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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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7. Introduction to Part III: civil power and governance figurations

Big cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam are focal points of integration politics. The government and media constantly focus their attention on these places as they are perceived to be the front line of multicultural society. This is where disintegration is supposed to be occurring, where civil norms are violated. News media over the years have produced a steady stream of vivid accounts of Moroccan teenagers harassing elderly natives, parents forsaking their responsibility in raising children, Muslim men who do not want their wives to participate in society and so on. But villains and victims are not the only characters in these stories. There is also intense interest in the heroes and heroines who resist degeneration and strive to restore or recreate civil unity. Civil society associations, active residents and spirited and committed administrators receive favorable coverage.

The subsequent chapters investigate how civil power is distributed in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. How and why did power relations transform within local governance networks since 1980? I focus specifically on the position of Moroccan, Turkish and Islamic associations within local governance figurations. The reason for this is that the beliefs and practices of these (overlapping) population groups are most directly at issue in integration politics. Minority associations are often portrayed as threats to the civil community because they allegedly foster uncivil discourses and practices. But minority associations are also called upon to “take responsibility” and to mobilize and educate their constituents so that integration problems can be solved. How does this ambivalence play out in interactions between the government and minority associations? Which associations become powerful actors in governance networks and which associations are marginalized? What are the differences over time and between cities in the balance of power between different civil actors?

At first sight, it seems that minority associations were supported in Amsterdam and marginalized in Rotterdam. Amsterdam has become known as a city that, in spite of severe incidents, puts its faith in dialogue, cooperation and tolerance. Amsterdam’s mayors have a long history of promoting pragmatic solutions to integration problems and since his installment in 2001, Job Cohen has been a figurehead of Pragmatism (Chapter 6). Rotterdam, in contrast, has been the city where Culturalism manifested itself most forcefully. Pim Fortuyn, one of the champions of this discourse and a resident of Rotterdam, won a staggering 35 per cent of the votes in the municipal elections of 2002. After Fortuyn was killed, his party, *Leefbaar Rotterdam*, opted for a confrontational approach. Rather than working with minority

associations, as Cohen proposed, Leefbaar Rotterdam considered minority associations as part of the problem that had to be solved.

These political discourses are obviously important. They are widely disseminated through the media and define oppositions in public debate. But when focusing on the relationships between different actors, we should not assume that political discourses automatically determine power relations. The power and effects of discourses can only be assessed by analyzing how they were mobilized in interactions between local governments, civil society associations and other civil actors. I refer to the set of relationships between the government and civil society associations as a governance figuration and investigate how positions and oppositions crystallized and transformed within these figurations.

The four subsequent chapters show that we can identify three consecutive governance figurations in Amsterdam and just one in Rotterdam, and that each of these governance figurations has its own rules of the game, that is, specific mechanisms for rewarding and recognizing some civil actors while marginalizing others. Part III's concluding chapter provides a more systematic comparison of the structure of governance figurations and the power of minority associations. The remainder of this chapter elaborates on the questions and presents the methods, techniques and data used to answer them. I first indicate how power relations in governance relations can be investigated and then formulate a hypothesis about the power of minority associations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

Mapping positions, oppositions and power in governance relations

Before the inception of the minorities policy, government and civil society associations' responses to the influx of migrants were incidental and ad hoc (see Chapter 4). While there were many associations, support groups and government agencies somehow concerned with the position of migrants, they were not part of a unified policy field. Following the introduction of the minorities policy, the national government encouraged local governments to set up consultative structures for minorities. Yasemin Soysal characterizes the governance of diversity in Netherlands in the 1980s and early 1990s as follows:

Elaborate state structures or state-sponsored institutions develop to provide social services. Since the state is responsible for the collective good, governments in corporatist polities generate clear top-down policies for the incorporation of migrants, with an emphasis on standardized protection and services. Corporatist polities have

formal avenues by which new populations can gain access to decision-making mechanisms and pursue their interests (Soysal, 1994, p. 38).

Both Amsterdam and Rotterdam developed corporatist institutions in the 1980s but the type of corporatism was different. Amsterdam opted for a specific variant of corporatism that I refer to as *ethnic corporatism* because its key institutions were consultative councils organized along ethnic lines. Such councils were not established in Rotterdam. The Rotterdam government instead financed non-profit corporations to support minority associations. I refer to these corporations as civil corporations and to Rotterdam's governance figuration as *civil corporatism*. The differences between the cities' governance figurations were initially more a matter of form than of substance. But they nevertheless had long-lasting impact by locking both cities into specific trajectories (*cf.* Pierson, 1994, 2000). The next four chapters examine the evolution of governance figurations in both cities. The remainder of this chapter outlines how I identify positions and oppositions and how I document power relations.

Positions and oppositions

I mainly used interviews to map positions and oppositions in governance figurations. Interviews provide rich data on actors' dispositions and schemes of perception, how they view the world and how they try to change it. I conducted interviews with around 30 participants in integration politics in both cities. In addition, I drew on around 50 interviews conducted by thesis students or student assistants who carried out research under my supervision.⁶¹ Virtually all respondents cited in Part III represented or worked for associations or organizations. The interviews reconstructed the evolution of respondents' schemes of perception through questions about the settings in which they cultivated their views and the experiences or events that shaped their life course.

Interviews not only provide rich information on actors' perceptions but also give insight into their alliances and antagonisms with other civil actors, such as civil society associations, political parties and government agencies. I asked my respondents to speak about their everyday interactions as well as large-scale events such as conferences and protests. The answers provided detailed information on their activities and on the networks that practically and financially enable them, as well as how actors perceive the figurations in which they are embedded. Apart from interviews, positions and oppositions can also be gleaned from local media, from publications (pamphlets, mission statements, subsidy requests), from secondary literature and from observed interactions during informal

discussions or public debates.

Power relations: resources and recognition

As in Part II, I understand power as an outgrowth of the positions of actors within figurations (*cf.* Emirbayer, 1997). Such a relational research strategy can draw upon the work of researchers at the Institute of Ethnic and Migration Studies at the University of Amsterdam to map relations among minority associations. Jean Tillie and Meindert Fennema's comparison of Turkish and Moroccan migrant associations in Amsterdam showed that the Turkish associations have stronger ties between them; they argued that these linkages between associations produced a higher level of civil participation within the Turkish community (Fennema & Tillie, 1999). Floris Vermeulen's comparative study of the evolution of Turkish associational networks in Amsterdam and Berlin over three decades concluded that ethnic corporatism in the former supported cooperation between groups with radically different political ideas (Vermeulen, 2006). Apart from relations between civil society associations, I am also interested in the position of minority associations within larger governance figurations in which the state has a strong presence. Power in governance is very directly about access to state resources and this is why I extensively document the interface between the elected government, the state bureaucracy and civil society (*cf.* Putnam, 1976). By analyzing the distribution of *recognition* and *resources*, it is possible to identify and reconstruct power relations within governance figurations.

Recognition refers to the extent to which actors are regarded, by others in their networks, as legitimate and honorable representatives of a particular or the general interest. Interviews provide rich data on how different actors in a governance figuration value each other, and why. Sometimes these valuations materialize into institutional structures. Advisory councils, for instance, represent a prime example of the institutionalization of recognition: those who are on the council have the legitimacy – in the eyes of the state – to represent a particular interest. Next to the state, the media is also a source of recognition. In reports on integration issues or incidents, the media portray some individuals as heroes of civil repair while castigating others as threats to the civil community. I incidentally refer to coverage in the local media but since integration politics in both cities is so enmeshed in national integration politics, I can draw extensively upon the analysis in Part II.

There is also a material component to civil politics in multicultural cities: the production, dissemination and institutionalization of discourses require *resources*, including accommodations, equipment and labor power. Governance figurations are not only symbolic

economies; they are also material economies. The state has enormous resources at its disposal, making it a crucial terrain and stake in the struggle for civil power. The analysis focuses especially on those resources appropriated directly for civil projects such as funds spent on campaigns to promote civil unity or to increase civil engagement. With the help of student assistants, I collected data on subsidy relationships between governments and civil society associations in both cities as well as in a number of neighborhood districts. This information was processed in a database containing a total of 397 subsidy allocations. The database includes information on the subsidy (the amount, the purpose, the fund from which it was paid, the target groups, the date) and the association (name, ethnicity). At an average of 14,800 euros, the subsidies are tiny in light of total municipal budgets. Nonetheless, they are important for two reasons. First, civil actors usually have very limited budgets, which is certainly true for associations catering to lower class minorities. Second, subsidy relationships indicate the state's acceptance of a civil actor. If civil actors manage to claim subsidies from a particular fund, it is very likely that they can also tap other resources.⁶² An association that receives money to organize a debate on, say, the position of migrant women can usually also claim resources from other sources (from the Department of Education, for instance).⁶³

Contradictions and transformations

What determines the balance of power between actors in a governance figuration? How do power relations transform? Chapter 2 identified three possible causes of transformation. First, the relations between different fields can be reconfigured, resulting in new rules of the game. For instance, the introduction of New Public Management techniques (see Osborne & Gaebler, 1992) and the growing importance of image management call corporatist arrangements into question. Actors who have the specific capital required to adapt to these changing circumstances can move to the center and marginalize actors whose prestige depends on their position within corporatist institutions. A second possible cause of transformation is a changing basis of support. Civil society associations cater to specific groups and depend on them for inputs in the form of voluntary work, financial contributions or attendance. When a group contracts (as happened when “guest workers” lost their jobs *en masse*), associations either have to redefine their constituencies or lose ground. Actors within governance networks reconsidering their alliances is a third possible cause of transformation. For instance, oppositions inherited from migrants' countries of origin can be overcome if antagonists find common ground, as happened when Amsterdam's progressive Moroccan associations decided to cooperate with conservative associations.

However, the aim of Part III is not only to explain change but also to account for continuity. Chapter 11 shows that Rotterdam's governance figuration – despite persistent tensions between liberals and conservatives and occasional conflicts between the government and minority associations – has remained remarkably stable over a period of at least 20 years. Since none of the actors gained a decisive advantage over the others, they were unable to shape the figuration according to their own ideas and interests. I argue that there was no such balance of power in Amsterdam due to the direct support of its government for one or the other civil elite. Rather than distributing resources and recognition evenly between secular and religious associations, between progressive and conservative associations, or between mono-ethnic and multi-ethnic associations, the Amsterdam government intervened directly to impose its discourse upon civil society. This, then, is the major difference between Rotterdam and Amsterdam: while the Rotterdam government's shifts in discourse were more radical, such shifts were more consequential in Amsterdam.

A comparative study of the power of minority associations

The different chapters in Part III explain why Rotterdam's governance figuration remained resilient while that of Amsterdam was dynamic. In addition, I make and test the argument that the shape of governance figurations influences the civil power of minority associations. This argument echoes the findings of a body of literature that emphasizes the role of institutions or political opportunities in shaping and channeling contention (Kriesi *et al.*, 1995; Ferree *et al.*, 2002). In the field of integration politics, Ireland's pioneering study suggested that institutions determine how migrants will mobilize (Ireland, 1994; see also Ireland, 2006). For the Netherlands, Soysal (1994), Rath *et al.* (2001) and Koopmans *et al.* (2005) have shown that particular political opportunity structures create distinct patterns of mobilization. The most relevant study for our case is Laure Michon and Jean Tillie's comparison of Amsterdam and Rotterdam (Michon & Tillie, 2003). Anticipating and inspiring some of the arguments made here, the authors suggest that the political participation of minorities in Rotterdam is higher because its government more generously sponsors minority associations. The causal chain is as follows: generous subsidies facilitate minority associations to promote civil engagement, which expresses itself in higher levels of electoral participation. I corroborate and extend this argument. As I am not only interested in electoral participation but in various aspects of civil power, I formulate a deliberately broad hypothesis: *minority associations have more power in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam*. Why I expect stronger minority associations in Rotterdam is

developed in more detail in the various case studies and in the comparative chapter; here I restrict the discussion to the measurement of four indicators of civil power:

1. *Constructive relations* – in some civil societies, associations are segregated along ethnic, ideological or class lines and suffer from destructive inter-associational relations. Such a segregated civil society, where associations work against rather than with each other, drains the energy of civil actors and reduces their capacity to foster ties among different groups (Fiorina, 1999). The case studies show that such destructive relations are more prevalent among Moroccan and Islamic associations than among Turkish associations. Despite their formidable ideological conflicts, the Turkish associations manage to arrive at relatively high levels of cooperation and coordination in both cities (for Amsterdam, see Fennema & Tillie, 1999; Vermeulen, 2006). The litmus test for governance figurations is therefore the level of cooperation among Moroccan and Islamic associations. In both cities, Moroccan and Islamic associations have tried to create an associational network to address the problems that plague their communities, but with different levels of success. The comparative chapter assesses whether minority associations have engaged in constructive cooperation or inter-organizational rivalry.
2. *Resources* – civil society associations compete and cooperate with welfare organizations, consultants and political parties. While the case studies provide detailed information on individual civil society associations' relations with the state, fortunately data exist that enable a more systematic, comparative analysis. Both governments sought to increase their support of civil initiatives in the wake of the Theo van Gogh assassination to prevent polarization between Muslims and natives. Both created a subsidy fund to do so. The Municipality of Amsterdam launched Meldpunt Goede Ideeën (MGI); the Rotterdam government's equivalent was Rotterdam Mee (RM). Their goals were virtually identical: promoting participation, norms and values, and interaction between different groups.⁶⁴ The coincidence of both governments creating similar subsidy funds allows a quasi-experimental test of civil power: in which city did minority associations gain more resources?
3. *Constituencies* – strong civil societies organize broad constituencies. While the chapters on Amsterdam and Rotterdam address different types of associations, they do not offer a systematic account of their collective capacity to reach and organize constituents. For this we would need data on the memberships of all associations, which are not available. We do, however, have data on migrants' participation in civil society associations. Jean Tillie presented the findings of a 1999 Municipal Survey in Amsterdam that includes 210

Moroccan and 109 Turkish respondents (Tillie, 2004). Marieke van Londen and her colleagues presented results of the 2000 Rotterdam Minorities Survey, which includes random samples of 640 Turkish and 544 Moroccan respondents (Van Londen *et al.*, 2007).⁶⁵

4. *Political Influence* – strong civil societies foster political interest among constituents. They provide information and mobilize people to make use of their political rights (Putnam, 1993). The case studies provide detailed accounts of how associations do (not) perform these functions while the comparative chapter systematically analyzes electoral participation. To examine migrants' electoral participation, I make use of exit poll data since 1994. The Institute of Migration and Ethnic Studies and various partners carried out these surveys in various cities while Dekker & Fattah (2006) summarize the results for both Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

Class, culture and the power of civil society

We will see that Rotterdam scores better on all indicators, which *prima facie* corroborates the hypothesis that Rotterdam's governance figuration has stronger minority associations than Amsterdam. But apart from the structure of governance figurations, there are other factors that may account for the power of civil society associations. Here I consider these factors and explain how they can be taken into account or bracketed.

Class. Many studies – including this one – point to the relevance of *class* factors for explaining participation in civil society associations or elections. Higher educational levels, for instance, correlate positively with electoral participation (e.g. Van Egmond *et al.*, 1998). Different levels of civil engagement could therefore result from differences in the class composition of migrant communities. If migrants have a higher class position in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam, it might very well be that class – and not the structure of governance figurations – explains the difference. But the class position of Turkish and Moroccan migrants is remarkably similar in both cities, as Tables 7.1-7.4 show. Data on income, employment and education indicate that Amsterdam's migrants have higher scores on some variables (especially employment levels). To the extent that class matters, we would expect (slightly) higher levels of civil engagement in Amsterdam. But as we find the opposite, we must conclude that higher class position has no positive impact, or that its impact is mitigated by other, more important factors such as the structure of governance figurations.

Table 7.1 Ethnic composition of Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 2005

	<i>Amsterdam</i>		<i>Rotterdam</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Native Dutch	377,278	50.8	324,038	54.3
Turks	38,209	5.1	45,254	7.6
Moroccans	64,794	8.7	36,292	6.1
Surinamese	70,993	9.6	52,762	8.8
Antillians	12,021	1.6	20,330	3.4
Industrialized	72,464	9.8	33,242	5.6
Other foreign	107,192	14.4	84,679	14.2
Total	742,951	100	596,597	100

Source: Central Bureau of Statistics

Table 7.2 Highest completed education of labor force in Rotterdam and Amsterdam in 2003 (*1,000)

	<i>Amsterdam</i>		<i>Rotterdam</i>	
	N	%	N	%
Elementary school	148	27.6	180	44.2
High school	164	30.6	137	33.7
Higher education	224	41.8	90	22.1
Total	536	100	407	100

Source: adapted from Uitermark, 2006, p. 37

Table 7.3 Cito scores⁶⁶ in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 2002

	<i>Rotterdam</i>		<i>Amsterdam</i>
	girls	boys	boys and girls
Native Dutch	534	534	538
Turks	528	529	529
Moroccans	528	528	530
Surinamese	529	529	531
Antillians	526	526	529

Source: COS/Scala, 2004; O&S, 2004, p. 214

Table 7.4 Unemployment rates as a percentage of the labor force in Amsterdam and Rotterdam in 1991 and 1998

		<i>Turkish</i>	<i>Moroccan</i>	<i>Surinamese</i>	<i>Antillean</i>	<i>Native Dutch</i>
Amsterdam	1991	30	30	25	40	12
	1998	17	21	9	9	5
Rotterdam	1991	37	43	35	39	9
	1998	23	27	11	20	5

Source: Burgers and Musterd, 2002, p. 411

Civil culture. Numerous studies draw attention to the relevance of specifically national or ethnic factors in explaining variations in civil engagement. Traditionally, this line of research has focused on differences between countries (Almond & Verba, 1963; Ferree *et al.*, 2002). More recently, a number of authors have suggested that socio-cultural factors can account for variation between different ethnic groups within a single city or country (Fennema and Tillie, 1999; Fennema *et al.*, 2001; Vermeulen, 2005; Nell, 2008). Fortunately, it is possible to control for this variable since the data used in this study differentiate between different ethnic groups, *in casu* Moroccans and Turks. We find strong differences between the two ethnic groups *and* the two cities.

Cultural interaction. Analysts of culture such as Ian Buruma and Ron Eyerman graphically narrate the clash between orthodoxy and hedonism, a clash that seems especially explosive in Amsterdam (Buruma, 2006; Eyerman, 2008). Rotterdam, in contrast, has the image of a sober, modern and hard-working city, which may appeal to migrants (Duyvendak, 2002). While an explanation based on city culture cannot be rejected out of hand, it did not find support in my interviews or in other data. Representatives of conservative associations did not express frustration over hedonism, but about slurs made by politicians and other opinion-makers. Available data does not allow systematic comparison of minorities' identification with the cities in which they reside, though available research suggests that migrants in Amsterdam are as likely to identify with their city as migrants in Rotterdam (Van der Welle & Mamadouh, 2008, p. 85; Phalet *et al.*, 2000). My provisional conclusion is that the difference is not one of mental identification but rather one of the mechanisms enabling residents to act upon their commitments, which brings us back to governance figurations.

Natives. Another possible explanation for variations in civil engagement focuses on the attitude of natives in general and politicians in particular. Criticisms or slurs may deter migrants from participating in civil life, increase polarization between population groups, and push migrants towards more extremist and fundamentalist view points. If confrontational discourse indeed fuels disengagement, this should be more evident in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam. But as we find the opposite, we need to explain why minority associations are more powerful in Rotterdam *in spite of* the discourse of its administrators. This is not to say that this factor is somehow unimportant, but to suggest that other factors have greater impact. It may, for instance, be the case that confrontational discourse pulls minorities into civil politics to rebut criticism. But then we would need to explain which institutions or relations enable such counter-offensives – which once again brings us back to the structure of governance figurations.

Conclusion

In his analysis of migrants' political claims, Ruud Koopmans has shown that “the magnitude of cross-national differences is much more important than that of local variation within each of the countries” (Koopmans, 2004b, p. 449). This is correct but the case studies here show that there are also important variations over time and between cities that a political sociology of integration has to account for. In this chapter I have indicated how positions and oppositions can be identified, and how we can map power relations and explain their transformations. While resources and recognition may be concentrated in individual actors, I have argued that their power relations can only be understood if we position these actors in a governance figuration that consists of asymmetrical interdependencies between actors rooted in different settings and unequally invested with civil power. Focusing on the governance figurations that structure relations between people and their polities allows us to uncover the mechanisms that produce inequalities (and to reflect and act upon them, although this is not my goal here).