Beleid voor cultuur en immigranten: rijksebeleid en uitvoeringspraktijk 1980-2004

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SUMMARY

Ever since World War II, the Netherlands developed a policy for cultural expressions and arts (henceforth called cultural policies) with substantial subsidies. Since then an intricate system has developed of cultural organisations with long-term government funding and other fundable expressions of culture. For a long time, the financial means to sustain cultural provisions and enable cultural expressions were only rarely the subject of parliamentary debate. If any discussion took place, it was at best about the size and allocation of the available sums, never about the legitimacy of the funding in itself. Consequently, the spending of the cultural budget became largely fixed over the years. There was never much room for political debate as regards the content of culture. In the context of Dutch cultural policies, politicians and policy-makers were not supposed to have judgments on the content and form of cultural expressions. That prerogative was left to independent experts. In the Netherlands, local and provincial as well as the central authorities pursue policies on culture. This study concentrates on the policies of the central government. Resources provided by the (central) authorities are partially allocated to funds, in the form of subsidies, each fund related and tuned to a particular artistic discipline. In their turn, these funds provide the money for particular initiatives and smaller cultural organisation; the large institutions in the field are directly funded by the Ministry, on the recommendation of the National Arts Council. The settling of large groups of non-western immigrants in The Netherlands prompted the development of a national minority policy, followed later by a policy on migrant integration. At the end of the seventies this government policy for settled immigrants and their descendants came into effect. The Netherlands Ministry of the Interior, in its coordinating role at that time, required the other ministries involved to develop a minority policy, each in their own particular field. Thus a minority policy for culture was developed.

In the nineties I was a civil servant at the Dutch Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture and was co-responsible for this policy in the field of culture. At the start of the new millennium, after I had given up my job at the Ministry to enter on a career in consultancy, I still retained my fascination for the way this policy for culture and immigrants had taken shape and was functioning. Looking on from my new perspective I asked myself, how had the policy on immigrants and culture developed between 1980 and 2004? How had this process, meant to bring about changes in the existing cultural policies, taken its course? In what respect had this policy been successful (or not) and for what reasons? Also, I was interested in the question of along what lines the policy on immigrants and culture had been implemented in the overall cultural policies of that time and why the decision had been made for the implementation measures as they were.

In this study I analyse how cultural and artistic expressions of immigrants were incorporated in policy texts and implementation instruments. In order to make this possible I developed a specific approach for the study of the different lines of reasoning that influenced the making and implementation of the relevant policy documents. These documents encompass varying domains within the sphere of subsidized culture. In the descriptive part of my study I will discuss these domains where they can be clearly recognized. However, in the analysis I will focus on the domain of art, which was most strongly emphasized in the policy for immigrants and culture.

To enable an effective study of this subject I chose the following approach.
The first chapter is an introduction. Chapter 2 provides the reader with an overview of the field of study and briefly discusses the notions used in the analysis. It then focuses on the different concepts of culture which developed from the nineteenth century onwards. What follows is a brief summary of the history of government intervention in the field of culture in the Netherlands. It shows the prominent role of private initiative in financing manifestations of art and culture. Attention was placed both on the actual production of art and the attempt to stimulate, through cultural participation, moral education and the wellbeing of communities through the arts. Gradually, on this basis, our current government involvement with culture has taken shape: banning of cultural manifestations has been replaced by co-financing their production and conservation.

The sequence of cultural policies after 1945 shows how the tenor of the debate has alternated between two focal points: the interest in facilitating the development of autonomous art on the one hand and wide-spread popular participation in subsidized and other cultural manifestations on the other. The field survey concludes with an outline of the structure of cultural policies in The Netherlands, with their most important institutions and procedures. These include the organisation of quality assessments and subsidy procedures.

In the first part of chapter 3, I describe the search for an effective approach to the analysis of the development of the policy on immigrants and culture, its embedding in overall policies on culture and the specific characteristics of that position. Inspired by existing approaches as described in existing policy and public administration studies I developed a method which provides the means for a systematic approach to these questions. This method enables a systematic description and analysis of the actual life cycle of a policy and its implementation. In addition, it provides a framework for studying both the implicit and explicit views underlying a policy and the interaction between these views. Fischer’s approach to the evaluation of policies acted as my starting point. His approach involves a system of charting four interrelated levels of policy debate and policy evaluation.

In the processes of policy development and implementation, the actors and their views take up an important position. Each of these actors in a field of policy holds normative views about that field. These views, in combination with the actor’s own position and experience in the field, determine the problem definition and the desired role of the government, in the actor’s eyes. To indicate the link between an actor’s abstract view, and the concrete consequences and (intended) acts following this view, I use the term ‘action theory’ (‘handelingstheorie’) in this study. It is my considered opinion that the process of developing a policy and implementing it, reflects the interaction between the views and beliefs of actors involved. The actual policy text, in my view, emerges as the end product of this interaction.

The second part of chapter 3 describes the questions researched in further detail:

1.a Which definitions of problems, goals and (intended) measures were used in the policy texts on culture and immigrants in the period 1980 – 1999?

1.b What measures were used to implement these policies?

2.a Which action theories, fundamental convictions, definitions of problems, goals and (intended) measures played a role in the policy debate preceding the creation of a policy for culture and immigrants in the period 1999 – 2001?

2.b What positions did the most prominent actors take up in this process?

3.a What measures were taken to realise the formulated policy goals and how were these carried out in the period 2001 – 2004?

3.b What positions did the most prominent actors take up in this process?
4. In what way did the policy for integration influence the policy for culture and immigrants?

The answers to the questions outlined above will make it possible to approach the central query of this thesis:

5.a In what way was the policy for culture and immigrants adopted into the overall policy on culture? To what extent can we speak of mainstreaming?

5.b How do the implementation measures for the policy on culture and immigrants relate to the existing implementation arrangements of the general policy on culture? Can specific implementation measures be identified as distinct from the mainstream of general cultural policy or are the implementations for culture and immigrants to be found within existing arrangements? To what extent, then, can we speak of ‘mainstreaming’?

The third part of chapter 3 deals with the concrete steps of my analysis. As an elaboration of Fischer’s approach I introduce the ‘conceptual worlds’ which underlie the reflection on policy in the cultural field. I use this term ‘conceptual world’ to refer to the collective convictions of an actor about culture and the role of the government. In my view the following conceptual worlds can be distinguished.

In the first - and dominant – view, symbolized by K or KK in the diagram, the pivotal point is the production of quality in art. In its essence this view and the conceptual world behind it are derived from the ideas of the romantic epoch: good art is absolute, not bound to time or context, and the maker of such art is perforce a genius. In addition, the belief that this art, in its manifestations, is limited to a specific number of genres, is commonly held by supporters of this view.

In the second approach (symbolized as P), art is important in itself, but participation in art and the effects of art on people and society are the key elements. The origin of this view can also be traced back to the nineteenth century, in its pursuit of educating the population through culture and the civilizing effect of its spread. Within this approach two views on participation can be distinguished. The fundamental conviction which I have symbolized as PK focuses on the idea that ordinary people will develop into better human beings if they are brought into contact with ‘high’ or ‘respectable’ forms of art and culture. In the other perspective (PP) the central idea is that people must be given the opportunity to inform themselves widely on art and culture, including popular or mass culture, to be able to make informed choices.

The third view (KC) holds that art is not absolute, but determined by context: art will always be created under specific conditions in a specific situation. In any judgement on the quality of artistic manifestations context will play a part and no judgement can therefore be ‘universal’ in nature.

The conceptual worlds (KK, KC, PK and PP) each encompass a set of essential convictions, a particular priority of values, a problem analysis or arguments for government intervention based on these, and convictions with respect to the desired level of government intervention. In my view, the conceptual worlds defined above are the – ideal-typical - fundamental concepts underlying a policy on culture.

This study of a policy and its implementation consists of a broad descriptive analysis of the creation and implementation of the memorandum *Ruim Baan voor Culturele Diversiteit*. 

(‘Clearing the way for cultural diversity’) of 1999, in my chapters 5 and 6. The preceding chapter (4) presents a summary treatment of the policy documents relevant to this study, from the period of 1980 to 2001. These are, in order, the 1982 Actieplan Cultuuruitingen van Migranten (‘Action plan for cultural expression among migrants’), the Beleidsnotitie Cultuuruitingen van Etnische Minderheden (‘Memorandum on cultural expression among ethnic minorities’) of 1987 – 1989, the Brief over het Categoriale Beleid Kunstuitingen van Minderheden (‘Letter on the group-specific policy on artistic expression among minorities’) of 1990 – 1992. Finally, the passage “Intercultureel” (‘Intercultural’) from Pantser of Ruggengraat (‘Shell or Backbone’) from the Policy on Culture of 1997 – 2001 is reviewed.

The concluding chapter 7, presents the most important findings in relation to the questions posed and the observations on the basis of these findings.

Findings

The ever-shifting terms used for policies and their target groups reflect the various ways in which a policy problem can be approached from a variety of perspectives. Also reflected is the discomfort in singling out a group of people as target group of a specific policy.

The memoranda up until 1997 contain many lines of reasoning displaying a romantic-universal (KK) and a contextual (KC) character. It is mostly unclear which is the dominant vision, leading to a degree of ambivalence as to what must be understood by the terms “quality” of artistic expressions and the “disadvantage” of specific groups in this field. Because of this lack of clarity it cannot be stated with precision when a specific policy may be called successful. After all, when you do not know where you are heading, no course is either absolutely right or wrong.

Repeatedly, (assistant) ministers with a romantic-universal bent describe cultural expressions of immigrants as “somewhere between amateur and professional” or as “semi-professional”. This creates room for those in power to take group-specific measures, and the established institutions for professional art need not concern themselves with the cultural expressions of immigrants. This also means that, in principle, no part of the resources for professional art can be claimed for these expressions.

In most policy texts arguments are used which reflect the desire to view the policy in question as an exponent of participation policy. This can easily be understood, because this way of thinking about cultural policy had for long been accepted by all actors. For parts of the policy for culture and immigrants this is a fruitful way of thinking, but this approach does not facilitate recognition of the work of immigrant artists, nor is it sufficient.

The advantage of this approach for the proponents of the romantic-universal (KK) conceptual world was that for them there was no further need to think about the contextual view of quality. By terming the cultural expressions of immigrants, including immigrant artists, as belonging to participation policy this policy was placed in a well-known and non-threatening frame of reference for KK-proponents.

A further repeating pattern is that the problem definition and goals in the texts contain KC (contextual) lines of reasoning more often than can be recovered from the intended measures. The size (limited resources) and (specific) nature of the measures is always in such a way that it is acceptable for the proponents of the romantic-universal (KK) approach.
With a view to measures, we can conclude that specific measures were used during the entire period under study. The established art- and cultural institutions hardly play a role in the implementation of the policy for culture and immigrants. Although state secretary Van der Ploeg tried to make established institutions play a role in the policy on diversity in 1999, he, too, was unsuccessful.

The specific measures were mostly deployed for the funding of specific projects. Also, successive ministers and state secretaries created specific institutions: STIPT (1981-1986); MMF (1989-1991); Scarabes (1988-1997); Phenix Foundation (2001-2005); Netwerk CS (2001-2008) and Atana (2001-today). In the context of Ruim Baan voor Culturele Diversiteit (‘Clearing the way for cultural diversity’) an Action Plan for the Spreading of Culture was set up, together with local and regional authorities, with the aim of promoting cultural participation.

The year 2001 saw a large increase of 34 institutions with a “multicultural character”, as the Ministry of Education, Arts and Sciences called them in a policy letter of 2002, which received regular funding. This increase was not the direct result of policy aims, but an important consequence of a parliamentary intervention to curb the spending of financial resources for the Action Programme for the Spreading of Culture and the subsequent decision by the state secretary. He decided applications of initiatives which at the time of this intervention already were considered worthy to be funded in the context of the Action Program should receive funding from the regular budget for culture.

The specific institutions mentioned always enjoyed only a relatively short lifespan, because too many responsibilities were imposed upon them, including the duty to establish a relationship with the regular cultural institutions. This task proved an impossible one, because for those institutions there was no obligation whatsoever to play a role under the specific policy for culture and immigrants.

The long-lasting availability of project funding had more than one effect. For the institutions under regular funding it offered a legitimate excuse not to concern themselves with the subject. As a result, over the years a number of relatively strong specific institutions arose alongside the regular institutions, which had a limited, marginal role in the cultural field as a whole, but were active for many years. For them the existing situation was to their advantage, in that they were able to grow further in relative peace. The policy of the day both isolated the cultural expressions of immigrants and immigrant artists, and created opportunities for them.

The institutional strength of the established cultural institutions, mostly working from a romantic-universal KK-vision, was powerful all through the period under study. These institutions acquired their institutional character thanks to the long years and the almost automatic nature of funding. Moreover, for a long time they played a key role in the process in which the policy memorandum on culture was conceived.

Before 1999, institutions did not make themselves heard as explicitly as they did during the construction process of the white paper on culture named Cultuur als Confrontatie (Culture as Confrontation). This does not imply that they did not continuously influence the course the policy for culture and immigrants took, precisely because they, as important pillars in the policy on culture as a whole, played no part in the policy for culture and immigrants. Those responsible in government did not require from the established cultural institutions a definition of their role. However, these authorities were nevertheless obliged to act.
Therefore they created specific institutions, whose task it was to set up relations between the cultural expressions of immigrants and the established institutions.

Another effect of the limited involvement of the established institutions was the development described above of a number of strong institutions under project funding.

Even though the wish for integration in the overall policy was formulated as a policy target as early as 1987, always, in practice, specific texts were written and specific measures prepared and taken.

In the general texts on cultural policy, room was created for contextual (KC) lines of reasoning in some cases, up until 1999. This can be viewed as a modest form of mainstreaming at the level of policy texts. In 1999, state secretary Van der Ploeg used such contextual (KC) reasoning in his interpretation of the basic assumptions underlying the general policy on culture, including essential convictions, problem analysis and policy goals. This green paper *Cultuur als Confrontatie* (Culture as Confrontation), therefore, shows mainstreaming.

The long-lasting existence of specific implementation arrangements and the associated phenomenon of established institutions playing no role, or hardly any, in the policy on culture and immigrants, led to the conclusion that the attempted embedding in regular facilities did not materialize. What did happen was that the broad spectrum of regularly funded institutions saw the arrival of a number of institutions of a multi-cultural nature, which can be viewed as an (unintended) form of mainstreaming.

**A closer scrutiny**

That the wish for integration of specific policy into general policy was repeatedly and emphatically pronounced by (assistant) ministers, but that their actions with respect to implementing these policies were constantly at odds with these wishes, remains a most remarkable fact. The question of why this should have been the case demands a discussion of the interplay of the forces between actors and of the factors which contribute to the supremacy of the (romantic-universal) KK-way of thinking.

**A taste of his own medicine**

State secretary Van der Ploeg was forced to adjust his proposal for implementation measures, which demanded from established institutions to play an explicit role in the policy on diversity. This course of action would seem surprising: after all, the state secretary wished to realize a long-standing government intention. However, governments of the day were in a habit of subsidizing the larger institutions (with a KK-vision) without asking too many questions. Both the authorities and the field itself held the view that the authorities should not interfere with artistic content. In the course of time it also became an issue of whether or not the request to institutions to increase the number of visitors or invest more in educational work affected the artistic content of their work. The authorities usually distanced themselves from discussions of this type.

As a consequence, a practice arose over time in which the government started to realise goals of participation and innovation outside the established art and cultural institutions. The state secretary got a taste of his own medicine; the long-standing tradition of non-intervention, the realization of participation goals via specific programmes and institutions turned out to be more powerful than the minister’s wish to bring about change.
The foundation of all of this is an interplay of factors, kept alive by all involved, including the government, which itself plays an important role because of the institutional character of the funding mechanism. This mechanism allowed hardly any room to be created for the cultural expressions of immigrants. This affected not only these particular expressions: any new development taking place in the margins of the cultural sector also ran up against this closed front attitude.

Conflicting conceptual worlds
Due to the emergence of contextual (KC) lines of reasoning in policy debates, the existing relationship between the romantic-universal (KK) and participatory (P) convictions shifted. This relationship was characterized by a reciprocal acceptance of each other’s conceptual world and the size of the government funding allocated. The growing importance of cultural expressions of immigrants and of the contextual approach (KC) meant that proponents of the romantic-universal (KK) line of thinking had to close their doors upon this alien approach to the notion of quality, competing in terms of content. This could be achieved by awarding a separate position to the cultural expressions of immigrants and by allocating limited funding. In that way the romantic-universal (KK) views on quality and the spending of existing financial resources would not come under pressure.

It appeared opportune to categorize the cultural expressions of immigrants in the terms of the existing balance between advocates of the romantic-universal (KK) and participatory (P) visions. In fact this meant a referral to the domain and the financial means for participation. From the side of immigrant artists this met with objections, and subsequently terminology like ‘semi-professional’ and ‘in between amateur and professional art’ was adopted in policy texts. This opened the way to specific provisions. The proponents of the romantic-universal (KK) line – and particularly the larger institutions – were satisfied, because they were thus left in peace. At the same time, immigrant artists could work on unimpeded, as they were not bothered with the romantic-universal (KK) vision on quality and were thus able to continue developing their work from their respective contexts and perspectives.

When, in 2001, state secretary Van der Ploeg intended to expand the domain of fundable art on the basis of contextual (KC) arguments and measures and to involve established institutions in the policy on diversity he automatically called into question the supremacy of the romantic-universal (KK) conceptual world and its proponents. This intention did not meet with admiration and approval. The romantic-universal (KK) conceptual world stayed dominant, and it is an interesting question why this was the case.

Supremacy of the KK-vision
The supremacy of the romantic-universal (KK) way of thinking became manifest in the course taken by the policy development process of 2001 to 2004, described in chapters 5 and 6 especially in the choice of implementation measures. Before that time it already showed itself in the implementation measures of earlier policy documents on the subject of culture and immigrants.

Dominance also appears in other elements which are characteristic of this policy, but are never the subject of discussion. This is the case when the funding of the larger institutions was defended, or the question of for whom they did what they were doing and how their offer was to be regarded in comparison to that in the free market. Neither the question of what belongs to the domain to be funded (and what does not), how the mechanism of funding should be organized, nor how the decision structure should take shape, were subjects of reflection.
Finally, neither was the relation between government intervention in culture nor the many expressions which are labelled ‘popular culture’ seen as a concern of government. As a consequence of the supremacy of the romantic-universal (KK) line of reasoning, subsidized culture remained predominantly directed to expressions fitting the romantic-universal convictions of the KK-conceptual world. This led to the situation where, apart from the arrangements for cultural expressions and immigrants discussed above, cultural expressions mainly developed outside of the official cultural policy, and in great variety, on marginal locations and often without funding from the authorities. If the authorities were involved, this usually came under the heading of a contribution to social cohesion and personal development.

The supremacy of the romantic-universal (KK) conceptual world is based on a number of mutually reinforcing factors: institutions, emotions and distinction. The most important protagonists of the romantic-universal world are the major institutions. In addition, being part of a particular movement and sharing a particular vision works as a badge of membership, which meets the fundamental need in people to belong somewhere. In the case of the KK-proponents it is the desire to belong to the group which recognizes itself in the romantic-universal viewpoint on art and culture. In addition, the social effect of sharing the KK-vision is that its proponents together form an elite. Advocating the vision can therefore also be prompted by the wish to be a member of this elite. The elite in question is represented in the entire political spectrum, as the case of Ruim Baan voor Culturele Diversiteit and its implementation shows.