Literature Review on
Active Citizenship & Governance Education
in the Netherlands

Floor Basten and Ruud van der Veen

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0. Introducing the harmony model and the agenda culture: setting the stage for the Netherlands

It is the year of 1982. Wassenaar. The social partners (representatives of employers and unions) come to an agreement: the trade-unions accept less growth in wages in exchange for gradual reduction of working hours, thus cutting down the costs of labour and therefore decreasing unemployment. The agreement of Wassenaar fits perfectly into the consensus or harmony model, eventually renamed the *poldermodel* to promote this typically Dutch way of politicking, which has met with a lot of inquiring enthusiasm world-wide, as a valuable export product. But what might seem an unusual but creative step in adapting to a new socio-economic environment to outsiders, is in fact to the Dutch a very normal procedure in adapting to any change whatsoever.

It all started with the literal creation of Holland, transforming swamps into land and protecting that land against the rising water, thus constructing an artificial home below sea level. The plain and simple need to survive under severe natural circumstances made it impossible for any sovereign lord to operate on his own: none of the sovereigns could afford not to join the common effort to fight the water. Add to this the continual wars with foreign kingdoms, and we have the conditions under which a culture of co-operation and agreement could arise. The lords of Holland remained sovereign on their own land, but also had a responsibility for the whole because they were very well aware that the were dependent upon each other for the safekeeping of their land and their political and economic privileges. This sovereignty was transferred into the socio-cultural makeup of the Dutch: tolerance among persons of different religious persuasions led to a compartmentalised society, in Dutch called the 'pillarised' society, where the leaders negotiated with each other to ensure equality among difference. Even now that the religious pillars have lost much of their influence, the Dutch still attach great value to negotiating harmony, eventually resulting in the construction of an agenda culture, finding its ultimate embodiment in the well chosen metaphor of the poldermodel.

So there you have it: the Dutch stage for active citizenship and governance in a nutshell.

1. The debating-society: its members and its topics

The Dutch literature related to citizenship and governance can mostly be found in the libraries of societal sciences and policy sciences. Much literature on these topics is in book form. These books range from a theoretical outlining of policy studies, via the reflection on both theory and practice as in for instance the proceedings of conferences, to practical guidelines on how to develop, implement and evaluate policies. It is striking that much more is written about governance (mostly in terms of 'government') and far less is reported on citizenship. Whether the message is that citizens should be activated in order to participate, or that less active participation of citizens would be desired, the 'citizen' is treated as a somewhat 'being

there' factor in the decision-making process that can be manipulated in varying degrees. In other words: the focus is that of the policy maker or policy advisor, not that of the receiver of the policy. Information on Dutch citizens can be found in cultural studies, but in these studies the factor 'policy' is mostly left out of the analyses. Virtually nothing can be found on the interaction between policy and citizens from the citizens' point of view, although alarmed citizens do speak out their concerns in the media (in front of the TV cameras and in letters they send to national newspapers) and do have the attention of researchers who are more careful with the notion, differentiating between gender, ethnic background, socio-economic setting, etc.

The authors are chiefly academics, but most of them are also active in the advisory practice, combining theoretical notions with practical experiences in the political field. In some cases, the author is a committee installed by the government, such as the *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (WRR: Scientific Advisory Board for Governmental Policy) and the *Emancipatieraad* (ER: Advisory Board for Emancipation), in other cases the author is a ministry, publishing in the form of (preliminary) government policy documents. as the *Wiardi Beckman Stichting* (WBS: Wiardi Beckman Foundation) There are also NGO's that publish in both books and journals, such as the *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek* (IPP: Institute for Public and Politics); and, of course, we must not forget the churches, that focus our attention to all sorts of societal problems and misbehaviours. Most contributions of the part of societal interest groups are to be found on the internet and in non-scientific journals. Furthermore, the programmes of political parties reveal notions and visions on citizenship and governance. Finally, attention to these topics is paid in newsletters (columns) and opinion papers. We might conclude that on every level and in every form citizenship and governance are discussed by everyone, although it is strikingly clear that there are far more titles on governance than there are on citizenship. The citizen as an actor is practically absent in the literature.

Different angles of the subject are highlighted (such as multicultural society and minority groups, poverty, exclusion, gender, etc.), but the main theme is: how to deal with societal problems and decision-making processes now that the process of de-pillarization is completed? The end of the pillarised society has consequences for both citizenship and governance. In the section below, the different viewpoints on citizenship are discussed. These views are mostly held and expressed by political parties, although more differentiated notions of 'citizenship' are also to be found. Next, the consequences for governance are discussed. Did the de-pillarisation have any decisive influence on the harmony model and agenda culture, or did it leave both fundamentally unchanged?

2. Citizenship in the Netherlands: moral lessons for a tough crowd

The term *citizenship* has been used mainly in the political discourse. Dutch citizens fight for a variety of issues that concern them, but the issue of 'the ideal citizen' is not among them. Citizenship is mostly an issue for the government or, in a broader sense the political élite that feels responsible for 'the Netherlands, Inc.' (Koenis, 1997: p. 99). Politicians and their parties have all formulated definitions of citizenship according to their own traditional background. Instead of the term 'active', 'good' is a more commonly used adverb for citizenship in this discussion. The academic discussion is more concerned with analyses of political discourse and actions concerning citizenship, placing the political reality against the background of Dutch socio-cultural developments.

The liberal roots of Dutch citizenship: from virtuous gentlemen to empty state

In eighteenth century Holland, citizens where those who had rights based on descent and merit – in that order. This meant that the majority of the people was excluded from citizenship. The juridical system of natural right justified this situation, and the Republicans did not deplore this justification. Their main concern was that those who had rights, neglected their republican duties. In their elitist opinion of political virtue, it mattered whether the gentleman was virtuous; the ethics of the common people left them quite cold, since they did not count politically. The democratic revolutions in France and in the United States led to a radicalisation of the natural right. This meant that individuals were acknowledged indefeasible birth rights; otherwise, there would be oppression and tyranny. It also meant that the state imposed duties directly. Civic humanism was stimulated in two regards. Firstly, the growth of the state power should be matched by a growth in individual right of say, or rather: the exercise of state power would only be justifiable, as long as it was a derivative of the participation of the individual citizen. This participation was considered to be more than individual negotiation of interests; it was the active construction of the virtuous public life. Secondly, democratisation would eventually become a *fait accompli*, and one could only hope that during this process, the Dutch population would grow up politically. In the late nineteenth century, the intellectual debate gains a new character. Ethical questions are put onto the background, whilst pragmatic issues take their place. Citizenship becomes a matter of execution, and the two paradigms of natural right and republic become self-evident starting points that have lost their practical meaning. Instead, their intellectual arguments become means of propaganda: the principles need to be sold to a population that used to be abstract, but has become very physical in an ever changing world (Van Holthoorn, 1992: p. 31-38).

The present discussion on citizenship is based on a *dynamic* understanding of the term. Citizens are individuals who must have equal rights, and if this is not the case, who should gain equal rights. The issue of duties has left the scene (Van Holthoorn, 1992: p. 25). With 'citizen' we mean a person who has by law the right to participate in public affairs. Whether he or she exercises that right is not the touchstone for citizenship. Our view on citizenship is legalistic and passive (Van Stokkom, 1992: p. 63; see also Hemerijck, Simonis & Lehning, 1992). This conception has also met with a lot of feminist critique. This critique can be summarised in two points. Firstly, with the acceptance of equality of citizens, the existing inequality between citizens and outcasts (quasi-citizens) has become not-negotiable. Secondly, on the one hand only persons – not men and women – appear in modern liberal, republican and communitarian theories on citizenship, while on the other hand, these theories in fact build on older theories that explicitly couple citizenship with masculinity (Voet, 1992: p. 81). Instead, citizenship should be a matter of participation in all kinds of domains, for instance participation in the labour market in such a way that it not leads to feminisation of poverty (combining part-time jobs with care responsibilities, the glass ceiling). Although, as Bussemaker & Voet (1998) claim, potential conflicts about labour were often canalised by institutional ways of deliberation in a well developed system of neo-corporatism (labelled above also as 'poldermodel') the issue of the regulation of women's participation in the labour market has continued to provoke extensive discussion and disagreement. Also, although the Dutch system of welfare has a high level of public expenditures and rather generous welfare entitlements, the latter has been used to keep women out of the system: for a long time the breadwinner's income was assumed to be enough to support a family – the breadwinner being the male and the care-giver being the female (ibid: p. 5; see also Benschop, 1996)

Apart from feminist critique on a passive notion of citizenship, there are other reasons why citizenship is high on the agenda. Now that traditional enemies are no longer threatening or

evil to date, European countries are, more than ever, confronted with the necessity not to find their strength and value in a tug-of-war, but in their inner force and vitality. Concepts of citizenship are of vital importance in a re-orientation on the task and function of politics and state, and in the search for new societal relations. In the past, economical urge, socio-cultural structures, homogeneity, and a sense of national identity offered fertile soil; nowadays, societal developments are characterised by increasing social, economical and cultural differentiation. Society, as its individual members, is confronted with an increasing number of actual and imaginary possibilities, alternatives and choices: the direction of societal developments is far less predictable, while at the same time, the resistance against uniform rules and procedures grows. Citizenship is a matter of values and differences of opinion about those values. Citizenship itself, and discussions about it, are expressed in specific, biased and coloured statements that should remain open for deviant interpretations. A consensus-seeking approach is out of the question here; what is needed is not 'active agreement', but recognition and appreciation of different opinions (Van Gunsteren, 1992).

Frissen characterises Dutch society as somewhat fatigued and decadent. In his opinion, it does not need a centre where stories about the good and the just are told. There is, in contrast, a multiplicity of small, individual, and also digital biographies. A citizen is reduced to what is known about him or her in administrative data bases. All efforts to moralise these citizens is futile. The public domain has become anarchistic: without centre, without characteristics, without predictability and without plan, goal or intention. As far as politics is concerned: it is the form that matters (Frissen, 1999). Many people are looking for new forms of citizenship, that could serve as alternatives for operating within the traditional frames of the political parties, that suffer a dramatic loss of function. In a fragmented society as the Dutch one, all hope for revitalising the grand narratives is idle romanticism. In fact: the state is empty (Frissen, 1998: p. 60; see also Frissen, 1999). In line of this thought, Koenis states that it is a persistent misunderstanding to equate politics with the effort to create community. Instead, politics has to do with the development and carrying out of ideas, the provision for arrangements and the creation of institutions precisely in situations where community is insufficient, or even completely missing (Koenis, 1997: p. 7).

Although politics is not, according to Koenis, about the creation of community – it is, in fact, the compensation for lack of community – the desire for it is a pivotal point on the political agenda, where the discussion on national identity is fuelled by problems surrounding integration of migrants and refugees. The proverbial Dutch tolerance has reached a minimum: the traditional emphasis on maintenance of the proper identity has, in regard to recent newcomers, been changed for an intolerance regarding whoever does not accept fundamental Dutch values as tolerance, equality of men and women and freedom of speech (Koenis, 1997: p. 17; for a discussion of the alleged Dutch plural society, see also Duyvendak, 1998a). As a matter of fact, the price of tolerance is a certain resistance to take others intellectually seriously: pacification in practice means mutual respect for each others' ideas and lifestyles, but without critically discussing them. Tolerance, then, remains superficial, passive, ritual and idiosyncratic. Identity is considered to be nothing more than a second skin, categorising people on the base of a simple adverb. This development is strengthened by the traditional Dutch pillarization reflex: the institutionally putting apart of 'strangers' in a pillar. Although chief politicians and sociologists (for instance Zijderveld, who pleads for a proper pillar for Islamites) consider this a well functioning instrument for the emancipation of new groups (*andersmaatschappelijken* or 'other-socials'), these groups often lack the power traditional groups had. Instead, they will be put aside and made object for welfare projects (Koenis, 1997: p. 65; for an analysis of the social construction of minorities see also Rath, 1991). It is observed that whereas in the old system, for the sake of consensus, various religious and 'quasi-religious' groups were very well represented in the top-level organization of society,

such is no longer the case: women and ethnic or other minority groups might be allowed, and sometimes even encouraged, to develop their own organizations and 'group identities', but they are largely excluded from top-level positions in decision-making channels and public institutions (Bussemaker & Voet 1998: p. 7).

The shift from keeper to pastor: the rise and fall of the welfare state

Another important subject in the discussion is the welfare state: as much as the political standpoints differ on this matter, all politicians agree that 'community' is the countervailing power for increasing individualisation, and, moreover, that 'moral' should be the soil for this community (hinted at in concerns about the pedagogical task of schools and the Christian-democrat proposal for a Ministry of Family) (Koenis, 1997). The welfare state has become a too costly enterprise, and the accusing finger is pointed at the new calculating citizen who lacks responsibility for the whole of society or community. However, the claim that all societal problems relate to a defective transfer of norms and values is not supported by empirical findings (Bovens & Hemerijck, 1996; Dekker, 1999); let alone that education should do anything more then offer entrance to existing citizenship (Van Gunsteren, 1992: 7). Koenis cannot help himself but to suspect some sort of conspiracy of politicians, policy officials and scientists to embezzle the political character of the welfare state. The state, then, is no longer the keeper of the public domain, but the pastor of 'our' communality, our shared norms and values. The social sciences are being tied into the shackles of policy relevance and citizens are being disciplined for virtue. In this political culture, terms like 'state', 'government' and 'policy' easily collide for the honour and glory of the joint project 'the Netherlands'. The welfare state has equally become a joint project with one simple goal: the production of welfare and well-being. However, a liberal democracy is not a (moral) community and citizens are individuals who do not co-operate for the sake of a moral goal (they do so within the context of their proper communities), but for the sake of political goals. Politics, thus, has to do with civil diversity and negotiation, and not with community – the confusion arises from identifying state government as the sole political actor, leaving citizens to be complaining consumers who seek their rights (Koenis 1997: p. 81).

In the Netherlands, citizenship on the political agenda is mostly coupled to the approach of different policy problems (see also Van Gunsteren & Den Hoed, 1992), such as the improvement of education, the upholding of the law, increase of participation in the labour market, matters of minorities, reduction of the gap between voters and voted, decentralisation and social renewal. Van Gunsteren (1992: p. 70-72) clusters the topics into several domains:

1. *The welfare state* and, in particular, the constellation of labour and social security (Zijderveld & Adriaansens, 1981): the main concerns here are that the system of social security is no longer affordable and that it might distort the reintegration of long-term unemployed. Against this background several reports have been published (WRR, 1990a; Kroft c.s., 1989) in which the problem of long-term unemployment has been broadened, which has led to a revision of the system in order to stimulate people to participate in the labour market
2. *Renewal of statesmanship and government*: the starting point for this initiative has been a report in which a list of questions about the functioning of the parliamentary democracy has been drawn up (Rapport Commissie Deetman, 1990/91). The main conclusion was that there was a gap between voters and voted: citizens doubt the legitimacy of the government, the 'primacy of the parliament' has weakened and the development of policy has become diffuse. The solution is sought in decentralisation, on the one hand both of the

state government and of a multiplicity of policy domains (top down); on the other hand in the structure of local government of municipalities (bottom up; see also WRR, 1990b)

3. *Social renewal*: this theme has been put on the political agenda at the end of the eighties and has become a government programme executed by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is also concerned with minorities (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken, 1989; Commissie Idenburg, 1989). The observation was that the economical and technological recoveries did not result in an equal revival of the social structure. In order to adjust this imbalance, programmes has been developed to stimulate community initiatives and to enhance citizenship among foreigners
4. *Public spirit*: this is an overarching theme in which the previous issues return in a broader framework as a matter of policy with a moral approach. The state government has been overburdened (it both articulates interests of citizens and carries them out), while at the same time the public spirit has been corrupted (citizens calculate and shift of the consequences of their actions on to the state). In reaction to this simultaneous development a series of measurements has been proposed: more attention for the formation of responsibility in schools (Uitleg, 1991a/b), active fight against fraud with social security and taxes, stimulation of the social middle field (Partijbestuur CDA, 1987), an active role for the churches in raising the public spirit and the recovery of a moral foundation on which justice can blossom once more (Hirsch Ballin, 1992), re-pillarization for the emancipation of 'newcomers' (Breedveld & Greven, 1991) and a renewed co-operation between citizens and a state government that takes its core business seriously (Appendice of Handelingen Tweede Kamer, 1990/91).

An alternative frame: the neo-republic view of the state and its citizens

All this themes come together in a rather recent and recurrently cited report on contemporary citizenship from the *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (WRR: Scientific Advisory Board for Governmental Policy) named after the main author Van Gunsteren (1992), where he outlines the framework of the neo-republic view of the state and its consequent values regarding citizenship. A citizen is he or she who both rules and is ruled. Society does not automatically produce robust citizens, nor up to date conceptions of citizenship. Now that society has become genuinely plural (but see also Duyvendak, 1998a), the reproduction of citizenship is primarily located within the responsibility of the public sphere. A 'citizen' is never solely a citizen: he or she is always *also* something else, like soldier, tax official, politician, student, employee, child or fool. Citizenship is thus a dimension. This perception of citizenship being a dimension resonates with the later published *Education for Democratic Citizenship* (Council of Europe, 1996). In this paper the Council of Europe distinguished between a political dimension (civic rights and obligations), a social dimension (inalienable birth rights) and a psychological concept. The latter views the individual and collective capacities as cognitive and socio-affective instruments which put a social contract into effect. Whereas the paper of the Council of Europe is rather normative in talking about citizenship (the aim is a continuing participation of individuals in the co-management of public affairs) and thus raises 'activity' as the norm, Van Gunsteren states that the degree of activity can never be a touchstone for citizenship, because citizens cannot be forced to activity (see also below). Citizenship concerns the organization of plurality, the dealing with differences and conflicts of loyalty, the modification of dependency relations in such a manner that the character of slavery is taken away (for Frissen, politics has to do with the avoidance of cruelty). The citizen has a secured place in the public sphere and in that position he or she modify practices of action with which he or she is involved. In order for

him or her to operate effectively in the public sphere, he or she requires a minimum of competence, an aspect that has met with a lot of theoretical attention because it implies interference. However, some things can be said about this competence: it concerns the capacity to judge and act in practices of citizenship. This is more a matter of intuitively 'knowing how', then a structured body of knowledge about 'knowing that'. People learn in practice, in interaction with the environment: it is more a 'conversation' with others and the context. Furthermore, people learn by participating in practices of citizenship and politics, by listening and reading, in short: by being open for the society in which one lives (Van Gunsteren, 1992: p. 35-44). These characteristics of competence might explain why there is little discussion and theory about education and learning for citizenship and governance.

Next to the crucial element of judgement civil competence comprises such things as civility, timing, and dealing with corruption and lies. This list is not exhaustive and should avoid the suggestion that civil competence might be caught in one simple formula. Furthermore, although competence of citizens is of the utmost importance, it is both in theory and practice mostly not open for discussion because a univocal standard for competence is missing and because the free choice of citizens – even in some occasions where they might appear to be incapable or clumsy – needs to be respected *in principle* (Van Gunsteren, 1992: p. 43-44).

Incapable and clumsy citizens, there seems to be more and more of them according to recent public debates. Participants in these debates, such as politicians, journalists and social scientists, talk of people who have the formal status of citizenship, but who behave in such a way that they do no justice to that status: they are citizens, but do not act accordingly (De Haan, 1992; Koenis, 1997; the paper of the Council of Europe referred to above also implies an unwanted gap between the 'should be' and 'is'). Result: irritation in the public sphere, considered as both a physical place (vandalism and pollution) and a virtual place ('free-riding' and low participation), which would lead, according to leading politicians, to the corrosion of societal integration (Van Gunsteren, 1992: 74-77). The substantial – in contrast to the formal – status of citizenship is gradual. Some people are better citizens than others, and, if we are to believe the participants of the public debates, at the moment a lot more people are less good citizens than is desirable. The three main conceptions of citizenship and their visions on society (moral/communitarian, economical/utilitarian and social/righteous), all have their different interpretations of citizenship. However, they also have something in common: they not only point to the incapacity of the citizens, but also and foremost to the incapacity of the government. The debate about citizenship is, in fact, a reflection of political impotence, but does more than just *re*flect: it *de*flects the image in such a way that this impotence is lost out of sight. Every time the term 'citizenship' pops up in the public debate, the message is communicated that the state *can* no longer direct, but moreover, that those responsible for the functioning of the government no longer *wish* to direct: citizens must direct themselves. What at first was actually impossible, is in reformulating it into terms of citizenship, even normatively undesirable. The shifting rhetoric of a factual statement to a normative justification, visible in all three conceptions, also leads to a very real shift in responsibilities. The responsibility for solving societal problems is, by describing them in terms of failing citizenship, put into the hands of the civil society. The problem of the failing government is covered up by the discussions about the design of citizenship in the civil society. This new argument remains, however, in the constellation of failing governmental policy. The matter of what the heart of the civil society is, results in half-heartedness: on the surface it is a discussion about an alternative for governmental policy, but at a deeper level it has an undertone that focuses on the question of how civil society can be (re)designed in order to make the *existing*, *unchanged* governmental policy more successful. The result of this half-heartedness is that the responsible citizen is mostly pictured as a passive citizen, and that the active, political role of the citizen in the civil society remains under-exposed (De

Haan, 1992) – a point already made above. Moreover, efforts to stimulate a revival of this kind of disciplined citizenship in a republic is a paradox: politicians *are* citizens and can only express their appeal *as* fellow citizens, not as political leaders (Van Gunsteren, 1992: p.78).

The discussion on and concern for 'moral' has been defined by Van Gunsteren (and other writers) as a-political, and for that reason the impact of his WRR-report will be low, according to Koenis. 'The' politics is rather not interested in citizens as *political* beings who act in political forums and who should be equipped to do so successfully; Dutch politics has discovered citizens as mainly moral beings, who should adjust to the standards of community, whatever those might be. This *moral* citizen fits the long-term tradition for education for community, morality and society (Koenis, 1997: p. 20). This education has been provided by and within the pillars.

Let us now take a closer look at the Dutch discussions about governance, translated into the capacity to govern citizens and the consequent forms it takes. A main theme is: the de-pillarised society, what comes next and how to deal with it??

3. Governance in the Netherlands: from discipline to hedonism

A closer look at the Dutch literature on citizenship and governance reveals that the political reality is not as simple as the stage sketched above (see section 1). There is a broad consensus about the 'consensus model' being the political reality, but that does not mean that there is a broad consensus about the desirability of this model. Hendriks & Toonen (1998) edited a review of the Dutch political and decision-making tradition. The topic of 'the state of the Netherlands' is as old as the state of the Netherlands itself. Recently, attention for the Netherlands has seen an upheaval as a result of the success of the *poldermodel*. In describing the Dutch state, the national literature is often equivalent to the international reflections. The decision-making culture is summed up in the three C's of consultation, compromise and consensus (Koch & Scheffer, 1996; Duyvendak & De Haan, 1997); the decision-making structure is classified as the spreading and division of power (Daalder, 1995; Lijphart, 1968). A representative of the political élite labels the typical Dutch way of government with the acronym IBZMA: *iedereen bemoeit zich met alles* (everybody interferes with everything) (Hoogerwerf, 1986). The Dutch appreciation for its own poldermodel is of rather recent date, and seems quite dependent of the favourable economical situation and the international praise for its success. The love for the poldermodel is mostly stirred up from the outside, and does not go very deep yet. There is, however, a discourse that goes much deeper, coming from the inside: the 'treacle discourse'.

The treacle state: the sweetest democracy in the world

In the literature on this subject, the key word appears to be 'treacle', a Dutch speciality of a sticky, dark and sweet substance, made out of apples or pears that serves a delicious supplement to pancakes, cheese and other Dutch treats – but 'an absolute horror to work your way through with a knife on a cold winter's night' (as the prime-minister is cited in Hendriks & Toonen, 1998).

In search of the roots of societal consensus and organised deliberation, one quickly stumbles on the notions of 'settling and straightening', notions that historically seem to have evolved in a linear way, but that, at a closer look, also show discontinuities and ruptures. Three key words indicate three different phases: *persuasie* (persuasion) during the Republic of Holland, *accommoderen* (accommodate) during the Batavian-French period, and the *stroperige staat*

(the treacle state) of the present day. *Persuasie* was the governmental tendency for compromise and indulgence that served primarily economical interests of the cities of Holland, that guaranteed the wealth in the Golden Age. As a consequence, the national politics was nothing more than a derivative of regional and local interest: the Republic was a weak state, in which moderation and tolerance was the glue that kept the nation together. This oasis of moderation and tolerance did, however, have its boundaries: the economical and politico-religious power relations were not to be disturbed for risk of crises (Randeraad & Wolffram, 1998). In this period, the different minorities settled and straightened into their subordinate position in exchange for liberties (Groenveld, 1995). In the period between 1795 and 1798 a large-scale innovation in the governmental bureaucracy tied centre and periphery in a hierarchical manner, ending the sovereignty of the provinces and eventually the privileges of the regional élites. Settling and straightening now became a matter of *accommodatie*: the élites had learned that it was better to bind (new) social groups to the existing constellation – and thus to themselves – by giving them concessions to a certain degree. Settling and straightening took the form of negotiation between the state and the provinces. In the next period, the Constitution of 1848 had created a national frame, taking away the basis for the existing class society. The national state gained political influence on the local levels. The time was ripe for new power balances and the different groups went to war over education and the so-called social matter (suffrage). The process of pillarisation that followed from this, was not one without problems and struggles. Eventually, it ended in the pacification of 1917, that set the stage for the extension of the social middle field (private institutions responsible for the execution of public affairs) and the post-war controlled economy of deliberation. Settling and straightening took shape as a the willingness to equally divide societal provisions, taking into account the social interests (Randeraad & Wolffram, 1998; for a historical overview see also Lijphart, 1968 and Daalder, 1995). The discourse of the treacle state has matured since 1966 and reached its peak in 1996, when the new 'purple government' (a sort of 'third way' government where the Christian-democrats have been excluded from – although purple is the traditional Christian colour for 'passion') declared war against the slow and vast decision-making culture and announced to restore the 'primacy of politics' (Hendriks, 1998).

The discourse of the treacle state moves between two extremes: treacle is good or treacle is bad. In the 'treacle is good' version, the stickiness in the development of public policies is highly valued and considered to be an integral part of the Dutch tradition of 'settling and straightening'. This tradition has kept Dutch politics to become one-sidedly authoritarian and has preserved the conditions for plural policy development, thus establishing long-term effectiveness (Randeraad & Wolffram, 1998; Duyendak, 1998). After all, in a consensus-seeking model, it may take some time, but eventually everyone agrees on the issue at hand. The defenders of this model can be found in neo-corporatists (who emphasise the benefits of the intense interaction between government and organised interest groups), communitarians (who are opposed to a mere instrumental politics and all for a broads political role for representatives of communities and organizations of the social middle field) and post-modernists (who prefer complexity, diversity and horizontal structures above straightened, uniform and vertical structures). Among the critics, we can find the neo-liberals (who want to give more power to the market), the neo-étatists (*nieuw-flinkers* (new left-wing politicians with balls; *links* is left-wing and *flink* is ferm) who want to increase the political elbow-room) and the so-called democracy-accomplishers (those who want a more direct relation between electorate, politics and policy). Although the critics, installed in the purple government, gratefully and gracefully accept all international praise for the accomplishments of the Dutch system, they are somewhat embarrassed for the traditional basis of this success, a basis they

had already dismissed as obsolete. The suggested relation between the consensus model and the favourable economical results is therefore officially denied (Hendriks, 1998).

Authors who are affected by the treacle discourse, whether they can appreciate the treacle or not, are more focused on the *form* of politics than in its *content*. In fact, they state that politics should not even meddle with content (Frissen goes as far as to state that, since it is all about form, we might as well make it as pleasant as possible: hedonistic and aesthetic politics). Obviously, politicians disagree by nature. A side from the discussions on the preference of either fast or slow policy development, we can discern a discussion on the possibility of moral values in politics. This is a discussion about the possibility of a restoration of the primacy of politics. The major theme is whether the form should allow for active politics or for minimal facilitation, on maximum or minimum state intervention.

Politicians with balls and muscular language: restoration of the primacy of politics

In the discussion about democracy, three views can be discerned:

1. there is nothing wrong with the present organization of democracy, but maybe there can be done something about public governance and over-centralisation
2. there is something wrong with the present organization of democracy, but that is more a matter of increasing societal problems and the welfare state than a problem of democracy itself
3. there is something wrong with the present organization of democracy, because the influence of the voters in assigning political officials is too little.

These observations are all wrong, according to Bovens cs. (1995), who state that the real problem is the rush for a 'primacy of politics'. In this discourse, politicians plead for less interference from other parties involved, in order to speed up the decision-making process. They loathe the broad possibilities social movements have to organise *hindermacht* (hindrance power) and actually raise their voice for less democracy on matters that involve, in their opinions, immediate action. Treacle is, in this context, the unease of the political élite with citizens who have become smarter and more independent, who have found their ways to and know how to make use of legal protection, and who behave as co-decision makers. That makes governing difficult. However, there is an ironic twist in recent history here: all procedures to organise *hindermacht* have been the merit of the very same generation of politicians that now critics the treacle state (Frissen, 1998). Another ironic twist of fate is the co-existence of the critics of the treacle state and the critics of social engineering. The critique on social engineering states that politicians are not allowed to govern without the consent of the citizens (they promote co-production and interactive decision making, thus adjusting the output to the input), while the critique on the treacle state focuses on the primacy of politics (reduction of the input in favour of an increased output). Politicians usually express both critiques, which makes the situation all the more intriguing. The paradox is this: the very same citizens who were subject to emancipation in the sixties, are now being accused of behaving emancipated, thus slowing down and frustrating the politics of the very same angry overachievers who initiated the wave of emancipation in the first place (Duyvendak, 1998b; for a discussion on contemporary social engineering see also Duyvendak & De Haan, 1997).

Be it as it may, for the purpose of speeding things up, politicians lump all citizens' protests to the so-called NIMBY-syndrome (Not In My Back Yard: a provision in the general interest is the subject of citizens' protest because this provision would have negative effects on their neighbourhood). In the political rhetoric, these protesting citizens are calculating actors who,

within a sheer instrumental rationality, who weigh costs and benefits solely for their own self-interests. All arguments, legitimate or not, based on independent expert reports or not, are dismissed as NIMBY. However, NIMBY-decision making can not only be seen as a collision between private and public interests. In most cases, it is precisely a 'battle for the public interest' and who is the obvious authority to decide on that matter. Using NIMBY-arguments and rhetoric, politicians re-claim their monopoly in defining the public interest and re-install their role as the patronising keepers of the public good in a society that is driven by self-interests (Tops, 1998; for an interesting analysis of governmental discourse see also Van Twist, 1995). However, politicians have to realise that 'politics' has been removed from The Hague to other panels: Europe, jurisdiction, the private sphere, local government, clerical 'porches' and social organizations. The 'primacy of politics' discourse is too much concerned with bringing back politics to The Hague – although it is recognized by some (but for instance not Frissen or Koenis) that the state government keeps playing a stimulating and initiating part in policy development (Bovens cs., 1995). Obviously, the discourse of the primacy of politics (read: The Hague) is in contradiction with the European document *Evolutions in Governance* (Lebessis & Paterson, 1997), which observes that increasing difficulties for government action and social complexity results in a paradigm of government action in crisis. In fact, the report concludes that prior consultation should be replaced with ongoing consultation with stakeholders (thus to add treacle instead of muscle). In line with this, the report *Learning for Active Citizenship* (1997) claims that Europe has a commitment to encourage people's practical involvement in the democratic process at all levels, and most particularly at the European level (see also Prodi, 2000). Although the report acknowledges that there is no univocal standard for active participation (cf. Van Gunsteren, 1992), it also uderlines the urge to stimulate learning in a Europe of Knowlegde. Learning is conceptualised as the ability and willingness to negotiate meanings and actions.

This fits the Dutch tradition of the three C' s of of consultation, compromise and consensus, and also agrees with the conception of a fluid and dynamic interplay between public and private. As Frissen (1998) points out, the public domain can be characterised as hybrid (see also In 't Veld, 1997; the term 'hybrid' corresponds with the observation of Lebbesis & Paterson (1997: p. 9) that the traditional government functions are being diffused among an even more complex array of actors who defy description in terms of the traditional model). There are many forms of communication and debate. Sometimes, public governance takes initiative; however, far more initiative comes from other actors and institutions, such as media organizations, politico-cultural centres, interest groups and individual citizens. In the public debate, diffuse images of the general interest dominate, while at the same time, they are confronted with strong and passionately expressed private interests – reason why the conclusions of these debates are usually unsatisfying. In a variety of domains, the hybridity of public assignments and private task execution takes form in a number of ever changing constellations. Private corporations look for possibilities to make money out of societal responsibilities; public organizations examine ways for corporate governance and management in public entrepreneurship (Frissen, 1998; for a discussion on the latter see also Noordegraaf, Ringeling & Zwetsloot, 1995). The discussion on this matter is often expressed in terms of purification: hybridity is evil and results in an unwanted mixture of pure cultures (Frissen, 1998). All the more reason for politicians to restore the primacy of politics – in contrast to promoted 'Network Europe' which by way of issue-based activism aims at more direct and more participatory democracy (Prodi, 2000).

Government speak analyzed: why citizenship is not an issue

In the discussion about the primacy of politics, we find two kinds of arguments. Firstly, politicians see (active) citizens as a nuisance, as actors who frustrate speedy decision making with their *hindermacht*. Their main concern is fighting the treacle state. Secondly, politicians claim an active part in moral governance: citizens need to be re-motivated and re-stimulated for the public cause. Their main concern is fighting clumsy and failing citizenship (see section 2). In contrast to the latter view, the neo-republicans, who state that active citizenship and public spirit are in fact free choices of citizens, which cannot be forced to respond to the moral appeal. A first analyses of the speech act of politicians who are concerned with a revival of the public spirit reveals three issues:

1. The *uncritical upheaval of the past*: a moral discourse that for its audience is both frightening and reassuring in terms of pollution, danger, illness, and ritual purgation and regeneration by way of broad societal discussions about the possibilities of a renewed disciplined sense of solidarity. However, the interventions suggested all involve the private sphere, a sphere that politicians should stay away from and that is characterised by a pluralism (disorder or chaos to some) that is precisely organised and promoted by the democracy they wish to enhance but in their efforts to destroy pluralism endanger
2. The *denial of contemporary pluralism and the unknown society*: an issue closely related to the previous one. The dynamic and multiform societal realities are conceived in terms of and compared with the past, which results in a perception of imperfections (things that are no longer present, such as a coherent meta-story about tradition, public spirit, rationality, constitutional state). An appeal on public spirit is in fact a nostalgic appeal for the way things where: the possibility of representation and civic behaviour that allows for and legitimates government of the system. It also leads to a misconception of the present creative possibilities: calculation and lack of interest. In the war against calculating citizens, politicians tend to forget that calculation is one of the organising principles of pluralism and that it does not exclude norms and values, but actually *implies* them. Political apathy, regarded as a positive value just after WW II because of its disciplining and stabilising power over the herds, is no longer valid, because the apathetic citizens of today are no longer the good citizens of yesterday: they are in fact a nuisance (see also section 2). However, lack of interest can be considered as a strategy for dealing with pluralism; moreover, it is an important signal for the present political system and functioning – even apart from the fact that apathy is a civil right that is neither uniform nor in an exclusive 'friend-or-foe'-relation with public spirit
3. The *paradox of 'the appeal to public spirit'* (in the line of: 'be spontaneous!'): an issue regarding the audience of the appeal for public spirit. Are these solely the goody-goodies who polish up their own public spirit and go out on a mission to promote the cause to others? Obviously yes (but why bother?), but what about the non-interested (and again: why bother?), the authorities, the stay-at-homes, the non-citizens? And what about non-individual actors such as political parties, large businesses, interest groups and so on? (Van Gunsteren,1992: p. 82-90). They should be denied citizenship; instead, there is a need for a new form of institutional citizenship (Bovens, 1992).

In conclusion, it can be stated that in the debates about Dutch politics, the treacle discourse and the discourse of the primacy of politics dominate. These public discourses exercise the many minds of both politicians and academics and, apart from a single folk singer, feminist, gay or migrant – in sum: all those not quite that publicly visible – who point to the white, heterosexual, masculine and middle class connotation of the discourse, everybody is quite

happy with the situation as it is. After all, the white, heterosexual, masculine and middle class Dutchman has sucked the art of discourse in with his mother's milk.

4. Education for citizenship and governance: information and persuasion

Citizen education (*burgerschapsvorming)* is a rather general term that has not been used very much in Dutch publications. Instead, until the eighties the most common general nominator was 'political education' (*politieke vorming*); but since then it seems to be a dying concept. In the literature of the nineties there is a further proliferation of terms, each indicating a specific form of citizen education, for instance public information (*overheidsvoorlichting*), social studies (*maatschappijleer*), training of political officials (*kadertraining*), community development (*opbouwwerk*). It is also quite common to use the term 'education' in connection with a specific content, for instance 'environmental education' (*milieueducatie*) or 'mondial/global education' (*mondiale vorming*). Below we will more or less follow that tendency towards proliferation, in making a distinction between literature on citizen education facilitated by the government, citizen education in the more strict sense of political education as organised by political parties and social movements, and, finally, citizen education as built-in education in community development and organization development.

Education on behalf of the government: informing the public

Although government reports give much attention to citizen participation and in that framework often also to the need to educate citizens for effective participation, we could not find a government report dedicated to just citizen education. But the national government does subsidise the national *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek*, which has an impressive list of publications on all sorts and contents of citizen participation. Many of these publications dedicate sections to specific forms of citizen education as a correlative of citizen participation, but no publication could be found on citizen education in general. Interestingly enough, this Dutch national institute does publicise with the German "Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung" a *Newsletter Political Education* that tries to cover the subject of citizen education for Europe as a whole and indeed delivers a quite useful reference to new publications, upcoming seminars, etc.

An important form of citizen education as delivered by the government is the information of the general public both about its own policy and about other subjects which are seen as crucial for citizens. In the reference list you will find some studies that give an overview of the history and central problems of public information in the Netherlands (Katus & Volmer, 1991; Van Dam, 1996; Wagenaar, 1997). We shall mention briefly here three publications that stress the communicative and educational aspect of public information. Katus (In: Van Gent & Katus, 1995, 171-186) emphasises that the rise of the welfare state and the political democratisation were the main factors in the expansion of public information in the sixties and seventies. He argues that in the eighties this expansion reached a level where the term 'public information' is not appropriate anymore and is changed into the term 'public *communication*', because the government in fact enters a public debate with other strong partners, such as market organizations, civil society and mass media. Klandermans & Seydel (1996) discuss not so much the information from the government about its own action, but the public information on topics like the environment, health, crime. Heymann (In: Röling, 1994, 197-216) tries to define quite precisely under which conditions this public information is really educational, instead of just informational, persuasive or even manipulative. In an educational approach the client is in the centre of the process. Instead of just delivering

solutions for the clients problems, the capacity of the client to learn to solve his or her own problems is crucial; the professional takes part in that learning process of the client and tries to facilitate it as well as possible.

Another important responsibility of the government is the education of young, 'arriving' citizens in secondary school. In the seventies in all types of secondary education the new subject of social studies (*maatschappijleer*) has been introduced. At the end of the eighties it got a more formal status as a subject of examination. Recently, its status became threatened again, when the Minister of Education announced she wants to combine, starting 2003 or 2004, history and social studies as an integrated subject at the secondary school. In fact, this integration of history and social studies in one subject has been realised already, halfway the nineties, for the first two years of the secondary schools. The most important source of information about the history, content and methods of social studies as a subject in secondary school can be found in the periodical *"Maatschappij en Politiek, vakblad voor maatschappijleer"* (Society and politics: professional journal for social studies), published by the *Instituut voor Publiek en Politiek* mentioned above. Two important book publications are Klaassen (1979) and Van der Kallen (1987).

Finally we should mention here an obligatory course for arriving migrants, called *inburgeringscursus*, i.e. a course about how to settle down as a migrant, how to become a citizen. More information, comparing the Dutch and the Flemish practice, you will find in Foblets & Hubeau (1997).

'The good life': political parties and social movements teach morals

While citizen education as it is organised by the government should be neutral, or at least balanced, the political education as it is organised by political parties and the social movements is of course more partisan, which not necessary means that it is not education. As long as these activities deliver serious information and include forms of dialogue and there is also a freedom to participate or not, they will be included in the text below.

Jacobs & Schennink (1984) wrote a very well documented treatise on three main historical and philosophical trends in political education:

- the conservative perspective emphasising the integration of society resting on law and order,
- the liberal perspective emphasising the emancipation of the individual as realised in de confrontation of interest groups,
- the socialist perspective emphasising the collective emancipation of the labour class, through class struggle and coalitions with other oppressed groups.

The last conference in the Netherlands on the subject of political education has been organised in 1989. In a reader edited for this occasion (Hartman & Vlug, 1989) you still find an overview of the perspective each Dutch political party holds on political education, but more typical is that the main papers try to overcome these differences in perspectives. Instead, these papers develop new perspectives on political participation in the light of the most important societal and political trends (o.c., 5-6). It seems to be symbolic for the de-ideologization of politics that followed in the nineties.

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, political education took in the eighties and nineties more and more the form of political education not connected to a specific political ideology/party, but political education connected to a specific political issue/movement. So,

you have environmental education, mondial/global education, peace education, etc. It is amazing how sensitive this type of education is for the ups and downs in public opinion. The environmental movement is nowadays by far the political movement that invests most in education. The website www.nme-rontonde.nl has a description of 30.000 Dutch documents on environmental education, mostly related to school education on all levels, but also a substantial set on out-of-school education for adults. For instance recently there has been a quite interesting national project 'everyday environmental education for adults'; all texts can be found on the website mentioned above. A good general introduction for environmental education is Vanken (1994). On the other hand, mondial/global education, a very popular branch of political education in the seventies and eighties, withered almost away in the nineties. We were not able to find a recent book publication that delivers an introduction to this field for the last decade.

The academic contribution: community & organization development

In the preceding sections we referred to the Dutch poldermodel and in particular the Dutch history in corporative democracy. One of the consequences is a strong tradition of local and organizational democracy. For the same reason, the Netherlands still have a strong professional field of community development. In fact, the field splits itself in two branches. On the one hand you have community organization (*opbouwwerk*) as a social work profession. On the other hand you have community education (*sociaal-cultureel werk*) that is closer to the field of adult education. We shall mention below some recent literature for each of these fields.

De Waal, Schuyt & Verveen (1994) published a manual for societal entrepeneurship, written for an audience of active citizens, volunteers, managers of societal oriented and non-profit organizations and government officials. Broekman (1998) recently wrote a new version of his handbook on methods, techniques and domains for community organization. A more fundamental, phenomenological reflection has been written by Vreeswijk (1996). But most interesting is the short publication of Duyvendak (1997), the one-and-only professor in community organization in the Netherlands. He concludes that there is a proliferation of the method of community organization. Not only community organisers, but also the police, municipal officials, housing corporations, schools, etc. use now methods of community organization to stimulate participation of citizens in their own domain and to support the learning processes of these citizens.

For the field of community education the most important handbook has been written by Spierts (1998). Also rather instructive publications have been published by Nieuwpoort & Vlaar (1996) and Jansen & Van der Veen (1995). All three books stress that community education is not just education but a combination of education with community development, community social group work and community recreation. For each of these sub-domains these books give many examples. More detailed information can be found in the Dutch/Flemish professional journal *Vorming*. We limit ourselves here to one illustration that is typical education and in particular education of individuals in the role as citizen: Broens (1995) and Verhagen (1999) describe a successful project in Brabant, one of the provinces of the Netherlands , to foster the local public debate on a range of political issues. An interesting element is the use of the theory of Kohlberg on moral development as tool to trigger the debate.

Organization development (*organisatieontwikkeling*) has, within work organizations, a function comparable to community development. From the perspective of citizen education, organization development becomes interesting where it concerns itself with the

democratisation of the organization. Fruytier (1998) describes the Dutch tradition, making an explicit link with the Dutch poldermodel. Other recent introductions in organization development have been written by De Leeuw (1999) and De Nijs (1998). Within the Netherlands the work council (*ondernemingsraad*) is the principle vehicle of internal democracy in work organizations. A good overview of the discussion on the functioning of these work councils can be found in Looise, Leede & Van Beusekom (1996). The training of these work councils is regulated and financed through the Dutch practice of collective labour agreements between employers and unions. Goodijk (1995, 1998), a professional trainer of work councils, tries to answer the central question what professional knowledge work-council members need in order to secure their position and power in corporate governance, in particular in relation to the managing directors and the Board of Directors. Feijen (1992) investigated how unions and work councils could be involved more effectively in the introduction of new technologies in a company and concludes what the consequences are for training of works councils, in particular also when they do not have the technical knowledge to keep up with the engineers.

5. Citizenship & governance: the learning-by-participating paradigm

The Dutch literature on how citizenship is *learned* is rather limited (with the exception of the WRR-report of Van Gunsteren, 1992, as mentioned above), compared to the rather extensive literature on how citizenship can be taught, trained or facilitated. In the literature on learning of citizenship, in so far there is such literature, a crucial distinction must be made between the learning process of citizen *organizations* and the learning process of *individual* citizens. With respect to individual learning processes we shall make below a distinction between literature on *motivation* of citizens to learn and literature on learning in a more strict sense.

Democratisation of business and labour: learning employees and learning organizations

The concept of a learning organization has, since the nineties, become popular in the literature on work organizations. Typical for this literature is that it emphasizes that organizations (including smaller teams within the organization) can be more effective if they foster critical reflection on their actions. A rather well known Dutch introduction on this paradigm of the learning organization has been published by Van Tellingen (1997). A rather large body of knowledge about socio-technical systems (introduced in the Netherlands by De Sitter) has been produced by researchers of the Nijmegen Business School. In their publications, they not only stress the importance of self-regulating teams, but also warn for the unexpected side-effects this new organization of work might cause. In several publications, they stress that democracy may be undermined in this type or organizations, because the increase in decision-making power lags behind the increase in responsibilities, which eventually might result in the active reinforcement of managerial power by the employees themselves (Benschop & Doorewaard, 1997 and 1998; Brouns, 1998; Doorewaard, Benschop & Brouns, 1997). These principle might surely apply also to work councils and other groups that are the carriers of organizational democracy. However, we did not find any Dutch publications that applies principles of a learning organization to these groups.

This emphasis on organizational learning as critical reflection can be found as well, already for many decades, in international literature on community development. But compared to this international tradition, the Dutch community development literature has been often rather pragmatic. The learning of the community organization has been often limited to a

description of learning how to improve 'task' aspects (i.e. how to get the job done) and 'process' aspects (i.e. smooth collaboration) in community development; the third aspect, 'reflection', which is considered to be typical for the 'learning organization' paradigm, was hardly ever mentioned.

But on this rather pragmatic tradition there is has been a recently significant exception. Wildemeersch et. al. (1998) developed a model for the analysis of 'social learning' in what they tagged as 'participatory systems'. They describe four aspects. Apart from the more traditional aspects of action and co-operation, they mention explicitly also communication and reflection. Each of the four aspects has been subsequently described as a tension between polar positions, for instance, the aspect of reflection as a tension between distance and identification.

Motivation for political and social participation

There have been some important research projects in the Netherlands on the motivation of citizens for political and social participation. Klandermans (1983) did a quite interesting research project on *political* motivation, i.c. the motivation of workers within the AKZO company to participate in union actions for shorter work time. Klandermans tries to explain it by using the resource mobilization theory. He makes a distinction between three motives to participate: the value and the expectation of success, the reactions of others to the individual decision to participate, and the observed costs and profits of participation. He found in particular considerable evidence for the third factor.

Much more research has been done on the motivation of citizen for *social* participation, in particular the motivation for volunteer work. Lindeman (1996) makes a distinction between two categories of determinants of participation in voluntary work. One category has to do with circumstances, such as position in the labor market, family situation, age, education, another with personal characteristics such as motives, attitudes and personality traits. Again, as in the conclusion of the research of Klandermans on political participation, it becomes clear that the motivation for voluntary work is a function of rather concrete benefits for the volunteer such as an 'active' way of spending his or her leisure time, an opportunity to meet other people, an opportunity to develop particular competencies and the possibility to gain work experience.

Much research on motivation of citizens for participation makes a distinction between the roles of men and women. Nederland & Portegijs (1996) investigated why there is an under-representation of women on volunteer boards. They found two explanations in their research. On the one hand women are less motivated for functions on the board; they prefer not to sit in meetings, but to do the hands-on work and in particular to work with 'the people'. On the other hand, there is also a conditional factor: women also have a smaller chance to be asked for boards. Verloo (1992) concentrated her research on the participation of women in community organizations. Her research concentrates on the question what sort of power problems women face in community organizations. But there is a sub-question on motivation of women to participate in such organizations. In this section the researcher discusses Klandermans application of resource mobilization theory and the three motives Klandermans mentioned. She concludes that this classification did not fit for the women in her research project. Instead, she constructs a classification with four types of motives: belonging to a social group, moral principles, personal development and finally the balance of costs and benefits.

How citizens learn to become active citizens

There is of course a lot of Dutch literature on learning; there is even some specific literature on adult learning. However, there is very few on learning to become an active citizen. One of the few examples is the distinction between three types of learning of active members of a community, described by Van der Veen & Van Netten (1996). Firstly, there is *functional* learning (learning 'how to do', learning what is effective community behavior), there is also *reflective* learning (learning to discuss the moral and political foundations of community behavior) and finally there is *expressive* learning (learning to express in your community behavior personal intuition, feelings, meaning).

6. Comments & Conclusions: the harmony model and the agenda culture revisited

As we described above, the discussion on governance and citizenship in the Netherlands can be best understood in the Dutch tradition of 'negotiating harmony', avoiding polarisation of conflicts and authoritarian solutions. In recent policy debates this tradition has often been called the Dutch 'poldermodel', because it seems to go back to the medieval condition of sovereign lords collaborating in their fight against the water. In later centuries this tradition was reinforced in a tolerant culture which accommodated for religious differences. In the nineteenth century this religious tolerance was finally institutionalised in a 'pillarised' society, allowing different religious and quasi-religious groups a far-going autonomy in organising their own education, health care, social work, etc. Typical for the second half of the twentieth century is the gradual secularisation and de-pillarisation of the Dutch society and the search for new forms of settling and straightening societal conflicts, leading, for instance, to a strong corporative economy and a remarkable social peace. However, we also mentioned as the dark side of this habit of seeking harmony the exclusion of non-traditional pillar groups (such as women and newcomers) from the negotiations, thus reproducing uneven situations. In other words: harmony among the dominant traditional groups can be percieved as an approved tool for maintaining social, political and economic power at the cost of weaker groups.

This tradition makes it understandable that also in the recent literature on governance and citizenship, governance is stressed more than citizenship. In the international debate on governance, the Dutch poldermodel, and in particular the strong corporative economy, gets much attention and praise. However, within the Netherlands there has been given also much attention to the dysfunctions of such a model of strong governance, in particular its 'treacliness'. Two lines of criticism can be distinguished. One stresses that governance endangers the 'primacy of politics' in these public-private partnerships. In particular, critics fear the 'hindrance power' of all sorts of societal institutions involved in the decision-making process. Others stress the danger of clumsy and self-interested contributions to processes of shared decision making, in particular the increase of 'Not In My Back Yard' interventions.

In so far the Dutch literature concerns itself with citizenship proper, three main theoretical perspectives in current use are the community thesis, post-modernism and the neo-republic:

- *Community thesis* is a term coined by Koenis (who can, however, definitely not be shared under the adherents of this thesis) to indicate the axiom that society is held together by shared norms and values, a public moral. This thesis seems to appeal in particular to the political parties. It can be found as the underlying principle in all three main political directions. The Christian-democrats have underlined their traditional emphasis on the social middle field with the concept of the 'responsible society'. The liberals have made a

plea for a new balance between non-engagement and paternalism. The social-democrats are looking for a new vision on solidarity, now that its classical concept has been put under a lot of pressure by way of renovation or demolition of the welfare state.

- The most prominent and outspoken defender of *post-modernism* is Frissen (1998; 1999). His view seems to reflect much more the position taken by most common citizens. In this view there is no need for a political centre where narratives about the good and the just are developed and promoted. All efforts to moralise citizens is futile. The public domain has become anarchistic. As far as politics is concerned, it is the form that matters. Many people are looking for new forms of citizenship that could serve as alternatives for operating within the traditional frames of the political parties.
- The *neo-republic* perspective has been developed in 1992 by the *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid* (WRR: Scientific Advisory Board for Government Policy), and can be seen as a compromise between the community thesis and the post-modern view. This committee defines a citizen not as a moral being who should take up social responsibilities, but as an individual that just happens to act sometimes within political systems. Citizenship is not about moral values and norms but about (learning) competencies to act effectively.

Both the first perspective (community thesis) and the latter (neo-republic approach) make an explicit connection with education and/or learning of citizenship. The community thesis stresses the need for a moral education, educating people to take up their moral responsibilities. But this thesis has been hardly discussed in the more recent literature on education and learning of citizenship (with the exception of a discussion about moral education in schools). This, however, does not mean that the educational literature in general falls back on a post-modern perspective of politics. In fact, most of the literature and practice of citizen education seems to be in line with the neo-republic approach of citizenship. It is rather pragmatic in its focus on facilitating citizens to develop the competencies needed to act effectively in a political domain, for instance supporting activists in the social movements, volunteers in the local society or members of work councils in the corporations.

Finally, we want to stress an important aspect of the literature on governance, citizenship and citizenship education. Many authors stress that although governance in the Dutch tradition can build on a long tradition of negotiating consensus among citizens, it is mainly a matter of 'institutional citizens' and occasionally of individual higher and middle-class citizens. This was true for the former pillarised society, but is also true for most of the new practices of governance and participation in the (post) modern Dutch society. This has been recognised widely in the literature on governance and is since the sixties also a dominant theme in the literature on all forms of citizen education. Citizen education has been seen in this literature essentially as an emancipatory practice in the sense that it motivates and supports in particular the excluded to enter the political arena and its many associated public-private organisations, committees and the like. There is still much to do to realise this emancipatory goal – for those who feel appealed by this.

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