She gave municipalities the possibility to offer a civic integration provision for free to all participants.[6] Although in principle, municipalities could still oblige migrants to prepare for the exam through their own means, in practice municipalities went on to select and finance the civic integration program for almost everyone. Between 2007 and 2009, more than 100 thousand newcomers and oldcomers embarked upon a civic

integration program provided by their municipality, while less than 8 thousand persons prepared for the exam on their own, making use of the loan and reimbursement facilities available to this effect.[7] Thus, the role of the municipality in implementing civic integration policies had been restored to its old state.

However, the current Conservative Rutte government, which is composed of Conservative Liberals and Christian Democrats with minority support from the populist anti-immigrant Freedom Party and entered office in 2010, has presented a proposal to reform the Law on Civic Integration once again, so as to reinstate the principle that migrants are to select and finance civic integration courses themselves, with state assistance limited to providing loan facilities for those with insufficient financial resources.[8]

III. Political parties' positions on governing diversity

The distribution of political party preferences in debates about civic integration

Political debates about civic integration policies are about if and how the state should intervene to regulate the diversity and protect the cohesion of society. Figure 1 below shows the positions adopted by Dutch political parties in these debates, along the two axes that make up Kitschelt's two-dimensional model: state intervention in socio-cultural matters on the vertical axis, and state intervention in economic redistribution on the horizontal axis.

Party positions in this figure are based on an analysis of statements about the role of the state made by political parties in debates about civic integration between July 2002 and September 2011. A total of 379 statements about economic distribution and 116 statements about socio-cultural governance were scored on a scale ranging from -2 (small state) to +2 (big state).

On the economic dimension, political parties statements' were scored negatively according to the extent to which they favoured free market mechanisms, financial responsibility for the individual migrant, and minimal involvement of municipalities, or emphasised duties, responsibilities, and the strength and capacities of migrants. Statements were scored positively according to the extent to which

they opposed free market mechanisms, favoured state financing of courses and extensive involvement of municipalities, or emphasised rights and the vulnerable position of migrants.

My operationalization of the second issue divide identified by Kitschelt (2004) begs further explanation. This issue divide pertains to whether the state should play a role in socio-cultural matters, enforcing collective moral norms en social codes, or whether morality and life style should be left to individual choice. The libertarian position, which favours a small state in moral matters, is usually associated with progressive values such as gender equality, gay rights, and positive evaluation of cultural diversity (cf. Flanagan and Lee 2003). However, this is not necessarily true in the Dutch case. As Duyvendak (2004) has noted, issues that are highly contentious among the population of many other countries – gay rights, women's emancipation, non-authoritarian styles of upbringing of children, freedom of religion and opinion – are broadly supported among the Dutch population. These progressive values have become part of the dominant majority culture and national self-image, and are frequently contrasted in political discourse with the supposedly conflicting values of the 'Muslim' migrant population (Duyvendak 2004, Mepschen *et al.* 2010). With the exception of two small Christian parties, all political parties in the Netherlands warmly support progressive values. However, as Duyvendak (2011) also shows, notwithstanding this substantial consensus, the question of 'how to deal with those who don't share "modern" values polarizes the political spectrum as nothing else'. The issue divide on socio-cultural governance remains relevant: the question is still whether the state should intervene to strengthen or enforce the dominance of this 'Dutch' corpus of progressive values in society or not, i.e. whether the role of the state in moral matters should be big or small.

Therefore, in figure 1, political parties' statements are scored positively on the socio-cultural dimension according to the extent to which they favour a substantive shared identity based on a uniform set of values and cultural practices, as well as state intervention to enforce adherence to a common identity, values and culture. Statements in favour of a big state in moral matters are classified as authoritarian, even if the values and cultural practices that the state is to protect reflect progressive values usually associated with the libertarian position. Statements are scored negatively according to the extent to which they favour multiple identities and diversity of values and cultures, and if they

reject state intervention in matters of identity, values, and culture – even if this state intervention aims at protecting progressive values.

Figure 1 : Distribution of Political Party Preferences in Parliamentary Debates about Civic Integration

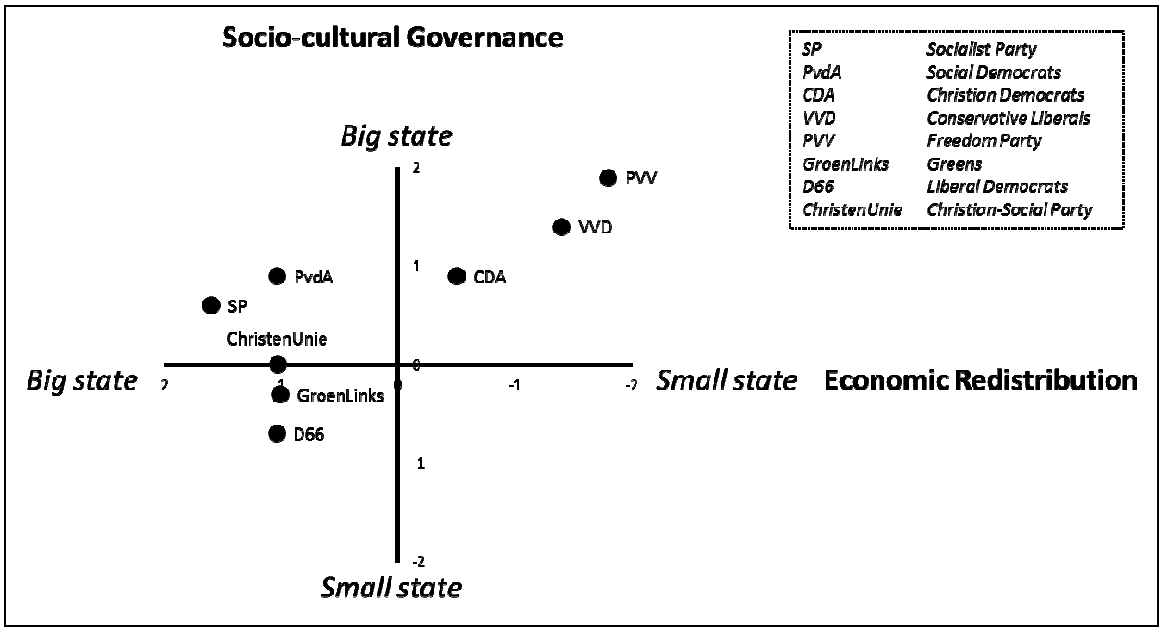

Figure 1 shows that indeed, positions on socio-cultural governance still reflect a relevant issue divide. There is a significant distance between the populist Freedom Party which wants the state to enforce Dutchness as a *Leitkultur* on the one end of the spectrum, and the Liberal Democrats who resent state-imposed uniformity in beliefs and behaviour on the other end. However, most Dutch political parties are positioned in the upper half of this quadrant. The Greens and the Liberals, which are the only parties which take up libertarian positions, both won 10 seats out of the 150 seats in the Lower House in the elections of 2010. The reformed *ChristenUnie*, which adopts a neutral position, has only 2 seats. Although to different degrees, a very large majority among Dutch politicians support interventionist policies aimed at a shared identity, value system, and culture.

Duyvendak (2011) is right to state that moral and cultural governance remains a contentious issue among Dutch political parties, but not that it 'polarizes the political spectrum *as nothing else'* (emphasis added). Figure 1 shows that the most contentious issue in Dutch political debates about

civic integration is not the role of the state in cultural matters, but the role of the state in economic distribution, i.e. the division of responsibilities for the provision and financing of civic integration courses among state, market, and migrants. The Dutch political spectrum is deeply and and rather equally divided: on the one hand, the Freedom Party, the Conservative Liberals and the Christian Democrats want civic integration courses to be provided by commercial actors, and purchased by individual migrants, with state involvement limited to setting standards for the exam and (if necessary) providing loan facilities. On the other hand, the Social Democrats, Socialist Party, Greens and Liberal Democrats want civic integration to be organised and financed (primarily) by the state.

The following two parts of this section present the results of a complementary qualitative content analysis of political debates, aimed first at a more refined interpretation of the positions adopted by different political parties, and second at relating these positions to the policy reforms implemented by successive Dutch governments since 2002.

The first issue divide: economic distribution

Ever since Dutch political parties started debating the Law on Civic Integration in the early 2000s, the most contentious issue has been the role of the state in economic distribution, i.e. whether the state should intervene to protect and assist the (financially) weak in society. On the side of this issue divide which favours a 'small state' in matters of economic redistribution in civic integration policies, we find the Conservative Liberals, the Christian Democrats, and the populist anti-immigrant Freedom Party. These parties' views are reflected in the policies of the Balkenende II and Rutte I governments.

Doing away with the semi-public monopoly on the provision of civic integration courses and opening the market was expected to enhance the diversity ant the quality of the courses and to lower the prices. As a Conservative Liberal MP argued: 'People are different and may have different demands. (…) If the market is good at anything, it is at making supply meet demand. (…) This will probably lower the costs too'.[9] The Christian Democrats took up a relatively moderate position, stating that the government should play a role in assuring that the courses met certain quality standards. This government involvement would not eliminate the responsibility of either business or individual

migrants however: the minister was to develop these standards 'together with business organisations' and migrants should retain the possibility to opt for an uncertified course provider: 'in the end, this is the candidate's own responsibility'.[10]

'Individual responsibility' has been a mantra in Dutch migrant incorporation policies since the early 1990s. However, the Conservative Liberals, Christian Democrats, and Freedom Party have pushed for a more radical interpretation of this mantra, in which migrants would be expected to prepare for the civic integration exam on their own, with only limited financial state assistance. As Minister Verdonk argued, 'personal responsibility yields the best results. It stimulates people to get busy themselves and to find the best way to prepare for the civic integration exam'.[11] No longer should migrants be treated as 'care categories that need to be taken by the hand by the government'.[12] Likewise, Conservative Liberal parliamentarians pled for breaking with the policies of the past, when 'civic integration was in the hands of social workers and as long as civic integration remains a matter of social assistance, continuous failure (…) is rewarded with extra attention'.[13] Piet Hein Donner, Christian Democrat minister responsible for integration policies in the Rutte government, deplored that 'citizens are put more and more in the position of consumer and client of public services, and less and less in the position of involved and responsible citizen'.[14] A Christian Democrat MP pled for 'a demanding integration policy, where people are not seen as victims but as responsible individuals who are capable of shaping their existence and are not victims of circumstances'.[15] A Freedom Party MP expressed a similar view in more blunt terms: 'People just need to get a kick in their ass and get to work. (…) That's why we are very pleased that this government starts from the individual responsibility of people'.[16]

The Christian Democrats again take up a more moderate position than the Conservative Liberals and the Freedom Party, in that they deem a certain level of state assistance necessary for particularly disadvantaged groups. The Christian Democrats therefore supported the exception made to the principle of 'personal responsibility' for asylum seekers, unemployed people and housewives, who should be offered a civic integration course by their municipality.[17]

On the other side of this issue divide, we find the Social Democrats, the Greens, the Socialist Party, and the Liberal Democrats, who favour a 'big state' in matters of economic distribution in civic integration policies. The views of these parties are reflected in the policies of the Balkende IV government, in which the Christian Democrats participated but Social Democrat ministers were responsible for civic integration policies.

From the first debates on the Law on Civic Integration, the Social Democrats had criticized minister Verdonk's plans:

> The responsibility of the government is marginalised in these proposals. The newcomer is left to find his way between legal obligation and market mechanisms. Individual responsibility is primary in our vision too, but as new citizens of our country they must also be enabled to participate.[18]

In a similar vein, the Greens argued that 'the obligation to learn must be met by the right to education'.[19] The Liberal Democrats stated that 'considering the efforts that people make, [the state] has a duty to provide'.[20] Likewise, the Socialist Party argued that 'if you introduce an obligation, the migrant (…) at least has a right to a good and fitting [civic integration] provision'.[21] This criticism increased as the first results of the Law on Civic Integration proved severely disappointing, with the number of persons embarking on a civic integration course dropping from 30 thousand to 10 thousand in the first year after the Law entered into force.[22]

In response, the Social Democrat minister Ella Vogelaar, responsible for civic integration policies in the fourth Balkenende government, decided that municipalities would once again be allowed to offer a course to any member of the target group, not just to the 'special' categories. In explaining why she chose to 'shift the responsibility for providing a course to municipalities', minister Vogelaar wrote: 'the personal responsibility of applicants remains fully valid on a number of points, but what is at stake is finding the proper balance between this personal responsibility and the societal interest of having as many people as possible doing civic integration. In the Law on Civic Integration, this balance was insufficiently found'.[23] Thus, the role of the municipalities in the provision of civic integration courses was fully restored. No formal changes were made to the free market provision of

courses, but in practice the municipalities became almost the only buyer on the market.[24] The state may no longer have had a monopoly on the offer, but it had a virtual monopoly of the demand, thereby retrieving significant control over the market.

If these politicians favoured a bigger role for the state, it was because they considered the target group of civic integration a vulnerable group. Minister Vogelaar wrote:

> If the government gives the impression that it will take care of everything, citizens will not feel called upon to do much themselves. On the other hand, if the government leaves everything to citizens, it is likely that only those with the necessary competences will manage to get things well organized.[25]

In other words, this government thought only a very specific part of the target group fitted the profile of able and autonomous citizens that underlay the original Law on Civic Integration. For the rest of the target group, state provisions were deemed necessary. The Social Democrats stated that 'responsibility must be placed where it can factually be carried; this involves capacities and financial resources', arguing that they knew 'from experience that these target groups in particular need some guidance to be able to carry this responsibility'.[26] Similarly, the Socialists claimed that 'the target group of this law is one that needs good guidance to be able to carry personal responsibility'.[27] Thus, these politicians wanted the state to provide and care for weaker groups in society, so as to redistribute economic resources in society more evenly.

It is this opposition between the preferences of Christian Democrats, Conservative Liberals, and Freedom Party on the one hand, and Social Democrats, Liberal Democrats, Greens and Socialist Party on the other hand, which explains the reforms to the Law on Civic Integration implemented successively by the centre-Right Balkenende II government, the centre-Left Balkenende IV government, and the current Conservative Rutte government.

The second issue divide: socio-cultural governance

In debates about civic integration policies, most Dutch political parties position themselves somewhere on the authoritarian side of the socio-cultural governance axis. The strongest authoritarian

positions are predictably adopted by the Freedom Party, closely followed by the Conservative Liberals: they want to protect 'Dutch' identity and disseminate 'Dutch' values among the migrant population through state policies. The Conservative Liberals consider 'compliance with fundamental values and the codes of conduct which result from these values a condition for successful integration'.[28] They claim that 'the Conservative Liberal message about integration is really quite simple. If you come to the Netherlands, you adapt (…)'.[29] The Freedom Party takes up a similar position in stating that 'the Netherlands has only one dominant, leading culture' and that 'people who settle in the Netherland must adapt to Dutch society'.[30]

The position of the Christian Democrats is more moderately authoritarian, and characterised by a certain tension. On the one hand, as early as 2000, the Christian Democrat party leader pled for a 'normative government' which was to conduct civic integration policies aimed at ensuring that migrants 'appropriate the value pattern and public consciousness' which 'makes up the dominant culture'.[31] Since then, Christian Democrat MPs have continued asking migrants to 'internalise and express' Dutch norms and values.[32] This position fits with the conservative ideology of the Christian Democrats which favours a collective morality which outweighs individual preferences. However, it contrasts with the traditional Christian Democrat preference for self-determination and freedom from state intervention for religious communities. This latter tradition is reflected in statements such as the following:

> Integration does not imply that one join some kind of majority culture. Especially in our country, there is so much cultural plurality – also within and between groups of native citizens – that one can hardly speak of a majority culture. (…) Cultural uniformity fits better with a dictatorship.[33]

Reconciling these two contradictory views is a constant and enduring struggle for the Dutch Christian Democrats. Overall however, the authoritarian view has clearly dominated Christian Democratic discourse over the last decade.

The preference of the Conservative Liberals and Christian Democrats for a thick moral identity disseminated through state policies is reflected in the positions adopted by the Balkenende II and Rutte governments. Conservative Liberal Minister Verdonk argued that 'sharing dominant norms and fundamental values is vital for participation' in Dutch society.[34] The terms of the exam on Knowledge of Dutch Society which Verdonk introduced in 2006 include the requirement that the migrant understand that 'Dutch people can be very direct, without intending to be offensive or impolite' and therefore 'do not take direct feedback and criticism personally'. The successful candidate would also make appointments before visiting acquaintances, know when to draw a number in a shop, and warn the neighbours before organising a party.[35] The current Rutte government reflects the positions the Christian Democrat and Conservative Liberal coalition parties, but also of the Freedom Party which lends it minority support, when it states that 'society rests on a fundamental continuity in values, opinions, institutions and habits which form the leading culture' and that 'the concept of civic integration is based on the idea that Dutch society is not a random collection of people who live here, but a community of citizens with a shared language, values and opinions'. 'Solidarity', the government states, 'implies that fundamental values are shared', i.e. 'not abstractions, but the values which are expressed in manners, modes of life, and in the goals and ways of operating of organisations'.[36]

Authoritarian positions are not limited to the Right half of the Dutch political spectrum however. On the far-Left, the Socialist Party adopts a moderately authoritarian position. The Socialists are in favour of a 'big' state in terms of policy intervention in moral values and social codes. They argue that 'learning the written and unwritten rules of society is indispensable' and that 'lack of knowledge of Dutch customs' leads to 'isolation'.[37]

Likewise, the Social Democrats take up a moderate authoritarian position which has recently become more pronounced. In a speech in 2002, a Social Democrat MP declared that the state may impose certain forms of conduct, but not thoughts since 'thoughts are free'.[38] In 2003, Social Democrats criticized minister Verdonk for 'steering towards monomania'.[39] Such statements reflect the positive valuation of cultural diversity and individual emancipation which have been recurring

themes in Social Democrat discourse since the 1980s. In 2008 however, Social Democrats argued that 'we must stand for these core values in the Netherlands. Everyone must support them actively. That is the purpose of civic integration. Everyone who comes here, must support the values'.[40] Most recently, a Social Democrat MP declared:

> Each society has its values (…) rooted in history. They are about how we behave towards each other, about what we share. It is good that [the Rutte government] wants to emphasise this as a starting point of its policy. (…)
>
> I am convinced that it is important to make explicit what values tie this society together: this is who we are, this is how things work here, and join! If you make an effort, you are very welcome. Progressive views, individualisation, the expectation that you will do anything you can to strive for your own success, taking responsibility for your environment. Whoever participates in that, can count on our sympathy, regardless of their origin.[41]

Thus, the Social Democrats have come to share the same authoritarian position on the socio-cultural axis as the Christian Democrats.

The views expressed by the centre-Left Balkenende IV government reflect the more moderate authoritarian position of the Christian Democrats and the Social Democrats, as well as the internal tensions which characterise the discourses of both these parties. On the one hand, the government 'realises that it is not always possible or necessary to agree on all differences in conduct and opinions. The individual freedom to live according to one's own views and ambitions is of great value'.[42] But on the other hand, the government declared that 'social integration (…) requires a shared pattern of values and norms – identification with society, respect for fundamental rights, but also agreeing on street rules'.[43] Similarly, it wrote that 'civic integration and education must equip everyone in our country to shape their lives with due observance of [progressive gender and family] values'.[44]

The only Dutch political parties which have positioned themselves on the libertarian side of this issue divide are the Greens and the Liberal Democrats. Both parties are warmly in favour of women and gay emancipation, out of a concern for the emancipation of individuals from group

pressure of any kind. Out of this same concern, they shrink from the idea of uniform morals and codes of conduct and – especially – from state intervention to enforce such values and codes. Thus the Greens have criticized the Christian Democrats for suggesting that there is 'one single Dutch cultural identity' and have asked the government to replace the questions in the civic integration exam about 'non-static codes of conduct, norms and values' by 'knowledge about the Dutch constitution'.[45] Most explicit and fervent in their rejection of the authoritarian positions adopted by the other political parties were the Liberal Democrats. They declared:

> We mustn't consider people primarily as members of a group, but as individuals, and treat them as such. We must cherish diversity. There must be rehabilitation for tolerance. Let's not draw narrow boundaries to what is normal. A definition of normalcy is never a good starting point for shaping a dynamic society.[46]

In a recent debate, a Liberal Democrat MP criticised the Rutte government policies thus:

> [It seems] the multicultural society will be abolished by state decree. I ask the minister how much further the state will intrude into the private lives of people. Actively countering multiculturality is naïve and anti-liberal. To which extent does the state define the norm, and where do the boundaries lie?[47]

Thus, the Greens and the Liberal Democrats are the only Dutch political parties to favour a small state in matters of identity, moral values and social conduct.

IV. Political party preferences on governing diversity: two lines of conflict

The two-dimensional model proposed by Herbert Kitschelt is an incisive tool to analyse political debates about governing diversity. It enables us to show that the large majority of Dutch political parties position themselves on the authoritarian side of the socio-cultural governance axis, favouring

state policies which strive to affect citizens' identity, values, and manners. Only the Greens and the Liberal Democrats have adopted the libertarian position that moral values and social conduct should be left to individual choice rather than government policies. Together, these parties represent 20 seats out of 150 in the Lower House since the 2010 elections, i.e. a relatively small minority in Dutch politics. The large majority of Dutch politicians wants to use civic integration policies to stimulate migrants to embrace Dutch values, behave according to 'Dutch' ways, and identify with the Netherlands. The assumption that the preservation of social cohesion requires a certain degree of socio-cultural homogeneity among the population, and that the state should intervene to maintain or restore this homogeneity, is broadly shared among Dutch political parties. This explains the observation by several scholars that Dutch civic integration policies since 2003 reflect a 'thick' conception of government, i.e. a government that pushes or requires its citizens to adopt specific values and forms of conduct (Spijkerboer 2007, p. 49-52, Michalowski 2011).

When it comes to the role of the state in economic distribution however, Dutch political parties are much more divided. Those which favour a small role for the state and want the (financial) responsibility for acquiring the required knowledge and skills to be attributed to individual migrants and the market, i.e. Conservative Liberals, Christian Democrats, and Freedom Party, obtained 76 out of 150 seats in the Lower House in the 2010 elections. The parties which favour a bigger redistributive role for the state, i.e. which want the state to care for vulnerable groups in society by providing civic integration policies, represent almost half of the House – more than half in fact between 2002 and 2006. This explains why this aspect of Dutch civic integration policies is subject to frequent change: the responsibility for organising and financing courses has been shifted from the state to the market and migrants or back by each new government which entered office since 2003.

Kitschelt's preference distribution model offers an innovative, comprehensive way of understanding political dynamics in the field of citizenship and migrant incorporation. It is a dynamic model, in that it offers insight into interactions between political actors as well as policy change. Moreover, it broadens our analytical perspective on the politics of citizenship. It enables us to comprehend how citizenship policies are shaped not only by views on the relation between identity,

culture, and social cohesion, but also by diverging perspectives on socio-economic justice and welfare state retrenchment.

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[2] Tweede Kamer (further: TK) 29543 (2), 23 April 2004.

[3] The official definition of this category was persons 'not entitled to unemployed benefits and without paid labour', i.e. according to the government 'mostly women in a disadvantaged position'. TK 29543 (4): 11, 7 December 2004.

[4] TK 30308 plenary: 6084, 7 July 2006.

[5] The cabinet Balkenende III was a transition cabinet, in office from June 2006 until February 2007.

[6] TK 31143 (1) appendix: 15-16, 7 September 2007, VROM '*Nieuwsbrief Deltaplan Inburgering, nr.17, december 2009'*, http://www.vrom.nl/pagina.html?id=4590, consulted 1 June 2010.

[7] TK 31143 (84) appendix: 24, 12 August 2010.

[8] TK 33086 (3), 14 November 2011.

[9] TK 27083 (44): 22, 21 June 2004.

[10] TK 27083 (63): 4, 30 June 2004.

[11] TK 27083 (44): 24, 21 June 2004.

[12] EK 30308 plenary: 353, 21 November 2006.

[13] TK 27083 (44): 20, 21 June 2004.

[14] TK 32824 (1): 19, 16 June 2011.

[15] TK 30308 (63): 9, 21 June 2006.

[16] TK 31268 (52): 40, 29 June 2011.

[17] TK 30308 (12): 11, 27 February 2006

[18] TK 27083 (44): 6, 21 June 2004.

[19] EK 303087 plenary: 349, 20 November 2006.

[20] TK 30308 (63): 44, 12 June 2006.

[21] TK 31318 plenary: 6098, 21 mei 2008.

[22] EK 30307 plenary: 359, 21 November 2006, TK 31143 (25): 3, 3 October 2008.

[23] TK 31143 (9): 6, 18 October 2007.

[24] TK 31143 (84) appendix: 24, 12 August 2010.

[25] TK 31268 (2): 20-21, 13 November 2007.

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[28] TK 30308 (6): 3, 29 November 2005.

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[31] TK 27803 plenary: 4711, 18 April 2000.

[32] TK 31268 (14): 42, 17 December 2008.

[33] EK 30308 plenary: 341, 20 November 2006.

[34] TK 30308 (3): 11, 21 September 2005.

[35] TK 30308 (25) appendix, 2 June 2006.

[36] TK 32824 (1), 16 June 2011.

[37] TK 30308 (6): 3, 29 November 2005, TK 27083 (44): 9, 21 June 2004.

[38] TK 28600 VI plenary: 956, 6 November 2002.

[39] TK 29200 VI (94): 48, 3 October 2003.

[40] TK 29700 plenary: 3721, 7 February 2008.

[41] TK 31268 (52): 7, 29 June 2011.

[42] TK 31268 (25): 9, 17 November 2009.

[43] TK 31268 (8) appendix: 5, 1 July 2008

[44] TK 32175 (1) : 4-5, 2 October 2009.

[45] TK 29200 VI (94): 13, 3 October 2003, TK 31143 (41): 14, 19 March 2009.

[46] TK 31268 (14): 11, 17 December 2008.

[47] TK 31268 (52): 9, 29 June 2011.