

# CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

**Understanding the making and re-making of  
Dutch citizenship in the classroom**



# **Citizenship Education**

*Understanding the making and re-making of  
Dutch citizenship in the classroom*

**E.R. Jetten -- 5719828**

**M Cultural Anthropology: Sustainable Citizenship**

**Supervisor: Yke Eijkemans**

**University of Utrecht  
August 15, 2017**



**Universiteit Utrecht**



“Culture is not a real thing, but an abstract and purely analytical notion. It does not cause behavior, but summarizes an abstraction from it, and is thus neither normative nor predictive.”

- (Baumann 1996, 11)



# Preface

Before I started my master of Cultural Anthropology, I gained a bachelor's degree in Applied Pedagogy and worked with children during various internships at primary and secondary schools, and in a pediatric department at a hospital. This thesis grew out of an interest in cultural diversity and the minds and habits of children. More often than not a child is still seen as an object that depends on others, instead of a person with agency and with his own ideas, feelings, and rights. Which is a shame as they are sincere, open, and very creative thinkers. I am thankful for the students of group 6/7/8 of a primary school in Gelderland whom allowed me to interrupt their daily activities as a stranger and whom shared their stories with me. They made me part of their class and of their school by asking me tons of questions about my personal life, telling jokes, referring to me as 'teacher' and wanting me – and some special moments, needing me – to act like one; letting me in on their personal stories, explaining their assignments, and getting mad with them. Their names are fictive, chosen by them for those who wanted to, however their thoughts and ideas are not, so I hope this thesis will do them justice.

I also wish to thank the whole staff of the school, who explained me the daily routines and let me observe in their classrooms. Special thanks go to the teacher of group 6/7/8, who agreed to let me observe him and his students on a daily basis for over three months, and for his trust in me to letting me help him out during the lessons. This made my role in the class very prominent and difficult at times, and simultaneously so valuable. My participant observatory role and engagement with the students made time run very fast. Twelve weeks passed by. These are not really the correct words, as it presumes a state of mind, of being in which one does not act. This was my biggest misconception beforehand, participant observation, even 'just' sitting there and watching others doing things is hard work and really exhausting. As long as I was at school actively participating with students and staff everything was fine, however, the minute I stepped on the train that took me back home, all the impressions of the day sank in. I had the intent to write the last things down during this twenty minutes, though, I found myself staring out of the window, into the landscapes passing by.

My gratitude goes to Yke Eijkemans for her insights and inspiration during the messiness of my thoughts and notes. And finally, I want to thank my fellow students for support and feedback, and my friends, and family for believing in me.





# Abstract

There has been an outburst of interest in democratic citizenship and citizenship education in the past 30 years in the Netherlands, which focuses on practices for active citizenship. The Dutch government is concerned with the growing individualization, a downturn of participation in society and the enormous internal cultural diversity. Therefore, the law of December 9, 2005 (Stb. 678) regulates the obligation of schools for primary and secondary education to contribute to the integration of students into Dutch society. On February 1, 2006, this law came into force (Stb. 36). This means that from this date on, primary and secondary schools are required to pay attention to active citizenship and social integration in their curriculum, to create a vision on how students, with diverse cultural backgrounds, can participate within society as citizens (Ministerie van OCW 2005, 2; Onderwijsraad 2003). Through citizenship education, the government wants to enhance social cohesion by creating a shared national identity and civil belonging in society to let people pursue the interest of the community (Anderson 2006; Huppertz, Hawkins, and Matthews 2015, 8; Onderwijsraad 2003). As there are no clear guidelines, schools can shape their curriculum themselves. I have studied in detail how citizenship education comes into practice at school level. This thesis examines and compares Dutch citizenship education policy on a national level to local outcomes thereof, and analyzes the extent to which they foster inclusive or exclusive notions of citizenship. Through ethnographic data of a three-month long study on a culturally diverse primary school in Gelderland, I argue that even though the aim of the policy is to create a national shared citizenship and social cohesion, the influence of politics and socio-political debates on students creates experiences of exclusion and discrimination.

Concepts: citizenship, education, policies, identification, exclusion.



# Table of contents

<b>Preface</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Abstract</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>13</b>
Citizenship: a multidimensional concept	14
Identity based concepts	15
Citizenship education	16
Qualitative studies on children’s citizenship	17
Field site and methodology	18
Argument and structure thesis	22
<b>Part I. Policies and societal debates on citizenship (education)</b>	<b>24</b>
Introduction	24
Active and shared citizenship	25
Hyphenated identities	26
Collectivity and framing	30
An ideology of multiculturalism or assimilation?	32
“I better pack my bags”	34
Conclusion	36
<b>Part II. School tuition</b>	<b>38</b>
Introduction	38
School identity and characteristics	39
Collaboration: The wider community	42
Collaboration; “One hand cannot clap on its own”	43
Dealing with differences: freedom of speech	46
Dealing with differences: “all religions are the same at heart”	48
Conclusion	49
<b>Conclusion and discussion</b>	<b>51</b>
Recap	51
Conclusion	53
Critical note: limitations and recommendations	53
<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>56</b>



# Introduction

There has been an outburst of interest in democratic citizenship and citizenship education in the past 30 years around the world (Levinson 2005, 392), and The Netherlands is no exception. Citizenship education has been high on the Dutch educational agenda since 2005 and in 2006 a law came into being that made it mandatory for primary and secondary schools to make citizenship education part of their curriculum (Ministerie van OCW 2005; Bron and Thijs 2011). The reasons for introducing citizenship education are in line with international trends. Nation states face enormous internal diversity, but want to create homogenization for its citizens. A similar discourse can be seen in Dutch society, which is characterized by a rich ethnic, cultural, social and religious diversity (Bron and Thijs 2011, 124).

An ideology of tolerance, inclusiveness, equality and consensus are seen as quintessentially Dutch (Baumann and Sunier 2004, 32). However, Dutch society faces discrimination, exclusion and an increasing individualization. In recent years, the negative effects of individualism and cultural diversity have been highlighted to a greater extent, such as a lack of community feeling and the loss of national values and traditions (Bron and Thijs 2011, 124; Onderwijsraad 2003; Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 11). The involvement of citizens between themselves and between citizens and society has diminished. The government is concerned with a growing individualization, and a downturn of participation in society, mainly amongst younger generations. They state that there are people with different ethnic backgrounds living together which are not rooted in Dutch civic traditions, practices and values which are needed to create a strong social cohesion. These factors combined cause concerns about a downturn of social cohesion and participation within society (Bron and Thijs 2011, 124; Onderwijsraad 2003). Therefore, through citizenship education, the government wants students from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds to learn to live together to strengthen the social cohesion within society. By making students aware of their citizenship status and to gain an equal vision how to participate and contribute to society as citizens (Ministerie van OCW 2005).

Shared citizenship is considered the most common goal of the integration policy. In 2006 the Dutch government introduced the 'naturalization ceremony', which entails the "culturalization" of citizenship for foreigners to gain full Dutch citizenship. Thus, it is more than a legal status or learning the Dutch language, it is concerned with learning about "Dutch society" and accepting "Dutch norms

and values” (Verkaaik 2010, 69). Certain naturalization ceremonies can be perceived as a form of inclusion in society (Anderson 2006, 145). However, citizenship has a connection with cultural essentialism (Faulks 2000, 52), as it is closely related to nation-building and creating a national identity (Faulks 2000, 7 and 166; Huppertz, Hawkins, and Matthews 2015, 8). National identity is a social identity which is felt and imagined as a sense of belonging to a community or nation defined by shared values (Rowse 2015, 99-111). So, the naturalization ceremony appears to be an attempt to neutralize differences and create a more homogeneous society. A similar discourse can be seen regarding the legislation of citizenship education. The Dutch Ministry of Education points to concerns they have about migrants who are supposedly not familiar with Dutch values and practices, which are needed to create a strong social cohesion (Ministerie van OCW 2005, 2). In this regard, individualization and cultural diversity are complicating and inhibitory factors for encouraging identification with a national community (Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 27).

Citizenship education has been frequently studied but it is seldom done in a qualitative way in which the making and remaking of citizenship and the self-understanding and agency of students is examined. To understand the importance of such research, let's first look at the meaning of citizenship and the contemporary debates of citizenship education.

### **Citizenship: a multidimensional concept**

Citizenship is a complex, ambiguous and multidimensional concept that can be studied in many ways. Traditionally citizenship is understood as a membership in a geographic and political community, a legal status which comes with rights and duties, which non-citizens are not ought to have (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008, 154). As stated by Marshall (1950, 253), citizenship is: “a status bestowed on those who are full members of a community. All who possess the status are equal with respect to the rights and duties with which the status is endowed.” This view relates to liberalism, an important feature of Dutch society, which is about freedom, autonomy and individual rights, such as voting and the freedom of speech. Looking at citizenship through a liberal lens emphasizes these rights and duties (Sleeter 2014, 86). However, contemporary academic literature focuses on a broader view; on the relations between citizenship as a legal status, as participation, as (national) identification and as social belonging to a group (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008; Yuval- Davis 1999). From this perspective citizenship is not only an individual ownership of a legal status within the nation-state, rather it needs a community to have meaning (Faulks 2000, 11).

Citizenship is a reciprocal relationship between people in society. In understanding this reciprocal relationship, citizenship should be understood as a practice of identification with public issues (Biesta and Lawy 2006, 72). Levinson (2005, 226) explains these relations as follows:

“**Citizenship** is about the rules and meanings of political and cultural membership, and the associated modes of participation implied by such membership; **identity** is about the varying senses of social belonging and commitment that form in each individual; and **democracy** is about the continual construction of a political order that sponsors reasoned deliberation, promotes civic participation in decision making, justly distributes political- economic power, and strives for cultural inclusiveness.”

Citizenship schooling is used to educate people, to let them imagine their social belonging and to participate within society. Because social identity, and corresponding features, become most vital at the moment they seem threatened (Eriksen 2010, 81). Kees Terlouw (2013, 237) states that “in an increasingly individualized Dutch society, the central staging of a uniform national identity loses ground to the dispersed and fragmented performances of ever more distinct individual identities and lifestyles.”

### **Identity based concepts**

This makes citizenship, diversity, integration, nationality and multiculturalism – all currently important themes of socio-political debates - identity-based concepts. These concepts are concerned with identity and forms of identification, on national as well as local levels (Kiwani 2008, 45). Thus, there is an important relationship between citizenship, identity and the state. Citizenship includes practices of belonging and identification of citizens themselves in everyday life, as well as practices structured from above - as can be seen by the citizenship education act. In this same light. Carol Greenhouse (2002) argues that; “There is an ethnographic question to be asked about citizenship, regarding whether and how people incorporate the state into their own self-understandings and agency.”.

According to Thompson (2001) one should keep in mind, there is no direct causal relationship between a ‘common national identity’ and the behavior of individuals towards and in relation with others. People often feel connected to more than one group, and have more than just one identity. The intensity of this connection can differ with time. The emphasis should be on the plurality, rather than the singularity of one’s identity (Huppatz, Hawkins, and Matthews 2015, 5; Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 34). Hence, the nation should not be seen as a homogeneous entity in which all

citizens think feel and act the same, “instead, each of us engages in many ways in ‘making sense’ of ‘nations’ and ‘national’ identities in the course of our interactions with others and in making the ideas of nation and national identity accountable to us.” (Thompson 2001, 24 -27). There are many ways of being Dutch, besides, a national identity is just one of the connections that can be determinative for someone’s identity.

As stated by Hall (in Levinson and Pollock 2011, 280): “An anthropological concept of identity captures the varying senses of social belonging and commitment, identification (Hall, 1996) or attachment, in relation to diverse publics.” Modes of identity and belonging are social and cultural dimensions and they are continuously in transition. No identity can exist by itself, it has a two-way relationship with social surroundings; social identities have an impact in how one experiences their surroundings, and simultaneously the experiences one has within a certain environment influences one’s sense of identity and belonging (Power 2016, 86). Consequently, identity is not bounded to a specific place, rather it is deterritorialized, it is created in interaction with others in different places (Lovell 1998, 5). National identification and behavior are formed and shaped in everyday patterns of experiences, practices rituals and discourses at home, in church, by youth culture and mass media (Anderson 2006; Barrett and Oppenheimer 2011, 6; Levinson 2005). Thus, citizenship and national identity are being shaped in everyday life, within as well as outside the school curriculum.

### **Citizenship education**

With citizenship education, the school has become one of the main sites for creating and consolidating of a national identity (Levinson 2005, 335). However, all education can be seen as citizenship education, since educational processes are not limited to the school environment. “schooling is just a subset of the education that occurs throughout everyday life.” (Levinson and Pollock 2011, 1-3). Nonetheless, the school can be seen as a reflection of society, where people with diverse backgrounds, ideas and values come together. Manners and behavior are developed which serve the group, such as dealing with differences and acting socially responsible (Netjes et al. 2011, 36). School tuition should not just be concerned with providing knowledge, but also with ‘learning by experiencing’: by doing and engaging with social and environmental surroundings (Ministerie van OCW 2004). Within the school environment students can practice certain skills and attitudes together, supervised and guided by others. Teachers and co-students can act as role models to stimulate them to behave appropriately (Fens et al. 2010, 2-4).

Matthew (2016, 73) argues that children are important social markers, the future to which the society is heading. Therefore, through citizenship education, the Dutch government wants to enhance social cohesion by creating a shared national identity and civil belonging in society to let



people pursue the interest of the community (Anderson 2006; Huppertz, Hawkins, and Matthews 2015, 8; Onderwijsraad 2003). Primary and secondary schools are required to pay attention to active citizenship and social integration in their curriculum, to create a vision on how students, with diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, can participate within society as citizens. In this view citizenship is understood as a result of an educational trajectory, in which students are citizens-to-be (Biesta and Lawy 2006, 64-72). The focus is on the creation of 'good' and 'active citizens' that participate in and contribute to society and feel responsible for community interests. However, this is only possible when many citizens participate (Ministerie van OCW 2004; Onderwijsraad 2003).

According to the Dutch law on citizenship education, schools should pay active attention to basic values of Dutch society as equality, tolerance, and freedom of speech, but also gaining a democratic attitude and being an 'active citizen' (Minister van OCW 2005, 5-6). Accordingly, schools have a significant role to fulfill and the expectations of their contribution are high. Yet, because of the 'freedom of education act' – Article 23 of Dutch Constitution Law – citizenship education is represented as a general assignment in which schools are free in making moral and didactical choices (Ministerie van OCW 2005, 6; Bron and Thijs 2011, 123-124). Consequently, it varies per school how it comes into practice, which makes it particularly essential to understand the school context in which citizenship is practiced (cf Faulks 2000, 6).

### **Qualitative studies on children's citizenship**

Until now, Dutch studies mainly seem to be focused on the results of citizenship education by measuring the competences of students in a quantitative way. Citizenship is, however, more than competences such as participating, acting socially responsible and being actively involved. As stated before, there is an interplay with behavior and identification of children and feeling of belonging to a social group (cf Anderson 2006; Levinson 2005). Consequently, it is about their self-understanding and agency. Thus, missing in this kind of research are questions around identification and social structures and positions in society, what Thompson (2001, 27) calls the interactional work "that underpins how individuals position themselves in relation to national symbols or national narratives, about how we make sense of, interpret or renegotiate what our nation and our national identity is produced by individuals in the course of social relations."

Children's citizenship is influenced by national and local factors, such as politics and schooling. So, it is important to focus on socio-political contexts which shape and structure citizenship and on the participation and identification of students who practice and give meaning to their citizenship in such contexts.

Therefore, the main question of this research is:

- How do Dutch national policies and local practices of citizenship education interact in constructing national identity and citizenship among students aged 10-12 on a culturally diverse primary school in Gelderland, The Netherlands?

In the next section, I explain how I studied these practices in everyday interactions between students and staff on a primary school in Gelderland.

### **Field site and methodology**

In the spring of 2017 I have conducted ethnographic research for three days a week for three months, on a small, and culturally mixed public primary school in Gelderland, the Netherlands. The curriculum is structured by the Dalton method, which entails core values that students need to learn: independence, collaboration, responsibility and freedom in restraint. The vision of the school is described in their policy as follows:

“With the Dalton philosophy as a base, we are a public school where children receive excellent language and math education on a daily basis. In addition, the students are challenged to discover their talents to further develop them in a chosen domain. We believe the possibilities of children are unlimited. We have confidence in the ability, the driving forces and the power of each child. We give children the space and opportunities to take full advantage of their opportunities.”

The school is a cultural mix of different nationalities, such as Dutch, Moroccan, African, French, and Indonesian. The teachers are mainly autochthone Dutch women, except for one woman of Turkish descent and a man of Moroccan descent. The latter is the teacher of class 6/7/8, which was my main field of study. The school is very small, there are approximately 70 students, and therefore they merged some groups together. That is why the class of students whom I observed contained 23 children of group 6, 7 and 8 (children in the age of 10-13). Groups 6 and 7 had one teacher, Ammar, and the students of group 8, also had a second one on Fridays, namely Michelle. The main teacher of this class was Ammar, and he told me at the beginning that he could use an extra pair of hands and eyes during school hours (8.30 till 14.00 o'clock). During every school day, there were two breaks for the students, one short one of 15 minutes in the morning, and a lunchbreak which lasted 30 minutes. During the lessons and breaks I was engaged with the students and staff by participating as a voluntary teacher's assistant, a role that gradually became bigger during the weeks. On other days, I typed out my jotted notes, analyzed the school Facebook page, the content of their website, and

conducted a few interviews and an observation with three individuals outside of the school, to gain more knowledge of acts and ideas of citizenship education in society.

In consultation with the school director and the teachers of group 6/7/8 I did not send an informed consent form to the parents and students. The school director said this was not needed as they work with more interns during the school year and none of them have to do this and the parents know that they also use certain activities or events for their school assignments. I did sign a privacy statement, in which I promised I would not use any photo's or movies in which the faces of students are visible. Besides that, before I started my fieldwork, I wrote a small piece for the newsletter of the school in which I introduced myself, so the parents and students would know who I am and what I am doing. In this short text, I stated that if they had any questions they could always ask me. I made a similar statement the first time I stood in front of the class and explained my role as a researcher and told them why I am in their classroom. I kept it quite simple, and asked them if they knew what a researcher does, and if they understood the concept 'citizen'. I told them I am mainly interested in the content of the curriculum, and that I would mainly just sit in the classroom or walk around, but that I also liked to know their thoughts and ideas and therefore, I would ask them questions. I stated that if they did not want to tell something or did not want to participate during an activity, they did not have to. This is an important ethic in working with children; inform children about their rights in such a way they understand what it means to take part (O'Reilly 2012, 88). At the end of my research I emphasized again that I would write a report about the school and the classroom interactions and that they would be in it. I talked with them about being anonymous, and, for those who wanted to, I made them choose a fictive name. Other names are chosen by me. Another important ethic is respecting their dignity, this means that children's status and evolving capacities should be recognized and that their diverse contributions, values, ideas and feelings must be valued equally (ERIC 2013). I chatted with all students and tried to involve all of them equally, however, some students kept more distance than others. Nonetheless, I did a few activities with them and at these times they could all participate.

My role as researcher was about "being there" (Ingold 2011, 238), about being immersed with staff and students in the school environment. I have studied the daily practices and classroom interactions of teachers and students, aged 10-12. Joining the daily activities within the school structure provided information of how citizenship education comes into practice at school level, and correspondingly how everyday interactions and negotiations resonate with public and political debates and policies of citizenship and cultural diversity. The first weeks I have mainly focused on getting to know the staff and the students and letting them get used of me hanging around and leaving room for them to get

to know me. The latter appeared to be quite important for the students. They asked me a lot of questions during the weeks about me personally, not so much as a researcher per se. One of the first questions they asked was if I would join them on their school trip to the *Efteling* (theme park). Which made me laugh as they only knew me for ten minutes or so, but also felt welcoming. They also asked me about my living situation, my family, vacations, my favorite color, and leisure activities, if I am 100% Dutch, and so on. They are very curious, which also gave me the opportunity to make small talk with them, built rapport and ask them the same things.

My starting position every day was a seat front of the class as there was no room at the back. This was a good - but sometimes maybe a bit peculiar - position. I had a good overview of the class, I could see clearly how students look at each other or at the teacher, their reactions, and what they were doing (which not always corresponded to what they should have been doing). At the same time, I was also a part of the class, sitting in front made me more engaged with them. They turned to for explanations when they did not understand something or they asked for permission to sit somewhere else. Simultaneously this also made my position a bit peculiar, as my role was part teacher part researcher. When something happened, such as when they argued or when they were too loud and others were bothered by it, they looked at me to see what I was going to do. Some moments I did interfere, however, on others I did not as I wanted to gain information of their conversations, thoughts and interactions. This was a judgement call, which I based on the severity of the argument (was anyone getting hurt or bullied) and the overall classroom situation (is someone making a test) or if Ammar asked me to keep an eye on them and to keep them quiet.

I am aware that my presence in the classroom, even at moments when I was just sitting there, had an effect on the daily routines of the staff and students. How big this effect was for my data, is hard – if not impossible – to say. That I did have an effect can be seen by a personal reflection at an event in which my two roles were in conflict:

*Thursday March 23, 2017.*

*I'm in the girls dressing room, by the gym, and before I know it I find myself in a discussion with one of the girls. Ammar, their teacher asked me to keep an eye on the children if he is not there. Thus, when Rochelle wanted to do something which I did not approve I said something about it. We are in a discussion about tying someone else's shoelaces, it is not that important, but I feel that she is testing me – and not just now, also at other times in the classroom - so I also don't want to give in. Besides, one of the other girls says that Ammar also does not allow this. I say that Roos must try herself so she can learn how to do it. Rochelle does not look up but goes on with the laces: "She already knows how, but I want to*

*do it." And she seems determined not to give up. She bends forward and begins to tie, I ask again if she wants to stop. "Why?" "Because I say so. I think it's better if she tries herself, so she can learn how to do it." Rochelle looks at me – how a girl of nine years old can make an adult feel smaller than her - "You are not our teacher. You do not decide. You have nothing to say about us. You are just doing research." The emphasis is on the last sentence. I feel she is right, I am getting warm and I am not sure what to do or say. Still, I feel I have to say something: "That's right. But if Ammar does not approve, then I can't either. He asked me to help him out." Should I have said this? Do I have any authority? And how is this going to affect my further research?*

In between lessons or after school hours I talked to Ammar about such events, my overall observations and the content of the lessons. I also spent time with the school staff before and after school hours and during breaks in which we drank coffee and tea. I have eavesdropped from time to time, sitting quietly at the table observing their interactions, as well as actively participating in talks about work and personal stuff. By doing this I got a better view on the (implicit) protocols, rules and regulations of the school.

In this study, it was the aim to gain a thorough understanding of the whole school culture, all structures and social patterns concerning citizenship education. Hence, I followed Laura Nader's (1972) view on studying 'up down and sideways'. The vertical slice (studying up) exposed different layers of power and contained analyzing the work organization and language of the school board and teachers. This is also interesting, because, as mentioned before, The Netherlands has a liberal education system in which every school can decide for themselves how they deal with citizenship education. To understand the working knowledge of the law (Nader 1972, 300) and how school staff direct the aspects of student's everyday lives within school community, I gained knowledge concerning decision making structures. I studied down and sideways by looking at habits, thoughts and feelings of students. By doing this I tried to pose the study in a more comparative frame in which differences and similarities are analyzed to get an understanding of the various factors which have an influence on how a student behaves and expresses him/herself. By studying in these different directions, a rich contextual information (Nader 1972, 305) and a broad picture of behavioral patterns and habits, cause and effect (Stryker and Gonzalez 2014, 11) was conducted.

## **Argument and structure of thesis**

In this chapter, I gave a small overview of academic and political debates on citizenship and citizenship education. Citizenship is a multidimensional and flexible concept that can be studied in as many ways. I will use the concepts of identity as a lens to look at citizenship and processes of integration and cultural diversity. Because, as I will show in this thesis, these are related in contemporary socio-political debates and resonate with classroom discussion of students and teachers.

This thesis is divided into two main parts, as I compare national policy and political discourses of citizenship education with local manifestations thereof. Part one starts with an analyzation of the documentation of Dutch policies on citizenship education and the socio-political discourses, and how this interacts in constructing a national identity and citizenship among students. After that the report will turn to the pedagogical domain of a primary school in Gelderland. The identity, pedagogical aim and vision of the school will be addressed, and a description will be given of how citizenship education is incorporated, and how these are negotiated in interactions between students themselves and students and staff.

My research interest is to show that citizenship is an active process of making and remaking in interaction with one's surroundings, in which socio-political debates on the negative consequences of cultural diversity play an essential part. In the concluding section, I will I argue that even though the aim of the policy is to create a national shared citizenship and social cohesion, the influence of politics and socio-political debates on students creates experiences of exclusion and discrimination. To finish, I will look critically at my own research **and give** recommendations for further research work.



# **Part I.**

## **Dutch policies and societal debates on citizenship (education)**

### **Introduction**

The Netherlands is characterized by a rich ethnic, cultural, social and religious diversity, and an ideology of tolerance and multiculturalism (Baumann and Sunier 2004, 32). Though, this ideology is experienced differently in practice. Dutch society faces discrimination, exclusion and an increasing individualization according to the Dutch government. These factors combined cause concerns about a downturn of social cohesion and participation within society. To improve this, in 2006 the Dutch government made citizenship education obligatory for primary and secondary schools. By implementing citizenship education, the government wants to create active citizens who take responsibility for community interests and are willing and able to make an active contribution.

In this part I focus on the construction of citizenship as a common identity of and belonging to a group, by examining the policy report of citizenship education in The Netherlands and the dynamics and dialogues in classroom interactions. These interactions were strongly related to larger socio-political debates on cultural diversity and integration.

### **Active and shared citizenship**

The policy report on citizenship education states:

"Promoting active citizenship and social integration is high on the agenda. The need to pay attention to this is due to discomfort about the decrease of social commitment (also called social cohesion) in our society. Trust and reliance between citizens, between citizens and public institutions and between citizens and government seems to decrease. This discomfort is felt not only by politics but also by many people in our society. Everywhere in the Netherlands initiatives are taken to strengthen social commitment. The term "social commitment" refers to the extent to which people behave and experience their involvement in social relationships in their personal lives, as citizens in society as members of society." (Ministerie van OCW 2005)



Citizenship is presented here as inclusive of all citizens, whom are expected to be or get more actively involved in social relationships and to get a shared perspective to create better social cohesion and trust. Citizens needs to learn to live together with others who differ from them on an ethnic, cultural, social or religious background. The government recognizes different identities and characteristics of Dutch citizens, and tries to emphasize the importance of it for all youth:

“Schools have the task of preparing their students for participation in pluriform society. Within education, students should learn about and come into contact with peers with diverse backgrounds and cultures. In this way, a school can make an important contribution to the preparation of students for participation in society.” (Ministerie van OCW 2006, 2)

However, the policy falls into the trap of making a division between allochthone and autochthone citizens:

“Active citizenship is important for both allochthone and autochthone youth, so that they learn to live in a society characterized by ethnic, cultural, social and religious pluralism.” (Ministerie van OCW 2005)

Although the report is not directed to a certain allochthone group, it does suggest that these differences make a “shared citizenship” more fragile. By dividing citizens in autochthones who are rooted in Dutch traditions and uses, and those with an allochthone ethnic origin who are not, the spirit of inclusiveness fades away:

“Because of different social developments, education for citizenship is no longer a self-evident part of youths’ preparation for society. Individualization in many areas of society has led to a low rank for citizenship and civic skills in the order of education and pedagogic goals. In addition, many foreigners and children by allochthone ethnic origin are not rooted in the citizenship traditions and uses which are needed to give the social fabric of our society the required firmness. Therefore, citizenship education, a wish of the government, is closely linked to the integration of ethnic minorities into Dutch society. Shared citizenship is the most common purpose for government to achieve its integration policy. But citizenship must be learned by providing development to citizenship in education, it can be achieved that migrant and autochthone students get a joint and shared perspective on the contribution they can make as citizens to society.” (Ministerie van OCW 2005).

The policy states that a pluriform society provides difficulties for the “social fabric of society” and that autochthone Dutch students should be prepared to participate with cultural diverse others in society. Thereby, citizenship education seems to be more essential for allochthone Dutch youth, since they are not as familiar with “Dutch traditions and uses”. The report suggests that autochthone Dutch citizens have to put in less effort, as they need to learn to accept and live together with citizens of allochthone ethnic descent. There seems to be an integral process of assimilation or integration of allochthone citizens in this policy, whom should change themselves, as they are supposedly less familiar with and do not conform to traditions, standards and national customs of Dutch citizenship. It appears to be particularly interested in how citizenship education can promote shared Dutch traditions, uses and values, and suggest that a cultural down-play is needed to establish common ground and harmonious relations between citizens (Mannitz and Schiffauer 2004, 70; Osler and Starkey 2001).

### **Hyphenated identities**

There are many ways of being Dutch, and a national identity is just one of the connections that can be determinative for someone’s identity. People often have hyphenated identities, as they often feel connected to more than one group (Kiwan 2008, 48-49; Thompson 2001, 27). The intensity of this connection and feeling of belonging can differ with time. Thus, being Dutch can easily be reconciled with, for example, being Moroccan. Some students of group 6/7/8 of my field research expressed the importance of their different nationalities and identities, and subsequent features, to them during an activity called “Cross the line” (*Over de Streep*). During this activity, I named several types of groups or statements and the students walked to the other side when they recognized themselves. After they crossed (or not) I talked with them about their choices. Beforehand, we talked about the concept ‘identity’ what it entails, how it is a multiplicity, how it can change in time and what it means for them. One of the students, Houda, said that having a passport is an important feature of one’s identity, as one must show who he or she is with this document. I talked with them about having one or more identities and Houda stated that people can also have a double passport.

Houda: Yes, for example, if you emigrate from Africa to the Netherlands, you can, for example, also get a double passport. Then you also get a Dutch passport, as you live in the Netherlands.

Me: And sometimes you can keep them both, I do not know, for example, if Ammar still has his Moroccan passport, but sometimes someone actually has two passports. Or, for example, you can only have your Dutch passport, but still feel more connected to Morocco.

Mimoen: Yes, it is the same for my parents, they had a Moroccan passport, and when they lived here for a long time they also gained a Dutch passport and, for example, my sister is eighteen and my other sister is seventeen years old, and they also have a Dutch and a Moroccan passport, but they are not born in Morocco. I do not, but I would like to. I actually do not know why it would be fun, I just think that it would be.

Me: you would like to get a Moroccan passport when your older?

Mimoen: yeah, I would, because I like to be there, my family lives there. I like going there, but I don't speak Moroccan very well. If I need to go to the grocery store I cannot really talk with people. Some of my family there [in Morocco] like my uncle do speak Dutch, so I speak Dutch with them and sometimes mixed with a few Moroccan words. And, I live here, so I also want to keep this one [Dutch passport]. And otherwise I may get problems if I want to live here later on.

Houda: I also speak Moroccan a bit. My parents speak it at home together, and speak partly Dutch and Moroccan to us [her and her siblings].

Mimoen and Houda were born in the Netherlands but are both of Moroccan descent. They are both proud to be Moroccan and Dutch. During the activity, I talked with the student about the kind of work they want to do when they grow up and where they want to do this, in which part of the world:

Jamila: "I want to be a turner, but then all over the world."

Me: "Okay, and why all over the world and not just in the Netherlands, for example?"

Jamila: "There will be many people coming to see me."

Me: "So you want more people to see you?"

Jamila: "Yes."

Me: "Okay, and Aicha?"

Aicha: "I want to start my own cake business later in Italy."

Me: 'Oh that sounds nice, and why in Italy?'

Aicha: "Because I think that's a special country."

Me: "And why is it so special?"

Aicha: "Because, uhm, I think it's a very beautiful country."

Me: "I agree with that. And Leila? "

Leila: 'Soccer Player' [laughs]

Me: "You want to be a soccer player and really famous?"

Leila: [laughs] 'Yes'

Mimoen: 'Soccer Player'

Me: "Do you have a club you want to play at?"

Jamila: "Yes, her own club, the Leila Club" [students laugh and Leila nods]

Me: "You [Mimoen] definitely also want to be a soccer player, right?"

Mimoen: "Yes, I want [Anwar chats with someone else] shh quiet! I want to be in the first at uhm, in Morocco or in Netherlands soccer team, in the best one."

Me: "And why in Morocco or in the Netherlands and not somewhere very different?"

Mimoen: "Because I was born in the Netherlands, but my descent is Moroccan, that is why it will be one of those. And the club I want to start with..."

Ayano: 'Barcelona'

Mimoen: "No PSV. If I become a famous soccer player later, I will give a donation to the club I play soccer now."

Me: "They will probably be very happy with such generous donation."

Soufian: "Yes." [a lot of chatting]

Anwar: "I'd like to be kickboxer and if that's not possible then I want to be a lawyer. '

Houda: "I really want to work internationally."

Me: "Why international?"

Houda: "Because I want to become a journalist and I'd like to do something like that in Asia. And Dubai and that kind of places. And later I would like to live in America for example."

These dialogues show that people can feel connected to more than one group. The world today is experienced as a global village in which people are no longer separated through distance (Appadurai 1996, 47). It is easier now to travel, work or live someplace else than when you were born then a few decades ago. Such processes of migration and travelling have increased because of technical inventions in transportation, and at the same time interventions as the telephone and the internet influenced the speed of transporting information and communication (Appadurai 1996; Eriksen 2014). Because of these processes, one can stay easily connected to family and friends who live in a different part of the world. Free movement of goods and people also means a crossroad of identities, histories and values (Eriksen 2014). For several years now there have been heated debates, publicly and politically on diversity and 'the' Dutch national identity. It seems like this quest is fueled by social developments, such as globalization, individualization, and migration, which offer alternative sources of identification (Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 23). It is a concern for shared citizenship and the encouragement of identification with a national community, as these aims contain an idea of a common identity and a social belonging to a group with shared features (Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 27).

According to Power (2015, 90): "Through process of homemaking, people project and perform their sense of belonging to particular groups, including ethnic or cultural groups and even, at a smaller scale, of being part of a family." Identities are structured and shaped by influences from social surroundings, as the experiences one has within an environment effects a feeling of belonging and identification (Thompson 2001, 27; Power 2016, 86).

Every year group 7 and 8 have an information morning in which two police officers give a lecture about behaving (in)correctly and what happens when one does not abide the law. And to discuss with them the rights and duties one has as citizen, how to be a 'good' citizen, and to make them aware of illegal practices and what the consequences are. Lucas, an ex-criminal, told about parts of his own life, some of the bad choices he made, his regrets, how he could have been a famous soccer player, and most important for him, how he let people down and how much he missed his family and his freedom when being behind bars.

Lucas: "What is home for you? What makes you feel at home?"

Norah: "Where my parents are."

Sebas: "For me, home is sitting together with my mother and little sister on the couch and watching television together."

Soufian: "Where you feel comfortable."

Anwar: "Where you can play games online!"

Mimoen: "Yeah! And playing outside, I like to play soccer. I do this with him..." [points at Anwar]

Anwar laughs and interrupts Mimoen: "yeah we play it a lot."

Mimoen: "...and with other kids in my neighborhood. I cannot do this with my sister, she is too little, it's no fun."

Houda: "Home is where your family is. "

Lucas: "Okay, you are all right. But you do not have any of this when you're behind bars, you have nothing, you cannot do anything. It's not nice to be there. Really, believe me, you should not listen to the 'tough' guy you saw in the video. I have been in prison at the same time as he, and I know he talks big but has a lot of regrets. He also missed his home, his family and freedom."

As this dialogue exhibits, a home is not just a physical space, it is also defined and produced via a set of social practices. Thus home, identity and belonging are a feeling, an imagination of an individual, and simultaneously defined by groups and institutions operating at other scales (Huppatz et al. 2016, 92-97).

## **Collectivity and framing**

'National community' has been used as a euphemism for Dutch civil society, which assumes that the nation state or any community can be seen as an organic wholeness, with a given collectivity, where one belongs to or not. In defining a group, in creating a national identity, a certain sameness of its members, a strong notion of homogeneity, is presumed. It expects a shared features, solidarity and collective action (Brubaker 2004, 34-37). Internal differences can be seen as a contribution to the community or as an anomaly (Anthias and Yuval-Davis 2005, 116). By defining the in-group and their shared features, others are excluded. By this means, the diverse identities of citizens in society cannot be all represented as equals as particular identities are not recognized by themselves (Kiwan 2008, 51). Baumann (2004, 10) calls this "the paradox of universalism and exclusiveness". This paradox makes inclusion both one of the core values, and one of the main problems of democracies, as the aim of democracy is "the inclusion of everyone (the whole demos) into the ruling (kratein) of society." (Biesta 2007, 18).

Due to the prominence of "shared citizenship" and "national citizenship traditions" in the policy of citizenship education, the emphasis is on the primacy of the nation state and identifying with a national identity. It appears that the government wants to create a common identity, or an umbrella identity so to speak, that holds disparate groups together. By creating unity and to protect a national culture and identity against the threat of people who are not rooted in Dutch culture, social consensus seems to be more important than particular group belonging (Mannitz and Schiffauer 2004, 85). However, communities, cultures, nations and ethnic groups are dynamic and process-oriented, they are not concrete bounded wholes (Brubaker 2004, 3). National identities do not have primordial roots belonging to a group, with adjacent features and traditions (Eriksen 2010, 215). Rather it is a sociological subject which is formed in the relation between subject and its surroundings and constructed through framing and categorizing. These frames and categories involve more than just sorting, they can form stereotypes and deeply embedded representations, and therefore carry beliefs and expectations about how (groups of) people behave and are dominant in how people talk and act (Brubaker 2004, 71).

In the process of categorizing, citizenship and identity are viewed as concrete and fixed, instead as fluid, and situational – what they essentially are. Social worlds are made logical and interpretable, this is a natural process, because without it "the world would be a `blooming, buzzing confusion" (Brubaker 2004, 71). Consequently, people need some way to create order, and categorizations and stereotypes help to divide social reality in different kinds of people, this give people the feeling that they understand society (Eriksen 2010, 29-30). Although we are not consciously aware of a certain categorization, it can affect our judgements, perceptions and behavior

towards people within this category (Brubaker 2004, 71-73). This negative effect of creating categories of groups of people with matching features can be seen in my following fieldnotes that describe an incident told by the teacher of group 6/7/8:

*The students went to the local church where they got a history lesson in Cristian and Protestant religion by members of the church. The students were divided into three smaller groups, guided by me, Ammar and Bente. At the end of the day I am drinking coffee with Ammar and Hanne (teacher of the youngest students, group 1/2) and we talk about the activity. Ammar tells that he is disappointed and a bit frustrated because the man who guided his group of students almost immediately said something about their cultural backgrounds. He referred to them as being part of the Mosque of "those Moroccans". Ammar really did not like this and thought it was very strange the way he spoke to the children. Ammar says: "I don't get why he does that. He says it with a certain tone as if it is a bad thing. Why would he do that? Why would he start like this? He starts on the wrong foot with them. They haven't done anything or said anything and the first thing he emphasizes is that they belong to a certain group, "those Moroccans" he said. This is not okay they are all just children. They are not different than others." Hanne agrees with this and states that as a guide who want to teach students about his religion he should be neutral and keep such statements to himself, as it is not up to him to say something like this about and to these children: "They are all children and so they have to be treated the same as other students. There must be no distinction in this." Ammar nods and goes on: "And by the way, at the end of the tour he said that this group was one of the best listening and behaving ones that he had guided so far. Not bad for "those Moroccans."*

Even though the guide did not explicitly say what he meant with the label "those Moroccans", it immediately led to assumptions of the underlying content of his statement. It is highly likely that both parties have presuppositions when using or hearing this label, the guide may (not) have had negative connotations when using it, and the teachers connect this statement to broader discourses in society and instantly felt protective of his Moroccan students. Therefore, labelling and creating a collective identity can deepen social-cultural cleavages between citizens instead of connecting them and creating social cohesion (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012, 269), as is the aim of the Citizenship Education act.

A nation is a social construction, an imagined community as one will never know and meet all members of this group. Still, because of this image one feels highly connected to the nation. Thus,

strong feelings and emotions of belonging to a nation or sub-group in society are based on an imagination, an invisible relationship with other members. There are no clear margins or features of citizens that clarify why some people (feel that they) belong (or not) to a nation (Anderson 2006, 3-6). These margins and features are therefore in constant negotiation with and a hot topic in Dutch socio-political debates.

### **An ideology of multiculturalism or assimilation?**

Dutch integration policies are often seen as the most idealistic form of multiculturalism as it seems to be in line with an ideology of tolerance, inclusiveness, and equality (Baumann and Sunier 2004, 32; Duyvendak and Scholten 2012). Yet, the ideology is expressed and experienced differently in practice, as multiculturalism in everyday life is practiced in a society “where ethnic difference continues to matter and where assimilation remains an ideal.” (cf Hawkins 2015, 24). This can be seen by contemporary issues and debates in society about discrimination on the labor market, ethnic profiling by the police and the body of words anchored in Dutch language that divide people by their ethnic or cultural descent, such as ‘black and white schools’<sup>1</sup> and autochthones and allochthones<sup>2</sup>.

In 2000 a new nationalistic discourse has risen about the protection of a national culture and identity from the presupposed anti-modern character of migrants (Verkaaik 2010, 70). The politician Pim Fortuyn stated that the Dutch approach of integration failed and he portrayed Muslims as people of a backwards culture that lack integration and national loyalty towards the host country. Pim Fortuyn was murdered because of his ideas about Muslims, and this caused conflicts and debates in the Netherlands. His ideas were fueled by his assassination, and by the events of 9/11 and the rise of

---

<sup>1</sup> Since the 1970's, schools in the Netherlands are usually labeled as white or black. Schools with mainly students of Dutch origin or another western background are referred to as “white schools” and schools of which more than half of the students have a non-western background are referred to as “black schools”. These categories are used by government organization, media, scientists, but also by teachers and school leaders themselves. The Netherlands is the only country in Europe where schools are categorized in this way. In other European countries, these terms are seen as unthinkable or even outrageous. However, the terms “black and white schools” are anchored in Dutch speech (Abacioglu et al. 2017).

<sup>2</sup> The terms ‘allochthone and autochthone’ date back to the 1990s which was used for official statistics and prognoses. The former refers to a person who was born abroad or of whom at least one parent was born abroad. Although the label ‘allochthones’ refers to all people who meet the criteria, it is mostly used for non-western immigrants. Officially there is a division between western and non-western allochthones, nonetheless in political and societal discourses it is used as a reference to people of non-western descent. In 2016 a motion was adopted in which the government was asked to revise the terms ‘autochthone’ and ‘allochthone’, as the latter has a negative connotation. It is used for people who lack of integration into Dutch society, which led to the framing of groups of people which are seen as having issues with integration. Since November 2016 the terms ‘autochthones’ and ‘allochthones’ do not appear in the ‘Annual Report Integration 2016’ (*Jaarrapport Integratie 2016*). Instead, the Central Statistical Office (CBS) speaks of people with a Dutch or a migration background. These additional terms have been chosen in consultation with the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) (Ree 2016). Thus, even though the terminology changed, there is still a division between diverse groups of people.



radical Islam, as well as the murder of Theo van Gogh in 2004<sup>3</sup>. Such events and conflicts widened the debates about Dutch integration policies and the social positions of migrants, especially of Muslims, in society (Rattansi 2011, 120; el-Aswad, 2013; Verkaaik 2010, 71). These discourses led to political concerns of social-cultural differences that interfered with the integration of newcomers and the protection of a national identity and social cohesion in society. Integration policies took a more assimilationist turn:

“which was codified in an ‘Integration Policy New Style’. Whereas the Integration Policy had stressed ‘active citizenship’, the Integration Policy New Style stressed ‘common citizenship’, which meant that ‘the unity of society must be found in what members have in common (y), that is that people speak Dutch, and that one abides to basic Dutch norms’.” (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012, 274)

Shared citizenship is considered the most common goal of the integration policy. In 2006 the Dutch government introduced the ‘naturalization ceremony’, which entails the “culturalization” of citizenship for foreigners to gain full Dutch citizenship. The Dutch governments sees it as a festive gathering<sup>4</sup>. Certain naturalization ceremonies can be perceived as a form of inclusion in society (Anderson 2006, 145). However, it seems to be an effort to neutralize differences between citizens. Former Dutch integration courses were focused on preparing newcomers to participate in society by learning the Dutch language and preparing them for the labor market. These lessons were prolonged with courses focused on certain knowledge of Dutch society, such as Dutch history classes, lesson about rights, rules of democratic government, and dominant key values (e.g. gender equality, tolerance, sexual freedom, freedom of speech) (Verkaaik 2010, 69-70). This naturalization ceremony raises a few important questions: what does becoming Dutch mean? What is the core, the defining essence of the nation? This is an important topic of debate, it was especially during time of Dutch elections (March 2017). Sybrand Buma party leader of CDA<sup>5</sup> stated: “The traditions we have need to be made more explicit in a society that has become very multicultural (...) Because things change, we need to clarify what needs to stay in place.” He referred to his idea of singing the national anthem at school to create common traditions and practices. He followed with: “At the naturalization

---

<sup>3</sup> Theo van Gogh is a Dutch filmmaker who produced (among other things) a short film named ‘Submission’ in which he criticized Islam. His ideas and his film have been much debated, especially after his death.

<sup>4</sup> For a more comprehensive description of the integration procedures I refer to the site of the Government (*Rijksoverheid*): <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/nederlandse-nationaliteit>.

<sup>5</sup> Sybrand Buma is a Dutch political and the party leader of the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA) which is inspired by Christian values, but - despite of its name- also have Muslim, Jewish and Hindu members. The CDA has conservative ideas of the identity and values of Dutch citizenship. They favor the integration of migrants into Dutch culture by letting them adopt Dutch values, practices and traditions.

Ceremony, something we do currently - which is actually very beautiful – people sing the national Dutch anthem. So, we obligate people who want to get Dutch citizenship to know the anthem, however Dutch children are not. To them we say: “just hum along if you hear the anthem.” I believe this is a very strange thing.” Buma is not the only one who feels that because people with different ethnic backgrounds living together joint practices and values are needed to create a strong social cohesion (Ministerie van OCW 2005, 2). Dutch government argues that migrant and allochthone Dutch citizens should learn to live together to strengthen the social cohesion within society. They want to create ‘good’ and ‘active’ citizens that participate, contribute and feel responsible for community interests (Ministerie van OCW 2004).

### **“I better pack my bags”**

At the end of a school day the students sometimes had some spare time left in which they played games. One group of six girls, whom I have seen talking and playing together more often, played a game called 'Hyves', which is about how well you know each other as friends. They needed to answer questions about each other. Aicha, a girl who wears a headscarf because of her faith in Islam, got the question: ‘Who would you prefer to speak to: the Dutch king, the president of America, a famous pop artist, or your best friend?’ Her answer was the president of Amerika, as she explained herself: “To hit him in the face”. After her statement, the other girls laughed and agreed with her. Aicha argued that she believed Trump is “stupid and mean” as he has been saying “these stupid things about Muslims.” Norah agreed and said: “Trump is weird. And his hair is super weird [laughs] he just says stuff and doesn’t know what he is talking about.” The others laughed and then they went on. This moment did not last very long, but conversations as these happened more often. Throughout my fieldwork Geert Wilders<sup>6</sup> and Donald Trump were both topics of conversations brought up by the students themselves for several times mainly during the weeks before the Dutch elections, in which the students saw the broadcasting of debates on television. Almost every day the students look at *Jeugdjournaal* (Children’s news) at school, and some watch it at home with their parents, so they see and hear the debates about refugees, migration others, and Muslims. The main part of the students is Moroccan and/or Muslim which made Wilders and Trump a hot topic, as they both talk about the negative consequences of flows of migrants and specifically the exclusion of Muslims from society. On the day of the Dutch elections, Wednesday March 15, 2017, the students talked with me and Ammar about the elections. As happened a lot the last two weeks before the election, the students almost immediately talked about Geert Wilders and how they think he is “stupid” and “should not be

---

<sup>6</sup> Geert Wilders is a Dutch politician and current leader of PVV (*Partij Voor de Vrijheid*) – Party for Freedom - which is a Dutch right-wing nationalistic political party. Wilders is known for his criticism of Islam, and Moroccans, whom, according to him, are mainly criminals and lead to a downturn of Dutch society.

able to win". We were talking about the different parties that may win that night and for whom they would have voted if they could, when Mimosen said: "I better pack my bags, if Wilders wins tonight we should be on a plain tomorrow." He referred to the statement of Wilders about the exclusion of Moroccans. Mimosen laughed about his announcement himself, as did some others, but there was a serious tone behind it. He is Dutch himself, and he was born in the Netherlands and lived here his whole life, still he feels he belongs to a group who is seen as backwards and not rooted in Dutch society, and whom will be excluded from society if it was up to Wilders. Even though, three years have passed since the conference of PVV (party of freedom) during which party leader Geert Wilders asked his audience: "Do you want more or less Moroccans?"<sup>7</sup>, the debates surrounding diversity, migration and the link to the downturn of Dutch society have not been reduced. One of the most important debates of the Dutch elections on television was certainly the one of *EenVandaag* between prime minister Mark Rutten and Geert Wilders. During the preview of the broadcasting the presenter introduced the most important topic of the debate as "The discussion that deals with the minds", namely "The Dutch identity (...) The discussion will be about migration, 100.000 refugees, about Black Pete, gays and lesbians; can they still walk safely in the streets? Is immigration threatening Dutch identity?" (March 13, 2017). In the Netherlands, the autochthone Dutch citizen has become a neutral category, these citizens are viewed as unproblematic, while at the other end cultural diverse others, mainly those of nonwestern-Europe descent, are viewed as backwards and intrinsically problematic (Schinkel 2010, 273-274).

Identity and belonging have become political, and in being politicized it is used for social change. This change, formulated as 'participation' and 'shared citizenship' has a tension between inclusion and exclusion (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008, 155; Huppatz, Hawkins and Matthews 2015, 196). In the transition from government policies to common sense, descriptive and analytical statements can become strengthened by racism (Yuval-Davis 2006).

---

<sup>7</sup> This news item of NOS March 19, 2014, has led to a big commotion and debates within and outside of the government. This statement has been seen as a reflection of Wilders view about migration, foreigners and Muslims in general, and is part of the reason why other parties do not want to form a coalition with him. The news item can be watched here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0cYhLHNYgEE>.

## Conclusion

This part has looked at how the policy on citizenship education is linked to current socio-political debates and issues, and, how it ends up in classroom interactions. The aim of citizenship education to establish common ground problematizes cultural diversity. As It assumes that problems are caused by the 'strangeness' of cultural diverse others, and that issues will disappear with acculturation or when allochthones assimilate (cf Anthias and Yuval-Davis 2005, 123). Therefore, citizenship "entails a tension between inclusion and exclusion." (Bloemraad, Korteweg and Yurdakul 2008, 155). Boundaries of belonging inside or outside the national community become highly important to protect a national culture and identity (Anthias and Yuval Davis 2005, 116). This determines who belongs to the nation and who does not, and therefore it offers security and stability to people. Accordingly, every time the integrity of Dutch culture and values seems to be threatened, there is a revival in the discourse of constructing a hegemonic national identity (Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 63). Thus, even though, identities are sociological subjects that are fluid and change overtime, they are seen as fixed.

The dialogues between students and teacher show the affect social structures can have on ones feeling of inclusion or exclusion and belonging to a certain group. This is mainly the effect of labels and stereotypes that frame cultural diverse other, especially Muslims and people of Moroccan decent, as being inherently problematic. This works in the disadvantage of certain students as their cultural background is interpreted via oppositions of us and them, good and bad (Zedde 2014, 34).

Hence, this section has focused on citizenship education on a national level. In the next parts, I will look at local manifestations of citizenship education on a primary school in Gelderland.



## Part II.

### School Tuition

#### Introduction

Because of the Dutch Freedom of Education Act, citizenship education was introduced as a “low profile policy” (Bron 2005). The Ministry of Education gives a certain prescription for the curriculum of primary and secondary schools, to promote active citizenship and social integration. This general assignment is laid down in a few legal articles, and states (Rijksoverheid 2010, 4):

Education:

- a. Assumes that students grow up in a pluriform society,
- b. Is aimed at promoting active citizenship and social integration, and
- c. Is directed at students understanding of and acquainting with diverse backgrounds and cultures of peers.

At the end of every school year the Inspectorate of Education (*Onderwijsinspectie*) inspects whether and in what way citizenship education is part of the school curriculum. They focus on the curriculum aimed at promoting social competences, openness to society and the diversity thereof, and the promotion of basic values and the democratic constitutional state. There are six basic values of that support the democratic constitutional state which schools must pay attention to in their curriculum; freedom of speech, equality, sympathy, tolerance, autonomy, rejection of bigotry and rejection of discrimination (Rijksoverheid 2010; Bron 2005). Primary and secondary schools have autonomy in how they incorporate these points in their educational program, with the intention to let it correspond with their school identity. It gives them the opportunity to work from their own pedagogical and ideological visions and react to local challenges in a way that fits into their school program (Bron 2005, 1). This autonomy makes it important to understand the school context in which citizenship education comes into practice.

According to the school director not much has changed for their school curriculum since the Citizenship Education Act in 2006. The school policy focusses on the incorporation of citizenship education. However, the staff is not as aware of this as the director is herself. In my first meeting with them I explained the goal of my research and they told me they were very curious what kind of practices of citizenship education I would find in their curriculum. A part of this is caused by the

number of rules and regulations they must teach by. The other side, as stated by the school director is that the legislation is in line with Dalton Education, which is the main character of the school that structures their way of teaching:

“Responsibility and cooperation are key features of citizenship education and of the Dalton principles. The inspection rated our school as the best one in our district in safety and citizenship. So, I know we are on the right track. The involvement of the children is high and we heed important things that happen in the country or in the world. Such as with the elections, during which the students that simulated the political campaigns.”

In this part I turn to the pedagogical domain. Some classroom interactions have been discussed in previous sections, however, this part will dive deeper into the identity, pedagogical aim and vision of the school and how citizenship education is incorporated, and how these are negotiated in interactions between students themselves and students and staff.

### **School identity and characteristics**

*May 9, 2017, I am doing an interview with Robin the school director. We are sitting in her chamber, and while she is getting her laptop, I look out of the window and see students playing, running and shouting, it is their lunch break. Teachers are walking around, keeping an eye on the students and talking to each other. The schoolyard features a climbing rack, a football field and a sand pit for the younger children. It provides room for the children to play and run around and for the parents to stand or sit and chat with each other before or after school hours. I remember the first time I walked towards the school which is situated in a residential area, ringed with terraced houses where most of the students live. I thought the schoolyard looked very sober, and I was surprised of the inside of the building, as it is much more colorful and friendly, with blue walls and the text “Everyone is welcome” above a platform, which is the entrance of the staircase, or the theatre stage from time to time. For me these words on the banner immediately gave the school a welcoming and open ambience. Robin looks out of the window and laughs about something, I ask her if she misses it to be a teacher. “I really like the interaction with the children” she says, “I always try to go into the classroom, out on the schoolyard or speak to them in the hallway.” I have seen her doing this before, and I have noticed the students being quite fond of her. She had a hip operation a few months ago and she was gone for more than two months, and when she came back, the students made her drawings and wrote a card. After some small talk, I begin my actual interview by asking her how she would describe the school. I ask her this, because I want to know how she sees it, what she sees as characteristic, not what is stated in the policies. She gives a long answer in which she names several things. She begins with the*

*small scale and cultural diversity of the school in which pupils of different ages and cultures get in touch with, get to know and play with each other. After this she states: "It is a safe school. We also think a lot about development. Providing good education; linguistics and math are key features of our curriculum, because these are basic skills they need to have further in life." I nod, and point out the plastic word cards that hang and lie all over the school, to name different objects, such as "the stairs" and "the computer", and the rule that all students should speak Dutch during school hours. She states that this is important for the students as for most of them Dutch is their second language as they have parents with a different descent or come to live in the Netherlands and do not speak Dutch when they start on this school. We talk about Donald, a student of group 6/7/8, and his siblings who came to live here two years ago from Syria. "Ammar told me Donald did not speak a word Dutch. I was really surprised when I heard that, they are as good as the other students. In two years they learned so much. Yes, when he takes a linguistics test his scores are not as high as the others, and I have seen him help his little brother with math when he did not understand the assignment. But that's it, I would not have guessed it if they did not tell me." Robin agrees with me and explains that word cards are supportive, as repetition is needed in learning a new language, and it can also be helpful for their parents or for other Dutch students. After this she explains that she believes that children should be able to develop themselves as high as possible and to discover their talents:*

*"Every child is different and has its own talent, and as a school we try to trigger the children to discover their talents. This is the main goal of the Academy [extracurricular activities after school hours], because of the wide range of activities, they encounter other things than they probably normally would have. A lot of them play soccer on the street after school hours, however, I believe it is better if they develop themselves in a different way. If they learn about different activities, like playing chess or dam, or learn to work with a 3D printer, they gain a wider range of skills and a broader view of what kind of skills they can develop. There is more for them than becoming a doctor or lawyer, or a famous soccer player. Not everyone is good in math or grammar, thus, also for the content of the lessons during school hours, teachers should not focus on just one aspect. As teachers, we should be aware of this."*

*Next, she talks about democracy and participation and stresses the role of the school in the neighborhood, as they work closely with the district team.*





This photo is of the main hall of the school. For me these words on the banner - "Everybody is welcome" - provide a friendly and open environment and reflect the school culture.

### **Collaboration: the wider community**

The school has an important function in neighborhood and the director feels that the students should be aware of their place thereof. For example, on Dutch Election Day they placed voting booths in the main hall<sup>8</sup> for adults living in the area. As many people know how to find it, it is easy to reach and the school hopes to create extra awareness and attract more students. Besides that, the school also operates as a meeting point and a site for socializing, particularly for mothers who wanted to get in contact with each other and wanted to learn the Dutch language, and cook and dance together. This was facilitated by the school and they helped them to grant a subsidy to make this idea come true. In addition, the school has a room which is called the 'multifunctional space' which is used to organize meetings with social district team or used by other parties as a conference room. Once a year the school organizes a summer market, usually after Ramadan, for the students and parents, the kindergarten, and all partners from the district are invited, such as the bakery, the ice cream shop, the social district team, and Social Work. It is something they intently organize for the whole neighborhood. In creating this events and opportunities, the school tries to widen the view of the students, so they do not only see themselves as part of a class or school, but also as being part of a wider community. This is also what occurs in the teaching materials of geography and topography. The students gradually gain a broader view of the social structures in the world. It starts with themselves and their close surroundings, then they must gain a broader, a more helicopter view over the years: first the neighborhood, subsequently the Netherlands, then Europe, the world and at last they learn about the universe. Gradually their view gets widened. This is how the structure of the curriculum usually, however, last year they could not manage to do this. Ammar did not agree with this, but explained it to me as follows:

“Group 7 has the same content as 8, only their assignments are less difficult. But, it is still the same, as they already learned the same stuff as the students of group 6, so they cannot get this reading material again. It is better for them to learn from students that are older and get information they did not get before. Still, I really did not agree with this, because it is important that the children learn the various levels, otherwise you skip ‘Europe’ and go immediately to ‘the world’. They should understand first that the Netherlands are a part of Europe.”

---

<sup>8</sup> The Netherlands has about ten thousand voting districts. These venues are often located in public buildings, which are owned by the municipality and should be accessible for everyone. Therefore, a school, as it is a public building, can be used as a polling station (Rijksoverheid 2017).

Creating social cohesion and letting people pursue community interests are the main aims of citizenship education (Onderwijsraad 2003). Subsequent ideals as being an active citizen, and feeling responsible for the community can only be learned by embedding it in daily routines of students. They learn this by doing and being involved with their surroundings (De Waal 2015, 5). This is in line with how the school operates. Thereby, manners and behavior are developed in school, which serve the group as a whole (Netjes et al. 2011, 36). The school staff see their school as a reflection of society, because as Ammar stated: “Children and parents of diverse cultural backgrounds come together. This is a good thing, as this is also a reality in society.” On a different moment, the internal school counselor said something similar to me. She formerly worked on a Christian, “white school”, and she taught students for whom being a Christian was not that important, but their parents did not want them to go to a school where they would sit in class with “foreigners”. She argued that:

“This is a shame, really, I believe that the cultural diversity within this school is a strength, not a weakness. Growing up with parents that do not want you to sit in class with migrants, makes you less tolerant. This is not the fault of the child, they grow up and see this as normal and do not get in contact, more closely, with children of another religion or whatsoever. This can also work the other way around. We have a lot of Moroccan children at our school, also some with an African, French, or Indonesian decent. Autochthone Dutch children are a minority here, and if I can be honest, I am glad that there are a few new Dutch toddlers. Because in that way we stay a mixed school, and they can learn from each other, and learn to live together.”

This feeling is also shared by other teachers. Ammar told me that they wanted this to be 50-50, to encourage integration from both sides: “we have had a project called “over the doorstep” that linked NT2 children and NT1<sup>9</sup> children, and during lunch breaks they went home together and saw each other’s parents and sibling. The involvement was enormous.”

### **Collaboration: “One hand cannot clap on its own”**

As explained by Faulks (2000, 4): “The status of citizen implies a sense of inclusion into the wider community. It recognizes the contribution a particular individual makes to that community, while at the same time granting him or her individual autonomy.” The student’s autonomy and agency are recognized by the usage of responsibility contracts. Every student has a contract in one of the three colors: orange red or green. Orange is the standard contract that all of them get, if one behaves well,

---

<sup>9</sup> NT1 and NT2 children are references to children for whom Dutch is a first or second language.

doing extra things, behave neatly, one gets a green contract. With this contract, one has more privileges than with orange or red. The latter, a student get when he/she misbehaves. They lose certain freedoms, like working behind the computer, or helping a teacher in another class. As stated by the school director:

"You need to have confidence in the children, and in yourself, this is essential. If you are confident that children can work in the hallway together, with the responsibility contracts, then you assume that they are able to do so, they feel this and act like it. This is also what we talk about with them; this is what 'Dalton' is about, independence, responsibility and cooperation. We also believe it is important that they can solve problems. Coming up with solutions or arguments, it is amazing how children do that, sometimes they have far better solutions, it fits better. "

The contracts imply a recognition of agency of the students and their autonomy is thus reflected via a set of rights (cf Faulks 2000, 4). Which contract the student get depends on how they participate and accordingly they can control this themselves. The students learn to interact and being responsible, for their own behavior, as well as how their behavior affects others. The responsibility of the students is also addressed by involving them in decision-making processes via the student's board. These modes of participation stimulate collaboration and democratic citizenship. Biesta (2007, 18) emphasizes the value of this: "it is of little use to teach adolescents to be active and responsible citizens if they do not have the chance to influence situations that are important to them in their daily lives, if their voices are not being heard: if they do not actually have opportunities to participate."

On April 19, the class got two boxes of the National Committee 4 and 5 May, with books about commemoration and celebration. This book is about the Second World War, but also about victims of wars in general and commemoration in general. All schools that have received these boxes should open it at the same. After opening it the students have 15 minutes of reading time. Afterwards Ammar discusses with them what they read and remembered of it:

Ammar: 'World War II, who started this?'

Donald: "Hitler."

Rochelle: "The Jews had to wear this yellow star or something on their clothes, so everyone knew who they are."

Houda: "I think it's sad, a lot of terrible things happened. A lot of Jews get killed."

Jan: "Also others, like gypsies."

Donald: "It was really cold and people made clothes out of dog hair." [a few students laugh]

Donald: "That's not funny."

Ammar: "Okay, Donald you can go next. This is what we have talked about before. All religions are about the same thing. A force, we call it Allah, another God, and for others it has a different name. "

Norah: "You also have Buddha."

Ammar: "Yes, okay that is right, probably also some other smaller religions. What I wanted to say was that all religions are about the same thing. All people are the same, skin color, length, etcetera. It does not matter. We should not listen to people who feel superior. We all need each other. A baker needs the doctor, the doctor needs a mechanic. Do you know when you are a good person? If you have a good heart, if you have heart for others, if you help the elderly and give to others."

Mimoen: "Yes you need each other, you cannot do anything yourself. Everybody can do something else."

Ammar: "That's right. This is very important to keep in mind. A lot of people now die because of fights about religion and the like, and why? Allah did not say people should be killed because they do not believe in him."

Houda: "religions are about love."

Norah: "That is what that girl from the police said."

Ammar: "Okay, we go on. What else do you remember from what you read?"

Showing respect to each other is one of the main values of Ammar and he stressed the importance of working together and listening to each other frequently during classes. One of the sayings he used a lot was an Arabic proverb: "One hand cannot clap on its own." Which means that people need each other to get further, thus the students need to learn to work together and experience that they need each other, because in working together they can achieve much more.

During school hours, the students learn to enter dialogue with each other and to substantiate their opinion. The teachers also go into dialogue with the students. This is what the school calls "freedom in restraint". The students are not completely free to choose and do what they want, they must ask things, however they have the freedom to plan their assignments, and when they do not agree with something to go into dialogue with the teacher. According to Ammar this is important, as it is the same in real life: "You can make certain choices yourself and be responsible for your own life, but this does not mean that you can do anything you want, you are bound to certain limits and rules. In addition, the children learn about cooperation and taking responsibility. This also means that you

learn what the effect is of your words and how you behave.”

### **Dealing with differences: freedom of speech**

According to Baumann (2004, 1) schools are still seen as the main place site to create a “pre-defined national whole” in which social and cultural differences are integrated. However, as he explains reality is much more complex, as schools rather “operate on the cutting edge between, on the one hand, reproducing recognizable nation-specific structures and routines and, on the other, recognizing and engaging with cultural differences and socio-cultural inequalities on a day-to-day basis.” (ibid.)

The school tries to connect unity with diversity by stating that students should respect each other and acknowledge differences and listen to people with a difference of opinion. Ammar told me the following:

“Our children also have a strong sense of responsibility, right? That's Dalton. Responsibility, you need to help others. You must fix it, cope with it, when something happens. Share things with each other. It is also about working together. These are actually the Dalton principles.”

So, even in being different they should treat each other the same. The school staff tries to prevent bullying and discrimination and learn their students how to cope with it. The students learn to acknowledge all cultures and religions, and they learn to handle disagreement and the right to disagree.

The pupils learn they must listen to each other, to people whom they may not like or disagree with. On May 8<sup>th</sup>, the students were eating and watching the youth news during their break. It was International Women's Day, an important topic during the news, however the Dutch elections were an even bigger hit. On the news, they talked about the debates between different party leaders and how they promoted themselves. Geert Wilders was also shown, immediately Aicha said: “Wilders is really stupid.” The teacher commanded one of the students to pause the news and he corrected Aicha; “Nobody is stupid, everyone has their own opinion. And we should listen to all.” It became noisy in the classroom. Some students seemed to be indignant. Soufian stated that Wilders is racist and that he does not like Moroccans: Soufian: “he wants us out, why should we listen to him? My parents will vote for *DENK*<sup>10</sup>” A few other students agreed and said that if they could vote they would

---

<sup>10</sup> DENK is a Dutch political party, which means ‘think’ in Dutch or ‘equality’ in Turkish. It is a new movement, founded in 2015. They champion non-western citizens and want to create mutual acceptance, tolerance, and justice (DENK 2017).

also vote for DENK. Ammar: "I must say, if I'm honest, I don't really like DENK either. They are also kind of extreme, they are the opposite of Wilders. They don't seem to listen either. And I think it should be better if we listen to each other, and meet each other half way. Otherwise you do the same as Wilders, he says a lot but does not want to have a dialogue. Just making assumptions or being angry of people will not get you anywhere."

An almost similar discussion happened a week later when they were having a debate. This debate was an activity to let them learn more about Dutch elections, and to let them experience it firsthand. They formed coalitions which they named themselves and they had to think about their main aims and values as a party:

Donald: "There should be less racist people. And more police on the street. We must not pay attention to people's religion but to what people do, how they behave. This is what counts, how one is from the inside, not the outside, the looks. If someone has a beard, for example, it does not mean he is bad."

Houda: "Discrimination must be avoided, all people can believe what they want, everyone must be treated with respect."

Mimoen: "Wilders must go away. He is talking about foreigners, but maybe he is one himself. So, when we have to go, he has to come along."

Ammar: "But if he wants to say these things, can he?"

Norah: "Yes, because there is freedom of speech."

Emily: "respect each other even in different religions."

Ammar: "We should respect each other because one is not superior to the other."

Jan: "People with a lot of influence like Wilders should not say such things. You cannot reject people, discriminate them because of a headscarf."

Ammar: "No. However, you should listen to everyone, and should talk about it together."

Ammar believes it is very important the students learn about other cultures and religions, because it makes them more tolerant. I talked to him about this as these students also bully each other or discriminate. Ammar said this is part of being a kid, bullying happens everywhere, nonetheless the students will be in great trouble when they do so, as they should show each other respect. "They should learn this when growing up. When they grow up with children with different kind of backgrounds, they will probably be more open for diverse kinds of people." He took Jan, a so-called autochthone Dutch boy, as an example:

"He is smart, right? He is not always nice to others, he has bullied Bendy [*boy of African descent*] because of his dark skin color. Sometimes he is maybe too smart as he can be sneaky. However, he has also learned from other children, from their cultures. He knows so much about Moroccan food and cultural aspects. Things he may not know if he did not have his fellow students."

### **Dealing with differences: "all religions are the same at heart"**

The school celebrates typical Dutch holidays as Saint Nicholas, Christmas or Eastern, but also Ramadan and Eid. On June 25, the Facebook page of the school shared an image with a drawing of laughing children, which said: "We wish everyone celebrating Eid a wonderful day tomorrow together with family and friends." Besides that, at the beginning of the new school year, the students, staff and family celebrate the Sacrifice Feast. The students portrayed it as a family celebration with their teachers, there always is a big BBQ and everyone brings food and drinks. As stated by Michelle: "Together, we want to make sure we have a good Christmas party, but also have a good Eid. The students have to respect both." She also told me the parents of Jan said that he is now more aware of what being Catholic entails than on his former school, which was a Catholic one. "Here they see what similarities and differences there are, philosophizing and they learn the norms and values that belong to a religion."

As stated before, throughout my fieldwork Ammar spoke from time to time with the students about the essence of each religion, and how they should see it as the same. At one time, I saw the effect it had on the students. During the activity "cross the line" I mentioned in part I, we talked about which students were religious. When I asked who believed in God, only Jan walked to the other side of the room. Ammar stated that Christianity and Judaism believe in God, and the Arabs believe in Allah, but they all have the same purpose.:

Mimoen: "Yes, teacher, I wanted to say that too. We all pray. Look, I wanted to say that too. It's actually the same. Look, like..."

Jan: "Yes, it is all the same, only in a different way."

Ammar: "Yes, that's right, just in a different way."

Mimoen: "Teacher look, everyone should actually just stand over there [points to the other side] because if you do not believe in Judaism or Christianity then you are not a Muslim, then you are not a Jew and not a Christian."

Ammar: "Yes." [some students walk to the other side]

Mimoen: "But teacher, I believe in Allah, but that's the same."



Ammar: "Yes. If you as a Muslim do not believe in the God of Jan, or you do not believe in the God of the Jews, then are you a Muslim? "

Multiple students: "No"

Ammar: "I'm a Muslim, that's me, but I have to believe in Jesus in Moses, in all prophets. All religions are consistent in all books. In the Qur'an, in the Bible, in the Torah."

Soufian: "What is the Torah?"

Ammar: "The Torah is the book of the Jews; the Bible is of the Christians and the Qur'an of Muslims. At home, I have all the books. "

Houda: "We also have them at home."

Ammar: "There are enough people who say: I'm Muslim so I only need to understand the Qur'an, I do not believe in Christianity or Judaism. That is not true. [a few students are chatting Ammar strikes on the table] "watch out!" [when they are quiet he moves on] "All religions are the same at heart."

Houda: "We should study all of them. People should not argue about which religion is the best one."

Ammar: "Right. [turns to me] I am sorry I interrupted your activity, but I believe this is very important."

## **Conclusion**

By celebrating different holidays, talking with the students about diverse cultural backgrounds and treating each other with respect, the school creates an environment in which all students are welcome and represented, and thus included. They are involved in decision-making processes via the student's board, and by using responsibility contract they try to make the students aware of their behavior and the consequences thereof. The school tries to make them active and responsible via these daily activities. This is in line with the aims of the citizenship education policy and the inspectorate which focuses on the attention of social competences, openness to society and the diversity thereof, and the promotion of basic values and democratic citizenship.



# Conclusion and discussion

In this thesis, I have examined the making and remaking of Dutch citizenship in the classroom through a focus on the policy and curriculum outcomes of citizenship education in the Dutch primary school context. To answer the main question of my research:

- How do Dutch national policies and local practices of citizenship education interact in constructing national identity and citizenship among students aged 10-12 on a culturally diverse primary school in Gelderland, The Netherlands?

I argue that even though the aim of the policy is to create a national shared citizenship and social cohesion, the influence of politics and socio-political debates on students creates experiences of exclusion and discrimination.

## Recap

The interest in democratic citizenship and citizenship education in the past 30 years in the Netherlands emphasizes practices for active citizenship. The school has become a site for solving problems of contemporary issues of individualization, a downgrade of participation and enormous cultural diversity in society. A key strategy is to make citizenship a part of the school curriculum. Citizenship is thus seen as an outcome of an education trajectory, which can teach pupils to be active and good citizens, who participate in and pursue the interest of the community. The policy on citizenship education emphasizes the primacy of the nation state, and a shared national identity and civil belonging in society, as key factors for creating participation and more cohesion. Pupils should learn certain Dutch traditions and values to create an enhance social inclusion. The ministry states that a pluriform society provides difficulties for creating a stronger cohesion. Citizens with a diverse cultural background are seen as not rooted in Dutch civic traditions, practices and values which are needed to create unity (Ministerie van OCW 2005). Thus, the ministry states there is a sense of not-belonging to a group, which translates in not taking part in Dutch society later in life. A political decision is citizenship education is needed to remedy this.

This policy is in line with current socio-political debates on citizenship and integration in which assimilation remains the ideal and cultural difference continues to matter. The autochthone Dutch citizen has become a neutral category, and viewed as unproblematic, while allochthone Dutch

citizens, mainly those of nonwestern-Europe descent, are viewed as backwards and intrinsically problematic (Schinkel 2010, 273-274). Therefore, allochthone Dutch youth are seen as being less familiar with Dutch traditions, standards and uses, they need to “learn how to behave, while ‘Dutch people’ already know how.” (Martineau in Zedde 2014, 27). Because of this assumption, there is an integral process of assimilation or integration of allochthone citizens in this policy, which suggests that a cultural down-play is needed to establish common ground and harmonious relations between citizens (Mannitz and Schiffauer 2004, 70; Osler and Starkey 2001).

The idea of a common citizenship that unity of citizens should be found in what they have in common, such as abiding Dutch norms and values and practice of traditions (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012, 274). Thus, it is supposed to hold disparate groups together, but seems to create more exclusion and discrimination. Owing to the fact this ideal determines who belongs to the nation and who does not, consequently it creates boundaries and certain stereotypes of the in- and outgroup.

Every time the integrity of Dutch culture and values seems to be threatened, there is a revival in the discourse of constructing a common national identity (Schrijvers and Broeders 2007, 63). These discourses and labels can deepen social-cultural cleavages instead of social cohesion (Duyvendak and Scholten 2012, 269), as is the aim of the Citizenship Education act.

On the contrary, the school is not focused on creating a common identity, rather they focus on the equality of the different students which are all seen as having unique talents and are addressed to their responsibility and they try to make the students aware of their behavior and the consequences thereof. The school tries to make them active and responsible via these daily activities. And, they want students to learn about other cultures and religions, because it makes them more tolerant and open for diverse kinds of people. Thus, the school curriculum seems to live up to the expectations of the government, as students feel part of the school community and are asked to actively participate and contribute to it. At the same time, is the socio-political debates that create feelings of discrimination and exclusion. As I conducted research on a culturally mixed primary school, most of the students could relate to these diverse cultural backgrounds that are problematized, and see this as an important part of their identity. However, because of socio-political debates and issues that find their way into the classroom, the students become aware that this cultural diversity is seen as problematic and that the groups to which a lot of them belong, Muslims and Moroccans, are seen as backwards and lack of integration and loyalty to Dutch society.

## **Conclusion**

Thus, the government wants to create a better social cohesion in society in which all citizens participate and feel responsible for. However, in the categorizing, citizenship and identity are made static, and diverse cultural backgrounds and different kinds of Dutch identities are ignored. This counteracts the incorporation of all citizens to create more social cohesion.

Therefore, I conclude that it is the political system, their focus on cultural diversity as an inhibitory problem for social cohesion, should undergo change. The ministry can learn from the school which accepts, appreciate and respect differences and see everyone is equal. They state that all cultural background and subsequent identities are equally important, as are all people. Only by truly seeing it like this one will come to a more inclusive notion of citizenship which will probably lead to an active participation in society. Because by addressing someone as if he/she is part of, and therefor responsible for, the community, one will act like it.

## **Critical note: limitations and recommendations**

My data is based on students in the age of 10-12 on one primary school. The advantage of this is that I have gained in-depth data of the explicit and tacit aspects of the routines and culture of the school. This is valuable as knowledge does not only remain in what people say, but in how they act and the larger implications that may behind it. As argued by David Graeber (2004, 11-12): "When one carries out an ethnography, one observes what people do, and then tries to tease out the hidden symbolic, moral, or pragmatic logics that underlie their actions; one tries to get at the way people's habits and actions make sense in ways that they are not themselves completely aware of." On the other hand, the limitation is that this data may not be representable for other students on different schools. Consequently, my understanding of these social realities may be biased. I have compared my findings to literature, to give my thesis additional depth.

Though, I am certain this school was a nice test case, as Dutch research on children's citizenship are mainly quantitative studies that measure their competences, and not of identification and social structures and positions in society. And I believe that it is highly important that more qualitative research is conducted in this underexposed field of study. I want to draw upon Tsing (2005) who, by her research and writing in Indonesia, was like "a hair in the flour". This is a metaphor for the disturbance of everyday structures and routines. To write as a hair in the flour is to look for weaknesses, and gaps in business as usual, and it allows for new information to occur (ibid.). Therefore, I recommend to further examine daily, micro-level classroom interactions between

students and staff to gain a better understanding of the effects of how Dutch national policies and local practices of citizenship education interact in a national identity and citizenship among students

I am aware that, even though my aversion to how our society frames and divides people because of their decent, and the idea that diversity is seen as a downgrading of society, I also had to use certain labels to make my point and to see how diverse characteristics are of influence in negotiating one's citizenship and identity. Still I want to end by emphasis that one should always be aware of using labels to explain social structures and make these realities more concrete, as it can lead to a deeper imbedded view with negative connotations thereof, which contributes to the misery in the world.



# Bibliography

Abacioglu, C., Altinyelken, H.K., Baan, J., Calor, S., Daas, R., Geijssel, F., Goethem, A. van, Kuiper, E., Munniksma, A., Rinnooy Kan, W., Schuitema, J., Soeterik, I., Sözeri, S., Starink-Martha, G., Verhoeven, M., Volman, M., and Joke Voogt. 2017. "Wetenschappers: stop met de termen 'zwarte' en 'witte' school." *De Volkskrant*, February 28. Accessed August 5, 2017.

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/opinie/wetenschappers-stop-met-de-termen-zwarte-en-witte-school~a4467962/>.

Anderson, B. 2006. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London and New York: Verso.

Anthias, F., and Nira Yuval-Davis. 2005. *Racialized boundaries: Race, nation, gender, colour and class and the anti-racist struggle*. London: Routledge.

Appadurai, A. 1996. "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy." In *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization*, 22–47. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Banks, J. A., and Diem Nguyen. 2008. "Diversity and Citizenship Education: Historical, Theoretical, and Philosophical Issues." In *Handbook of Research in Social Studies*, edited by Linda S. Levstik, and Cynthia A. Tyson, 137–154. New York: Routledge.

Barrett, M., and Louis Oppenheimer. 2011. "Findings, theories and methods in the studies of children's national identifications and national attitudes." *European Journal of Developmental Psychology* 8(1): 5–24. doi: 10.1080/17405629.2010.533955.

Baumann, G. 1996. *Contesting Culture: Discourses of Identity in Multi-ethnic London*. Cambridge: University Press.

Baumann, G. 2004. "Introduction: Nation-State, Schools and Civil Enculturation." In *Civil enculturation: nation-state, schools and ethnic difference in four European countries*, edited by Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, and Steven Vertovec, 1–20. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.



Baumann, G., and Thijl Sunier. 2004. "Chapter 1: The School as a Place in its Social Space." In *Civil enculturation: nation-state, schools and ethnic difference in four European countries*, edited by Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, and Steven Vertovec, 21–32. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Biesta, G.J.J. 2007. "Don't count me in: Democracy, education and the question of inclusion." *Nordisk Pedagogik* 27(1): 18–31.

Biesta, G.J.J., and Robert Lawy. 2006. "From teaching citizenship to learning democracy: overcoming individualism in research, policy and practice." *Cambridge journal of education* 36(1): 63–79.

Bloemraad, I., Korteweg, A., and Gökçe Yurdakul. 2008. "Citizenship and Immigration: Multiculturalism, Assimilation, and Challenges to the Nation-State." *Annual Review of Sociology* 34: 153–179. doi:10.1146/annurev.soc.34.040507.134608.

Bron, J. 2005. "Citizenship and social integration: Educational development between autonomy and accountability." Accessed August 5, 2017. <http://www.slo.nl/downloads/documenten/Citizenship-and-social-integration.pdf/>.

Bron, J., and Annette Thijs. 2011. "Leaving it to the schools: citizenship, diversity and human rights education in the Netherlands." *Educational Research* 53(2): 123–136. doi: 10.1080/00131881.2011.572361.

Brubaker, R. 2004. *Ethnicity without groups*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

DENK. 2017. "Beweging DENK." Accessed, August 13, 2017. <https://www.bewegingdenk.nl/>.

Duyvendak, J. W., and Peter Scholten. 2012. "Reconstructing the Dutch multicultural model: a frame perspective on Dutch immigrant integration policymaking." *Comparative European Politics* 10(3): 266–282.

El-Aswad, E.-S. 2013. "Images of Muslims in Western Scholarship and Media after 9/11." *Digest of Middle East Studies* 22(1): 39–56. doi: 10.1111/dome.12010.

ERIC (Ethical Research Involving Children). 2013. "Charter: International Charter for Ethical Research Involving Children." Accessed January 11, 2017. <http://childethics.com/charter/>.

Eriksen, T.H. 2010. *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. London: Pluto Press.

Eriksen, T. H. 2014. *Globalization: The key concepts*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc.

Faulks, K. 2000. *Citizenship*. London and New York: Routledge.

Fens, D., Eijsackers, L., Wit, C. de, and Detje de Kinderen. 2010. *Werken aan actief burgerschap & sociale integratie*. Den Bosch: KPC Groep.

Graeber, D. 2004. *Fragments of an Anarchist Anthropology*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press.

Greenhouse, C. 2002. "Citizenship, Agency and the Dream of Time." In *Looking Back at Law's Century*, edited by Austin Sarat, Bryant Garth, and Robert A. Kagan, 184–209. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

Hawkins, M. 2015. "Chapter 2: Ethnicity." In *Identity and belonging*, edited by Kate Huppertz, Mary Hawkins, and Amie Matthews, 11–25. London: Palgrave Macmillan Education.

Huppertz, K., Hawkins, M., and Matthews, A., eds. 2015. *Identity and belonging*. London: Palgrave Macmillan Education.

Ingold, T. 2011. "Epilogue: Anthropology is *not* ethnography." In *Being Alive: Essays on Movement, Knowledge and Description*, 229–243. London and New York: Routledge.

Kiwan, D. 2008. "Citizenship education in England at the cross-roads? Four models of citizenship and their implications for ethnic and religious diversity." *Oxford Review of Education* 34(1): 39–58. DOI: 10.1080/03054980701584551.

Levinson, B. 2005. "Citizenship, Identity, Democracy: Engaging the Political in the Anthropology of Education." *Anthropology and Education Quarterly* 36 (4): 329–340. doi: 10.1525/aeq.2005.36.4.329.

Levinson, B. and Mica Pollock, eds. 2011. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Education*. UK: Wiley Blackwell.

Lovell, N. 1998. *Locality and belonging*. London: Routledge.

Mannitz, S., and Werner Schiffauer. 2004. "Chapter 3: Taxonomies of Cultural Difference: Constructions of Otherness." In *Civil enculturation: nation-state, schools and ethnic difference in four European countries*, edited by Werner Schiffauer, Gerd Baumann, Riva Kastoryano, and Steven Vertovec, 60–87. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Marshall, T. H. 1950. *Citizenship and social class*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Matthews, A. 2015. "Chapter 6: Youth." In *Identity and belonging*, edited by Kate Huppatz, Mary Hawkins, and Amie Matthews, 71–85. London: Palgrave Macmillan Education.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. 2004. "Parlementaire Monitor: Memorie van Toelichting." Accessed January 10, 2017.

<https://www.parlementairemonitor.nl/9353000/1/j9vvij5epmj1ey0/vi3an9kw82xp>.

Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap. 2006. *Voorlichtingspublicatie Wet van 9 december*. CFI-Online.

Nader, L. 1972. "Up the Anthropologist: Perspectives Gained from Studying Up". In *Reinventing Anthropology*, edited by D. Hymes, 284–311. New York: Pantheon Books.

Netjes, J.E., Van de Werfhorst, H.G., Dijkstra, A.B., and Ellen A.M. Gebroers. 2011. "Eenheid of Verdeeldheid? Burgerschap in een gedifferentieerd Voortgezet Onderwijssysteem." *Mens en Maatschappij* 86(1): 34–65. doi: <https://doi-org.proxy.library.uu.nl/10.5117/MEM2011.1.NETJ>.

Onderwijsraad. 2003. *Onderwijs en burgerschap: Een voorname rol voor onderwijsinstellingen en overheid*. Den Haag: Onderwijsraad.

Osler, A. and Hugh Starkey. 2001. "Citizenship education and national identities in France and England: inclusive or exclusive?" *Oxford Review of Education* 27(2): 287–305.

doi:10.1080/03054980124800.

O'Reilly, K. 2012. *Ethnographic Methods*. London and New York: Routledge.

Power, E. 2015. "Chapter 7: Households & neighborhoods." In *Identity and belonging*, edited by Kate Huppertz, Mary Hawkins, and Amie Matthews, 86–98. London: Palgrave Macmillan Education.

Rattansi, A. 2011. *Multiculturalism: A very short introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ree, M. de. 2016. "Termen allochtoon en autochtoon herzien." *CBS*, October 25. Accessed August 9, 2017. <https://www.cbs.nl/nl-nl/corporate/2016/43/termen-allochtoon-en-autochtoon-herzien>.

Rijksoverheid. 2010. "Toezicht op Burgerschap en Integratie". *Inspectie van het Onderwijs*, 1–18. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/brochures/2010/08/30/toezicht-op-burgerschap-en-integratie-door-de-inspectie-van-het-onderwijs>.

Rijksoverheid. 2017. "Nederlandse nationaliteit." Accessed August 8, 2017. <https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/nederlandse-nationaliteit>.

Rijksoverheid 2017. "Stembureauinstructie." Accessed August 1, 2017. <https://www.stembureauinstructie.nl/>.

Rowse, T. 2015. "Chapter 8: Nation." In *Identity and belonging*, edited by Kate Huppertz, Mary Hawkins, and Amie Matthews, 99–112. London: Palgrave Macmillan Education.

Schinkel, W. 2010. "The virtualisation of citizenship." *Critical Sociology* 36(2): 265-283. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1177/0896920509357506>

Schrijvers, E., and Dennis Broeders. 2007. *WRR Rapport: Identificatie met Nederland*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Sleeter, C.E. 2014. "Multiculturalism and education for citizenship in a context of neoliberalism." *Taylor & Francis Intercultural Education* 25(2): 85–94. doi: 10.1080/14675986.2014.886357.

Stryker, R., and R.J. González. 2014. *Foreword (by Laura Nader) + Introduction On Studying Up, Down, and Sideways: What's at Stake?* New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Terlouw, K. 2013. "Performing Identities on a Dutch River Dike: National Identity and Diverging Lifestyles." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism* 13(2): 236–255. doi: 10.1111/sena.12035.

Thompson, A. 2001. "Nations, National Identity and Human Agency: Putting People Back into Nations." *Sociological Review* 49(1): 18–32. doi: 10.1111/1467-954X.00242.

Tsing, A.L. 2005. *Friction: Ethnography of Global Connection*. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.

Verkaaik, O. 2010. "The cachet dilemma: Ritual and agency in new Dutch nationalism." *American Ethnologist* 37: 69–82. doi: 10.1111/j.1548-1425.2010.01242.x.

Yuval-Davis, N. 2006. "Belonging and the politics of belonging." *Patterns of prejudice* 40(3): 197–214. doi: [10.1080/00313220600769331](https://doi.org/10.1080/00313220600769331).

Zedde, M. van der. 2014. *Constructing difference, contesting exclusive citizenship in the classroom*. Diemen: AMB Publishers.