

Civic Integration Courses in the Netherlands, 1994 – 2016.

How a toolkit for early reception and integration became a neo-liberal instrument for assimilation policy.

By Rinus Penninx

Former Coordinator of the IMISCOE Research Network

Overview

1. **What place did provisions for early reception and civic integration have in six periods of integration policies?**

Each period has its own specific framing of the desirability of immigrants, who qualifies to come, what position is allocated to newcomers, what is expected from newcomers in the long run, politically, socio-economically and culturally.

Provisions for early reception and civic integration are part of / derived from these varying framings.

2. **How did “Inburgering” develop as a technical tool and as a policy?**

- **1991 Blue print for early reception by municipalities**
- **1998 WIN-law: Law Civic Integration Newcomers**
- **2007 new WI-law: Law Civic Integration**
- **2013 again new WI-law on Civic Integration**

Six periods of policies for immigrants / newcomers in The Netherlands,

1) 1945-1980: Separate and different *ad hoc* policies for colonial migration, 'guest workers', refugees: "The Netherlands is not an immigration country"

- "Repatriates" from former Dutch Indies (of mixed Euro-Asian descent, formally Dutch citizen) received the intensive and full assimilation programmes;
- "Guest workers" received ad-hoc provisions for their supposedly temporary stay;
- "Immigrants from Surinam and the Antilles were citizens of the Dutch Kingdom (**Rijksgenoten**): as if internal migration.
- "Moluccans" (native soldiers of the Colonial Army in the East Indies) were stateless, arrived by historical accident, and temporary. Segregated accommodation.
- **Refugees**: full reception programmes.

2) 1980- 1994: Ethnic Minorities' Policy: socio-economic and ethno-cultural group-emancipation policies for specific groups:

“Make newcomers part of Dutch society”

- **Socio-economic and ethno-cultural group-emancipation policies for specific groups `in danger of becoming permanent minorities’**
- **The double emancipation in Dutch society should be supported in their on the individual (Dutch language courses, orientation on Dutch society) and group level (support for organizations); also Education in Own Language and Culture (OETC).**
- **Institutional barriers should be taken away (screening of Dutch laws); strengthening of legal and political position: advisory structures and local voting rights for foreigners (1985);**
- **Access to formal Dutch citizenship made easier (1984) as means to support emancipation (heavily used). Dual nationality more leniently allowed.**
- **Toolkit-approach of early reception developed at the local level “Opvang Nieuwkomers”: 1991 a blueprint for municipalities**

3) 1994-2002: Integration policy for individual newcomers combined with an area-based social cohesion policy: “Newcomers should take their chances to be part of Dutch society”.

- Policies aiming at supporting socio-economic insertion of individual migrants by specific measures in the socio-economic domain and social cohesion policies for vulnerable urban residential quarters. Active individual participation solicited.
- Specific ethno-cultural orientation and organization (re-)defined as impediments to integration than as promoters of individual emancipation;
- Birth of the ‘active citizen’ concept: focus on individual newcomers to participate as active ‘citizens’ in the domains of work and education; not only rights but also obligations; earlier transformed into a national system of ‘inburgering’ on the basis of a ‘contract’ and first sanctions for non-compliance.
- Lenient policies towards double nationality, changed at the end of the period: naturalisation became seen more the final and earned result of inburgering trajectory.
- WIN-law 1998: Nationwide mandatory Civic Integration courses for newcomers

4) 2002-2007: Integration New Style: Active individual integration efforts required of all newcomers: Dutch language, society, norms and values.

- **Active individual integration efforts of immigrants required (as a condition for admission and mandatory after arrival) for all newcomers that are supposed to be in need of knowledge of Dutch society, including norms and values.**
 - **“Integration test” before arrival (as condition for admission): 2006**
 - **Mandatory civic integration courses after arrival and obligation to pass the final exam. Mandatory courses also for “oldcomers”. Stronger penalties for failing the test (discontinuation of residence permit)**
 - **Responsibility for training shifted to migrant, including financing. Privatization of Civic Integration Courses.**
 - **New Nationality Law of 1 April 2003: re-introduces the requirement to give up former nationality; strict tests on Dutch language knowledge and knowledge of Dutch society. Stronger symbolic and ceremonial value to naturalisation.**
 - **Thus, inburgering connected both with selective immigration in the beginning and formal naturalisation at the end. Naturalisation is “the final crown” on the integration process.**
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5) 2007-2010: Temporary return to Integration policy of late 1990s as local urban social cohesion challenge.

- **Socio-economic renovation and cohesion policies for vulnerable urban residential quarters central: back to the urban policies of the end of the 1990s.**
- **Burgerschap in this context is redirected towards ‘common interests and the common future of all residents’ of the vulnerable residential quarters. Burgerschap in this context ‘has to do with the awareness of being part of this Dutch society’.**
- **Partial relaxation of mandatory individual civic integration measures: the unilateral obligatory character is redefined and the interest of the new migrants, their future participation, their learning of competences and tools for participation and interaction are stressed.**
- **The structure of pre- and after-migration inburgering of an assimilative nature is maintained; comprehensiveness enhanced (Deltaplan Vogelaar).**

6) 2010-2016: Integration New Style Revisited.

New 2010 minority government (VVD/CDA condoned by PVV) announces to `substantially reduce immigration`, particularly family migration;

- to secure `integration` by increasing the level and requirements of integration courses;**
- to increase the responsibility of the migrants by making the costs of immigration and integration to be borne by immigrants;**
- to couple failure in courses with non-continuation of residence permits;**
- to make naturalisation more conditional to measured qualification, participation and integration of the candidate to be awarded;**
- to stop diversity and affirmative action programmes: non-discrimination only.**

2013 VVD/PvdA government in essence did not deviate from this line.

Preliminary conclusion

- **Inburgeringsbeleid (civic integration policies) has become the key part of Dutch integration policies, at least when it comes to the discourses and policy making of overall integration policies.**
- **‘Inburgering’ has changed meaning across the different periods of Dutch integration policy: From an initial toolkit for early reception and integration (in the phase of minorities policy), it gradually became ‘civic integration courses’ as an instrument for assimilation (in the phase of Integration New Style) and at the same time an instrument for immigration reduction and selection.**
- **Naturalisation (acquiring formal Dutch citizenship/nationality) is coupled to this process of inburgering as the final crown on a successful integration process.**

How did “Inburgering” develop as a technical tool and as a policy?

1) 1991 Blue print for early reception by municipalities

- **By Min of Welfare, Health & Culture, based on pilots in two cities**
- **Municipality does intake after registration of foreign newcomers**
- **Offer of 500-hours courses of Dutch language and Orientation on Society, commissioned from Adult Education Institutes**
- **Municipality monitors the trajectory of newcomers**
- **Municipality coordinates; Ministry of WHC finances.**

2) 1994 – 1998 Preparation of the WIN-law: Law on Civic Integration Newcomers

- **By based on practice in many cities**
- **Birth of the `active citizen` concept: focus on individual newcomers to participate as active `citizens` in the domains of work and education; ‘Inburgering’ on the basis of a ‘contract’ (sanctions for non-compliance only applicable for those dependent of social benefits)**
- **Courses of 500 hours for Dutch language, orientation on work, professions and labour market; Dutch society in general. Duration 1 – 1,5 years.**
- **Courses provided by specialized Regional Educational Centers;**
- **WIN-law 1998: Nationwide Civic Integration courses for mandatory newcomers, voluntary for ‘oldcomers’.**
- **Financed by Min. of Interior; Costs 1998: app. 100 mln Dutch guilders.**

2000: Task Force Inburgering: Advise on implementation

2002: Evaluations by municipalities (IBO) and ministry (Evaluatuiou WIN-law)

2004: Parliamentary Inquiry on Integration Policy: Commissie Blok.

All of these evaluations were critical on:

- **Quality of courses and their fit to (very heterogeneous) clients;**
- **Role of municipalities and ministries in the implementation;**
- **Financing of the courses;**
- **Output / results**

3) 2004-2007 Preparation of the new WI-law: Law on Civic Integration

- **Special Min. of Integration within Ministry of Justice 2002-2007**
- **Active individual integration efforts of immigrants required (as a condition for admission and mandatory after arrival) for all newcomers that are supposed to be in need of knowledge of Dutch society, including norms and values.**
- **“Integration test” before arrival (as condition for admission): 2006**

New WI-Law 2007:

- **Mandatory civic integration courses after arrival for all TCN between 16-65. Mandatory courses also for “oldcomers” too. For family members there is the pre-migration test (of 2006).**
- **Obligation to pass a centrally organized and controlled final exam. Stronger penalties for failing the test (discontinuation of residence permit)**
- **Responsibility for training shifted to migrant, including financing. Privatization of courses: migrant buys courses on the market and pays.**
- **Max. period for exam: 3,5 years.**
- **Financing of costs by central government (app. 300 mln in 2007) should be taken over by migrants themselves.**

4) 2007-2010 The new WI-law and the Delta-plan for Civic Integration

- **2007 Min. of Integration within Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning.**
- **In 2007 the new Minister (Labour Party) announced a Delta-plan “to recover the heavy backlogs in integration.**
- **Against the WI-law of 2007, municipalities were asked to lead this recoverage locally.**

Evaluation report of 2010 (Tazelaar et al.) states:

- **New WI-Law 2007 started very slow: 10.000 courses in 2007 realized while 45.000 planned. 2008: 45.000 realized; 2009: 50.000 realized.**
- **Percentage passing exam: between 74 – 85 % for 2007-2009.**
- **Number of loans given out by DUO still very low.**

5) (2010-)2013 The third new WI-law on civic integration

2010: Costs of civic integration (350 mln Euro) should be brought back to zero in 2014..

Min. Of Social Affairs and Employment coordinating integration.

Aim of new Law is ..to reinforce the responsibility of newcomer for his own civic integration..he should take the initiative ..choose a course on the market and pay himself.

- **DUO (for loans) and market are the actors (not municipality..)**
- **Municipality does only monitoring and sanctioning**
- **One central exam for all**
- **Period to exam shortened from 3,5 to 3 years**
- **Sanctioning also by fines (1250 euro)**
- **Refugees' loans acquitted when passing exam in time**

Conclusions:

- **Policy making on civic integration has taken place in an unstable, politicized context: between 1998-2013**
 - **9 ministers for integration, under 8 cabinets**
 - **5 different ministries coordinated policies**
- **There has been few technical evaluations, but frequent political ones; changes in policy were politically motivated.**
- **Changes in the system were so frequent that new systems did not get the time to function.**
- **It has been financially a big sector from the beginning that – in the neo-liberal climate - developed into big business.**
- **Results from the new system do not live up to the high (politicised) expectations; Amsterdam had a 50 % who passed exam in time! Discussions nowadays pushed aside by early reception of (admitted) asylum seekers 2015.**