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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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13. Conclusion: the dynamics of power

Up until 1990, the integration of immigrant minorities into Dutch society was the preserve of specialized politicians, academic experts and minority representatives. While the extreme right tried to turn immigration into a wedge issue for electoral politics, the established political parties agreed immigration was a potentially explosive issue that should be depoliticized by taking an accommodating approach. They therefore established, under the rubric of the minorities policy, comprehensive institutions to support minority associations and to incorporate ethnic leaders. While tensions existed, these were largely contained within the policy field.

The calm was shattered in the early 1990s when the parliamentary leader of the right-wing Liberals, Frits Bolkestein, initiated a heated public debate on minority integration. The institutions of the minorities policy, Bolkestein claimed, had not solved but aggravated the problems of integration. Bolkestein did not focus on particular policy measures but argued for an altogether different approach based on the premise that the majority culture of Dutch natives and the minority cultures of immigrants, especially Muslim immigrants, were in conflict. A decade later, in 2000, the Social Democratic intellectual Paul Scheffer renewed the public debate with his attack on multiculturalism and his warnings on the purported formation of an ethnic underclass. Since then, voices arguing for enforced integration and against immigration have multiplied and grown louder. These voices speak through a discourse that I have referred to as Culturalism; a set of notions and sentiments that revolve around the idea that our (enlightened, liberal, Dutch, Western) culture should be defended against minority cultures and especially Islam.

In the *lingua franca* of comparative research on integration politics, the Netherlands moved from "multiculturalism" to "assimilationism." Indeed, restrictions on immigration have tightened and policies have become much more demanding. Nevertheless, the image of a coherent model that moves from one pole (multiculturalism) to another (assimilationism) does not adequately capture the contentious dynamics of integration politics. To think in terms of *a* shift requires us to overemphasize one particular development at the expense of others. The rise of Culturalism is just one of the more salient developments in Dutch integration politics; it was moreover fiercely contested both in the national debate and in multicultural cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Instead of a simple shift – where one discourse gradually grows more powerful and engulfs the totality of society – there has been a proliferation of

integration politics where different actors push in different directions. To answer the question posed at the outset – How and why did power relations transform in Dutch integration politics between 1980 and 2006? – we need an approach that can capture the contentious dynamics of power within integration politics. I developed such an approach in Chapter 2, which I summarize in the following section. Subsequent sections summarize the findings of Parts II and III respectively. The chapter then draws more general theoretical conclusions on the transformation of power relations: how can the theoretical framework developed to study this particular case contribute to our general understanding of discursive struggle?; is it possible to abstract from the empirical findings and indicate, at an abstract level, why and how power relations change? The chapter ends with some reflections on the future of integration politics.

The struggle to define integration

To overcome difficulties inherent in extant approaches to integration politics, I drew upon the political sociology of Pierre Bourdieu. Although Bourdieu is often portrayed as a reproduction theorist, his work provides numerous tools to explain transformations within power relations. Bourdieu shows how actors mobilize particular types of capital in the symbolic struggle to define and redefine standards within their fields. Integration politics takes place in what Bourdieu refers to as the field of power, a space located at the intersection of the public sphere and the state. Within this meta-field, elites from different fields struggle to make their particular interpretations of the general interest universal. The state, too, is a site for struggle among elites who seek to use its institutional apparatus and symbolic force to impose their visions of the social world. While these theoretical pointers aid our understanding of integration politics, I argued that Bourdieu's conception of symbolic power is too static to grasp the nature and dynamics of power. I thus recalibrated Bourdieu's field analysis in two ways.

First, I argued that discourse analysis can help make Bourdieu's field analysis more sensitive to meaning. Bourdieu tends to conceptualize symbols and language as instruments of absolute domination. But to understand contentious politics, and hence integration politics, we need to allow for the possibility that meaning is ambivalent and contested. Exactly what is at issue – is it a clash of civilizations, a new wave of racism, a gradual Islamic take-over, or an expression of collective hysteria? – is subject to struggles between actors who promote different discourses to make sense of minority integration. Second, I argued that figurational analysis can make Bourdieu's field analysis more sensitive to the tactical and strategic aspects

of politics. Drawing upon the work of Norbert Elias, among others, I argued that extending field theory and discourse analysis with network methodologies can help grasp the interactions through which oppositions and alliances are formed. Bourdieu considers interactions or networks among actors as surface phenomena that sociologists should look beyond. However, if we want to account for a case as dynamic and contentious as Dutch integration politics, there is a need to investigate how the interdependencies between actors form and transform. The power of actors is not simply an expression of their capital but also an outcome of the moves they make and the networks they create.

The power of Culturalism

The approach developed in Chapter 2 – a field analysis of civil politics – suggested a number of causes that can account for the rise or decline of a discourse's power. First, a reconfiguration of relations between different fields can change the rules of the game in integration politics. Second, a discourse's bases of support may change: when actors amend their opinions or when previously inactive actors start supporting a discourse, the balance of power shifts. The third possible cause of transformation is the making or unmaking of alliances between actors: the power of a discourse depends in part on the extent to which its supporters manage or fail to work together. Part II examined how these three factors influenced the ascendancy of Culturalism.

Dramatization – changing rules of the game
Interpretative analysis showed that Frits Bolkestein wrested Culturalism from the stigma of racism in 1991. By distinguishing between the (legitimate) differentiation of cultures and the (illegitimate) differentiation of races, he and his supporters dissociated Culturalism from the extreme right. The anti-racist left, culturalists argued, was correct to denounce racism but overzealous in suppressing criticisms of minority cultures; the memory of the Second World War and its exploitation by the far left had made the Dutch sensitive, understanding and tolerant to the extent that they had become incapable of defending the achievements of their own culture. Bolkestein and his supporters thus argued for a process of cognitive and emotional liberation that would extend freedom of legitimate speech to those who suffer the consequences of mass migration and the censorship of political correctness. This new problem, they argued, required honesty and decisiveness – and thus a departure from the political tradition of seeking compromise and consensus (*cf.* Prins, 2004).

This repertoire of contention – to "break the taboo" and to seek confrontation rather than consensus – grew in importance as media outlets sought to bring news with a dramatic edge. Newspapers and other media outlets with roots in the pillarized political past transformed from communication channels for clearly defined constituencies into discursive arenas featuring a wide range of opinions. It is telling that the right-wing Liberal Bolkestein could publish his controversial article in 1991 in the traditionally left-leaning newspaper *De Volkskrant*. While Bolkestein received more negative than positive attention, the opposition he evoked was part of the attraction of his discourse. Whereas politicians previously felt that a controversial topic like minority integration should be treated as soberly as possible, growing media attention played into the hands of culturalists. The rules of pragmatic politics were challenged as the mass media directed attention towards incidents and sentiments rather than statistical averages and technicalities. Two assassinations of prominent culturalists (Pim Fortuyn in 2002 and Theo van Gogh in 2004) further dramatized integration politics and fuelled culturalists' zeal to promote their discourse. They no longer simply broke taboos but had civil martyrs to honor and a discourse to redeem in the face of threats.

An expanding and diversifying base of support

It is important to remember that surveys show no significant shifts in public opinion regarding multiculturalism and minority integration during the period under investigation.[118] The question is therefore *not* why "public opinion" shifted or why "the Dutch" opted for Culturalism. The big changes occurred not in the population's preferences but in the communicative and regulatory institutions where integration politics was carried out, that is, in the civil sphere. We thus have to explain why more civil actors (politicians, academics, journalists, etc.) promoted Culturalism over time and how they managed to attract support. As I showed in Part II, the number and share of culturalists on the opinion pages of the three largest broadsheet newspapers grew substantially between 1990 and 2005. But what is perhaps more important than absolute and proportional growth is the diversification of the actors who supported the discourse. Initially the political right was alone in its outspoken support of Culturalism. Then in 2000, the Social Democratic intellectual Scheffer espoused a civilizing mission to prevent the formation of an ethnic underclass, a variant of Culturalism that appealed to some parts of the left. Around the same time, the leader of the Christian Democrats, Jan-Peter Balkenende, explicitly rejected multiculturalism and argued for the importance of shared – that is, Dutch – norms and values. In 2002, Pim Fortuyn's spectacular performances and blunt discourse attracted disgruntled and disenfranchised voters. After the

assassinations of Fortuyn and Van Gogh, Culturalism gained adherents among philosophers, writers and, most importantly, migrant politicians and intellectuals critical of Islam. By 2005 – the end of the period investigated here – Culturalism could thus count on support from an amazing diversity of previously disparate actors, ranging from laissez-faire liberals to paternalistic Social Democrats and from enlightenment philosophers to anxious lower-class natives. Though they did not have identical views on integration issues, these actors subscribed to the general tenets of Culturalism and shared an antipathy towards the consensual politics that had historically characterized Dutch political culture.

A cohesive coalition

As remarkable as the diversity of actors supporting Culturalism is the extent to which culturalists from different milieus work together. With the Traag algorithm for community detection, I identified the networks that sustain Culturalism and examined the extent to which they have internal ties and a mutual focus. In spite of its growing diversity, the coalition supporting Culturalism remained cohesive; as the discourse grew in power, its supporters increasingly rallied behind its leaders. The power of Culturalism is therefore not only due to the dramatization of politics and the expansion of its bases of support but also emerges from culturalists' capacity to support each other and to invest their power in icons. The Somali Muslim apostate and right-wing parliamentarian Ayaan Hirsi Ali represented the quintessential example of such an icon as she commanded support from a large number and broad range of actors. What is more, the opponents of Culturalism *also* focused on culturalist icons. Rather than promoting their own notions and ideas or rallying around an icon, they defined themselves through their opposition to culturalists. The central culturalists were thus the focal points around which oppositions took shape. In such a figuration, other actors were reduced to critical footnotes in a civil drama in which culturalists played the lead roles.

Limits to the power of Culturalism

Thus far we have confirmed that Culturalism became more powerful (as we would expect). I have also ventured to explain how and why this came to be. Although I may not have been exhaustive, I identified a number of factors that plausibly contributed to the rise of Culturalism and, just as importantly, a number of factors that most likely did not. The goal, however, was not only to explain the ascendancy of Culturalism but also to probe the limits and effects of its power. Towards this end, Parts II and III investigated four other integration discourses: the Diversity discourse, Anti-racism, Pragmatism and Civil Islam. The first two –

the Diversity discourse and Anti-racism – never had much support to begin with and were further marginalized as Culturalism grew in power. Opposition to Culturalism thus came (mostly) from pragmatists and (increasingly) from the promoters of Civil Islam.

The relationship between Culturalism and Pragmatism is ambiguous. While culturalists have been challenging pragmatist political culture since the early 1990s and managed to seize the initiative in the debate, their success was not really at the expense of pragmatists. The figures and tables in Chapters 5 and 6 graphically illustrated the symbiotic relationship of the two integration discourses: there were shifts in their balance of power, but one discourse did not replace the other. While culturalists criticized pragmatists, they also created windows of opportunity for pragmatists to show their worth. Pragmatists responded with measured calm to the alarmist discourses of culturalists: yes, there are problems, but we need to be careful and strategic (rather than ideological or emotional) if we are to find workable solutions. Culturalism and Pragmatism derive their power from different sources and have their strongholds in different settings but this asymmetry also provides the basis for their balance of power. The complicity of the antagonists (see Bourdieu, 1984a) involves an unspoken and unplanned division of labor: culturalists define a problem and pragmatists then redefine it in such a way that it can be measured and managed. This is apparent in the debate (where pragmatists respond to culturalists), in national policy circles (where pragmatists measure and monitor the processes that culturalists deplore) and in local governance relations (where pragmatists propose measures to cross the divides that culturalists postulate).

The relationship between Culturalism and Civil Islam may at first seem purely antagonistic: promoters of Civil Islam argue that commitment to Islam presupposes good citizenship while culturalists argue the opposite. But the relationship between Culturalism and Civil Islam is not simply that of a zero sum game. The number and share of migrants who mobilized both as Muslims *and* as members of the Dutch civil community grew considerably over the period under investigation. Moreover, the analysis of the debate on the opinion pages showed that the promoters of Civil Islam, such as Ahmed Aboutaleb and Haci Karacaer, had unusually high approval ratings because they demanded full civil integration from their ethnic and religious communities. Aboutaleb was the first Dutch-Moroccan to become an alderman in Amsterdam and was later appointed as the first Dutch-Moroccan mayor in the Netherlands – and this in Rotterdam, the city of Pim Fortuyn.

Balance and asymmetry

The resilience of Pragmatism and the emergence of Civil Islam indicate that Culturalism grew

in power but did not crowd out its competitors. In fact, the ascendancy of Culturalism seems to have triggered its own opposition. We may refer to this mechanism as the dialectic of the civil sphere: discursive assaults solicit discursive counter-attacks, which then leads to a balance of power (in the form of polarization or cross-cutting cleavages) or a transcendence of divisions (in the form of a discourse that synthesizes elements from antagonistic discourses). Though it does not guarantee symmetrical power relations, the civil dialectic mitigates against discursive monopolization. The overall picture is thus ambivalent. Yes, Culturalism has become more powerful because its supporters took the initiative and defined the parameters of the debate. Culturalism could enlist support from professional groups and class fractions that were previously inactive. Finally, culturalists supported each other in the debate in spite of their internal diversity. But, no, Culturalism did not become dominant. The analysis of the opinion pages as well as of local governance networks showed that Culturalism is weak in some settings and vehemently opposed in others. Moreover, while the critics of Culturalism were pushed onto the defensive, they were numerous and remained resilient. Finally, Culturalism did not have a discernable effect on opinions as expressed in surveys. Dutch public opinion was never positive towards minorities, multiculturalism or Muslims, but neither did it become more negative – implying that the dynamics of power in the civil sphere neither originated from, nor resulted in, changes in public opinion. [119]

The field analysis of civil politics developed here suggests that the transformations entailed a reconfiguration of power relations among elites. Culturalists turned against the pragmatist culture that had characterized the Dutch civil sphere and forced the elites associated with this culture to defend their positions. But while culturalists both marked and exploited divisions in a proliferating debate, culturalists and pragmatists agreed that governance institutions had to be redesigned to better promote integration. Part III therefore investigated how different discourses impacted on power relations within governance relations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam.

The governance of integration in Amsterdam and Rotterdam

Part III examined the relationships between the government and minority associations in the Netherlands' two largest cities: Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Minority associations have an ambivalent position in governance figurations as they are confronted with contradictory demands. On the one hand, minority associations were seen as potential obstacles to civil integration. Minorities – culturalists and pragmatists agree – should not retreat into their own

communities but become part of the Dutch civil community; they should speak as Dutch citizens, not as people whose loyalties are primarily ethnic or religious. On the other hand, minority communities were expected to take responsibility for solving their integration problems, and for this they need to organize themselves and speak out in public debates as Muslims, Moroccans or Turks. The case studies focused on the force field where these contradictory demands play out: the interface between the elected government, civil society and the media. Part III examined the distribution of resources and recognition within governance figurations and attempted to explain continuity or change within power relations.

Like power relations within debates, power relations within governance figurations were transformed by alterations in the rules of the game, changes in discourses' support bases and the (un)making of alliances. The rules of the game in local politics were heavily affected by mediatization and neoliberalization. Mediatization affected power relations as some actors were better able than others to present themselves as a force for civil repair. People like Haci Karacaer and Ahmed Aboutaleb derived power from their position in the national debate and could claim central positions within local governance figurations. Neoliberalization – the process through which market mechanisms are brought to bear upon society and the state – altered the rules of the game to the advantage of a new class of consultants who combined civil engagement with professional competence. Drastic changes also occurred within the support base of different civil actors: the guest worker associations experienced a contraction in their base of support while the pool of potential supporters for Islamic associations and associations with higher-class constituencies grew. Finally, both cities experienced drastic changes as alliances were made and remade. The oppositions that minority associations had imported from their country of origin (between dissidents and loyalists, for example) grew weaker over time, while new divisions emerged (for example, around the question of whether it was necessary to work with the government or to protest against its policies).

However, these different developments did not occur to the same extent or in the same way in both cities. Discourses indeed impacted on power relations, but in surprising ways. At first sight, Amsterdam and Rotterdam represent opposite poles in integration politics. In the municipal elections of 2002, Pim Fortuyn's party achieved a resounding electoral victory in Rotterdam while Amsterdam remained under the control of the Labor Party. Rotterdam became a laboratory for Culturalism; Amsterdam remained a bastion of Pragmatism. On the basis of the discourses of the two city governments, one would expect minority associations to be marginalized in Rotterdam and incorporated in Amsterdam. However, Chapter 2 argued that the power and effects of discourses cannot be understood without paying due attention to

the interdependencies among actors. The structure of these interdependencies explains why we encountered the opposite of what these governments' discourses would lead us to expect.[120]

In Amsterdam, the government reinforced transformations of power through its support of ascendant actors. When left-wing associations were strong in the 1980s, the government supported these, and only these, associations. When consultants and professionals gained ground in the policy field in the 1990s, the government recognized and rewarded these actors at the expense of others. After 9/11 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh, the government recognized and rewarded liberal Muslims. In each of these episodes, state resources helped the government's privileged partners to marginalize their opponents. First the left-wing associations stymied the conservative associations, then the diversity managers marginalized left-wing associations, and finally liberal Muslims criticized other Muslims for failing to show civil commitment. While Amsterdam has a reputation for embracing minority associations, it in fact supported associations selectively and conditionally. Because the government posed relatively stringent administrative demands and demanded conformity to its policy discourse, associations catering to lower-class and conservative constituencies were marginalized within governance figurations. Only professional and liberal associations won resources and recognition.

Rotterdam, in contrast, provided indiscriminate and unconditional support to civil society associations through its civil corporations: non-profit organizations that receive structural subsidies to support and connect a large number of civil society associations. The two civil corporations most relevant to our case – PBR and SPIOR – have remained resilient since their inception (in 1981 and 1988 respectively). While it is hardly surprising that institutions persist, it is remarkable that governance relations proved more stable in the volatile political context of Rotterdam. The comparison identified the specific structure of Rotterdam's governance figuration – referred to as civil corporatism – as the key to explaining this difference. This structure performed a crucial role in balancing power relations among minority associations and in reducing the volatility of civil politics. Civil corporations balanced power relations between conservative and progressive associations because, unlike in Amsterdam, they ensured that each association, regardless of its identity or discourse, received professional support and access to larger associational networks. Civil corporations also balanced power relations between associations catering to lower-class groups and those catering to middle or higher-class groups. Since professional support (partially) compensated for the lack of cultural or economic capital, the disadvantages experienced by associations

with lower-class constituents was muted. Finally, civil corporations reduced volatility because the government did not directly privilege one type of civil society association: associations dwindled or flourished with changes in their constituencies but the kind of elite displacement evident in Amsterdam did not take place in Rotterdam.

The case studies of Amsterdam and Rotterdam showed that government discourses can indeed be influential but only under specific conditions. Even small discursive shifts in Amsterdam immediately influenced the distribution of rewards and recognition because the government could immediately act upon its new preferences. In Rotterdam, in contrast, governance relations were resilient even after the culturalists of Leefbaar Rotterdam took office. The stability and relative autonomy of Rotterdam's civil society enabled it to function as a countervailing power *to* the government while the volatility and dependency of Amsterdam's civil society turned it into a front line *of* the government. The comparative chapter showed that Rotterdam's minority associations had more constructive inter-associational relations, acquired more state resources to undertake civil projects and, most probably, organized more constituents and stimulated higher levels of electoral participation. In short, Rotterdam's minority associations were more powerful than those in Amsterdam.

Theoretical ramifications

The primary objective of this study was to map the dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics. Towards this end, I had to engage a number of problems that have relevance beyond the case at hand. In this section, I first consider some methodological and conceptual issues. I then identify patterns found in Dutch integration politics which may exemplify more universal patterns of conflict and contestation. Finally, I draw some conclusions on the role of government and civil society in fostering civil engagement.

A general framework for studying specific power relations

The framework developed in Chapter 2 was designed to conceptually unpack and empirically investigate power relations in Dutch integration politics but it could, with some modification, be used to study the discursive and institutional politics around issues as diverse as welfare state restructuring, terrorism and financial regulation. For instance, were the conceptual framework applied to the politics of financial regulation, we could compare the strength of various discourses on financial regulation in different time periods, both in the very long run and immediately before and after the economic crisis of 2008. Analogous to the analysis of

the integration debate in Part II, we could ask if promoters of stringent financial regulation cluster together in a powerful discursive coalition or if they are marginal and divided. Analogous to the analysis of governance relations in Part III, it would be possible to examine the allocation of recognition (such as positions in administrations or on advisory boards) and resources (such as bail-outs). While commentators and scholars have wittingly or unwittingly suggested explanations for transformations in this and other fields, the approach developed here allows us to formulate specific hypotheses about transformations in discursive power relations, to survey their impact on governance relations and to develop conjunctural explanations for specific developments. In this sense, this study is a challenge to become more precise and empirical before arriving at conclusions on the "dominance," "hegemony," "demise," "bankruptcy" or "emergence" of one or another discourse, policy approach, framework or ideology.

Particular case, universal pattern?

Although this study emphasized the need for conjunctural explanations that take account of the contexts in which conflicts play out, it is interesting to examine whether the patterns found in this study can also be found elsewhere. There is reason to believe that this is the case. For instance, the finding that a few actors concentrate the bulk of references in the Dutch integration debate seems to suggest that the distribution of attention in debates follows a so-called power-law distribution that also typifies distributions as diverse as city size or the page views of websites[121] (*cf.* Barabási and Albert, 1999; Barabási, 2009; see also Collins, 1998). Another example of a pattern in the Dutch integration debate that can be found elsewhere is the recurrent opposition between, on the one hand, a small and cohesive cluster with strong leaders and, on the other hand, a diffuse cluster without strong leaders: a figuration reminiscent of the one Elias and Scotson found in the English suburb of Winston Parva in the 1950s (Elias and Scotson, 1994). Such similarities encourage exploring whether there are mechanisms at work that produce similar oppositions across widely different contexts (Elias, 1994a). Could the particular relations that we found in the Dutch case signal a more universal *figurational dynamic of discursive transformation*? To answer this question, let's see how we can describe the Dutch case if we (literally) bracket the particularities.

Discursive transformations start with a challenge: one actor or small group of actors (Bolkestein, Scheffer, Hirsi Ali, and the groups around them) seek to challenge established routines and power relations through dramatic appeals to the public. Unlike the challengers, the "established order" does not really have a face or even coherence. It responds wherever it

is challenged but not through a coordinated strategy or under the guidance of a charismatic leader. The passion and motivation of the challengers – sustained through dense networks and channeled through iconic leaders – pushes established actors onto the defensive as the habits and routines that underwrite their power are questioned. This pattern has the same network properties as Elias' established-outsider figuration but with an important difference: the interactions among the established (in this case, ministers and other guardians of the policy field) form a network pattern that Elias associates with outsiders (sparse networks). The challengers, in contrast, exhibit a network pattern that Elias associates with the established (dense networks). What we have here is a variation of the established-outsider figuration, which we could refer to as the challenger-established figuration.

The challenger-established figuration (observed in the case of the Dutch integration debate) emerges from two mechanisms. The first is the formation of a network of previously disparate actors willing to support leaders who challenge established interests and the rules of the game. The initial burst into the civil sphere pulls in previously inactive people who rally behind leaders who come to stand for change. The second mechanism is that the established respond to the challenge but do so without coordination or leadership. The result of these two mechanisms is the figuration that recurred at several points in this study[122] – a cluster with few members but with discursive leaders, relatively strong networks and high centrality, amidst a number of clusters with many members but without discursive leaders, with relatively sparse networks and with relatively low centrality. These different network patterns correspond to different emotions and discourses. The challengers identify and criticize orthodoxies and do so with passion.[123] Having experienced cognitive liberation, they rally for change. The challenged, in contrast, respond in a rather *ad hoc* manner. They are more likely to resist particular claims than to offer a comprehensive counter-discourse.

Describing the Dutch case in these general terms makes it easier to explore parallels with other cases of political transformation. Perhaps we can push the argument even further and hypothesize that these figurations do not only emerge in political struggles but also in other forms of competition. Innovations in the artistic or academic fields, for instance, also seem to create a challenger-established figuration: a handful of actors disrupt the field through the postulation of a new division, their names become attached to a particular current (the surrealists, the post-structuralists, etc.) or theory (of evolution, of relativity) and develop an antagonistic relation to a diffuse opposition (*cf.* Kuhn, 1962). Similarly, in the business world, ascendant actors can put their stamp on the market if they manage to hoard certain benefits, such as a new technology, in restricted networks. Google and its partners provide one example

of a cluster of companies that, through its strong networks and strong leader (namely Google), could challenge all established actors in the field, setting into motion numerous yet disparate responses to block its ascendancy.

I construct these arguments on the basis of only one case study but the goal here is less to come to definitive conclusions than to point to directions for future research on the dynamics of power. Future research can systematically investigate whether the challenger-established figuration can indeed be found in the transitions brought about by actors as diverse as culturalists, Darwin, Google, etc. If we can develop a more parsimonious vocabulary, it becomes possible to properly design comparative research and to highlight differences and parallels across different fields and cases. My primary goal here was not to develop such a vocabulary but the results suggest that this is a promising line of enquiry.

The government, civil society and civil engagement

As I indicated in Chapter 7, I originally expected strong correspondence between policy discourses and state institutions and thus anticipated that the government of Rotterdam would pursue much stricter policies than the government of Amsterdam. In practice, however, measures and policies towards minority associations were stricter and less generous in Amsterdam. Above I provided some possible explanations for these remarkable findings. Here I want to explore some of the theoretical and political implications.

The findings first of all represent a warning to analysts of integration philosophies (see also Favell, 1998). There is a huge literature that critically interrogates the assumptions of culturalist, multiculturalist, assimilationist or other integration philosophies. For instance, both left and right-leaning commentators have criticized multiculturalism for its alleged tendency to overemphasize the cultural differences between groups and to underemphasize the differences within them. The empirical findings presented here, however, suggest that it can be deceptive to analyze discourses in isolation from the relations of power in which they are conceived. For instance, the diversity discourse of the Amsterdam government followed the insights of progressive scholarship to the letter; it was careful not to reify cultural processes or to essentialize identities and did not associate alterity with dangers or deficiencies (Uitermark *et al*., 2005). For these reasons, the philosopher Seyla Benhabib applauds the Amsterdam government for making the shift from the minorities policy to the diversity policy (Benhabib, 2002). However, the minorities policy did not, as critics of multiculturalism would lead us to expect, benefit the most conservative groups within minority communities. These findings suggest that we need to move away from the scholastic

assumption that discourses should be measured according to scientific or philosophical standards (*cf.* Bourdieu, 2000). This does not mean that we abandon judgment but that we should evaluate philosophies of integration not as ideological templates but as discourses that are strategically mobilized within, and transform, relations of power in particular settings.

Second, these findings are relevant to theories and contemporary policy debates on civil society. Since De Tocqueville's classic study of civil life in the United States of the 19th century (de Tocqueville, 1835), commentators have often conceived of civil society as a space where the state is absent. The state, it is assumed, smothers civil initiative and creates dependent subjects rather than autonomous citizens. On the basis of her research on civil integration in Canada and the United States, Irene Bloemraad contradicts the idea that the absence of the state creates space for spontaneous initiatives (Bloemraad, 2005, 2006). She suggests that state support enabled minority associations in Canada to build an extensive organizational infrastructure and that the state's recognition of minorities created symbolic incentives for migrants to participate in their new country. My comparison of Amsterdam and Rotterdam confirms and qualifies this argument. The comparative chapter showed that it is likely that structural support for civil corporations in Rotterdam: (1) promoted cooperation among civil society associations, (2) fostered civil and political participation, (3) muted the negative effects of deprivation on civil engagement, and (4) attenuated extremism and radicalism. If these four criteria of a vibrant civil society are accepted, the verdict is that Rotterdam performed much better than Amsterdam, even though conventional wisdom suggests that Amsterdam had more conducive conditions for civil engagement (Fainstein, 2000, 2005; Soja, 1996; Gilderbloom, 2008). In Rotterdam, structural support for civil corporations created the conditions in which migrants, including deprived migrants, could participate in civil politics. Since civil politics requires skills and resources, professional support from state-funded civil corporations helped to overcome the problems experienced by newcomers and lower-class groups in pursuing a shared objective. However, state support is not *necessarily* beneficial for the development of civil society. If the government intervenes directly in civil society, the chapters on Amsterdam suggested, both weak and strong associations may lose their roles as organizers and intermediaries. If they have to compete for resources and recognition with stronger associations, the weakest associations will be further disadvantaged; the more successful associations may secure their position in governance networks but it is likely that this will be at the cost of losing contact with their base. Rather than building a large base and differentiated networks, they transform – partially or completely – into commercial organizations that care more for clients than constituents.

These findings are politically relevant at a time when governments everywhere are tightening their criteria for subsidizing associations. While policies to promote civil engagement and citizenship are proliferating in the Netherlands and elsewhere, these rarely aim to strengthen the institutional tissue of civil society. If subsidies are considered legitimate at all, there are strict conditions and definitive time limits. Lenin's slogan "trust is good but control is better" has become the motto of today's governments. Governments and commentators alike nowadays balk at the idea of indiscriminate and unconditional support for civil society associations, for this supposedly breeds insolence and dependence. But the findings in this study suggest something quite different: civil society associations in Rotterdam were critical and vibrant *because of* the indiscriminate and unconditional support they received.

Epilogue

What makes Dutch integration politics so complicated is that there was never strong support for multiculturalism or anti-racism. Activists and intellectuals in the 1970s argued against racism and for minority rights but lost steam as their ideas were enshrined into policy and law. After the inception of the minorities policy in 1983, minority integration increasingly became a matter for administrators and specialists, not for activists or ideologues. The technocratization of minority integration reached its climax during the reign of the purple government, which lumped together all lower-class migrants into one giant target group (*allochtonen*). While *allochtonen* were supposed to integrate and become responsible citizens, civil integration was narrowly and dispassionately operationalized as the position of minority groups on various negative lists: unemployment, crime, educational failures and language problems. Although policy memorandums and administrators occasionally alluded to ideals of multicultural harmony, integration was regarded first and foremost as a practical affair to be handled with prudence and discretion.

For culturalists, integration was never simply a policy matter. In the early 1990s, Frits Bolkestein framed the presence of minorities and specifically Muslims as a threat to the integrity of the civil sphere. The power of this discourse was evidenced by Bolkestein's centrality in the debate; he was so central that it was almost impossible to speak of integration without speaking of Bolkestein. Even his opponents had to refer to his discourse, thereby helping to disseminate it. But some of Bolkestein's opponents also *wanted* to give him space. They made every effort to distinguish Bolkestein from the extreme right and often praised

him for opening up the debate on integration. Much has changed since then: integration politics has further proliferated, Culturalism has grown into a full-blown discursive movement and new leaders have emerged. But there have also been continuities. Throughout the period under investigation, culturalists were at the center of the debate, had relatively dense networks and were more likely to support discursive leaders. Although systematic data collection for this study ended just after Geert Wilders established his Party for Freedom (*Partij voor de Vrijheid*, PVV), he is only the most recent and radical culturalist to dominate the debate, to lead a movement and to face a diffuse opposition.

That no powerful discourse has yet been able to counter the culturalists from Bolkestein to Wilders signals a discursive and ideological vacuum. The opponents of Culturalism are conserving what already exists rather than promoting a positive new vision of multicultural society. In a way, culturalists resemble the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s in that they use powerful symbolism to challenge inert institutions. And it remains doubtful whether a powerful integration discourse would make the pendulum swing in the other direction. What characterized the progressive movements of the 1960s and 1970s as well as the culturalist movement of the 1990s and 2000s is that they united previously disparate groups behind a shared agenda: their discourses united different class fractions and channeled their anxieties and aspirations. Unlike the progressive social movements, however, Culturalism in a very basic sense is a conservative and reactionary discourse: it seeks to curb threats through the demarcation of boundaries and the exercise of discipline. And as has undoubtedly become clear from my choice of words, I feel that there is an urgent need to foster new coalitions around discourses that do not rely on fear and force. That, however, is a task beyond the political sociology of integration politics that I have attempted here.