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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

Uitermark, J.L.

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3. Introduction to Part II: civil power and the integration debate

This chapter explains how the first part of the research question posed in Chapter 1 will be answered: how and why did power relations transform in the debate on integration? I focus specifically on the debate on the opinion pages of broadsheet newspapers. This setting formally approximates Habermas' ideal speech situation in the sense that all persons with the "competence to speak" can submit articles, express attitudes, desires and needs, and question the assertions of others (Habermas, 1990, p. 86). What Weber considered the essence of power – the capacity of actors to carry out their will in spite of resistance from others – is absent from the opinion pages since actors in this setting cannot use formal authority or physical force to coerce their opponents (Weber, 1964, p. 156).

To investigate power within debates on integration, and within the civil sphere more generally, we thus have to develop and operationalize concepts that do not presuppose the exercise of physical force or formal authority but that nevertheless capture inequalities. The goal is to map power relations in the integration debate, to identify the sources of power and to explain transformations. This chapter first indicates how positions and oppositions in the debate are identified and presents the databases used in this part of the study. It then identifies different types of power and indicates how these can be examined through network methodology. The final section of the chapter explores some general developments in the debate and specifies the research questions.

Positions and oppositions in the integration debate

"Integration" was not a hot topic until 1991. But to understand developments in the debate since then, it is essential to reconstruct the evolution of the context in which the debate unfolded. The next chapter therefore provides an overview of the evolution of the Dutch civil sphere at large and reconstructs the genesis of a policy field through which minorities were to be governed. This analysis is based on the work of other researchers, archival research and my own interviews. Though reliable, detailed data on debates on the opinion pages are only available after 1990, this is fortunately also the period when integration politics proliferated.

To identify positions and oppositions in the integration debate after 1990, I use a corpus of opinion articles, in-depth interviews with actors in the debate and secondary literature. The articles are drawn from three broadsheet newspapers: *Trouw*, *NRC Handelsblad*

and *De Volkskrant*. It should be clear from the outset that I do not consider the opinion pieces in these newspapers reflective of “public opinion” or “the integration debate” at large. As I argued in Chapter 2, the civil sphere is composed of a variety of settings, each with their specific rules and relations of power. Substantialist notions like “public opinion” or “the integration debate” reduce heterogeneity within the civil sphere to an arbitrary average. When I speak of “the” integration debate, the reader should bear in mind that it is really “a” debate in a specific setting. I have chosen this setting because the opinion pages are one core setting of the civil sphere where elites from different fields compete to define issues of general interest. They serve as a discursive arena where the meaning and purpose of public policies are contested. For journalists and editors, opinion pages are a source of news, view points and personalities: they browse opinion pages for cutting edge and authoritative analyses. For authors, the opinion pages are a channel for communicating particular points of view to an elite audience and a portal to much larger audiences that can be reached via gate keepers of other mass media. The opinion pages thus serve as one of the switch boards between, on the one hand, the policy field with its bureaucratic routines and its expert authority and, on the other hand, the media with its drive for spectacle and charismatic authority. I do not study the media field in its entirety (which would necessitate inclusion of many more newspapers and other media); nor do I study the policy field in its entirety (which would necessitate the investigation of many advisory councils, government departments and other state or quasi-state actors). Instead, I focus on one of the settings where these worlds meet: the opinion pages of *NRC Handelsblad*, *De Volkskrant* and *Trouw* form the intellectual core of the civil sphere where discourses are brokered and contested.

Databases

The corpus includes articles published in the three newspapers that were retrieved from the Lexis Nexis database with three combinations of key words: “minorities AND integration,” “foreigners AND integration,” and “Muslims AND integration.” The Lexis Nexis database contains articles from *NRC Handelsblad* since 1989, *Trouw* since 1991 and *De Volkskrant* since 1994. Only articles over 1,000 words were selected in order to focus on those contributions that are, according to the newspapers’ gate keepers, highly significant within ongoing debates. A further round of selection excluded articles that did not relate to minority integration, such as articles dealing exclusively with European integration. The corpus includes interviews.¹⁴ These selection procedures rendered a corpus of 729 articles. With this corpus, I constructed two databases (detailed in Appendices 1 and 2). Here I briefly introduce

the databases and indicate how I used them to identify positions and oppositions in the debate.

The *properties database* contains properties of the 729 articles, which include the (first) author's name, sex, affiliation and ethnicity.¹⁵ I also assigned a discursive category to the articles, distinguishing between five discourses: Culturalism (see Chapter 1), Pragmatism (characterized by its conception of minorities as a potential underclass), Anti-racism (characterized by its portrayal of minorities as structurally victimized or stigmatized), the Diversity Discourse (characterized by its portrayal of diversity as an opportunity rather than a threat) and Civil Islam (characterized by its emphasis on the compatibility of Islam and liberal democracy). While these coarse categorizations inevitably miss the subtleties of the discourse of individual actors, they enable us to identify the correspondence between the backgrounds of authors and the discourses they promote (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1984a, 1984b). Correspondence analysis is an exploratory technique designed to analyze simple two-way and multi-way tables containing some measure of correspondence between the rows and columns. Its goal is to represent the entries in a table of relative frequencies showing distances in a two-dimensional space, which can be visualized with a plot (Statsoft, 2008). Correspondence analysis is a relational technique that maps bundles of properties in a relational space instead of isolating them as variables (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 96). The benefit of this technique is that we can investigate whether some types of actors (with particular affiliations or ethnic backgrounds) distinguish themselves through the support of one or another discourse. Correspondence analysis thus provides one way to map positions and oppositions in the debate and to identify the bases of support for different discourses.

The *relational database* includes references that actors make to other actors. The database includes 5,397 explicit references. Almost half of the references are categorized as neutral ($n=2,523$ or 46.7 per cent), while there are many more negative references ($n=2,007$ or 37.2 per cent) than positive ones ($n=867$ or 16.1 per cent). These micro-interactions lead to the formation of figurations where actors group together in clusters. For a long time, it was impossible to identify these clusters because algorithms for community detection did not distinguish between positive and negative references, making them unsuitable for studying (discursive) conflict. However, I make use of an algorithm for community detection recently developed by Vincent Traag in collaboration with Jeroen Bruggeman (for technicalities, see Traag and Bruggeman,

2009). The algorithm provides an inductive technique to detect patterns of conflict and cooperation by maximizing positive ties and minimizing negative ties within clusters¹⁶. The algorithm also takes into account indirect linkages, following the principle that two opponents (or two supporters) of the same actor cluster together, even if the two opponents (or supporters) do not share linkages. This is useful as such indirect linkages often tell us something about patterns of conflict and cooperation not immediately apparent from the identification of shared discourses.¹⁷ For instance, the radical left and the radical right may end up in a cluster when both attack the mainstream left and right without attacking each other. While this result may seem counter-intuitive, it is valid in the sense that it signals (in this hypothetical figuration) that the opposition between radicals and the mainstream is stronger than the opposition between the left and the right.

Polarization

The algorithm identifies clusters of actors who cooperate with each other and oppose others. From a relational perspective, polarization refers to the intensity of the opposition between clusters. However, the literature on political and social polarization generally conceptualizes polarization as divergence, that is, as the extent to which different groups within a population have divergent opinions (e.g. Baldassarri & Bearman, 2007; Baldassarri & Gelman, 2008; Fiorina *et al.*, 2005). A divergence of opinions may be a cause *of* polarization but it is not the same *as* polarization. For instance, strong differences of opinion can be put aside in case of an external threat (like a terrorist attack), while partisans can exploit even small differences of opinion to divide a population. A more relational conceptualization of polarization understands the process as the simultaneous clustering of allies and repulsion between antagonists. Rather than looking at scores that indicate the convergence or divergence of opinions on certain issues, I consider polarization as resulting from the positive and negative interactions within a figuration. I distinguish between two types of polarization: structural polarization and discursive polarization.

The measure for *structural polarization* reflects the idea that a figuration is polarized when interactions within clusters are positive and interactions between clusters are negative. To measure structural polarization, I distinguish between interactions that contribute to polarization and interactions that do not. Interactions that contribute to polarization are positive references *within* clusters and negative references *between* clusters. Other kinds of references (positive references between clusters and negative references within clusters) mute

polarization; I therefore divide the number of references that contribute to polarization by the total number of references. The result is a measure of polarization, which stands for the proportion of interactions that contribute to polarization (for technicalities, see Uitermark *et al.*, 2009).¹⁸

The measure for *discursive polarization* reflects the idea that clusters are only recognized as poles when they are associated with symbols, in this case discursive leaders – individuals who receive recognition from their cluster members and therefore come to stand for the group. The score for discursive leadership is calculated as the number of cluster members who, on balance, refer positively to an actor. With this measure, we can investigate the extent to which cluster members rally around leaders. Discursive polarization in a figuration is operationalized as the mean value of discursive leadership, where high scores indicate that average cluster members recognize discursive leaders.

Mapping power relations

How does power operate within public debates? Following the argument laid out in Chapter 2, I conceive of power in relational terms, as an outgrowth of interactions rather than a property of actors. I distinguish between three qualitatively different aspects of power that correspond to different positions within network figurations.

Articulation power refers to the capacity to make an intervention.¹⁹ In the context of the debate raging on the opinion pages, it means that gate keepers have afforded an actor space because they feel that the individual and his or her discourse are interesting or authoritative enough to warrant publication. Using the properties database, we can determine the number and share of articles written by an actor (for instance, Frits Bolkestein), a group of actors (for instance, right-wing politicians) or that have been coded as belonging to a certain discourse (for instance, Culturalism). With the relational database, the articulation power of a cluster can be measured as the number of active members – those who actively position themselves in relation to others (operationalized as the number of actors who refer to others).

Consonance power refers to the capacity to articulate a discourse with which others actively agree (*cf.* Koopmans, 2004a, p. 374). This power is activated when actors “strike a chord” with their audiences and transform them into collaborators, followers or friends. For the debate on the opinion pages, consonance can be measured by the ratio of positive to negative references. Actors or discourses with high consonance power have an identifiable *base of support*: groups of actors that tend to support one actor or discourse rather than

another. Individual actors' bases of support can be identified by tracing those who made positive references to them in the relational database; where different discourses find support can be identified by applying correspondence analysis to the properties database.²⁰

Resonance power refers to the capacity to attract attention. It is important to make a sharp analytical distinction between consonance and resonance: the first is generated by supporters; the latter by supporters, neutral observers *and* opponents. Resonance can be grasped through measures of centrality: the more references an actor receives, the higher his or her resonance power.²¹ Centrality measures are commonly used to identify network benefits that emerge from positive interactions (Bruggeman, 2008). However, civil arenas – and this certainly holds true for the opinion pages of newspapers – thrive on social criticism and the constant creation and recreation of oppositions. This means that the ability to solicit responses indicates power, albeit in a very specific form: resonance power. When an actor receives attention from others, the latter help to disseminate the actor's discourse, even when criticizing it. The conventional measure for centrality is the number of references an actor receives. One problem with this measure, however, is that it does not discriminate between referents. In practice it matters whether an actor is cited by a marginal or central actor. When Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende refers to someone, this indicates a much higher level of resonance power than when an unknown figure refers to that same person. To capture this aspect of centrality, I measure power centrality with a Page Rank algorithm (see Page *et al.*, 1999; Bruggeman, 2008). As in a Google search, the Page Rank orders actors according to the number and prominence of references to them. When the Page Rank scores are normalized, we can express the score as a percentage and say that a particular actor has a certain share of resonance power in a given figuration.

Qualitative techniques

These relational techniques for mapping discursive space in this particular setting of the civil sphere provide insights into the structure and evolution of figurations. They show imbalances of power and help to identify the resources that different actors bring to the battle. As I argued following Elias and Bourdieu, these figurations have lives of their own since no single actor enjoys monopolistic control over them. But the dispositions and strategies of individual actors do matter. The macro-structures of discursive power are the product of the micro-strategies of actors who decide to intervene (authors) or who stage the interventions of others (editors). Individuals internalize discursive power relations but they also creatively interpret social reality and strategically act upon it. The drive to intervene within integration politics and to do

it in particular ways can be examined through interpretative analysis, interviews and secondary literature. *Interpretative analysis* of newspaper articles shows how different actors and discourses project the binaries of the civil sphere upon reality. What are the threats that they identify? To which groups do they ascribe uncivil motives? Which groups do they praise as agents of repair? How do they make sense of key events (like assassinations) or controversial statements (on the superiority of one culture over another, for example)? Interpretative analysis of civil drama can help to uncover the hierarchies implicit in discourse and can illuminate how civil solidarity is extended to some and not to others.

Interviews provide information on actors' dispositions and schemes of perception, how they view the world and how they try to change it. I conducted in-depth interviews with around 30 individuals involved in the integration debate as participants or gate keepers.²² Respondents included politicians, intellectuals and academics who frequently appear on television, on the radio or in the newspapers to air their views on integration issues (and often on other issues as well). Interviews typically began with questions on the interviewees' backgrounds and how they got to where they are now. The interviews reconstructed the evolution of their schemes of perceptions through questions on the milieus in which they cultivated their views and the experiences or events that shaped their life course. I also tried to identify their power resources, such as their sources of income and the institutions that invited them to talk or write (*cf.* Lamont, 1987). The interviews addressed the debate in the newspapers but also explored the position of actors in other settings, such as policy networks, political parties or university departments. To understand their intervention in one setting, we have to investigate how that intervention originated from – and feeds back into – other settings. Interviews with gate keepers, such as editors at newspapers and programmers of debates, included questions on the setting whose access they regulated (e.g., “What is distinctive about this newspaper section?”) and on their methods for selecting and recruiting contributors. Next to the interviews that I conducted myself, I used *secondary data and secondary literature* including interviews, biographies and autobiographies written by and on participants in integration politics. With the aid of these primary and secondary sources of data, we can reconstruct how individuals came to take a certain position. The text boxes interspersed through the text and the sections on experiences of power probe the processes of habitus formation of the most central figures²³, the feelings that animate integration politics and the different positions that actors take in different fields.

Explaining power relations

The distinction between the three forms of power makes it possible to indicate with considerable precision how strong a discourse, actor or group of actors is at any particular moment in time. Qualitative techniques help to identify the micro-foundations of macro-structures and to make an inventory of the subjective impacts and experiences of power relations. But how to explain transformations within power relations? The social forces that affect the debate are numerous and diverse. So, too, are developments in the debate itself. Many different strategies with origins in different settings push in different directions. For instance, the editors of the newspaper *De Volkskrant* have over the years afforded relatively more space to critics of minority cultures whereas the editors of *NRC Handelsblad* have not. Providing a proper explanation of such divergent developments requires a number of investigations into the different settings where integration discourses are produced. These complexities imply that we should not expect a single, straightforward development. Nevertheless, Chapter 2 identified several possible causes of transformation that can explain the course and outcome of discursive struggles on the opinion pages.

A reconfiguration of relations between different fields is one possible cause of transformation. While the format of the opinion pages has changed little, they are part of a larger field that has experienced drastic transformations. One general development that structures power relations is the mediatization of integration politics and the simultaneous sensationalization of the media. In the early 1990s, the media landscape was still dominated by broadcasting associations and newspapers with roots in the era of pillarization (see Chapter 4). But over time, commercial broadcasting associations and (more recently) the Internet have become more important. Some actors are better disposed to respond to this development than others and are therefore more likely to gain power. While my analysis alludes to the importance of these new modalities and settings for integration politics, data has been systematically collected only in one setting (the opinion pages). The allusions thus cannot be systematically elaborated. However, two other possible causes of transformation – changing bases of support and changing relations among groups – can be studied in greater detail.

Changing bases of support. Class transformations can impact integration discourse as ascendant groups and their representatives feel they can challenge established elites and denounce their ways as anachronistic or undemocratic. Transformations result from the growth or decline – or the activation and deactivation – of class fractions. For instance, right-leaning philosophers entered the integration debate following the assassination of Theo van Gogh in favor of Culturalism. Whereas they had previously been inactive, they now had a

strong impact. Something similar is true for Fortuyn's core constituency. The group of natives with low levels of cultural capital, distrustful of government and harboring negative attitudes towards migrants, had grown in the 1980s and 1990s. Data on electoral participation shows they remained inactive until Fortuyn pulled them into the political arena (see Chapter 5). The key to explaining change, then, is to investigate how civil elites succeed or fail to mobilize different class fractions. Or to put it in more positivist terms, the interaction effect of a growing support base and the articulation of a discourse that can appeal to that base translates into greater civil power. I investigate such processes through vignettes which describe how actors cultivated the dispositions that enabled them to appeal to specific class fractions. Although the central figures in integration politics tend to have idiosyncratic personalities and life histories, investigating the milieus from which they originated can reveal how their individual trajectories developed in relation to general processes of class transformation (*cf.* Bourdieu, 1984a, p. 113, 1992).

Changing alliances. Drastic transformations can occur when the relationship between class fractions is reconfigured. If civil elites turn their absent or antagonistic relationship into a cooperative one, they can focus their attention on a shared goal or on opposing a common opponent. This strategic dimension of integration politics can be examined through the structure of networks, which can explain why certain clusters appear more or less powerful than would be expected on the basis of sheer numbers. I therefore analyze three mechanisms that tie actors together. First, do members of a cluster share (only) opponents or do they (also) maintain internal relations? I use density as a proxy for this feature of clusters, operationalized as the number of positive ties shared by the total number of possible ties. Second, do clusters have discursive leaders – people who come to stand for the group? We can relationally reconceive Weber's "charisma" as the result of a process through which actors invest their energies and emotions into leaders who then come to stand for the group (Weber, 1978, pp. 1158-1159). I label actors "discursive leaders" when their net score for discursive leadership (see above) is at least five.²⁴ Third, and related to the above, do clusters concentrate discursive power in some actors or do they distribute it evenly? To answer this question, I refer to the variance of discursive leadership within a cluster, with high scores indicating concentration of discursive power in a select number of actors and low scores indicating an egalitarian distribution of discursive power. The growth or decline of civil power can thus be explained, in part, as a function of changing network patterns within and between different clusters. If previously disparate or antagonistic actors start working together (a change that would itself have to be explained) then they – and the discourses they promote – gain in power. If

previously cohesive clusters of actors fragment into disparate or antagonistic groups, then these actors, and the discourses they support, lose in power.

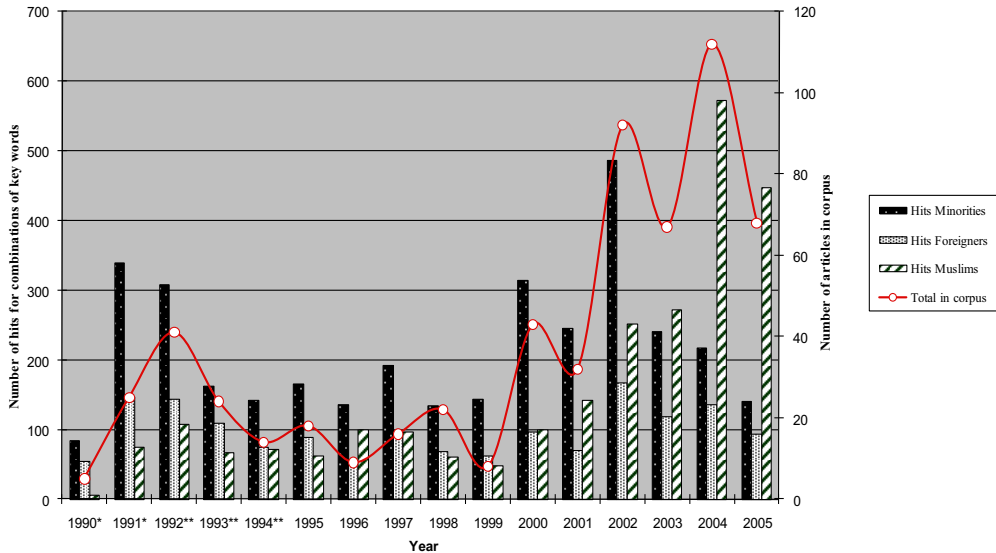
Specification of the research question

The thrust of the analysis in Part II focuses on the transformations that occurred between 1991 and 2005. To understand the preconditions of these transformations, the next chapter provides an account of the genesis and evolution of the Dutch civil sphere. The two subsequent chapters then examine the power of different discourses between 1991 and 2005 and provide explanations for their transformation. To get a rough idea of the transformations we want to account for, a general overview of the debate is helpful. Table 3.1 and Figure 3.1 present some initial findings that make it possible to specify the general question – how and why did power relations transform in the debate on integration? – posed at the beginning of this chapter.

Table 3.1 Relative and absolute support for five integration discourses in five different periods (unknown/other [n=118] not shown)

	<i>Culturalism</i>		<i>Pragmatism</i>		<i>Civil Islam</i>		<i>Anti-racism</i>		<i>Diversity</i>		<i>Total</i> N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1990 to 1994	17	14.8	73	63.5	11	9.6	10	8.7	4	3.5	115
1995 to 1999	11	17.5	27	42.9	9	14.3	6	9.5	10	15.9	63
2000 to 9/11	15	23.1	41	63.1	4	6.2	2	3.1	3	4.6	65
9/11 to Fortuyn murder (6 May 2002)	16	34.0	17	36.2	9	19.1	1	2.1	4	8.5	47
6 May 2002 to 1 January 2006	95	29.6	157	48.9	42	13.1	16	5.0	11	3.4	321
Total	154	25.2	315	51.6	75	12.3	35	5.7	32	5.2	611

Figure 3.1 Intensity of debate on minority integration in three Dutch newspapers (*NRC Handelsblad*, *De Volkskrant*, *Trouw*)



The number of hits refers to search results in the Lexis Nexis database. The number of articles in the corpus is much lower than the number of hits because short articles and news items are filtered out.

* Data for 1990-1991 is only available for *NRC*. To give an approximation of the total coverage, the number of hits has been tripled.

** Data for 1992-1994 is only available for *Trouw* and *NRC*. To give an approximation of the total coverage, the number of hits for *Trouw* and *NRC* have been multiplied by 1.5.

Figure 3.1 shows that the intensity of the integration debate fluctuates over time. The debate flares up when actors struggle over the interpretation of a dramatic event or a shocking intervention. To organize the discussion and data, I distinguish between five periods based on the interventions or events that marked an intensification or pacification of the debate:

Period 1: 1990-1994. This period covers the debate following Frits Bolkestein’s intervention in which he argued that integration policies had been too soft and there was a need to make clear that the values of the enlightenment were not up for negotiation. Although Bolkestein focused his criticisms on Islam, the debate mainly revolved around “minorities” and “foreigners.” The end of the period is marked by the entry of the right-wing Liberals into the Cabinet;

Period 2: 1995-1999. In this period there is no change in the substance of the debate. Its intensity remains comparatively low;

Period 3: 2000 until 11 September 2001. This period runs from the publication of Scheffer's article on the "multicultural drama" to the attacks on the World Trade Tower and the Pentagon. The debate at this point revolved mainly around (ethnic) minorities. Muslims were discussed but not so much;

Period 4: from 11 September 2001 until Pim Fortuyn's assassination on 6 May 2002. In this period, the populist politician Fortuyn roared onto the political scene. As a result of the events of 9/11 and a number of his remarks, the debate focused more on "Muslims" than before, though "minorities" are still mentioned twice as often;

Period 5: from the assassination of Pim Fortuyn on 6 May 2002 until 31 December 2005. The assassination of Fortuyn more or less coincided with the installation of a new cabinet and inaugurated a period of sustained conflict propelled by a series of incidents. The most important of these was the murder of Islam critic and film maker Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004. Together with the Somali refugee and right-wing politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Van Gogh had made a movie, *Submission*, which sought to demonstrate that the Quran justifies the maltreatment of women. In this period, the debate revolves more around "Muslims" than "minorities." The end date is chosen for practical reasons.

The descriptions of these periods already suggest that a select number of actors have leading roles. In spite of their differences, Frits Bolkestein, Paul Scheffer, Pim Fortuyn and Ayaan Hirsi Ali all support Culturalism. The fact that their names are so well-known compared to their opponents indicates that they have strong resonance – a conjecture confirmed by their Page Rank scores: Bolkestein concentrated no less than 17 per cent of resonance power in the period between his intervention in 1991 and 2000, while Scheffer had 10 per cent between his intervention in 2000 and the events of 9/11. Hirsi Ali (6 per cent) and Pim Fortuyn (4 per cent) were the most central persons after 9/11. Table 3.1 shows, moreover, that the number and share of articles supporting Culturalism has increased drastically over time. Given the growing power of Culturalism, the first set of questions – to be answered in Chapter 5 – is:

What are the ideas, notions and symbols of culturalist integration discourse? From

where does Culturalism draw its increasing power?

The results in Table 3.1 provide a first indication of the growing power of culturalist discourse. But they also show that it would be imprecise to say, without further qualification, that Culturalism is dominant. Its power is limited because culturalists receive much more criticism than praise. For example, Bolkestein was criticized 93 times and praised 28 times in the early 1990s (a ratio of 3.3) while Hirsi Ali was criticized 116 times and praised 59 times (a ratio of 2.0) in the period following the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. Culturalism is also not dominant in the sense that a majority of participants in the debate promote it; more authors support Pragmatism or one of the other integration discourses. The dominance of Culturalism is furthermore ambivalent because its support, as measured by the number of articles, goes up and down alongside the number of non-culturalist articles. Rather than Culturalism crowding out other discourses, integration discourses seem to be *unequal yet symbiotic*, though this is truer for some discourses than others. Hence the second set of questions that Chapter 6 seeks to answer:

Which discourses provide an alternative to Culturalism? What are their ideas, notions and symbols? How did promoters of these discourses respond to the culturalist ascent?

The answers to these sub-questions will provide us with specific answers to the general question of how the balance of power between discourses and actors evolved, and detail the mechanisms and strategies through which power relations were reproduced or transformed. The following chapters also set the stage for Part III where we examine discursive struggle in the governance of diversity in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Obviously the governance of diversity in the two largest Dutch cities plays a role in the national integration debate and *vice versa*. But before we can probe such relations and implications, we have to unpack this monolith – “the debate” – and investigate, in detail, how actors articulate discourses, how they acquire power and how they interact.