7. SOCIAL-SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH ON RELIGION AND CITIZENSHIP

After analysing the interpretation of the notion of citizenship and the relation between religion and citizenship at the level of political thought and policy documents, I will now turn to the view of Dutch citizens on these themes. There appears, however, to be a considerable difference between America and Europe when it comes to the everyday use of the term; citizens in the American context are much more familiar with it than their European counterparts (Kennedy 2005a, 2005b, 6–12). As Miller observed during the 1990s: ‘Citizenship — except in the formal passport-holding sense — is not a widely understood idea in Britain. People do not have a clear idea of what it means to be a citizen’ (2000, 26). This observation could also apply to the Netherlands. Citizenship is a term more commonly used in policy than in public discourse. Nonetheless, the issues addressed through the concept of citizenship itself are very much alive in the Netherlands. The aim of Part Two of this book is to investigate how Dutch citizens interpret the concept, and how religion and citizenship are interwoven at the level of Dutch citizens. Before I give a structural outline of Part Two and the empirical studies carried out in this section, I shall first discuss previous empirical studies on the theme of citizenship that have been conducted in the Netherlands.

7.1 Previous Research on Religion and Citizenship

In the past two decades, several empirical studies have been conducted in the Netherlands that have investigated the notion of citizenship. Other studies have researched the appreciation of religion in society. Until now however, relatively little interdisciplinary research has been carried out to investigate how the two are related. I start this section with an overview of three studies that focused on the interpretation of citizenship by Dutch citizens, and thereafter, I discuss four studies that investigated the appreciation of religion and the relation between acts of citizenship and religiosity. The results of these studies will be used for the design of the present empirical studies.

7.1.1 Social-scientific Studies on Dutch Citizenship

The first empirical investigation on citizenship from the viewpoint of Dutch citizens was conducted by Dekker and De Hart (2002). This pioneering research
asked citizens for their interpretation of citizenship by offering them two open-ended questions:

1. What does a good citizen do?
2. What does a good citizen not do?

Respondents were asked to write down a maximum of three answers. These answers revealed interesting results. Citizens mainly focused on the aspect of pro-social behaviour and good manners as characteristics for good citizens. 82% of the respondents referred to both these aspects. Furthermore, about half of the respondents considered a good citizen to be a law-abiding person. Strikingly, respondents did not think of politics and political involvement as an important element for citizenship. This aspect was cited by only 7% of the respondents.

Besides these general trends, there were response differences between regular church attenders and irregular or non-attenders of church. Church attendees focused more on law-abidingness and political involvement and less on pro-social behaviour and good manners. Furthermore, the researchers’ findings suggested a gap between a social-scientific conception of citizenship and the interpretations of the same concept by citizens. Concerning the three perspectives that I investigate in my research (political philosophical theories, government policies and Dutch citizens), there is a similar risk of disconnection between interpretations on citizenship. I will thus take both of these findings from Dekker and De Hart’s study into account in my own research.

Some critical notes have to be made with respect to Dekker and De Hart’s study. Firstly, the study only consisted of two open-ended questions. The results are to some extent random, in the sense that it is unclear whether the answers to these questions reflect the most important elements of citizenship or just the most obvious ones. In order to obtain more knowledge about the relative importance of the above mentioned elements, further research is necessary. Secondly, no interpretation of the response between church attenders and non-church attenders is given. Lastly, it is unclear to what extent the findings of this study are still applicable today. The article was published in 2002, but the data used was collected in 1997. Since citizenship became the central notion in government policy only as recently as 1994, and major frame shifts have taken place since the turn of the millennium, it is quite possible that the perceptions of citizens have also changed, making the data outdated and possibly obsolete.

A second empirical study on the notion of citizenship was conducted by Hurenkamp and Tonkens (2008). The definition of citizenship used in their study was directed towards the social aspect of citizenship: ‘It is about participation in society, directly or indirectly focused towards public affairs’ (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2008, 11). The researchers used focus groups in which they let the respondents discuss certain cases. They investigated five different groups: religious migrants, socially active migrants, socially active native Dutch people, non-active citizens, and policy-makers. Citizens who participated in this study shared opinions on three issues:
1. A neutral, non-rejecting stance toward the notion of citizenship.
2. A larger focus on duties than on rights.
3. A larger focus on social citizenship than on political citizenship (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2008, 19).

When we compare these results to the research of Dekker and De Hart, we see a similarity in the importance of the social dimension of citizenship.

Besides the similarities between citizens in their definition of citizenship, Hurenkamp and Tonkens also found differences. They suggested a division into three groups, based on the activity of the members: emancipation communitarians, neo-republicans and passive liberals (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2008, 21). The main difference between the groups is the meaning and importance of dialogue and respect. Only the neo-republicans stress the value of dialogue. According to them, dialogue is a way of showing respect to fellow citizens and to create bonds between citizens. Respect in this sense is a reciprocal principle. In contrast, the emancipation communitarians focus mainly on their own group. The right to maintain one’s own community stands in the way of dealing with people with other beliefs and other behaviours. Passive liberals, as a third group, are even more negative about dialogue. According to them, there are too many differences between citizens and too many sources of possible irritation to be able to keep the conversation going. From the perspectives of emancipation communitarians and passive liberals, respect requires that people do not bother each other, and tolerance equals tacit acceptance of other attitudes to life. The issues of dialogue, respect and tolerance were not present in the study of Dekker and De Hart, but it is relevant to take these into account in my empirical studies.

Another interesting result from this study is that a focus on national citizenship seems to be problematic for migrants. Whereas Dutch citizens care more for national identity, citizens with a different ethnic background stick to local citizenship. The authors explain this difference by suggesting that local identification offers the possibility to maintain a different national identity and at the same time to distinguish oneself from other people with the same ethnic background (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2008, 31). The researchers therefore recommended that policy-makers focus more on local citizenship than on national citizenship.

In 2011, Hurenkamp and Tonkens published a follow-up to their 2008 study, with a three-part detailed study on citizenship. First, they investigated the notion of citizenship in newspapers and in political debates from the 1990s until 2007. Second, they investigated civic initiatives throughout the country, and third, they investigated to what extent and why people felt at home in The Hague. For the present research, the first and the last studies are most relevant. The first study showed an unambiguous growth in the use of the concept of citizenship and fascinating changes that were made to the meaning of the notion. In the 1990s, the use of the word ‘citizenship’ was marginal and the most explicit meaning was a conservative form of criticism of the welfare state (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2011, 59–67). Nearly fifteen years later, the use of the
term in written media had tripled, which corresponded to an increased use in the Dutch Lower House. In the past years, such themes as integration and good manners have been added to the meaning, and the tone of the debate is nowadays unmistakably set by those who want to fill in the concept of citizenship with Dutch culture. The authors concluded that the political aspect of citizenship had been almost invisible in the Dutch situation and that the focus was mainly on Dutch majority culture. Instead of the pillarised model that defined the Netherlands in the first part of the twentieth century, the country now seems to be heading towards a mono-pillar society.

The third study investigated the extent to which inhabitants of The Hague felt at home in their city or country and why. The results showed that half of the respondents felt most at home in the Netherlands, whereas only one third of the respondents felt most at home in The Hague. The feeling of belonging to the Netherlands was, however, hard to explain for the respondents. Contrary to what Hurenkamp and Tonkens found in 2008, their 2011 study showed that migrants felt more connection with the Netherlands than with The Hague, and that native Dutch citizens were more critical towards Dutch society than migrants. Native Dutch people mentioned the political climate, the many rules and regulations, the sphere in society, and both tolerance and intolerance as critical issues in Dutch society. Many also thought that the Dutch cultural heritage had been damaged. There were two marked trends in that respect: on the one hand, native Dutch citizens missed a typical and distinctive ‘Dutchness’ in this multicultural society. On the other hand, people also missed the Dutch tolerance in a country that increasingly focused inwards.

Both studies provide input for the current research. The fact that political aspects are almost invisible in the Dutch debate on citizenship may point to a discrepancy between political philosophical interpretations of citizenship and empirical practice. This, I will study in more detail. The results regarding tolerance and feeling at home reflect the need to include the dimension of tolerance in research on citizenship and raise questions about the focus on national identity in contemporary citizenship debates.

Hurenkamp and Tonkens (2011) developed a model to frame their results that showed the ways in which citizens could connect with the community. They distinguished four variants of ‘culturalisation of citizenship’, along two axes: ‘practical’ versus ‘emotional’ and ‘restorative’ versus ‘constructive’. The first axis dealt mainly with content of citizenship: do citizens need to share only superficial elements or should there be more? The second axis addressed the way in which people acquired this content: is this content a given, or is it something that people can acquire? Table 7.1 shows this model:
Table 7.1 The four ways in which connection with the community can take place (taken from Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2011, 139)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culturalisation of citizenship</th>
<th>Restorative (dig up)</th>
<th>Constructive (build)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practical (participate)</td>
<td>Learning heritage, canon etc. and conform to the already existing culture</td>
<td>Confronting and blending traditions and habits, creating a new community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional (feel)</td>
<td>Feeling cohesiveness with the given culture</td>
<td>Feeling cohesiveness with what is collectively built</td>
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Based on my research so far, I believe this model offers a promising classification of citizenship perspectives that will prove useful in the construction of empirical studies. In my view however, the model is slightly oversimplified. The restorative-constructive axis fits neatly into the picture that I have sketched in Part One. There, I argued that diametrically opposed trends are visible in political philosophical theories on the one hand and Dutch government policy on the other hand. The political philosophical theories seem to have come to an agreement over the value of a discursive process in the development of a concept of good citizenship. This phenomenon is captured in the notion of constructive citizenship in the model of Hurenkamp and Tonkens. Opposed to this is the trend in government policy concerning integration and good citizenship. Integration policies tended to support a discursive process in the 1990s, but started to demand more adaptation to cultural norms after the turn of the millennium, which Hurenkamp and Tonkens label as restorative citizenship.

My problem with this model lies in the dimension of practical versus emotional culturalisation of citizenship. First of all, it seems to me that this dichotomy is unable to reflect the whole spectrum of possibilities. The practical aspect actually consists of two elements: knowledge and participation. Furthermore, the line of demarcation between practical and emotional culturalisation is not clear. According to government policies, having an emotional bond with the Netherlands is the ultimate goal. How the government tries to achieve this goal is twofold: first, citizens need to have knowledge of Dutch society and language; and second, citizens need to participate actively in society. Here we see a combination of the elements of the practical-emotional dimension. The Dutch government sees restorative emotional culturalisation as its goal, which embraces the idea that people need to feel at home in the existing culture in order to be able to integrate (Hurenkamp and Tonkens 2011, 139). The government then implements restorative practical culturalisation as a means for achieving that goal. Thus, in order to fit the Dutch context better, a cognitive element needs to be added to the model; the government expects not only participation, but also knowledge of Dutch history and customs.
Furthermore, the elements of knowledge, participation and emotion are better described as a hierarchical model; knowledge and participation are seen as building blocks for the actual goal of emotional culturalisation. With these provisos in mind, this model will be useful in the design of my empirical studies.

So far, studies on the notion of citizenship provide valuable suggestions for the construction of my empirical research. However, they also leave many questions concerning the relation between religion and citizenship unanswered. Both the research of Dekker and De Hart and the studies by Hurenkamp and Tonkens show that there is a relation between religion and the perception of citizenship. As mentioned above, Dekker and De Hart clearly demonstrated that church attenders prioritise different elements of citizenship than other citizens. However, it is not clear how this can be explained. Hurenkamp and Tonkens selected their participants on the basis of certain group characteristics; religious migrants were one of the research groups. Rather than looking for differences between the initial research groups, however, the researchers based their conclusions on newly created group distinctions. The choice for this shift in group division is unclear and reflects no interpretation of a relation between religiosity and applied definition of citizenship. At this point, it would be useful for the present research to provide complementary input from several empirical studies that focus on the appreciation of religion in society and on the relation between religiosity and several aspects of citizenship.

7.1.2 Previous Research on the Appreciation of Religion

The famous study *God in Nederland* investigated the role and appreciation of religion in the Netherlands and has been conducted four times since its inception in 1966. This longitudinal study described a continuing decline in the interpretation of religion as a constitutive force in society (Bernts, Dekker, and De Hart 2007, 93). Furthermore, the most recent version (2007) showed that there were two groups, almost equal in size, having diametrically opposed ideas about the role of religion in the public domain. The first group (50%) wanted to limit the role of religion to the private sphere, whereas the second group (47%) argued that religion should also be allowed to have a role in public life. These opinions were strongly influenced by the religious backgrounds of the respondents (Bernts, Dekker, and De Hart 2007, 100–101).

Aside from this, the study revealed differences between religious and non-religious persons in the appreciation of religion.\(^38\) This was reflected not only in divided opinions on religion in the public domain, but also in the evaluation of the role of religion for morality. Religious persons were often found to maintain

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\(^38\) I conducted a MANOVA on the items in the *God in Nederland* study. Items measuring the appreciation of religion served as dependent variables and religiosity as independent variable. The results are: Multivariate F(4, 1249) = 38.15, p < .001, \(\eta^2 = .109\). For an overview of what the analyses and statistical measures entail, I refer to the statistical glossary that I included in Appendix C.
the belief that morality was under threat if there was no longer a belief in God. Moreover, they often thought that their belief in God ensured that society did not deteriorate, and that if churches were to disappear, egoism would have free play. Religious persons are thus more positive about the public role of religion than non-religious persons.

Despite these unsurprising differences in opinions between religious and non-religious persons, the results can be interpreted in different ways. On the one hand, the results seem to suggest that religious people view religion as a necessary condition for the values and virtues that define a good person and a good citizen. Without religion, moral values and virtues would be less apparent. Non-religious citizens might think of the same values and virtues as being constitutive of good citizenship or good personhood, but might not subscribe to the idea that religion is a necessary condition to acquire these values and virtues. Note that we saw the same line of reasoning in Taylor’s communitarianism, who argued that disagreement on ultimate justifications for norms can exist, although different groups in society may agree on the norms themselves (Taylor 1999, 101–02). It is possible however, for religious and non-religious persons to differ on the norms. For religious people, the values and virtues that determine good citizenship might be especially religious ones, whereas non-religious people may highlight other values.

The Institute for Integration and Social Efficacy (ISW) has carried out three studies that investigated this relation between religion and virtues, especially with regard to citizenship. The first study asked respondents to rate the importance of virtues from a given list of fifteen virtues (Van Oudenhoven et al. 2008). The results revealed that there were hardly any differences between religious and non-religious people in the relative importance they attached to the various virtues. Furthermore, there were no striking differences between different religious groups. The authors concluded that there seemed to be more convergence than divergence in Dutch society concerning virtues. A cross-cultural follow-up of this study revealed that virtues do differ between nations, and moreover, that cross-national differences are larger than religious differences when it comes to the importance that people attach to various virtues (Van Oudenhoven et al. 2014).

Jedan and De Looijer (2010) then investigated the use of virtues in political party programmes to understand how the image of the good citizen was drawn with reference to virtues. Interestingly, their study showed that political parties

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39 The results of the univariate tests of the MANOVA were as follows: Als niemand meer in God gelooft, wordt de moraal bedreigd (if no one beliefs in God anymore, morality is under threat): F(1, 1252) = 427.11, p < .001, eta² = .254, Het geloof in God zorgt dat de samenleving niet verloedert (The belief in God ensures that society does not deteriorate): F(1, 1252) = 378.71, p < .001, eta² = .232 and Als de kerken verdwijnen, heeft het egoïsme vrij spel (If churches disappear, egoism will have free play): F(1, 1252) = 286.04, p < .001, eta² = .186. The answers were measured on a five-point scale with lower scores indicating higher agreement to the item. In same order, the means were as follows: religious persons – M = 2.20, M = 2.28 and M = 2.63, while non-religious persons scored: M = 3.58, M = 3.56 and M = 3.75.
made little use of virtue terminology in their party programmes. Jedan and De Looijer concluded that virtues are mainly interpreted as social phenomena and not so much as political instruments (2010, 48). These results can be related to the results from earlier citizenship studies, which interpreted citizenship as mainly a social matter; the political aspect was little regarded.

In addition to these results, the third study of the ISW found a relation between religion and good citizenship — if citizenship is measured by participation in voluntary service activities and charitable donations. Religious people tended to donate more money for charity and spend more time in voluntary service activities (Sluis and Van Oudenhoven 2009, 17). This last result corresponds to the findings of the God in Nederland study, where the relationship between religion and good citizenship was also investigated. The study demonstrated that church attenders in particular were active in voluntary service. Depending on the denomination, this voluntary service was directed either solely towards one’s own group, or also towards other persons (Bernts, Dekker, and De Hart 2007, 90–91).

These results parallel international findings. Empirical studies consistently reveal strong relations between religiosity and various forms of civic engagement and solidarity or pro-social behaviour (Bekkers 2004; Scheepers and Te Grotenhuis 2005; Ruijter and De Graaf 2006; Reitsma 2007). Churchgoers are notably more active in voluntary service work and donate more money to charity (Verba, Lehman Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Campbell and Yonish 2003; Reitsma 2007; Dekker and De Hart 2009). Churches and mosques also provide a wide range of social services. These range from soup kitchens to shelters for the homeless; from hospitals for the poor to various forms of spiritual care. Churches in the USA promote active citizenship and teach the sacred character of civic obligations (Weithman 2002, 41). Likewise, American studies have shown that voting is related to religious affiliation more than any other form of institutional affiliation, and that religion directly and indirectly influences political participation (Verba, Lehman Schlozman, and Brady 1995; Putnam 2000; Greenberg 2000; Green 2007; Putnam and Campbell 2010). Smith and Walker (2013, 399) argued that religion ‘promotes the development of civic skills that enable citizens to participate politically’. These studies all suggest that there is a direct relation between religion and citizenship and that religion can offer a positive contribution to civic engagement, as the American context has shown.

7.2 Reading Guide to Part Two

In the remainder of Part Two, I detail the outcomes of my empirical investigation of the relation between religion and citizenship in the Dutch context. I need to stress here that I do not aim to measure whether religious people are ‘better citizens’; I focus on interpretations of good citizenship rather than actual practices. In doing so, I aim to fill several gaps in existing research. First, the notion of citizenship has often been narrowly interpreted in previous research. Combining the results of different studies and the findings of Part One
enables me to investigate the notion in all its aspects. Second, previous Dutch studies have largely ignored the relation between religion and citizenship. Although several citizenship studies did find intriguing results concerning religion, the search for possible explanations remained rather superficial. My aim is to investigate in detail how Dutch citizens interpret the notion of citizenship and how this relates to their interpretations of the role of religion in contemporary Dutch society. As we have seen in Part One, the interpretation of the notion of citizenship has implications for the appreciation of the public role of religion, both in philosophical thinking and in government policies. It is quite possible that the relation between religion and citizenship also plays a role at the level of the individual. The interpretation of the notion of citizenship may have implications for the appreciation of religion, and vice versa; the religious background of citizens might influence the way in which they interpret the notion of citizenship.

Two empirical studies form the core of this part of my research. The first study regards a large-scale online survey, while the second consists of in-depth interviews with religiously highly committed citizens. Both the online survey and the interviews are designed with the Big Five model of citizenship in mind and intend to measure the extent to which various religious groups and non-religious persons differ in their evaluation of the dimensions of the model and in their appreciation of the public role of religion. It should be stated that in both studies, I have interpreted the dimension of shared identity in the nationalist sense that is put forward in liberal nationalism and in contemporary integration documents, and not in the communitarian sense. Shared identity thus refers to a national, Dutch identity.

The survey seeks to obtain a general insight into the views of Dutch citizens regarding the notion of citizenship and the appreciation of religion, while the interviews specifically address religiously highly committed citizens. I am thus able to investigate the relation between religion and citizenship in more detail than any previous empirical study. Three general questions run as a thread throughout Part Two:

1. How do Dutch citizens interpret the notion of citizenship?
2. What do Dutch citizens think about the role of religion in Dutch society?
3. To what extent is the interpretation of citizenship related to or inspired by the religious conviction of the respondents?

As my study integrates very different perspectives and combines different research methods, it is quite possible that the social-scientific approach of this part is relatively new to some of the readers. I therefore provide here a short explanation of my methods and a brief overview of the chapter structures.

In Chapter 8, I provide the methodological justifications for the online survey study. I firstly present how the questionnaire is designed and the description of items. Thereafter, the demographic data of the participants are given, and the procedure of data-collection explained. In Chapter 9, I discuss the methodological characteristics of the qualitative study. The chapter begins
with an explanation of the choice of participants for the interviews. The sample consists of religiously highly committed Muslims of Turkish origin and religiously highly committed Protestants of Dutch origin. In Section 9.1, I explain how I define ‘religiously highly committed’, and why I chose these two groups in particular. I developed semi-structured interviews, using a topic list. This ensured that several fixed elements were discussed during the interview, at the same time leaving the order and relative importance of the elements open. I present the complete topic list and justification for this specific method in Section 9.2. The chapter ends with a description of the interview procedure, ranging from the search for respondents to the treatment of the interview data. Readers are also invited to look at Appendix A for the complete survey, and Appendix B for the interview scheme.

Chapter 10 contains the statistical results of the questionnaire. Here, the technical and statistical explanations of the applied analyses and results are presented. In Section 10.1, I investigate which dimensions of the model are generally considered to be essential characteristics of a good citizen. In particular, I investigated whether the religious background of the respondent influenced opinions on the interpretation of citizenship. Where differences have been found, further analyses were carried out to investigate if the level of religiosity influenced the results. It is quite possible that not only the denomination influences opinions on citizenship, but also the individual’s level of religiosity. In Section 10.2, the above-mentioned analyses are repeated, with a particular focus on that part of the questionnaire concerning the appreciation of religion. As some readers may be less familiar with statistics, I have included a glossary of statistical and psychometrical terms in Appendix C. There, I explain the main statistical measures that I use, such as the p-value, \( \eta^2 \), mean and standard deviation, and the rationale behind the statistical analyses that I have employed.

Chapter 11 deals with the interpretations of the results of the questionnaire concerning the notion of citizenship, and Chapter 12 focuses on the results regarding the appreciation of religion. These chapters explain and expand upon the results found in Chapter 10. Interpretations of the online survey results are supplemented by the results of the interviews in order to give an in-depth analysis of how the notion of citizenship and the appreciation of religion were perceived by religiously highly committed citizens. The combination of the two sets of data enabled me to subject some of the results of the survey to further analysis. For example, if highly religious people scored differently than low or non-religious people on certain dimensions of citizenship, how then do these highly religious people interpret the notion? The survey data tell us something about general differences on a quantitative level, but the simplicity of the statistical data cannot replace the richness of a well-considered opinion on citizenship and religion. Thus, quotes from the interviews provide a lively impression of how religiously committed citizens treat both the notion of citizenship and the appreciation of religion in the Netherlands.

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40 How the level of religiosity is measured in the survey is explained in Chapter 8.
In Chapter 13, I delve further into the exploration of the interrelatedness of religion and citizenship. I give a detailed analysis of two case studies selected from the interviews. By citing larger parts of the interviews, I can demonstrate not only how the religious conviction of the respondents inspired their interpretations of citizenship, but also how they deal with the secular and sometimes anti-religious aspects of Dutch society.