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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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12. Comparing the power of minority associations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

The chapters of Part III analyzed power relations in the governance figurations of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. They examined how elites in the different figurations could rise to power and showed, *in passim*, that their relations to others were sometimes constructive and at other times destructive. This chapter offers a more systematic comparison of the governance figurations of the two cities. The first section summarizes the findings of the case studies and elaborates on the argument that Rotterdam's governance figuration contains a more powerful civil society. The second section provides a qualitative comparison of the forces that divide and integrate minority associations. The subsequent sections test the argument that Rotterdam's minority associations have greater capacity to tap state resources, to organize constituents and to influence politics. The chapter concludes by arguing that the minority associations in Rotterdam's governance figuration worked more like civil schools while minority associations in Amsterdam functioned more like talent shows. Both governance figurations generated specific distributions of power – with the one in Rotterdam more closely approaching the ideal of a harmonious, inclusive, egalitarian and engaged civil community.

Governance figurations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

Table 12.1 summarizes the findings of the previous chapters. The Table shows that Amsterdam saw a succession of different elites. In the 1980s and early 1990s, left-wing associations enjoyed central positions. Although these associations had many highly educated sympathizers and leaders (such as political dissidents), they were nevertheless rooted in lower-class migrant communities and were active in mobilizing these communities. But ethnic corporatism was plagued by contradictions. Contrary to what we would expect on the basis of the literature on multiculturalism, conservative associations were marginalized within ethnic corporatism and thus had no incentive to sustain this figuration. The left-wing associations did not open up positions of power to the second generation and monopolized rather than shared recognition and resources. While these contradictions made ethnic corporatism unstable, the final blow came when the government introduced neoliberal governance instruments like market simulations and advertising campaigns. The type of representation that the left-wing associations had monopolized was made obsolete and they

were gradually marginalized.

Table 12.1 Governance figurations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

	<i>Ethnic corporatism</i>	<i>Civil liberalism</i>	<i>Civil differentialism</i>	<i>Civil corporatism</i>
Prevalence (chapter)	Amsterdam, 1980-1995 (Chapter 8)	Amsterdam, 1996-2005 (Chapter 9)	Amsterdam, 2005- (Chapter 10)	Rotterdam, 1988- (Chapter 11)
Winners	Opinionated leaders of guest worker associations	Civil consultants	Celebrity politicians	Moderate grassroots associations
Losers	Younger generations, conservatives	Lower classes	Stigmatized target groups	Radicals
Contradictions	Intra-ethnic strife	Disengagement of lower classes	Tension between leaders and target groups	No (fatal) contradictions

A new elite emerged in the late 1990s: consultants with professional competence in neoliberal governance, committed to creating more positive representations of multicultural society. These civil consultants derived power not from their capacity to mobilize migrant communities but from their mastery of the techniques of business organization and image management. Civil consultants could acquire central positions because they did not depend on (crumbling) corporatist institutions (advisory councils, structural subsidies) and could profit from growing government budgets for management, planning and control cycles, and marketing. Unlike the left-wing associations, they did not advance claims for equality or against racism but instead emphasized the contributions they were making to the city. This meritocratic understanding of civil virtue, however, could not answer the growing anxiety over incivilities perpetrated by Moroccans and Muslims. The positive understanding of diversity that the municipality and its partners advocated was discredited by Scheffer's "The multicultural drama" and the framing of (radical) Islam as a threat to the civil sphere.

After 9/11 in 2001 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh in 2004, we see the emergence of a new elite that answers these challenges. Liberal Muslims like Aboutaleb, Marcouch and Karacaer became celebrities in the wake of these dramatic events. Rather than representing their communities (as the elite of ethnic corporatism claimed to do), or

celebrating the power of diversity (as the civil consultants had done), they criticized and confronted their own communities. While these migrant politicians embodied and voiced the civil standards set by Dutch core groups, they did not just demand from migrants that they assimilate to these standards. Instead they argued that migrants, according to their own religious standards, should civilize themselves as well as their co-ethnics: good Muslimhood, in this discourse, implies good citizenship. We thus see a civilizing project taking shape after 9/11 and crystallizing after the assassination of Theo van Gogh, with religion and religious institutions being mobilized to incorporate and discipline lower-class migrant youths.

Governance relations in Rotterdam were less volatile. The civil corporations – large, non-profit organizations receiving structural subsidies to provide professional support to civil society associations – did not lose their power over time. State support for the civil corporations catering specifically to minority associations – PBR and SPIOR – did not decline even during the reign of the culturalists of *Leefbaar Rotterdam*. PBR and SPIOR functioned as central nodes within the network of minority associations; they supported the incorporation of all such associations as they were eligible for support irrespective of their political or religious orientations. Civil corporations also encouraged moderation because associations that take up mainstream positions or mobilize through multiple identities receive more support than others. There is also a premium for associations that cater to large constituencies. Since the government uses its ties with civil corporations and civil society associations to reach target groups, corporations and associations are rewarded if they reach large constituencies.

This summary suggests that Amsterdam's governance figurations have been more dynamic. But there was also continuity: the Amsterdam government always tried to shape power relations within civil society. It initially supported radical left-wing associations to marginalize conservative associations. It then sponsored managerial discourses and consultant companies to marginalize radical left-wing associations. Finally it invested in associations and individuals promoting liberal Islam in the hope of marginalizing radical Islamic discourse. These privileged partners furthermore have no incentive to establish constructive relations with other minority associations or to create large constituencies because their positions depend on support from the government, not from minority communities. This is fundamentally different from the governance figuration in Rotterdam, where state support does not depend on the extent to which associations adopt the government's ideas. In contrast to Amsterdam, associations receive professional support to sustain their organizations, not just for activities that address policy priorities. Civil corporations support associations to build

organizational infrastructures, to expand their constituencies and to establish mutual linkages. This is especially important for conservative associations and those with lower-class constituencies as they lack the resources to participate on a level playing field with more established groups. On the basis of these observations, I hypothesized that minority associations in Rotterdam have more power than minority associations in Amsterdam. The remainder of this chapter examines the four dimensions of power that were identified in Chapter 7.

Constructive relations

Civil societies are composed of networks that either segregate or integrate associations. If civil society associations have constructive relations, they become mutually engaged and work together. Conflicts are not necessarily detrimental but weaken civil society if actors invest their energies in projects that ultimately do not materialize or engage in destructive inter-organizational rivalry. What types of relations do we observe among Moroccan and Islamic associations? What mechanisms account for the observed differences?

Relations among Islamic associations

Cooperation among Islamic associations was much more developed in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam. One organization, SPIOR, united Rotterdam's mosque associations and federations. While SPIOR also had internal frictions and not all mosque associations were equally involved, it is remarkable that SPIOR was able to incorporate the more conservative associations. In Amsterdam, in contrast, there were two Moroccan mosque federations and several Turkish federations with few or conflictual relations between them. While UMMON was traditionally dominant among the Moroccan associations, its purported conservatism led to the founding of its rival, UMMAO. Both are weakly organized compared to SPIOR. Of the several Turkish federations in Amsterdam, Diyanat and Milli Gorus were the largest. The government had a close relationship with Milli Gorus, or at least with its liberal leadership. The involvement of the government was in fact so intensive that both the conservative currents within the federation and Dutch culturalists opposed this cooperation, which in the end fell apart (see also Uitermark & Gielen, 2010). The *direct* support of the Amsterdam government for some civil actors, I conclude, had a detrimental effect, both for the civil actors and for the government. The Amsterdam government maintained contacts with select Islamic associations but could not call upon a professional broker with connections to all mosque

associations in Amsterdam. In short, contacts were absent, conflictual or incidental. Islamic associations either worked against or bypassed each other. The *indirect* support of the Rotterdam government, in contrast, helped to create a network of associations that could be accessed through a central node, namely SPIOR.

I suspect that the structure of Rotterdam's governance figuration not only helped to deliver services and increase coordination but also worked against the formation of discursive milieus where radicalism and extremism could flourish. The ties fostered by civil corporatism bind associations together, thereby preventing the sort of insularity in which fundamentalism or extremism can flourish. Anecdotal evidence from Rotterdam suggests that such ties facilitate the early detection of extremism and provide an infrastructure through which uncivil discourses can be quelled before they grow. While numerous commentators have argued that the growing power of anti-Islamic discourses feeds the frustration and anger that fuel radicalism and extremism, I did not find any evidence of this in Rotterdam. Muslims in Rotterdam did not respond to the growing power of *Leefbaar* with violence or radicalism; no networks of Islamic radicals were found in the city. The absence of ties between different types of Islamic associations in Amsterdam might explain why radicalism and extremism are more prevalent in this city, despite the conciliatory discourses of its government. My observations on radicalism and extremism, while not systematic, point in one direction: Rotterdam's governance figuration features more constructive relations and this mitigates radicalism and extremism.

Relations among Moroccan associations

What was true for Islamic associations also holds true for Moroccan associations. Chapter 8 showed that the institutions of Moroccan representation eroded in Amsterdam in the 1990s and the government discontinued the ethnic councils in 2003. The dismantling of corporatist institutions fit the idea of Amsterdam administrators that the city is made up of individuals, not groups that can be represented through spokespersons or leaders. But especially after the assassination of Theo van Gogh, the government no longer stuck to the civil liberalism that it had preached and practiced since adopting its diversity policy. The government desperately wanted the Moroccan community to take responsibility and to organize itself; it approached two of its privileged partners – TANS and the Argan youth center – to initiate a new Moroccan representative body. But the volunteers soon noticed that many Moroccan associations were no longer active or were unable to participate in such strategic projects. As the project evolved, the cleavage between the old elite of the Moroccan Council and the new

elite of civil consultants became apparent; by 2007 the initiators had moved on to other projects. In contrast to Amsterdam, Rotterdam never had a formal body representing Moroccans. The institutions of civil corporatism did not encourage civil society associations to mobilize on the basis of ethnic identity and Moroccan associations (in contrast to Turkish ones) were for a long time disinclined to do so. Nevertheless, a federation of Moroccan associations – SMOR (*Samenwerkende Marokkaanse Organisaties Rotterdam*, Cooperating Moroccan Associations of Rotterdam) – emerged around 2003. The immediate trigger for the associations to come together was concern over the sexual abuse of minors¹¹⁶ but the federation consolidated over time.

Government interference and constructive inter-associational relations

How to explain the fact that Islamic and Moroccan associations managed to create viable federations in Rotterdam but not in Amsterdam? Tensions between different associations also existed in Rotterdam: between Berbers and Arabs, between groups with different regional backgrounds, between royalists and dissidents, and between different class fractions. As in Amsterdam, my respondents in Rotterdam often used their interviews to express frustration with other associations and to spread gossip about their leaders and activities. But these tensions did not result in fractures. Such stability and cooperation, I argue, was due to the *lack* of government intervention in Rotterdam. Unlike the Amsterdam government, the Rotterdam government did not actively try to improve the position of some associations *viz-a-viz* others. Such selective support in Amsterdam led to inequalities among associations, making it frustrating and unrewarding for less valued associations to participate. In Rotterdam, there was a more level playing field as minority associations could draw upon an institutional infrastructure that was more autonomous and less subject to government interference. Rotterdam's support of all associations facilitated cooperation between Moroccan and Islamic associations; Amsterdam's direct support for specific initiatives frustrated rather than promoted cooperation.

Access to state resources

Governance figurations comprise specific distributions of recognition and resources. The previous chapters focused specifically on funds for minority integration and how resources were distributed among civil actors. Which associations had the will and the capacity to compete for the resources available within their governance figurations? I hinted in Chapter 7

that the presence of similar subsidy funds in Amsterdam and Rotterdam allow a natural experiment of civil power in the two cities. Table 12.2 compares the distribution of resources in Amsterdam and Rotterdam: although the criteria for allocating subsidies are virtually identical, the profile of the recipients is very different. The bulk of the resources in Amsterdam (almost 80 per cent) are allocated to civil consultants or associations established by consultants. The pattern in Rotterdam is markedly different: while civil corporations receive the largest share of subsidies (22.8 per cent), the figure remains comparable to those for Moroccan associations (16.1 per cent) and community work associations (19.5 per cent). Civil consultants have a marginal presence (7.4 per cent). This result indicates that Rotterdam's non-profit associations are capable of competing with professional associations. This is sometimes due to their having become quasi-professional associations (with permanent staff and developed bureaucracies), and at other times due to the support they receive from professional organizations (like civil corporations). As one might expect, these different associations also run very different types of projects. In Amsterdam, only 3 out of 24 projects were organized for constituents (rather than target groups). In Rotterdam, 60 out of 149 meetings were organized for constituents (data not shown).

Table 12.2 Beneficiaries of funds for the promotion of civil initiatives in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

<i>Type of organization</i>	<i>Rotterdam Mee</i>			<i>Melkpunt goede Ideeën, Amsterdam</i>		
	<i>Number of associations</i>	<i>Subsidy amount (euros)</i>	<i>% Amount of total subsidy</i>	<i>Number of associations</i>	<i>Subsidy amount (euros)</i>	<i>% Amount of total subsidy</i>
Civil corporation	6	68,000	22.8	0	0	0
Community work	9	48,000	16.1	2	35,700	6.0
Civil consultant	3	22,000	7.4	17	464,850	77.7
Migrant association						
Turkish	5	24,000	8.1	0	0	0
Moroccan	7	58,000	19.5	1	15,000	2.5
Mixed	4	10,000	3.4	2	59,000	9.9
Other ethnicities	16	40,000	13.4	1	5,000	0.8
Other types	14	28,000	9.4	1	18,750	3.1
Total	64	298,000	100	24	598,300	100

Source: archives Municipality of Rotterdam and Municipality of Amsterdam, data processed by the author

These figures point to some qualitative differences between government-sponsored civil initiatives in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In most of the Amsterdam initiatives, organizers and participants come from different walks of life. The organizers are usually middle or higher-class natives who earn substantial incomes from the activities. The target groups, in contrast, are usually lower-class migrants who are expected to participate voluntarily. While such power differentials between organizers and target groups also exist in Rotterdam, they are less pronounced. Organizers in Rotterdam are often middle or sometimes lower-class migrants and usually receive modest budgets. In Rotterdam, civil society associations that cater to constituents are still able to tap government resources; in Amsterdam, they either do not try or are unsuccessful.

Organizing constituents

The previous sections showed that Rotterdam's minority associations enjoyed more favorable positions within their governance figuration than Amsterdam's minority associations. They received more practical and financial support, had more constructive relations and enjoyed greater security in their positions. Did these favorable conditions increase their capacity to reach and organize constituents? If so, we would expect higher rates of participation in civil society associations in Rotterdam. The data we have on participation are unfortunately not identical: researchers in Rotterdam asked their respondents in 2000 whether they *participate* in associations while researchers in Amsterdam in 1999 asked whether respondents are *members*. The comparison of both cities nevertheless gives an indication of the relative power of co-ethnic and cross-ethnic associations and the differences between the civil participation of Turkish and Moroccan residents. Table 12.3 shows that migrants in Rotterdam more often participate in co-ethnic associations than in cross-ethnic associations. In Amsterdam, membership in co-ethnic associations is much lower. My fieldwork showed that Rotterdam has many co-ethnic associations that cater to lower-class migrants. Examples include guest worker associations that have transformed into neighborhood-based associations and mosque associations that have transformed from purely religious organizations into civil society associations providing a broad range of services. While similar associations exist in Amsterdam, my fieldwork showed that they were weakened by the developments analyzed in Chapter 8: they lost their structural subsidies and suffered from the corrosion of professional support.

Table 12.3 Membership of Turks and Moroccans in co-ethnic and cross-ethnic civil organizations in Amsterdam, participation in Rotterdam

	<i>Co-ethnic</i>	<i>Cross-ethnic</i>	<i>Total</i>
<i>Amsterdam</i>			
Moroccans (N=210)	21	41	49
Turks (N=109)	11	38	45
<i>Rotterdam</i>			
Moroccans (N=544)	55	36	62
Turks (N=640)	47	35	54

Source: Tillie (2004, p. 535), Van Londen *et al.* (2007, p. 1212)

It is remarkable that the differences in civil participation between Turks and Moroccans found in Amsterdam were not found in Rotterdam (Van Londen *et al.*, 2007, p. 1212). My fieldwork shows that Moroccan associations in Amsterdam suffered more from the neoliberalization of governance arrangements than the more resilient Turkish associations, which can explain the differences in civil participation between the two groups (Chapter 8). In contrast, Moroccan associations in Rotterdam, as Chapter 11 showed, benefited from structural support and did not suffer the same fate as their Amsterdam counterparts. The findings suggest a causal chain: greater support for co-ethnic associations leads to higher rates of participation within co-ethnic associations, which leads to higher overall rates of membership in civil society associations. Can we extend this chain further and say that the capacity of civil society associations to organize constituents increases their political influence?

Political influence

One of the functions of civil society associations is to disseminate information on politics and to motivate constituents to exercise their formal political rights (Putnam, 1993; Fennema and Tillie, 1999). Stronger civil society associations can be expected to increase political and specifically electoral participation (Michon & Tillie, 2003). Do we indeed find higher electoral participation in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam? Table 12.4 suggests that this is the case.

Table 12.4 Turn-out at municipal elections among ethnic minorities in Amsterdam and Rotterdam (%)

	<i>Amsterdam</i>				<i>Rotterdam</i>			
	<i>1994</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2006</i>	<i>1994</i>	<i>1998</i>	<i>2002</i>	<i>2006</i>
Turks	67	39	30	44	28	42	53	47
Moroccans	49	23	22	35	23	33	39	55
Surinamese/Antillians	30	21	26	24	24	25	25	51
Total electorate	57	46	48	51	57	48	55	58

Source: Dekker and Fattah, 2006, p. 8

There is one important qualification, however: Amsterdam had much higher turn-out rates in 1994. The most plausible explanation for the low turn-out in Rotterdam is that progressive associations were not so strong and conservative associations were not so interested in Dutch politics in the early 1990s. Rotterdam's left-wing associations were committed to promoting civil engagement and electoral participation but did not enjoy the resources and recognition commanded by their Amsterdam counterparts. In Amsterdam, Chapter 8 showed, left-wing associations were dominant before 1995 and strongly encouraged their communities to vote.¹¹⁷ Their loss of steam in the 1990s may well explain declining turn-out in Amsterdam after 1994, although historical research would be necessary to assess the strength of this explanation. Another finding that invites further scrutiny is the rise in electoral turnout in Amsterdam in 2006. Chapter 10 suggested that, after the assassination of Theo van Gogh, Amsterdam's government attempted to incorporate previously excluded (conservative) associations. This may have provided residents with the information and motivation to use their voting rights, though further research would again be necessary to verify this claim.

The overall pattern, however, is that after 1994 turn-out rates for Moroccans and Turks are higher in Rotterdam than in Amsterdam. Since the causes of electoral turnout are numerous, it is difficult to quantitatively estimate the impact of the structure of governance figurations or the power of minority associations. Nevertheless, my fieldwork suggests an important mechanism: civil corporations and civil society associations constantly try to intensify civil engagement through courses, debates, meetings and publications. In the run-up to elections, there are countless meetings where politicians present themselves and where associations provide information on candidates and party programs. The available evidence suggests that the causal chain mentioned in the previous section can indeed be extended:

greater support for co-ethnic associations leads to higher participation within co-ethnic associations, which leads to higher overall membership, which leads to higher electoral turnout (see also Michon & Tillie, 2003).

Conclusion

This chapter confirmed the hypothesis formulated in Chapter 7: Rotterdam's minority associations were stronger than those in Amsterdam. They had more constructive relations among themselves, obtained more resources when they competed with other civil actors and had larger constituencies. The communities they served also showed higher rates of electoral participation. The key to explaining these divergent patterns lies in the structure of the governance figuration in the respective cities. In Amsterdam, state support was, as a rule, short-term. It was also conditional upon the capacity of associations to conform to the government's policy agenda; associations received support only when they contributed directly to the realization of policy goals. Since the erosion of ethnic corporatism, the government of Amsterdam has faced a fragmented civil society. In Rotterdam, in contrast, the power of the government was counterbalanced by the civil corporations which supported and connected different types of minority associations. Although the government posed some administrative and procedural demands, it did not restrict support to associations that shared its discourse. The result of these differences, the case studies showed, is that power relations in Amsterdam's civil society were less equal than in Rotterdam. Amsterdam's governance figuration spawned a handful of stars who enjoyed meteoric careers. Rotterdam, in contrast, had a figuration that encouraged long-term, tranquil engagement. The contrast might be grasped through a metaphor: some powerful minority associations in Amsterdam functioned as civil talent shows while many minority associations in Rotterdam functioned like civil schools.

The structure of Rotterdam's governance figuration made it less susceptible to the negative effects that social differences and inequality can have on relations within civil society. Social deprivation is corrosive because civil engagement requires cultural and economic capital. But in Rotterdam, civil corporations helped civil society associations respond to administrative demands, organizational difficulties and public relations challenges. Especially lower-class migrants benefited from these efforts as they gained access to the resources and dispositions that higher-class groups accumulate during their education or in their working environment. Civil corporations also seem to mitigate the extent to which

ideological or ethnic differences result in conflicts and rivalry. It thus seems that Rotterdam achieved by institutional design what Amsterdam's government attempted to accomplish through conciliatory discourse: "keep things together."