

**A Comparison of Teaching Politics to Secondary
School Students in Portugal and in the
Netherlands**

Master Dissertation in Political Science and International Relations

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Abstract

This Master Dissertation is a combination of Political Science and Educational Science. This research investigates the differences and similarities in teaching politics to secondary school students in the Netherlands and in Portugal. The main aim is to discover these differences with a comparison of educational systems and teaching methods in political science in secondary schools. In order to do this, this research includes first a chapter on didactics and pedagogics. In this chapter different theories on teaching and development psychology are discussed. The literature review leads me to the conclusion that currently constructivism is used as a theory on teaching. I try to balance constructivism with the other theory, behaviourism. For the continuing of the research I assume constructivism, and its assumptions on theories as guided participation and scaffolding, as a theoretical basis to explore the educational system and the concepts and how this possibly affects the cognitive, moral, and affective development, eventually feeding active citizenship. In both educational systems the formation of active citizenship is considered important, but it is differently characterised. In Portugal, students are able to choose the course on politics in the final grade as a voluntary course. In the Netherlands students are first introduced to politics in a mandatory course on society in the fourth grade. In the fifth and sixth grade they are able to choose the voluntary course on politics and society. Within these courses, students learn about politics. In the Portuguese course there is no a priori teaching method, it is based on a curriculum the teachers use to prepare the classes, while in the Netherlands the course has a teaching method and a textbook for students as a guideline through the concepts of political science. The most important concepts the students need to learn are evaluated in this research, and connected with academic definitions. The courses both have some advantages and disadvantages. These will be discussed with the theories on constructivist and behaviourist teaching in the conclusion of this thesis.

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In this research, several Dutch resources are used. The reader might perhaps not be able to read them. For this, the external reader Henri Serné can be consulted at adsl469388@tiscali.nl.

Dedicated to:

Diana

‘I’m not a teacher: only a fellow traveler of whom you asked the way.
I pointed ahead – ahead of myself as well as you.’
— *George Bernard Shaw*

*A word of thanks to:
Paulo Vila Maior, Isabel Costa Leite, Luísa Vasconcelos,
Cláudia Ramos, Loek Durieux, and Henri Serné*

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List of abbreviations

<i>Abbreviations</i>	<i>Original language</i>	<i>English</i>
ALDE		<i>Alliance of Liberals and Democrats</i>
CDA	<i>Christen-Democratisch Appèl</i>	<i>Christian Democrats</i>
CDS	<i>Centro Democrático e Social</i>	<i>People's Party</i>
CITO	<i>Centraal Instituut voor Taalontwikkeling</i>	<i>Institute for Language Development</i>
CU	<i>ChristenUnie</i>	<i>ChristianUnion</i>
D66	<i>Democraten 1966</i>	<i>Democrats 1966</i>
EC		<i>European Commission</i>
EP		<i>European Parliament</i>
EPP		<i>European People's Party</i>
EU		<i>European Union</i>
GL	<i>GroenLinks</i>	<i>GreenLeft</i>
HAVO	<i>Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs</i>	<i>Higher General Preparatory Education</i>
HBO	<i>Hoger Beroepsonderwijs</i>	<i>Higher Education</i>
LWOO	<i>Leerwegondersteunend onderwijs/praktijkschool</i>	<i>Lower Professional Education</i>
MAVO	<i>Middelbaar Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs</i>	<i>Middle General Preparatory Education</i>
MBO	<i>Middelbaar beroepsonderwijs</i>	<i>Middle Education</i>
NATO		<i>North Atlantic Treaty Organization</i>
NGO		<i>Non-Governmental Organization</i>
PCP	<i>Partido Comunista Português</i>	<i>Portuguese Communist Party</i>
PES		<i>Party of European Socialists</i>
PEV	<i>Partido Ecologista "Os Verdes"</i>	<i>Ecologist Party "The Greens"</i>
PS / SP	<i>Partido Socialista / Socialistische Partij</i>	<i>Socialist Party</i>
PSD	<i>Partido Social Democrata</i>	<i>Social Democratic Party</i>
PvdA	<i>Partij van de Arbeid</i>	<i>Labour</i>
PVV	<i>Partij voor de Vrijheid</i>	<i>Freedom Party</i>
SGP	<i>Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij</i>	<i>Reformed Party</i>
VBO	<i>Vorbereidend Beroepsonderwijs</i>	<i>Preparatory Professional Education</i>
VMBO	<i>Vorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs</i>	<i>Preparatory Middle School and Professional Education</i>
VMBO-b	<i>Beroepsgerichte leerweg</i>	<i>Basic professional path</i>
VMBO-g	<i>Gemengde leerweg</i>	<i>Mixed path</i>
VMBO-k	<i>Kaderberoepsgerichte leerweg</i>	<i>Professional sector path</i>

VMBO-t	<i>Theoretische leerweg</i>	<i>Theoretical path</i>
VVD	<i>Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie</i>	<i>People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (Liberals)</i>
VWO	<i>Vorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs</i>	<i>Preparatory Scientific Education</i>

Introduction

In a democracy, citizens' political participation is very important. This involves a high level of political knowledge in order to be able to activate such participation. Political learning already starts in an early stage of life. Value education is nurtured by the cultural perceptions of parents and in primary school this is further shaped (Jennings, 1974). Learning about politics mostly takes place in secondary schools (or, at the level of more specific expertise, at the universities). The question of how teachers respond to teaching politics can be raised.

This Master dissertation is an evaluation of didactical and pedagogical aspects teachers have to take into account while teaching politics. This research tries to discover didactical theories in the context of teaching politics. Teaching is not only about bringing over information to secondary school students, but it also encapsulates a nurturing dimension of the teacher (Olgers et al., 2010; Slot & Van Aken, 2010). A teacher who does not know how to adapt to the learning process could be questioned of his/her competence, especially for complex studies such as politics. For this reason it is important to underline the psychological development factors and values that should be taken in account while teaching politics (Minns & Williams, 1989).

The focus of this study is not only on 'how to teach', but also rather more on 'what to teach'. The contents of what students learn about politics make them able to shape political opinions, but on the other hand what students learn differs from country to country. This is a logical consequence, since the country's political system is considered the most important to teach. In this issue it is important to stay close to students' daily life, while many students already consider the political system as too abstract and remote (Olgers et al., 2010). The aim of this research, therefore, is to compare two different countries within the European Union, namely Portugal and the Netherlands, and the way they have designed teaching politics as a subject for high school students.

1. Research question, hypotheses and unit of analysis

This master dissertation tries to find the differences and similarities in the political learning process of secondary school students in the Netherlands (College voor Examens, 2013-II) and Portugal (Moreira *et al.*, 2006) from the perspective and the role of the teacher, but it also tries to find the differences in the contents taught to secondary

school students. The research question is the following: “*What are the main differences and similarities in teaching politics to secondary school students in Portugal and in the Netherlands?*”

This research question can be divided in different areas of study, namely didactics, pedagogics, contents, and more abstractly on a policy level of how political education is designed in both countries. Considering this division, the following sub-questions can be formulated:

Didactics:

- a. *Which didactical theories in teaching politics are currently relevant?*

Pedagogics:

- b. *What psychological factors should be taken in account when teaching politics to adolescents?*
- c. *For what educational and pedagogical reasons politics is taught to adolescents?*

Policy on political education:

- a. *What is the legal framework for teaching politics in Portugal and in the Netherlands?*
- b. *What are the main characteristics of the courses on politics?*
- c. *What is the curriculum for teaching politics?*

Content-wise:

- d. *What is the minimum basis of political science taught to secondary school students?*
- e. *What are the most important political science concepts secondary students have to know?*
- f. *Is there a knowledge gap between the concepts of political science and what adolescents have to know?*

2. Objectives

The main objective of this research is to compare the way politics is taught in both the Netherlands and Portugal and what secondary schools’ students learn about politics. The main objective encompasses several smaller objectives:

- a. How politics can be taught in a didactical responsible way and an overview of existing didactical theories;
- b. An overview of political learning processes and socialization in adolescence psychology;
- c. The legal policy framework of teaching politics, as designed by the Dutch and Portuguese authorities, comparing similarities and differences.
- d. A framework of the most important concepts within political science and to compare them with the concepts in secondary schools' teaching methods;

3. Justification

This research is relevant because it shows how politics is taught within two European Union member states. It has the aim of pointing out the differences and similarities. The perceptions on teaching politics will be made clear in the sense that educational systems differ from country to country and that the perception of citizenship or political participation in both countries can be explained differently (Jacobsen, Frankenberg & Lenhoff, 2012). This research might be of some contribution to the scientific world, since a knowledge gap appears to exist in current research about the differences to teach politics.

This research might be useful for policy-makers to observe where educational systems' differences lie in order to integrate them on a European level. Besides that, it becomes clear how differences and similarities affect the way politics is learned.

4. Limitations

The master dissertation faces several limitations. The first is the understanding of the Portuguese language. The supervisor offered to help out with possible difficulties in translating or interpreting the texts. A second limitation was the access to Dutch resources, which mostly are placed in the University Libraries of the University of Amsterdam, Leiden University and the Landelijk Expertise Centrum Mens-en Maatschappijvakken. This implied that for several times fieldwork in the Netherlands was done in order to fully use the resources. The use of Dutch resources is not only a limitation for the author but also for the supervisor, since he has no knowledge of the Dutch language. This limitation was overcome by asking Henri Serné (secondary school teacher in History) as an external supervisor.

5. Methodology

Since this research is based on a comparative research between Portuguese and Dutch educational programmes, it is reasonable to consider it a cross-sectional case study. In order to do so, the research also needs to provide a background on the design of courses' legal framework. The curricula for the Portuguese and Dutch courses are only considered as a guideline through the information the teacher has to teach. For the comparison of the contents, the Essener '*Maatschappijleer Politieke Besluitvorming*' book shall be used for the Dutch course. Since the Portuguese course is not build on a specific teaching method, websites suggested by the designers of the course *Ciência Política* shall be examined as a valid teaching method.

Method of analysis

The research is based on a qualitative cross-case content analyse. A content analysis is the study of recorded human communication, such as books and websites (Babbie, 2010: 33). The unit of analysis is the educational system in the Netherlands and in Portugal, but also in didactical and pedagogical terms. Contents of educational programs are examined. For this purpose several concepts are involved, for instance the concepts that are present in both educational programs such as, amongst others, democracy, ideology, political participation, and European Union. Consequently, educational programs are the independent variables that cannot be changed but may affect the dependent variable which are perceived concepts in teaching methods (Babbie, 2010; Punch, 2005).

The definitions of the concepts are compared with current concepts in the academic world. For instance, the concept of democracy: what is the definition of democracy? How is it explained to Dutch and Portuguese students? Where are the differences? The methodology for this purpose is a qualitative structure analysis. This is called cross-case analysis (Babbie, 2010), based on the "Most Similar System Design", since the aim of this research is to find out the differences in the independent variables that explain the level of political learning in Portugal and in the Netherlands. This method is know as the Mill's Method of Difference as described in Mill's book *A System of Logic* (1843), which means that different independent variables affect the outcome for the similar dependent variables (Gomm et al., 2000: 242). Data will be analysed with the explanation-building model (Yin, 1994: 110). The goal is to assess

the outcome by building explanations for the differences in the contents and in the concepts.

6. Structure of the master dissertation

In order to answer the research questions and to achieve the objectives in a systematic way, the structure of the thesis is divided in the following parts: firstly, the introduction including the above mentioned elements. Secondly, the theoretical framework on didactics and pedagogical theories is addressed. Thirdly, policies on political education and the design of politics courses in Portugal and in the Netherlands are compared to build a theoretical background for the case study. The fourth part is the conceptual part of political science in comparison with the contents taught in secondary schools. Fifthly, and lastly, the conclusion and the discussion will be raised.

Chapter 1 - Theoretical framework

Teaching politics to secondary school students involves several didactical skills. The teacher has to be aware of his/her own role in the classroom. For instance, the teacher needs to take in account different cultural and social backgrounds, opinions, and values. A classroom is full with individuals who all think differently on political issues. The teacher is responsible to guide these opinions in a way so that they fit into a multicultural society in such a way that the student is ready to participate in the society and be tolerant to others' values and ideas. This also implies that the teacher should be aware of his/her own political opinions, since indoctrination is undesirable. On the other hand, a teacher cannot be fully neutral. For this reason the teacher should create an open classroom environment in where students learn how to use their opinions and realize that opinions can be different. For this reason, this chapter firstly tackles a couple of theories in didactics concerning teaching in general and teaching politics, in particular and, secondly, how knowledge on adolescence psychology can contribute to maximize students' political learning process. The main objectives therefore will be (1) to provide a framework on how politics can be taught and to give an overview in existing didactical theories, and (2) to provide an overview of the political learning processes and socialization in adolescence psychology. Lastly this chapter shall provide an overview for what educational and pedagogical reasons politics is taught to adolescents. The main goal of teaching politics is to activate students' citizenship.

1. Didactics

In the current theory formation two current streams exist on how to 'give' education to students. The first is objectivism. Objectivism implies that 'learning is the result of teaching or the transfer of information by adults to children, what is considered as the product.' (Rogoff, 1994: 211) In this approach, knowledge is fixed and purely objective. The only focus of the teacher is the transmission of knowledge that would result into the instruction-activity model. Children are only perceived as receivers and not as active players in the learning process (Rogoff, 1994: 211).

The second theory finds its origin in constructivism. According to Von Glaserfeld (1995), 'the truth exists on a network of events and relations on which we base to live and also on how others base themselves. Everybody interprets and constructs a truth based on own experiences and interactions with the perceived truth.'

(Glaserfeld, 1995, cit. in Valcke, 2000: 41) This directly implies that a concept of truth or objectivism does not exist since everybody has his own truth. Therefore, knowledge can only be used when one has experience with that knowledge. This involves an interesting paradox: all students have another (subjective) perspective on concepts, which forces teachers and teaching method-designers into precise definition of the concepts in such a way that misconceptions amongst students can be avoided (Olgers et al. 2010, 121). A good example with conceptualization differences within objectivism and constructivism is the concept of democracy. This concept can be described in the following ways (Valcke, 2000: 42):

- I. The concept of democracy goes back to the Greek term ‘dèмократia’, that literally implies ‘the people govern’;
- II. Democracy is a regime in which the people by representation govern themselves and in which freedom of speech is given;
- III. Democracy is a way of governing in which everybody has the right of being involved, notably through the electoral process, but politicians do not really represent the people and ‘play a game’.
- IV. Representatives who are chosen with the votes of the people should be representing the people, but tend to express more and more their own opinions.

In the previous examples we see that descriptions I and II have a more objective content on what democracy is. The content is a direct expression of the concept as formulated in, for example, dictionaries or teaching methods. Description III and IV entails a subjective view on the concept of democracy, mainly based on personal experiences, points of views, context and the perceptions of students’ social problems. The question is what approach is considered best to teach something complex as politics to secondary school students: do you as a teacher only transfer knowledge or do you guide students in finding their own truths? In order to answer this question it might be interesting to examine two other perspectives, namely behaviourism and cognitivism.

1.1. Behaviourism and Cognitivism

Behaviourism, the first mayor leading theory in educational psychology, knows two perceptions on learning. The first is classical conditioning. This approach leads us back to the work of Pavlov. In his method he states that the association with neutral

stimulus calls for a reflex. This is called the association principle. In other words, if two events happen at the same time or shortly after each other, one of the events has the same function as the behaviour for the other event (Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 7). The second approach is the operant conditioning. This conditioning, designed by Skinner (1968), states that learning is ‘the origin of observable behaviour change.’ (Valcke, 2000: 56) This theory implies that a certain behavioural standard needs to be conducted with the use of rewards when the desired behaviour is achieved. In this context, the consequence of the response (learning) would be observable behaviour change (Valcke, 2000: 57; Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 7-8; Skinner, 1968). Following Skinner, the best way to do so is with positive rewarding since it would affect intrinsic motivation. In the end, the teacher shapes students’ new behaviour. The term for this approach of teaching is successive approximation (Warries & Pieters, 1992: 62; Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 7).

Cognitivism caused a revolution in educational psychology. It covers the way in which students adapt information. The production system is an important concept on how students adapt information (Newell and Simon, 1972). The concept implies that a connection between one or more conditions to a consequence is caused by a ‘if ... then’-construction (for example: if it rains, then the streets get wet). In other words, the memory of people is constructed by systems to order events. Learning is the selection and coding of information and the adjustment to the own cognitive structure. The main difference with behaviourism is that passive reacting on the environment (receiving information by a teacher) does not cause learning, but that students should be actively involved in their own learning process (Olgers et al., 2010: 122; Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 8; Valcke, 2000: 89).

In order to memorize knowledge it is interesting to evaluate different types of knowledge. First, sensory memory (short-term memory) enables connections with semantic memory (knowledge, rules, concepts) and episodic memory (personal experience). These two together are the conduction of long-term memory that covers declarative knowledge (knowledge itself) and procedure knowledge (the use and implementation of knowledge). Declarative knowledge can be obtained when new knowledge is connected with existing precognition (elaborations) and the reorganization of knowledge. Procedure knowledge, on the other hand, is based on declarative knowledge but it requires a lot of practice and training. Most important in this

perspective is ‘pattern recognition operationalizations’, in where students recognize patterns in certain situations and how these patterns are connected to certain actions people undertake (Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 8; Valcke, 2000: 89).

In this theory it is therefore important to provide students with key concepts. Two directions are to distinguish here. The first theory is Bruner’s discovery learning, in where the teacher should provide problem situations stimulation for students to question, explore, and experiment (Woolfolk, 1993: 319). Bruner follows an inductive reasoning or superordinate learning: the formulation of general principles is eventually based on knowledge of examples and details. This implies that students should be able to learn how to think and how to solve problems. By doing own research, students will increase their memorization skills. This will enhance intrinsic motivation. Knowledge is memorized easier and can be adapted quicker in new situations. A condition is that key concepts need to be repeated frequently in such a way that knowledge can be broadened and deepened. This is called the spiral curriculum (Woolfolk, 1993: 320; Olgers et al., 2010: 122).

The second theory is Ausubel’s guided discovery or expository learning, which implies that students acquire knowledge primarily through the reception or expository learning rather than through discovery, since it organizes students and eventually leads to higher achievements. Ausubel agrees with Bruner that students learn better if they discover, but they need more guidance in this process. He states that deductive or subordinate learning (drawing conclusions by applying rules or principles or logically moving from a general rule or principle to a specific solution) is best for students. His theory has four major characteristics: (1) good interaction between students and the teacher is crucial, (2) expository education demands a lot of examples that connect to preconceptions, (3) expository learning is deductive, and (4) expository learning is sequential (Woolfolk, 1993: 322-324).

In both theories one concept is particularly important. This concept is known as scaffolding, which implies ‘the process of learning whereby a more expert partner offers help to a student in problem solving by adjusting the amount and kind of help to the student’s level of performance.’ (Schaffer, 2006: 128) Another important concept is guided participation, where the teacher becomes part of the learning process. Guided participation is defined as ‘the process by which students develop through their involvement in the practices of their community.’ (Schaffer, 2006: 128) The help of an

expert is useful because cognitive development occurs as new generations collaborate with older generations in varying forms of interpersonal engagement and institutional practices.

1.2. Cognitive and affective learning

The teacher should build upon students' precognitions in order to educate them. The connections with precognitions, experiences, and actuality are important because they make the memorizing of abstract and difficult concepts of political science easier for students.

Objectivism is also unlikely to be used, since every student has its own view on the world. In general, it is not an aim of the teacher to push students to the position of a 'good' citizen, but rather towards the preparation of active citizenship and to critical thinking and analysing. This implies that besides cognitive aims also affective or attitude aims can be formulated. Cognitive aims are formulated in such a way that they do not only reproduce knowledge but they are used as well as an instrument to explore own points of views. Students are thus motivated to discover their own attitudes and (mis)conceptions. Affective aims are most important for citizenship formation, and could involve the following nine factors: openness, empathy, tolerance, distance, researching attitude, curiosity, political self-confidence, participation, and responsibility (Olgers et al., 2010: 162).

Ausubel's method of creating a cognitive conflict can help with the creation of value-dilemmas, in which the student is forced to overthink and learn while working with subordinate learning. These cognitive conflicts are based on four concepts: formation (socialization, identity, and ideology), relationships (equality e.g.), bounding (cohesion, group formation), and change (modernization, individualization, democratization, or globalization). By using a problem-cause-solution method a certain type of political parse tree can be used: this will say that a political process can be parsed, just like grammar in languages, and gives students the opportunity to train both cognitive and affective skills (Olgers et al., 2010: 191).

Cognitive and affective aims are influenced by Bloom's taxonomy. He states that six steps are necessary in order to memorize and use knowledge (Bloom, 1956: 15):

1. Knowledge: the ability to reproduce facts, concepts, and rules;
2. Understanding: the ability to explain in own words the structures, relations or steps in a procedure;

3. Adjustment: the ability of using concepts, rules, procedures in a new context, for example with new examples;
4. Analysis: the ability to integrate the whole into parts with concepts, theories and skills;
5. Synthesis: the ability to aggregate different parts of the phenomenon and the evaluation with internal and external criteria;
6. Evaluation: the ability to evaluate with internal and external criteria.

The assumption is that one first needs knowledge before being able to understand the surroundings. Secondly, one first needs to learn concepts before being able to make connections between several concepts or theories (Olgers et al., 2010: 156). A teacher can opt to reverse or to combine the taxonomy if this fits in his/her approach of cognitivism. When the student starts with synthesis and then works back, it develops more creativity and originality in answering questions. Bloom's taxonomy is particularly interesting for students' assessment. Synthesis mainly suggests that the student has the ability to combine concepts and to create new ideas, while analysis focuses more on intensive reading and the ability to eliminate important issues from the text or audio. The main aim of understanding is to show that the student is able to understand the issue, while knowledge is only showing that one knows what he/she is talking about. Ideally, each exam question should cover components of understanding, adjustment, analysing, and synthesis (Olgers et al., 2010: 157-158).

Teaching politics to secondary school students might be connected with a constructivist approach since students probably already heard or formulated (sometimes unconsciously) political opinions and are (to some extent) familiar with the social context they grow up in (Tedin, 1980: 152). Most researchers do agree upon the fact that political learning should mainly take place at the level of students' houses and their familiar background. Parents with political sensitiveness have a major influence on their children's political learning process and thus it is likely that these students adopt their parents' political attitudes. On the other hand, adolescents who grow up in a family where politics is rarely discussed appear not to be much influenced by their parents on political socialization. Here the role of the teacher is considerable (Jennings, Stoker & Bower, 2009: 795; Sears & Levy, 2003: 77).

1.3. Teacher-student relations

In the classroom the teacher has to take in account several factors. As mentioned in the introduction, the teacher deals with a high diversity of students. Each student has his/her own points-of-view on the world, an own culture and way of adapting information. Besides that, the teacher is also a person with his/her own views on the world. Especially in teaching politics, it is important that the teacher is aware of his/her own positions. First I shall discuss some learning styles of students. After that I shall discuss value-education and the role of the teacher in the classroom.

1.4. Learning styles

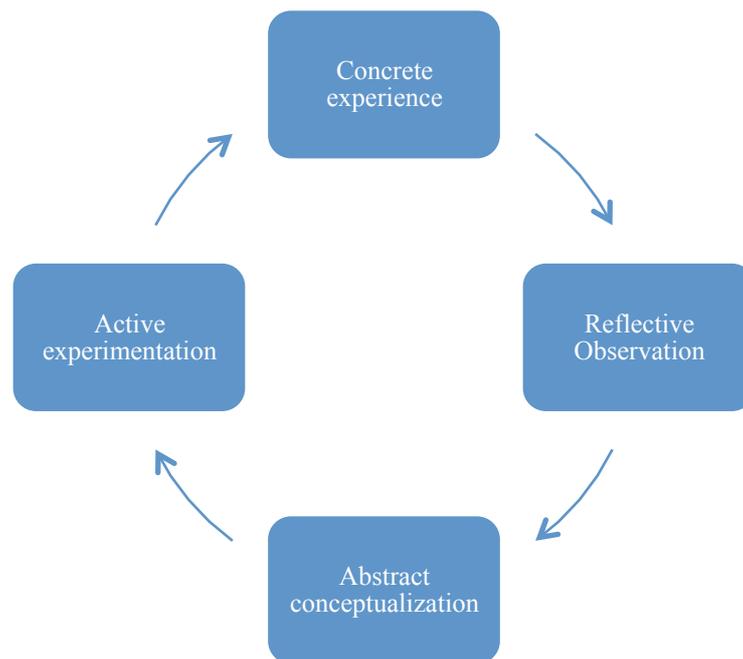
This section will cover three theories on learning styles, namely those of Pask, Vermunt and Van Rijswijk, and Kolb. The first is the Pask theory. In his research, he found three possible learning styles: (1) comprehension learners, (2) operation learners, and (3) versatile learners. Comprehension learners fit with the constructivist approach of teaching since this group of students search for similarities and differences in theories and events. Comprehensive learners conduct hypotheses, they are good in discovering connections, and they are able to think in a holistic way. Operational learners have more problems with ‘learning it all at once’, since for them the important is to study one thing at the time. Students that show this learning type are especially good in detailed cause-consequence thinking, but they tend to loose the whole picture once in a while. Versatile learners are good in both holistic and operational thinking. They possess a good view on (conceptual) networks, but also show specific knowledge abilities. The differences in learning styles also bring other learning strategies, for instance on how a text should be read (Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 75).

Vermunt and Van Rijswijk are the fathers of the second theory. This theory also underlines three styles of learning: (1) surface, (2) in-depth, and (3) elaborative. The surface style is characterised by memorizing, repeating and in-steps analysing of concepts. The in-depth style is focused on the selection of points-of-views, conclusions, ideas, and the main issues with, for instance, the connection with other concepts or evaluating the information more critically. This style is comparable with Pask’s comprehension learning. The elaborative style is mainly based on the relevance of students’ real life. They try to adapt what they learn to their own experiences. Personalization of the theory is used as an important issue. For this reason it is important that teachers use examples from the daily life since learning about politics for

students can be too abstract if they are not able to connect it to their own experiences (Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 75-77).

The third theory is Kolb's learning style theorem. He states that students can work with all four learning phases if they practice with it. The four learning phases are: concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualization, and active experimentation (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 – Kolb's Learning Styles



Source: Kolb (1984: 201).

Concrete experience means the same as 'feeling' and is therefore based on emotional experience with reality. Reflective observation is about 'watching' and is, thus, thinking about what is perceived in the reality. Abstract conceptualization is 'thinking' and, thus, the formulation of principles and theories. Active experimentation is 'doing', which implies that the student actively works with abstract principles and theories in real-life (Kolb, 1984: 201; Boekearts & Simons, 1995: 78; Olgers et al., 2010: 131-132). All four phases are integrated in the learning process, but that does not necessarily have to be in the same sequence.

Also in categorization, people can have their preferences in where they learn the most. Those are: divergers (concrete experience and reflective observation), assimilators (reflective observation and abstract conceptualization), convergers (abstract conceptualization and active experimentation) and accommodators (active

experimentation and concrete experience). Teachers of political science can adapt easily to all four learning style methods since students can balance each other in the learning process. A type of teaching could be discussing actuality, or team work in which students get the best out of each other and of themselves (Dieleman, 2009: 58). The next section tries to underline that learning about politics has a high connection with the society (or ‘reality’) and how another part of learning is involved, namely value-education.

1.5. Value-education

In general, teaching politics is related to three main goals: (1) political literacy, (2) political judgments, and (3) the ability to participate in the society (Olgers et al., 2010: 26; see further chapter 3). Other reasons why learning politics in secondary schools is difficult are its intrinsic complexity. On the one hand, the academic world produces new research on a regular basis, which makes it difficult for secondary school teachers to present an accurate picture of the society. The core of the course might be to present subjective aims of the society, while at the same time other ways of thinking and reasoning are demanded from students. On the other hand, political education is difficult because of citizenship education. Some say that learning about politics should not belong to schools whatsoever and should only be taught at home or as part of the pedagogical bias of the teachers (Olgers et al., 2010, 26).

Considering this, research underlines the importance of political education of adolescents at home, but another main aim should be to learn objective facts about the political system in order to be able to create subjective reasoning on political issues. This is where schools become important, since not all parents are familiar with politics (Tedin, 1980). It is, though, not fair to say that teaching citizenship is only a part of the pedagogical dimension, because it rejects the importance of cognitive knowledge about citizenship and politics, but also the necessary systematic value-education or affective aims. This type of education happens at school in real life (like conflicts or bullying), but does not cope with the essence of values in thinking for the more abstract political world (Vedder & Veugels, 1999).

Value-education for politics is perhaps the most difficult aspect a teacher faces. In general, three ways of value-education can be distinguished: (1) value transfer, (2) value clarification and (3) value communication (Power, Higgins, & Kohlberg, 1989). Value transfer is the most difficult one, because as a teacher one is expected to

‘transfer’ certain society values as tolerance, respect, freedom and equality, while on the other hand students’ freedom of speech who think differently can be restricted (Dekker, 1994). When focusing on value clarification, one expects that students already made a hierarchy of their own values. The task of the teacher is to let students recognize, to compare, and to order its own values. A common problem could be that the student does not know what values should prioritize (Olgers et al., 2010: 66-67). Value communication, on the other hand, invites students to clarify their values, but at the same time they learn to deal with debate and communicate with values that belong to other classmates. But values can be different from culture to culture, and some question whether a certain basis of values should not be necessary in order to learn about politics (Heater, 1990).

Citizenship education is not only about value education, but also about personal shaping in which the student connects its values with his/her personal life and towards society. This means that someone can think differently about personal values and values for society. This is called *ethics of the person* (Van Gunsteren, 1991; Raths et al., 1978). Not only students should learn about citizenship, but the teacher has also to adapt to certain values while teaching. A teacher, for instance, should allow points of views that might not match with his/her personal view. A teacher, on the other hand, has the right to his/her own personal views. This might cause trouble, because a teacher’s role is to guide students towards their own opinions. It is rather clear that the teacher cannot be completely neutral, since his/her values (for instance in what he/she discusses with students in the classroom) will always be visible, but the question is how he/she assures the value of freedom to students. One must also not forget that teachers are role models towards students and their political points of views might influence students (Olgers et al, 2010: 71; Leenders, 2001; Solomon, Watson, & Battistich, 2001).

2. Pedagogics

When teaching, the teacher has to take into account more than only value-education and the learning styles of the students. In a classroom full of individuals the teacher also has some responsibility to adapt pedagogical methods to guide students. Not all students have, for instance, the same cognitive, social, or moral development. Some classes are highly multicultural, which implies that the teacher should provide a culturally compatible classroom. In this section I firstly discuss cognitive development

within the inputs of Piaget and Vygotsky. Secondly, I discuss social and moral development. Here I look at Erikson's identity theory, self-concept and social cognition, and Kohlberg's stages of moral development. The last part of this section will address multiculturalism in classrooms.

2.1. Cognitive development

One of the most influential psychologists on development theory is Piaget. He devised a model describing how humans making sense of their world by gathering and organizing information (Piaget, 1970). His ideas provide a good explanation of development in thinking from infancy to adulthood. Certain ways of thinking are quite simple for an adult but rather difficult for a child. According to Piaget, our thinking processes change radically, though slowly, from birth to maturity. Piaget identified four factors why this processes change: biological maturation, activity, social experiences, and equilibration. These factors interact to influences changes in thinking (Piaget, 1970). We shall discuss the four factors.

Biological maturation is the unfolding of biological changes genetically programmed in each human being. Parents and teachers have no impact on this aspect of development. Activity is the ability to interact with the environment and to learn from it. When we act with the environment by exploring, testing, observing, we eventually organize information and then we are more likely to alter thinking processes at the same time. Social transmission is learning from others. Equilibration is the search for mental balance between cognitive schemes and information from the environment. Following Piaget, people continually test the adequacy of their thinking processes in order to achieve equilibrium (Piaget, 1970). People can achieve this balance by adaption, assimilation or accommodation to newly received information. This takes place in four stages: (1) sensorimotor, (2) preoperational, (3) concrete operational, and (4) formal operational (see table 1, below).

The first two stages are not necessary to this research since they mainly tackle infancy and early childhood. These stages are important to understand adolescent's performances at a later stage. Especially important is the reversed thinking process and the conservation of thought in changing appearances. I shall not discuss this in depth, but I shall focus on the last two stages.

Table 1: Piaget's Stages of Cognitive Development

Stage	Approx. age	Characteristics
Sensorimotor	0-2 years	Start of using imitation, memory, and thought; Start of recognizing that objects do not cease to exist when hidden; Moving from reflex action to goal-directed activity.
Preoperational	2-7 years	Gradually developing use of language and ability to think in symbolic form; Ability to think operations through logically in one direction; Difficulties seeing another person's point of view.
Concrete operational	7-11 years	Ability to solve concrete problems in logical reasoning; Understanding of laws of conservation and the ability to classify and seriate; Understanding of reversibility.
Formal operational	11-15 years	Ability to solve abstract problems in logical fashion; More scientific thinking; Development of concerns about social issues and identity.

Source: Woolfolk (1993).

In the concrete operational stage the child recognizes the logical stability of the 'real' world, he/she can realize the elements of that world that can be transformed although many of their original characteristics stay conserved, and he/she is able to understand that these changes can be reversed. The child's ability to solve conservation problems is based on the understanding of three basic elements of reasoning: identity, compensation, and reversibility. Shortly put, identity is the principle according to which a person or object remains the same over time; compensation explains that changes in one dimension can be offset by changes in others; and reversibility is the ability to think through a series of steps and then to return to the starting point. Reversibility, thus,

implies a two-way thinking. Other important operations developed in these stages are classification and, thus, the ability to categorize and order (Woolfolk, 1993; Piaget, 1970).

The final stage in Piaget's theory is the formal operation stage. In this stage the adolescent starts to be able to think in a hypothetical, abstract way. The concept fitting with this stage is the hypothetical-deductive reasoning. A student in this stage should be able to consider a non-existing or hypothetical situation and then reason deductively back to possible causes for that situation to come to a solution. This does not mean that inductive thinking is not present anymore. On the contrary, through inductive reasoning the student learns how to use specific observations to identify general principles.

In this stage adolescents are often critical towards people whose actions seem to contradict with their principles because of their ability to reason from general principles to specific actions. Adolescents can deduce the set of 'best' possibilities and imagine an ideal world. This might explain why adolescents develop a certain interest in utopias but also why they pay attention to political and social issues. They frequently fall into idealisms. This leads to another important characteristic of this stage, namely adolescent egocentrism. Unlike young children, adolescents do not deny that other people have different perceptions and beliefs, but they become highly aware of their own ideas and analyse own beliefs and attitudes. They reflect on others' thinking as well, but often they assume that everybody around them is just as interested in their feelings, thoughts, and concerns as themselves (Woolfolk, 1993: 30-39; Piaget, 1970). Piaget (1974) pointed out that possibly not everyone reaches the fourth stage of development. For instance, not all students appear to be able to do the hypothetical-deductive thinking.

The Russian psychologist Vygotsky developed an alternative to Piaget. He suggested that cognitive development depends much more on people in the child's world. Their knowledge, ideas, attitudes, and values develop through the interaction with others. Language is a very important component in cognitive development. Language provides the means for expressing ideas and asking questions and it provides the categories and concepts for thinking. This appears logically since when we consider a problem, we generally think in words and sentences. One reason why Vygotsky emphasised more on language in cognitive development is that development flows quickly when the child interacts with more capable members (adults or peers). These

people serve as guides and teachers, providing information and support for the child to grow intellectually. This concept is known as scaffolding (Woolfolk, 1993).

2.2. Social and moral development

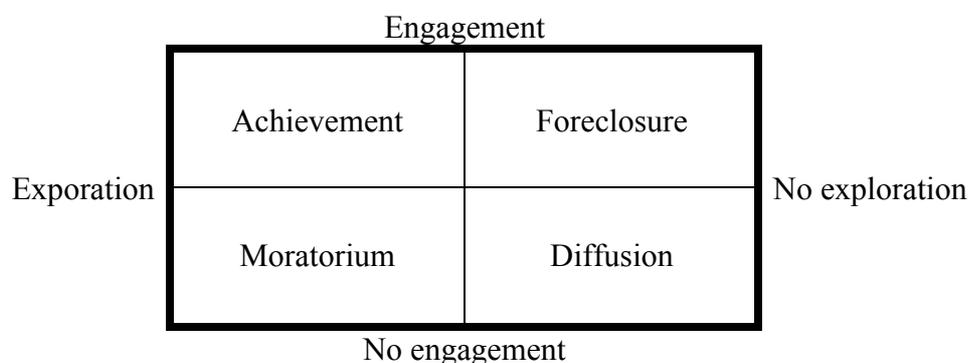
Besides cognitive development people are also involved in social and moral development. In other words, they develop on how they interact with the social environment they are in. Important to social development is the development of the self: the so-called self-concept, identity, and social cognition. During growing up, young people often ask themselves 'who am I?'. The answers to this question can be given when they have found their personal way of life. This implies they have accepted who they are with their qualities and deficits. Identity also is the relationship between other people in the group that influence the way of life. Identity is a subjective feeling in which you know how you want to design your life. This makes identity difficult to research, but Kroger (2004) states that identity also has an objective component that is based on engagement with the social environment, jobs, and specific relationships (Kroger, 2004: 9-10).

Years before Kroger found a relationship between the self and the other, other scholars were already involved in the research on identity. One of the most influential scholars in this field is Erikson. He emphasises the emergence of the self, the search for identity, and the individual's relationships with others through the years, but the formation of identity takes place mainly during adolescence. During this period identity works as a synthesis: the feeling that one knows where to go and that people considered important in one's life will support that (Erikson, 1968). Not for all adolescents this search goes as they want, which can cause role confusion. Four components are especially important in order to positively find one's identity: trust, autonomy, initiative, and industry. Adolescents who have established a basic sense of trust are prepared to find people and ideas worthy of their trust. A firm sense of autonomy encourages adolescents to insist upon free choice about one's career and lifestyle. The initiative already present in childhood can help the adolescent to take steps toward assuming a 'real' adult role. A strong sense of industry can feed a feeling of competence and belief in one's ability to make meaningful contributions to the society (Woolfolk, 1993: 70; Goossens, 2009: 258).

Marcia extended Erikson's work by suggesting four alternatives for adolescents as they confront themselves and their choices. These four statuses are different phases

an adolescent can end in. The first is identity achievement. This means that the individual makes choices that are well considered with realistic options and that these choices are going to be pursued. Only a few students appear to reach this stage at the end of secondary school. Identity foreclosure describes the situation of adolescents who do not experiment (or do not explore) different identities but simply commit themselves to the goals, values, and lifestyles of others, usually their parents. Identity diffusion, on the other hand, occurs when individuals do not reach conclusions about who they are or what they want to do with their lives. They have no firm direction, often caused by unsuccessful choices and therefore avoiding serious thinking about issues at stake. The final status is the moratorium. This status implies that adolescents are struggling with choices. They have no specific engagement with the social environment (Marcia, 1980). This is what Erikson called ‘identity crisis’. Erikson used the term moratorium to describe a delay in the adolescent’s commitment to personal and occupational choices. This delay is very common in adolescence psychology and development process. For Marcia, the meaning of moratorium can be extended with the adolescent’s active efforts to deal with a crisis of identity shaping (Marcia, 1980; Woolfolk, 1993: 71; Goossens, 2009: 260-263). In figure 2 the identity statuses are systematically recaptured.

Figure 2: Marcia’s identity statuses



Source: Mönks & Knoers (2009: 260).

With Erikson’s theory of social development as a framework, I can now examine several concepts connected with development during adolescence. Children’s understanding is first concrete and will late evolve to a more abstract way of thinking. The same is true about the understanding of the self. Early views of the self and friends are based on immediate behaviours and appearances. Children assume that everyone around them has the same feelings and perceptions. Consequently, their thinking about the other is not flexible. Through time they learn to abstract beliefs, intentions, values,

and motivations. That is when abstract qualities are likely to be incorporated (Woolfolk, 1993: 74).

The developing self-concept is the perception that one has about oneself. The term generally refers to the 'composite of ideas, feelings, and attitudes people have about themselves.' (Woolfolk, 1993: 74) Parents, other family members and several social groups, even teachers to some extent, influence the developing of the self. Jennings and Niemi (1974) found slightly proof that social peer groups determine the political self less than parents do. Sears and Levy (2003) stated that parents are important in the adjustment of political opinions. The environment eventually impacts on the self. Yet, adolescents learn to separate and, thus, see others as separate people as well, with their own identities. This is the concept of social cognition or, in other words, 'how children conceptualize other people and how they come to understand the thoughts, emotions, intentions, and points of views of others.' (Woolfolk, 1993: 78)

The finding of the political self does not have to do with adolescents' social development only. Of major importance is moral development in which they should be eventually able to link moral issues with their political conceptions. Kohlberg's theory on moral reasoning is useful to describe the political self. This theory finds its origins in three levels and six stages. In the first level, the pre-conventional level, judgement is based on the person's own perceptions and needs. In this level the stages of punishment-obedience and personal reward are abstracted. In the punishment-obedience stage rules need to be obeyed to avoid punishment. A good or bad action is determined by its physical consequences. The personal reward stage implies personal needs that determine what is right or wrong. The second level is the conventional level, where expectations of society and law are taken in account. In the stage of 'good boy-nice girl', good has the same meaning as 'nice'. It is determined by what pleases, aids, and is approved by others. In the law and order stage laws are absolute and authority must be respected, just as the social order must be maintained. In the third level, the post-conventional level, judgements are based on a more abstract level with personal principles that are not necessarily defined by laws. The social contract stage implies that good is determined by socially agreed standards of individual rights, while the universal ethical principle stage good and right are matters of individual conscienciousness and involve abstract concepts of justice, human dignity, and equality (Kohlberg, 1975: 671; 1981).

Table 2: Kohlberg's stage theory of moral reasoning

Level	Stage	Connection to Piaget
I. Pre-conventional	1. Punishment-Obedience	Pre-operational stage
	2. Personal Reward	
II. Conventional	3. Good Boy-Nice Girl	Concrete operational stage
	4. Law and Order	
III. Post-conventional	5. Social Contract	Formal operational stage
	6. Universal Ethical Principle	

Source: Mönks & Knoers (2009: 266).

To some extent, Kohlberg's theory is comparable with the Piaget's theory on cognitive development. This implies that intellectual development follows the same path as moral development. Some persons will not achieve certain stages in Kohlberg's theory. In formatting the political self this requires that the teacher needs to differentiate between different cognitive and moral development stages. Thus, besides the self-concept and the perceptions of students, multicultural classrooms can be sensible or conflicting. In a classroom it all comes together: students from all parts of the society with different cultural and religious backgrounds. Especially in a classroom where politics is taught in, students have different perceptions on political issues. This implies that the teacher has to be involved in multicultural education. This, in turn, implies the value of teaching cultural diversity. For teachers, this can be a complicated task, since it involves the concept of the self and the others to students. Cultural differences can occur at the socio-economic level, but they might also be racial, religious or even gender-based.

3. Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was (1) to provide a framework on how politics can be taught in a didactical responsible way and to give an overview in existing didactical theories, and (2) to provide an overview of political learning processes and socialization in adolescence psychology. In the didactics section I distinguished the differences between diverse viewpoints on teaching, namely objectivism and behaviourism, on the one hand, and constructivism and cognitivism, on the other hand. I came to the conclusion that teaching politics to secondary school students is, to a large extent, connected to a constructivist approach. This is mainly due to the fact that students

already have precognitions about the society, they had some contact with the social context they grew up in, and because they probably have formulated political opinions. In this context, learning strategies from Brunner and Ausubel are of valuable significance, since they state that information needs to be connected with precognition and the help of a more experienced peer. Learning strategies are also adapted to the cognitive development of adolescents. Two leading theories were discussed in this chapter: Piaget's and Vygotsky's. More connected to constructivism, affective learning, and value-education are the theories on social and moral development by Erikson, Marcia, and Kohlberg. Affective learning helps with the creation of self-concept and identity. Value-education is a part of moral development and demands a push into the last stages of Kohlberg's stages theory.

This chapter had also the goal to answer the question for what educational and pedagogical reasons politics is taught to adolescents. The answer lies mainly in the formation of active citizenship. The main goal appears to guide students towards higher levels of cognitive, social, and moral development. Another challenge is to provide appropriate information about the society that surrounds students in such a way that they can understand and actively participate in it. Conceptual knowledge makes it easier to think in an abstract way and to think about solutions. This chapter does not give yet an answer on differences and similarities in teaching politics to secondary school students in Portugal and in the Netherlands. Although it would be interesting to cover learning outcomes of students, that would not be possible due to space limitations of the dissertation. Instead, chapter 3 will cover concepts that are taught in both Portugal and in the Netherlands and they will be compared with each other to see whether some conceptual differences exist.

Chapter 2 - Policies on political education and design of the course

Differences in the political systems between Portugal and the Netherlands exist, as one can read in the next chapter. This automatically implies that the policies on political education and the design of the course in both countries are different. In short, Portugal only provides learning about politics for students in a limited amount of secondary schools within the course *Ciência Política* in the twelfth cycle, while in the Netherlands learning politics is included in the courses *Maatschappijleer* (Society Studies), which is obligatory in the fourth or fifth year of secondary school, and in *Maatschappijwetenschappen* (Social Studies), which is a voluntary course taught in the last two years of the secondary school. Later in this chapter the design of the courses on politics shall be discussed in depth. In the Portuguese case, this includes the twelfth cycle course, while for the Netherlands only the *Maatschappijwetenschappen 6VWO* shall be discussed. One noticed already that the Dutch education system might need some explanation before addressing the design of the course. Therefore, before discussing the design of the courses, this chapter shall briefly tackle at once the different educational systems in Portugal and the Netherlands.

1. Educational systems

1.1. Portugal

The Portuguese secondary school system starts for students when they reach the age of fifteen but at the same time the compulsory attendance at school is also fifteen (Diário da República, 1986: 3069). The Portuguese *ensino secundário* includes the last three years of the Portuguese school system, namely the tenth until the twelfth year. The differentiation in education levels does not appear to exist, since all Portuguese secondary school students take the same education program.

With the objectives as formulated in the *Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo* [Law on the Educational System] (1984), there is no specialization for secondary school students. These objectives are: (1) to guarantee the development of reasoning, reflection skills and scientific curiosity combined with in-depth exploration of fundamental elements in the fields of humanities, arts, science, and technique, which contributes to cognitive abilities and methodological approaches that eventually lead to an adequate

basis for a follow-up study and active citizenship; (2) to facilitate necessary knowledge to understand the aesthetical and cultural manifestations and to make the improvement of artistic expression possible; (3) to provide a platform for critical reflection on information; and (4) to promote active citizens with education programs within the prevailing values of society, and to motivate students to become involved in the search for solutions for national problems and to how Portugal is connected to the international community (Diário da República, 1986: 3070-3071).

Students entering secondary school have the option to choose a profile that is close to their preferences. All students have a general curriculum, which includes Portuguese Language, Culture, and Literature, a second modern language like English, French, or Spanish, Moral Education and Philosophy. Besides the general curriculum students also attend a specific program for four main profiles, with variations in the courses. Students pick two courses for two years and a course for the last year. The first profile is Science and Technology. The choices in the two-year courses are Biology and Geology, Physics and Chemistry A, and Descriptive Geometrics A. The one-year course could be Biology, Physics, Geology, or Chemistry. The second profile is Social-Economic. The options for two-year courses are Economics A, Geography A, and History B. The one-year courses are: Economics C, Geography C, and Sociology. Students have Math A throughout the whole secondary school in both the Science and Technology as in the Social-Economic profile. The Humanities-Language profile is relatively larger in choice, for the two-year program namely: Geography A, Latin A, a second Modern Language, Portuguese Literature and Applied Maths for Social Sciences. The one-year courses are a continuation of the Modern Language, Philosophy A, Geography C, Latin B, Portuguese Literature, Psychology B, or Sociology. Students have History A throughout the secondary school. The fourth profile is Arts. Here the students have Fine Arts A throughout the secondary schools. The options in the two-years courses are Descriptive Geometrics A, Maths B, and Arts History. The one-year courses are Arts, Multimedia B, and Materials and Technology. Besides the courses mentioned here schools have options to provide other courses. Political Science is one of them. (Consult Appendix 2 for an overview of the possible courses in Portugal (Diário da República, 2007: 4326-4328; 2012: 4337)).

In the Portuguese secondary school system students need to attend 900 hours of education in the tenth and eleventh cycle, and 675 hours of education in the twelfth cycle. For all subjects a 90 minutes final exam exists (Diário da República, 2012).

1.2. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, secondary school starts when the student is supposed to reach the age of twelve. After primary school the students are supposed to make a choice based on the results of the CITO-test (Primary School Exams) they make in the eighth cycle in the following levels of education:

- a. VWO – *Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs (Preparatory Scientific Education)*;
- b. HAVO – *Hoger Algemeen Voortgezet Onderwijs (Higher General Preparatory Education)*;
- c. VMBO – *Voorbereidend Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs (Preparatory Middle School and Professional Education)*;
 - a. VMBO-t – *Theoretische leerweg (theoretical path)*;
 - b. VMBO-g – *Gemengde leerweg (mixed path)*;
 - c. VMBO-k – *Kaderberoepsgerichte leerweg (professional sector path)*;
 - d. VMBO-b – *Beroepsgerichte leerweg (basic professional path)*;
- d. LWOO – *Leerwegondersteunend onderwijs/praktijkschool (Lower Professional Education)*
- e. Other variations on education.

According to the *Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs* [Law on Secondary Schools] (1963), the VWO is the type of education that focuses on preparing students for the university. Its goal is to provide a general knowledge about science and the Dutch society. The VWO's duration is six years and is divided in two sub-categories: (1) Athenaeum and (2) Gymnasium. The difference between the two is the addition of courses on Latin Language, Literature and Culture and Greek Language, Literature, Culture and Literature to Gymnasium students (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1963, article 7).

The HAVO is defined as education designed to prepare students for the HBO (*Hoger Beroepsonderwijs* [Higher education]). The duration of HAVO is five years. The possibility to enter HAVO after VMBO exists. In this case the last two years of

HAVO are necessary to accomplish in order to obtain a HAVO diploma. This implies that students do not need to undertake the whole five-year program of HAVO (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1963, article 8). VMBO exists since 1999 and is a successor of the MAVO and VBO. The education program is a preparation on the MBO (*Middelbaar Beroepsonderwijs* [Middle education]) with four years duration. The aim is to connect learning with working. The different levels in VMBO have to do with the balance between classical learning in school to a more practical way of learning (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1963; 1999, articles 9 to 10cd).

Since the focus of this research is the sixth class of VWO, the following section addresses the last three classes of this level, since they are considered to be preparatory for the State Exams. At the end of the third class students in VWO chose a profile with courses, besides that they have a mandatory part and space for free choice. In the mandatory part one can find the courses Dutch Language, Literature and Culture, English Language, Literature and Culture, Society Studies, Physical Education, Arts and Cultural Education, History 1, and Natural Sciences. Schools in the province of Fryslân also provide Frisian Language and Culture as a mandatory course. For the gymnasium students in VWO, Arts and Cultural Education will be replaced by Latin Language, Literature and Culture or Greek Language, Literature and Culture (Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 1963, article 12; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen, 2014).

The four profiles in the VWO are as follow: (1) Nature and Technique, (2) Nature and Health, (3) Economics and Society, and (4) Culture and Society. In the Nature-profiles, the students take Maths-Beta and Chemistry. Students with the Technique-profiles also take physics and a fourth free choice course, which could be Computer Systems, Geography, or Nature, Life and Technique (NLT). Within the Health-profile, students also take Biology and a fourth free choice course, such as Physics, Computer Systems or NLT. Students with the Economics and Society-profile take courses such as Economics, Maths-Alpha-plus, History 2 and a fourth free choice course, such as Geography, Social Studies, Management, Philosophy, or an extra language. Students with the Culture and Society-profile take courses like Maths-Alpha, History, Arts and History of Arts (depending on the school this could be Fine Arts, Visual Arts, Drama, Music, or Dance), and a third modern language like French,

German, or Spanish, which is free of choice. Some schools also provide Turkish, Arabic, Russian, or Chinese.

Most courses in the profiles are also provided in the free choice part, depending on schools. This could imply that, for example, someone with a Nature-profile could also attend classes of Arts and History of Arts, while a student with the Culture and Society also could take Biology. All students need to achieve at least 1.040 hours of education in years four and five and 700 in year six. This makes an average of 8 to 10 courses per year. For most courses there is a State Exam. Society Studies, History 1, Arts and Cultural Education, Natural Sciences, and Physical Education are only assessed with a School Exam (Examenblad, 2014; Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschappen; 1963, article 12).

2. Framework and aims in teaching Politics

As noticed in previous sections, the course *Ciência Política* and the course *Maatschappijwetenschappen* are not part of a mandatory program. This, thus, implies that in-depth teaching of Politics does not reach every secondary school student. The implications for political participation, political knowledge, and citizenship shall be discussed in the discussion chapter of the dissertation. What is relevant for this chapter is an overview on the design of the courses and the aims of the courses for secondary school students.

2.1. Portugal

Students are able to choose in their last year of secondary school the course *Ciência Política*. This separate course is taught for a year and is taught for 90 minutes a week. The course exists since 2006 and is not integrated in all schools since it is still on an experimental stage (APCP, 2007). No teaching method does (yet) exist, but the curriculum is rather complete and contains tips and didactical tricks for teachers, as well as materials and final aims.

The course of *Ciência Política* is mainly build up by four teaching elements, namely: (1) introduction to the course and core concepts, (2) political ideology in the modern state, (3) organization of the state and actuality, and (4) international relations. Students learn general facts in Political Science and analysing and discussing are also present. Concepts about the state, the European Union and political history are important for the first part of the second unit. In the second part students must be able to

analyse the meaning of individual rights and the state and equal treatment. In the third unit, students learn the political system of Portugal and make a comparison with other countries. Citizenship and political participation are other important aspects of this unit. In the fourth unit, students must be able to analyse and discuss current political international order issues such as European Union integration, globalization, human rights and war and terrorism (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006).

The final aims for this course are connected to the aim of fostering active citizens, as formulated in the *Lei de Bases do Sistema Educativo*. The aims for *Ciência Política* are formulated as follow:

1. To provide basic knowledge about politics, in general and more specific in Portugal;
2. To promote the necessary understanding for political action guided by ethics;
3. To contribute for autonomous, responsible, conscious, inventive, and critical citizens;
4. To guide the development of critical reasoning about the world and the society;
5. To contribute to the democratic values and the internalization of existing norms (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006: 5).

Besides the final aims of the course, specific objectives designed for the students are also present. These objectives are based on cognitive and social-emotional skills. Cognitive skills are about the knowledge obtained in the course, while social-emotional skills are considered to be important for active life. These objectives are:

Cognitive skills:

1. To obtain knowledge about the status and the role of political science;
2. To recognise the interaction between different fields of political science;
3. To understand the complexity of politics, connected to society, economy and the evolution of mentality;
4. To understand how political theory and practice complement each other;
5. To be able to use specific instruments of analysis from political science;
6. To know the specific terms and concepts of the discipline (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006: 5).

Social-emotional skills:

1. To develop the capacity to work in groups and at a individual level;

2. To respect other points of views and the plurality of opinions;
3. To develop own opinions based on a clearly founded reasoning;
4. To respect democratic values and norms;
5. To enhance tolerance and solidarity;
6. To develop the capacity to argument and to reflect (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006: 5).

Cognitive and social-emotional skills do also imply a certain level of competences for students. These competences are structured to emphasise the importance of ‘how to do’ and ‘how to be’ and to enhance the appreciation of the practical dimension and the learning-process. At the end of the course the students should be competent to:

1. Characterise the field of political science and political activity in general;
2. Relate political science with other scientific fields;
3. Relate politics with society;
4. Identify and characterise the main political theories;
5. Question ideologies and political solutions;
6. Systematise and critically think politics;
7. Read and interpret different types of documents related to politics;
8. Apply conceptual tools and the methods of analysis in new situations or problems;
9. Confront different opinions and critically think about these opinions;
10. Fundament arguments;
11. Produce founded and coherent texts;
12. Use search techniques, processing and present information (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006: 11-12).

In order to test if students raised the competences, the teacher will conduct an evaluation of knowledge. The teacher has to take into account the following principles: (1) to provide standardised examinations that connect with the class’s activities, (2) to depart from a diagnostic written evaluation before starting the course for the teacher’s awareness on the amount of knowledge students already have about modern history starting from liberal revolutions towards the twentieth century (including World Wars, democratic regimes, colonialism, the history of Portugal, Salazar’s dictatorship, the 25th of April 1974 revolution, and the access to the European Union), knowledge on

philosophical reasoning, specific terms and concepts of political science, and students' linguistic competences, (3) to use different types of examination, such as observations on the level of autonomy and responsibility of the students, oral participation, written tests, and assessments made during classes or based on the contexts of the lecture, (4) the obligation to motivate students' participation in the examination by providing accurate information (on the one hand) and to overcome difficulties in the materials (on the other hand) in order to achieve the objectives, (5) to enhance students' learning progress, and (6) to guide students to overcome their learning difficulties and to support them in a didactical responsible way (Moreira, Cardoso Rosas and Costa Lobo, 2006: 13-14).

2.2. The Netherlands

In the Netherlands, Political Science is taught as part of the courses *Maatschappijleer* (Society Studies) and *Maatschappijwetenschappen* (Social Studies). *Maatschappijleer* is a mandatory curriculum for all students in VMBO, 4HAVO and 4VWO since 1972 after the introduction of the *Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs*. This course is taught for one year and includes 90 minutes per week of classes. The course is based on four pillars: *Parlementaire Democratie* (Parliamentary democracy), *Rechtsstaat* (Civic law), *Multiculturele Samenleving* (Multicultural society) and a fourth subject, free to be decided by the school or the teacher. Students do not participate in a *Centraal Examen* (State Exam) for this course, but they got graded for this course for Schools Exam (College voor Examens, 2013-I).

For students more interested in the society, the choice of *Maatschappijwetenschappen* is possible since 2009 as a replacement of *Maatschappijleer 2*. This course is taught in 4/5HAVO and 5/6VWO and takes two years with an average of 180 minutes per week (depending on the curriculum of the school). In this course, students learn to know the society in depth, and several issues are discussed. At least Political Science, Law and Mass Media are examined in the State Exam. The school is able to teach three more issues, such as Development Aid, Sociology, Psychology, Ethics, Environment, and Labor. For both *Maatschappijleer* and *Maatschappijwetenschappen* several teaching methods exist, the prevailing is Essener which is also the method used in this dissertation in order to examine the concepts.

In this dissertation the focus is on Political Science within the

Maatschappijwetenschappen course for the 5/6VWO classes. This course is built on four sub-courses, namely: (1) political structures, (2) actors in the policy-making process, (3) political culture and ideologies, and (4) international relations (College voor Examens, 2013-II: 86).

Students are expected to recognise the structure of the Dutch political landscape and from other countries, such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France and authoritarian countries. Here they learn about political systems and voting systems, but also about the value of democracy and civic law. Furthermore, students should be able to explain and to analyse the policy-making process and who/what is involved in the process based on the Easton Model and Barrier Model. Another important aspect is that students must be able to discuss to what extent political systems and policies can influence the political culture and vice versa, as well as they should be able to distinguish the most important political ideologies such as communism, socialism, social democracy, Christian-democracy, liberalism, neo-liberalism, populism, and fascism. Contemporary ideologies such feminism and environmentalism are also taught. Within international relations, students are expected to understand the European Union and the United Nations and how they can influence Dutch policies on economic, cultural, social and political aspects (College voor Examens, 2013-II: 11-42).

This also goes together with several aims and objectives. Those are formulated around three main elements: (1) political literacy, (2) political judgments, and (3) the capability to participate in the society (Olgers et al., 2010: 26). It is important to notice that the third point mentions the *capability* to participate in the society. This, thus, implies that the participation in society on itself is not a main goal of Social Studies. In the end, the student should be able to decide in what way he/she would like to participate in politics or in the society. The aims do point out two functions of the course, which are (1) providing ground for core concepts and approaches to social sciences, and (2) education on citizenship. Currently, the government appointed the second function as the main aim of the whole education system, with a special role within Social Studies (Olgers et al., 2010: 26-27). Students are expected to make the connection between the course and their active life within four main concepts: bounding, formation, relationship, and change. These main concepts can be connected to core concepts from the field of sociology and political science, which are already discussed in chapter 3. Besides learning about concepts, students are also expected to

train skills such as analysing actuality, doing research, writing, formulating opinions with grounded arguments, and presenting the written outcome of their research (Olgers et al., 2010).

Neutrality in the education system is considered highly important. For that reason the course brings perspectives from different scientific approaches together. The aim is not to teach the students certain ‘truths’ but to analyse different types of social issues that are specific for a certain society or certain time, or that are universal and for all times. This implies an analysis of different angles of the society, namely (1) social-cultural, (2) social-economic, (3) political-legal (4) historical, and (5) comparative, within different issues and core concepts on micro-, meso-, and macro-level. By analysing society in this way, students are able to found the conclusions for their own actions as responsible citizens in the society (Olgers et al., 2010: 41).

Currently, the core program is focused on three main pillars: (1) culture and cultural learning, (2) social structures and social differences, and (3) politics, policy-making and ideologies. These three main pillars are based on the first three angles in the analysis, while number four and five are present in all three pillars of the program. The aim of this program is (1) to establish the connection between students’ own opinion and their socialisation process, (2) to raise awareness for different opinions in a complex society, and (3) to raise awareness that opinions often are connected to individuals and groups’ social positions and interests and that those are connected with different political ideologies, that sometimes are hostile to fundamental rights (Olgers et al., 2010: 46).

Chapter 3 – A comparative analysis of concepts as taught in *Ciência Política* and *Maatschappijwetenschappen*

While chapter 1 deals with didactical and psychological issues on teaching politics to secondary school students, chapter 2 deals with the characteristics of the educational systems in Portugal and in the Netherlands, this chapter will examine the contents of the courses on political science. For the Portuguese case this implies a close reading of suggested resources (mainly Pasquino (2002)) that can assist the teacher. No specific students' textbook appears to exist for the course *Ciência Política*. Luckily, the curriculum provides information, webpages, and books teachers can use. This implies that students are highly dependent on the information the teacher provides them. In the Netherlands, teachers are more limited since a 'standard' method to teach *Maatschappijwetenschappen* exists, to which political learning is assigned. All teachers teach with one of these methods and are free to choose extra information they provide. This research is based on the most-used method in Dutch secondary schools: 'Essener', written by Schuijt et al. (2013). Concerning the degree of freedom in teaching, it might be difficult to evaluate to what extent concepts are mutually understandable or if they are even comparable. As it was mentioned in an earlier chapter, this research is based on the guidelines of the Portuguese curriculum and the method 'Essener.' In table 3 the mutual concepts in political science are identified. Because of different contexts, some concepts will only appear in the Portuguese curriculum or in the Dutch method. They will be mentioned in the table as well, but they will not be further investigated since the focus of this research is primarily on a comparative approach, which requires an analysis of concepts shared by both models. The Portuguese curriculum is integrated completely in this table, while the Dutch method includes more concepts than the table captures. The reader will find a complete list of concepts in the 'Essener'-method in Annex 1. The research questions for this chapter are as follow:

- a. *What is the minimum basis of political science taught to secondary school students?*
- b. *What are the most important political science concepts secondary students have to know?*
- c. *Is there a knowledge cap between the concepts of political science and what adolescents have to know?*

Research questions are connected to the goal of this chapter, which is to provide a framework of the most important concepts within political science and to compare them with the concepts in secondary schools' teaching methods. As Table 3 (below) points out, research questions a. and b. are already answered. The most important concepts will be further explored in this chapter. The emphasis is on potential differences between the conceptualization in the Portuguese and the Dutch methods, and on possible connections between secondary school definitions and the definitions used in the academic world. These definitions were collected in Leach (2008), but also in another resources such as Hague and Harrop (2007). The consequences and conclusions shall not be drawn in this chapter, but will be discussed in the concluding chapter. For some concepts a precise definition is missing, especially in the Portuguese case. The implications for students and teachers will be broadly discussed in the conclusion as well.

Table 3: Concepts in courses on Political Science in Portugal and the Netherlands

<i>Mutual Concepts</i>	<i>Specific for Portugal</i>	<i>Specific for the Netherlands¹</i>
Politics (concept)	Portugal emigration country	Core tasks Dutch government
State	24 April 1974 and transition to democracy	Coalition making
Democracy	Multiculturalism ²	Parliament's rights
Democratic constitutional state	Globalisation after cold war	Trias Politica
Parliamentary Democracy		Policy making process (Easton & Barrier model)
Parliamentary government		Media and politics
Presidential government		Intergovernmental
Local governing		Supranational
Pressure groups		United Nations
Political parties		NATO
Ideology		
- Left/right		
- Liberalism, confessionalism, socialism		
Political participation		
European Union		

Based on: Curriculum Political Science, Portugal and method Essener, the Netherlands

¹ The list with the specifics of the Netherlands is not complete. For the purpose of this research the most important concepts are chosen. For a complete overview of concepts in Essener, see Annex 1.

² Multiculturalism is in this research considered as a specific concept for the Portuguese case. Please note that Dutch students intensively examine this concept within *Maatschappijwetenschappen* during a separate theme on multiculturalism and are only mentioned in the theme on political science. For this reason, this concept is not addressed as a Dutch specific concept or a mutual concept.

1. The concept of 'Politics'

For a teacher, the Portuguese concept of 'politics' is not clear. The concept is rather abstracted to '*political science*' as than to '*politics*'. The concept is used more as a starting point for the course in the twelfth grade as introduction to the different branches of political science (political theory, international relations, public policy, area

studies, European studies and comparative politics), allowing an understanding of the diversity of topics of this discipline and how political science is connected to other disciplines such as history, economics, law, sociology and philosophy, in order to understand the complex and interdisciplinary nature of political science and political activity (Moreira et al., 2006: 16). I miss a precise definition of ‘politics’ in the suggested resources, but found a review on political science. This review on political science does not explain the concept of ‘politics’.

In the Dutch Essener method *politics* is defined as ‘A process in which desires, wishes, and demands from society are transformed into legal regulations.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 6) This implies that politics is equated to the policy-making process. Politics can also be the constitutional structure of the state or the strategy of gaining power. For some people, politics is like a ‘dirty game.’ When politics involves policy-making, gaining power or playing a game, those three definitions all imply the gain of interests. Essener focuses on the definition on politics according to Easton’s conceptualization: ‘Decision-making process on how scarce resources should be allocated among the society in such a way that the decisions carry authority and the support of the majority of the population.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 8) This implies material and immaterial resources. Material resources are, for instance, money, housing, health care, and energy. Immaterial resources are the allocation of values such as freedom and equality. For example one can think about gay marriage, abortion, and equal finance of religious and state education. These issues, or new policy-making, become salient when a political problems rise. A political problem can be defined as ‘a situation considered as undesirable by a large group of people that is aroused by societal developments due to opposed interests and that should be changed by governmental interventions.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 7)

The chapter on ‘what is politics’ in Leach (2008) is long. The book covers several questions on what politics exactly is. To mention the chapter’s conclusion at first, politics is not just about one correct answer. Politics can be about government, governance, the state, power, conflict, consensus, ideas, or principles. For many scholars, politics means something else, thus students dealing with politics need to understand that the concept embodies several competing perspectives and different answers, even conflicting interpretations of the world and human society. Politics is

inherently controversial as a concept, what makes it interesting to investigate (Leach, 2008: 7-17).

2. The concept of 'State'

The Portuguese curriculum suggests teachers to go to the Wikipedia page for an explanation on the concept of 'state'. Teachers should consider this as a valid definition for their students. Therefore in this research, the conceptualization of the state will as well be based on the Wikipedia's definition: 'A set of institutions such as the government, military forces, and public servants who control and govern a nation' and as 'a sovereign state with own structures and political organizations.' (Wikipedia, 2014) The Portuguese Wikipedia page on the concept of the 'state' also provides Weber's conceptualization: 'The state is responsible for the organization and social control, because it holds a monopoly on legitimate violence (coercion, especially legal).' (Wikipedia, 2014-I)

Essener conceptualizes 'state' with four components: sovereign power, citizens, internationally recognised territory, and government's monopoly of violence. Sovereign power is defined as 'the ability to affect the behaviour of others, even if they don't want to', and 'the ability to take political decisions.' (Schuijt et al., 2013: 13) This is connected to authority, which means 'the acceptance of people that the power of others is constitutional.' (Schuijt et al., 2013: 13) The monopoly of violence implies that only the government is allowed to use violence.

In Leach's *Political Companion*, 'state' is defined as 'a compulsory political association that has supreme power over a particular territory.' (Leach, 2008: 162) The definition is extended with Weber's definition: 'the state is a human community that (successfully) claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given territory.' (Leach, 2008: 162) This implies that the concepts of force of power (monopoly of violence), sovereignty, and legitimacy are closely bound with most accounts of the state. The state can also be defined more narrowly, to include formal institutions of the central government (Leach, 2008: 162).

3. The concept of 'Democracy'

Portuguese students learn much about democracy and the transition process towards democracy since the teacher is advised to discuss chapter 10 in Pasquino. Throughout the chapter the Schumpeter definition is considered to be important for the

understanding of democracy: ‘The democratic method consists of the institutional arrangement necessary to reach political decisions in which some people reach the power to decide through a competition aimed at getting the popular vote.’ (Pasquino, 2002: 317) Pasquino argues that Schumpeter’s definition alone is not enough. He states that Friedrich’s notion of ‘planned reaction’ should be taken in account. This notion implies that politics can be addictive. Politicians have the desire to be reelected, get used to the taste of power, the privileges and prestige the function brings, and have a genuine loyalty to electoral promises and ambition for a place in history. Consequently, politicians need to be accountable (Pasquino, 2002: 318-319). The chapter continues with some conditions states need to meet before one can speak about a democratic regime. The most important is the respect and guarantee of citizens’ rights (Pasquino, 2002: 321). Considering Portugal’s recent democratisation process, a lot of attention is drawn on the democratisation process of countries. I consider the process of democratisation important, but in general it is another concept that fits more in the specific context of Portugal. For this reason it will not be discussed.

Rather strangely, the Essener method does not include a conceptualisation of democracy. The concept is already discussed within the History course. The Essener method considers ‘democracy’ as a red line throughout the book without explaining it in depth. Instead it provides four theories on the distribution of power within a democracy. The method states that the theories can be descriptive and normative. Those shall be shortly addressed here. The first is the Classic Democracy theory, or the theory of participatory democracy.

This theory states that policy-making is the ‘will of the people’. In the method they use a definition by Lincoln: ‘Democracy is the government of the people, by the people, for the people.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 17) This normative approach states that people are politically equal and want to participate both actively (for instance voluntary work or helping in the electoral campaign) and passively (voting on elections). In theory, this can be applied for the Netherlands, but the reality points out at a different direction. The election turnout was 74,6% in 2012 and 75,4% in 2010. This decreasing trend is visible since the abolishing of mandatory voting in 1970. No more than 300.000 Dutch citizens (out of 17 milion) are member of a political party (Rijksoverheid, 2012; NLKiest, 2014; Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2014).

The second theory is the Representative Democratic Model. This theory is considered to be more realistic, since it points out that people put their mandate in the hands of elected politicians who take the decisions in name of the citizens.

The third theory is the Pluralistic Democratic Model. This model is a supplement to the Representative Democratic Model. This model recognises the diversity in the society and states that every culture has its own interests. Political power is thus not only divided between voters and politicians but also with other political organisations like the European Union.

The fourth theory is the Elite Theory. This theory states that even in a democracy the elite takes the most important positions on political and socio-economic issues (Schuijt et al., 2013: 17).

In the academic world a lot on democracy is written. The *Political Companion* describes democracy as follows: ‘Democracy means government by the people, or in Abraham Lincoln’s slightly expanded formula, ‘government of the people, by the people, for the people’.’ (Leach, 2008: 122) Democracy appeared to be in many ways the logical culmination of liberal political principles, such as government by consent, freedom, and equality. Although some values are shared, democracy and liberalism are in some sense conflicting with each other.

Pure ‘economic liberals’ suggest that in a democracy everybody has its own interests that do not require state interventions and that *laissez-faire* and the principle of free market regulation are a logical consequence of this. ‘Social liberals’ embraced state’s interventions as an expansion of individual freedoms and rights, for instance, involving education, working conditions, and a ‘living wage,’ while economic liberals want to continue with the self-regulation of the free market without much government interventions (Leach, 2008: 72). Furthermore, it is interesting to tackle the conceptualisation of representative democracy and liberal democracy. Following Hague and Harrop, representative democracy is a form of democracy in which ‘citizens elect a parliament and, in presidential systems, a chief executive. These representatives are usually held to account at the next election’, and a liberal democracy is defined as ‘a version of representative democracy in which the scope of democracy is limited by constitutional protection of individual rights, including freedom of assembly, property, religion, and speech. Free, fair and regular elections are based on universal (...) suffrage.’ (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 44)

4. The concept of ‘Democratic Constitutional State’

Resources do not suggest a direct conceptualisation of democratic constitutional state, but it is becoming clear that the Portuguese Republic is based on this concept when reading article 2 of the Portuguese Constitution:

The Portuguese Republic shall be a democratic state based on the rule of law, the sovereignty of the people, plural democratic expression and organisation, respect for and the guarantee of the effective implementation of fundamental rights and freedoms, and the separation and interdependence of powers, all with a view to achieving economic, social, and cultural democracy and deepening participatory democracy.

Considering this conceptualisation, the Portuguese state protects fundamental individual rights and respects the principles of a democratic state based on the rule of law. Portugal is based on the principle of division of powers. The executive power is in hands of the government while the parliament is the legislative power. The Constitutional Court can check whether laws abide by the Constitution and can rule that laws invalid. The division is somewhat blurred, since the government has legislative powers as well. In this case, laws must be approved by the parliament (Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, articles 108, 110, 112, 120, 147, 156, 182, 183, 187 and 188; Canotilho, 2014).

The concept of democratic constitutional state is in the Essener method defined as ‘A state in which the rights and duties of both citizens and government are legalized in such a way that citizens are protected against abuse of power by the government.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 22) The constitutional state is a precondition for democracy. Constitutional rights protect minorities against the majority. For instance, the majority does not have the freedom to erase the article on freedom of speech from the Constitution, or any other article in the Constitution. Therefore it is better to give a second definition to democratic constitutional state as ‘a state in where the power by or on behalf of the citizens is practiced within the limitations of the constitution, in such a way that individual constitutional rights are protected.’ (Schuijt et al., 2013: 23) The method underlines three characteristics of a democratic constitutional state: constitutional division of the political power, respect for constitutional rights, and the governing of the country based on the principle of legality.

The Dutch political system is based on *Trias Politica*: executive power, legislative power and judicial power. The division is not completely following *Trias Politica*, since the legislative power is in hands of both the Second Chamber (parliament) and the government. The government holds the executive power, but is

controlled by both chambers of the parliament. The fact that ministers have both legislative and executive power makes them slightly more powerful than members of the parliament. The judicial power scrutinates whether laws are correctly implemented and they protect citizens against the state. The Constitution is the supreme law. Judges from the Constitutional Court assess whether laws respect the Constitution. The Dutch law does not know such a review because it is believed that judges might take over the legislature (Schuijt et al., 2013: 23).

Perhaps a more appropriate meaning of democratic constitutional state is ‘rule of law’ or just ‘Constitution’. Leach describes the Constitution as the

set of basic principles, rules and processes for the government of any state. Today these are normally set out in a single authoritative document. (...) Thus constitutions may contain some statement of fundamental principles perhaps containing a declaration of human or citizens’ rights. It will normally involve rules governing the relationship of various parts and levels of the government, for example between the executive, legislature, and judiciary (...). (Leach, 2008: 119)

The rule of law offers a useful connection of the law with the formal limitations of the government. In liberal democracies, the rule of law granted that absolute rulers had to share their responsibilities with a parliament. The rule of law is a Western and primarily Anglo-American concept. This Anglo-American concept implies that all institutions and citizens have to respect the same law and individual legal rights are present in the implementation of laws (Kleinfeld, 2006, cit in. Hague and Harrop, 2007: 259).

5. The concept of ‘Parliamentary Democracy’

Portugal is an example of a constitutional republic with a parliamentary system. The president of the republic is chosen by direct vote, but is mainly ‘ceremonial’ as the ‘Representative of the Portuguese Republic’. Because of the direct election process he has some political functions as well. He is the supreme commander of the army, he appoints the prime minister following a hearing of the parties with a seat in the parliament and taking the results of the general elections in account, appoints the other members of the government on advice of the prime minister, and he is allowed to visit the parliament and to chair the council of ministers. Furthermore he is (under strict conditions) allowed to dismiss the government or dissolve the parliament (Presidency of the Portuguese Republic, 2014). The president has no legislative rights, but he has to approve and sign all the bills. Normally spoken, he approves the bills based on parliamentary majority but on several issues he has the right of veto if he considers that

the bills are unconstitutional. The parliament can overrule the veto if it reaches an agreement based on a two-thirds majority (Presidency of the Portuguese Republic, 2014). The parliament is the most important legislative body. Some of the characteristics of the Portuguese parliament are the following:

1. The people are represented by a directly elected parliament in free elections;
2. All citizens are equal by law and have the same influence on the composition of the parliament based on a D'Hondt model with proportional representation;
3. The government makes policies based on the trust and majority of the parliament;
4. Elections are held every four years;
5. The Portuguese parliament is a unicameral parliament with 230 seats;
6. Every Portuguese above 18 years is allowed to run for the parliament, except when the nature of certain positions can cause conflict of interests, such as judges, active members of the military, and diplomats;
7. The parliament exerts political control over the government (Assembleia da República, 2014; Canotilho, 2014).

Besides a democratic constitutional state, the Netherlands is also known as a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The King has several constitutional functions, such as being a member of the government, signing all laws, inaugurating ministers and state secretaries, and pronouncing the Cabinet's plans for the incoming political year. The King has also some non-constitutional functions, like a weekly meeting with the prime minister, with the diplomacy, and with other heads of state. Although the King is part of the government as head of state, he has no constitutional rights to express power since he is a non-elected body. In reality, it implies that the King only has a ceremonial function. The Netherlands is a parliamentary democracy, which implies that 'People do not vote themselves for laws and policies, but they choose a parliament that does this voting in their place.' (Essener, 28-29) Some characteristics of the Dutch parliamentary system are:

1. The people are represented by the parliament that is chosen in free (Second Chamber) and closed (Senate) elections;
2. All citizens are equal by law and have the same influence on the composition of the parliament;
3. Ministers are accountable to the parliament;

4. The Cabinet makes policies based on the trust and majority of the parliament;
5. The power of the government is legalised by elections that take place every four years;
6. Policy-making by the government and the parliament leans on the majority of votes in both chambers;
7. The parliament is no 'dictatorship of the majority' since it must take into account the rights and interests of minorities;
8. The Dutch parliament is composed by two chambers, in where the political power lies in the directly elected Second Chamber with 150 seats. The indirect elected Senate (First Chamber) with 75 seats is the last control mechanism and is therefore called the Chamber of Reflection (Schuijt et al., 2013: 29).

The concept of 'parliamentary democracy' is a classic concept that differs from country to country, depending on how parliamentary constitutional rights are designed. I shall discuss different structures and functions of parliaments based on Hague and Harrop. The structures of parliaments are based on three elements. The first element is the size of the parliament. The size does not necessarily imply the strength of the parliament but reflects the population of the country. Only a few assemblies have more than 500 members, and this is probably a fair estimate of the maximum size for an effective body (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 206).

The second element is the number of Chambers. Most assemblies are unicameral, especially smaller and post-colonial democracies. Countries with a unicameral assembly are justified by a majoritarian reading of popular control. A bicameral system is composed of two chambers, mostly a senate and a house of representatives. Bicameral assemblies are often found in federations and in larger democracies. In a bicameral assembly, the Senate often functions as the checks-and-balances institution and it can defend individual and group interests against a potentially oppressive majority in the House of Representatives. Usually, the lower chamber dominates in a bicameral assembly. The government's survival depends mostly on this chamber. This is called weak bicameralism. This often depends on the way the upper chamber is composed: by direct elections (27 out of 66 upper houses), indirect elections through regional or local governments (21), or appointed by the government (16). Especially in the last two categories, it appears to be logical that indirectly elected upper chambers have less influence than the directly elected lower chambers.

The third element is the conduction of committees in the parliament. These are often specialised in specific issues like finance, education, or social security. They meet in smaller groups, which makes that the parliament does not necessarily need to meet on a plenary (Hague and Harrop, 2007: 305-309).

Hague and Harrop provide six functions of a parliament: (1) representation, (2) deliberation, (3) legislation, (4) authorizing expenditure, (5) making government, and (6) political scrutiny. Representation implies that members of parliament (MPs) articulate the goals of the party under whose label they were elected. Deliberation is the debating of issues of the moment; the right of appealing ministers to the chamber is an example of this. Legislation means the approval of bills and the possibility to make amendments. Authorizing expenditure has to do with the approval (or rejection) of the budget. Making governments is about the fact that the government emerges from the assembly. Lastly, political scrutiny involves the political control of the parliament over the government (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 310).

6. The concepts of 'Parliamentary and presidential governments'

Pasquino distinguishes three types of governments: parliamentary, semi-presidential and presidential. The parliamentary government is dependent on the majority in the parliament. In a two-party-system this implies that one party leans on a majority. In a multi-party-system it implies that several parties together need to search for a majority. Pasquino emphasises that this kind of government has a shorter duration than presidential governments, since a government collapses when the support of the majority in the parliament disappears. The chief of executive is often a prime minister. The head of state can be a monarch or a president.

Presidential governments are governments in where the chief of the executive is directly elected by citizens and has certain powers on his/her own. He/she does not necessarily need to have the support or the majority in the parliament. They are separate institutions sharing power. To prevent the president from ruling alone, check and balances between the congress and the president are present. The president cannot dissolve the congress, and the congress cannot send the president home when political supports lacks. An impeachment process can be started when the suspicion exists that the president committed serious legal infractions.

The semi-presidential system is a system in where the president is directly elected, but where the executive power is shared with the prime minister. When the

president's party is not the largest in the parliament, it is possible that the biggest (often opposite) party delivers the prime minister. The name for this unlikely construct is the French 'cohabitation', which means (involuntary) 'living together'. *Cohabitation* occurs because of the duality of the executive: an independently elected President *and* a prime minister who must be acceptable both to this president and to the directly elected assembly (Pasquino, 2002: 238-247).

The 'Essener'-method is not very clear on what it means about the parliamentary system. It is connected with representation, in where the points of views and decisions of the parliament are the same as voters' preferences. It is clear that the conceptualisation of the parliamentary system for Dutch secondary school students is quite poor. In the section on the presidential system, they point out the example of the United States of America. As head of state, the president has more influence than in the Netherlands and is allowed to appoint ministers. The president is appointed directly by the people and he/she then appoints ministers. In the Netherlands, ministers come from the parties that made a coalition in the Second Chamber. Differently than in the Netherlands, the *Trias Politica* is strictly divided in the USA. The Congress is the legislative power, while the president is the executive power. The Congress is not allowed to send the president or a minister home, a function that the Dutch parliament does have. In the other way around, unlike in the Netherlands, the president is also not allowed to send home the parliament after a Cabinet's crisis (Schuijt et al., 2013: 38-39).

Hague and Harrop (2007) provide a precise conceptualisation on parliamentary and presidential governments. In a parliamentary government the executive is organically linked to the assembly. The government emerges from the parliament and can be brought down by a motion of censure. On the other hand, the government can dissolve the parliament and call new elections. Parties in the parliament are the necessary unifying entities, or to put it differently, a 'bridge' between the government and the legislature. Their influence can differ, depending of the party system. In a two-party system it is most likely that one party can govern alone in a majority government based on a majority in the parliament. The typical example is the UK (with the exception of the current majority coalition between Conservatives and Liberal Democrats). In a multiparty system where the legislative body is based on proportional

representation, it is most likely that no single party reaches a majority. Three types of government formation can occur:

- (i) Majority coalition in which two or more parties with a majority of seats joins together in government. Within Europe this is the most common form of government and characterises Belgium, Finland, Germany, and the Netherlands;
- (ii) Minority coalition (or alliance). These are formal coalitions (or informal alliances) between parties that lack a parliamentary majority. It implies that government parties need to collaborate actively with the opposition to reach majority, or are in an alliance with a party that supports the government party. This type of governing is a common situation in Denmark, but also the Netherlands knew a situation like this in the 2010-2012 period when Christian Democrats and Liberals first had an alliance with the Freedom Party and later with the Greens, Democrats and the Christian Union (Andeweg & Irwin, 2014). The main advantage is the variation of coalitions that can informally occur for the implementation of laws, but on the other hand it causes a constant search for majorities in the parliament, which can be considered an obstacle to efficient policy-making;
- (iii) Single-party minority government, when the biggest party governs alone and also actively searches for majorities in the parliament. A classical example is Norway (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 336-337).

In a presidential government, the parliament and the executive are chosen separately. Formally, the president of the USA can appoint ministers himself/herself without the obligation of having the majority in the Congress. Both the president and the legislative body are elected for a fixed time and neither one can bring the other down (impeachment is an exception). This enables both institutions a certain type of autonomy. A typical example of a two-party presidential system is the USA. The presidential party sometimes has a majority in the Congress and sometimes has not. When the presidential party has a majority, legislation is easier. Two-thirds of the majority in both the House of Representatives and the Senate can override a presidential veto. The president is not allowed to initiate bills, but in reality he can ask a member of congress to initiate laws. This is different in a multi-party presidential system like Brazil, where the president almost never has a majority in the Congress and strongly

depends on coalition formation and ‘whipping’. In Brazil, the president in some areas has the exclusive right to initiate bills and – partly because of the complexity of the Brazilian congress – the Congress can only override a presidential veto with an absolute majority in joint meetings of both houses (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 329-336).

7. The concept of ‘Local governing’

The Portuguese Constitution encloses chapters on autonomous regions and local governments. Portugal has two autonomous regions, namely Azores and Madeira. Each of these regions has self-government bodies in the form of a legislative assembly and a regional government, which are elected according the principle of proportional representation. After consulting the government the president appoints a representative of the republic. This representative is responsible for the signing of regional legislative decrees (Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, articles 225-234).

Local authorities seek to pursue the interests of local people. Within this layer of government it is included parishes, municipalities, and administrative regions. Organisational structures comprise an elected assembly (municipal council) with decision-making powers, and a collegial executive body. The municipal council is elected through the proportional representation system; the majority of the seats in the council shall compose the executive body. The first candidate of the party that receives most votes shall be appointed president of the executive. This implies a mayor for a period of four years (Constitution of the Portuguese Republic, articles 235-262).

Essener provides a short overview on how provinces and municipals are governed in the Netherlands. The two are rather similar in the way they are governed, but only with different names. The members of the legislative body in the provinces together are called the ‘Provincial Chamber’. In the municipal the members of the legislative body are called the ‘Municipal Council’. Both are elected for a period of four years. The parties that conduct a coalition out of the Provincial Chamber and the Municipal Council are named Deputy Chamber and Aldermen. They make the decisions, although the Provincial Chamber and the Municipal Council, on the one hand, and the Deputy Chamber and the Aldermen, on the other hand, do have a ‘supervisor’. In the province that is the Commissioner of the King, in the municipal that is the Mayor. In the case of the province, the King appoints the Commissioner (in practice the Minister of Interior Affairs makes an recommendation). In the municipal, the Council makes a profile with qualities of leadership required for the (newly chosen)

Mayor that fits with the dynamics of the city or towns. The Commissioner of the King then accepts the candidates and suggests one to the Minister of Interior Affairs, who eventually appoints the new Mayor for a period of six years. The province is responsible for the public space and environment, while the municipal is responsible for executive tasks, such as social policies (Schuijt et al., 2013: 55-56).

The academic conceptualisation of local governing differs from country to country. Hague and Harrop tried to identify the common characteristics of local governing. They argue that the local government is a universal characteristic, found in federal and unitary states. The local government is the lowest level of elected territorial organisation within the state, but can embrace different names (communes, municipalities, parishes, etc.). Local governments express the power of the national government on a limited, smaller scale. Local governments represent natural communities, they reinforce local identities, offer practical education on politics, provide a recruiting platform for national parties, serve as a first entry to politics, and the allocation of expertise on policy issues (Hague & Harrop, 2008: 294).

In Europe, local governments often represent historic communities, but in new democracies, such as the USA and Australia, the local government is more pragmatic in character. Local authorities were set up to deal with local issues, such as infrastructure and local garbage collection. In Northern Europe the status of the local government is higher than in Southern Europe: local governments administer the extensive welfare state in Northern Europe but perform fewer functions in Southern Europe (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 295). Also important is the level of ‘general competence’ local governments is given by national governments. This concept is defined as ‘the authority of a local government to make regulations in any matter of concern to its idea. Where general competence is lacking, local authorities are restricted to those tasks expressly delegated by higher authority.’ (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 296) Thus, the level of autonomous power of the local government involved in policy-making is important here.

8. The concept of ‘Pressure Groups’

In Pasquino’s chapter on groups and movements, he first addresses membership to groups. These can be overlapping memberships or crosscutting memberships. He also states that different types of interests’ articulations of groups exist: (1) divergent articulation, (2) non-associative articulation, (3) associative articulation, and (4)

institutional articulation. Groups with divergent articulation are not organised and represent relatively new interests or experience lack of attention for their issues from those in power. Non-associative groups are groups with boundaries towards religion, ethical, or geographical interests. Associative groups are highly connected to social fragmentation and pluralism such as students' unions, freelancers, or feminists. They have to protect and promote their own interests in a professionalised structure. Institutional groups are integrated in the society. One can, for instance, think of the Union for Military or other bureaucratic groups. Institutional groups are interested in protecting their privileges (Pasquino, 2002: 87-88). The influence of pressure groups depends on the number of members, how representative they are, their financial resources, the expertise of the pressure group, and their social activities (Pasquino, 2007: 91).

Other than pressure groups, the chapter also deals with movements. These movements can be (1) movements to secure gained achievements or rights, such as Labour Unions or other socio-economic interests, (2) political movements to gain influence in the policy-making process, such as Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), and (3) class movements that aim to transfer (or to reverse) the social *status quo* (Pasquino, 2002: 105).

In the Dutch system of teaching political science, pressure groups are discussed within the chapter on political participation. Pressure groups are 'Organizations and groups who intentionally try to influence the political decision-making process.' (Schuijt et al., 2013: 67) Pressure groups are not the same as political parties since a pressure group does not interfere with all parts of society, but is focused on interests on one specific policy area that belong to a specific group. Three sub-categories can be identified within pressure groups: interest groups, action organisations, and action groups. Action groups mostly exist for a short time and for one specific issue, for instance, to stop a new highway through a forest. Action organisations are bigger and have longer existence. One can think of Amnesty International as an example of such groups. Interest organisations are (mostly) permanent bodies, such as labour unions.

A pressure group can push for influence through several methods, such as lobbying, demonstrations, a communication campaign, making sure that their own members are placed on key political positions, making objections to laws or through threats of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience is understood as non-violence

resistance and breaking of the law through peaceful means. Disobedience is focused on the general interest and not just on one's personal interest, the action takes place in the public space, and protesters think legal ways are not enough. An example is the Occupy movements, in where people camped for weeks to months in front of financial or public buildings all over the world to protest against the financial system.

The *Political companion* defines 'pressure groups' as

any organized group that seek to influence government and public policy at any level. They are organized, so they are not just a section of the public with an interest in common. They commonly have elected or appointed officers and paid-up, and sometimes a formal constitution. They are thus to be distinguished from broader and looser social movements. They seek influence rather than direct control of power. They are usually seen as voluntary organizations, part of civil society, and outside government and the state (Leach, 2008: 152).

Unlike political parties, pressure groups do not seek power through elections. Pressure groups articulate interests. They, therefore, campaign for a specific interest. The literature has no specific generally agreed terminology to distinguish different types of pressure groups, but a difference exists between those groups defending the (self-) interest of a particular section of the community and those groups promoting a cause (Leach, 2008: 152-153).

9. The concept of 'Political parties'

The chapter on political parties in Pasquino is rather complete and covers a lot of issues. A political party is a social entity with a structure allowing participation of its members in the design of a political party program and aiming at participating in elections (Pasquino, 2002: 154). Political parties remain vital organisations because they (1) are able to maintain the consensus between citizens and other political parties, (2) ensure the coordination of politicians, (3) hear citizens' opinions and represent them in a responsible way, and (4) represent a link between civilians and the public administration (Pasquino, 2002: 180). Pasquino describes the functions of political parties, but does not name them. Instead, he highlights the different types of political parties: (1) mass-parties and (2) splinter parties. He also discusses the catch-all parties, on what the Portuguese political party system is mostly based on. As catch-all parties they neglect ideology and accommodate people who have a wide range of beliefs, principles, or backgrounds (Pasquino, 2002: 161).

In the conceptualisation of political parties Essener especially focuses on their functions: (1) articulation, (2) communication, (3) aggregation, (4) participation, and (5) recruit. The articulation function is the transformation of the wishes and demands from

the society onto the political agenda. The communication function is the communication of the party's point-of-views to the electorate. The aggregation function is the connection between the society and the party's point-of-view in an election program or party program. The participation function activates people to work for the political party, while the recruit function deals with the selection of people for official party positions, for instance in the parliament or in the government. Articulation and communication functions have seized in power in the Netherlands, due to modern media (Schuijt et al., 2013: 69).

Following the *Political Companion*, political parties 'are often rather unsatisfactorily defined as political organizations that contest elections or seek to control government.' (Leach, 2008: 149) Parties play a crucial role in modern politics, particularly in representative democracies. Some even consider the political party as an integral element of representative democracy fulfilling the following important functions: (1) identification, or party choice, (2) political recruitment, (3) aggregation of interests, (4) triggers of political participation, (5) two-way channel of political communication, and (5) exerting accountability over the government (Leach, 2008: 149).

10. The concept of 'Ideology'

The curriculum on the course *Ciência Política* (Moreira et al., 2006: 23) states that the concept of 'ideology' is a 'content of deepening'. This means that this concept needs some extra attention and needs to be discussed in-depth. Students need to read about thinkers on different variations of ideologies. Before I shall address three modern thinkers, I shall first shortly address the definition of left-right as given in Pasquino (2007). The left-right dimension is still used often to characterise the ideological distance of political parties.

The ideological distance determines whether or not political parties will collaborate with each other or whether they rank as opposites (Pasquino, 2007: 177). Currently, the Portuguese party system is ordered from left to right in the following way: the extreme left parties such as *Bloco de Esquerda*, the Communist party (PCP), the Greens (POV) the Socialist party (PS), the Social Democrats (PSD), and the Christian Democrats (CDS) (US Library of Congress, 1993; Comissão Nacional de Eleições, 2011). A number of other parties also do exist in Portugal, but they did not gain enough votes in the 2011 elections to be represented in the Portuguese parliament.

The ordering of political parties named is in general based on the classical left-right division on economic issues, but as well on the progressive-conservative paradigm (US Library of Congress, 1993). This paradigm implies that progressive parties would like to change to society, while conservative parties tend to keep things the same. Often progressive is seen as secular, while conservative has a religious ground. This is not necessarily true, since economic reform can also be seen as a progressive issue that has nothing to do with secular politics.

Portuguese students are challenged to expose themselves to some influential thinkers on three main ideologies: socialism, liberalism, and conservatism. They start by three modern thinkers on these ideologies: Crick (socialism), Gray (liberalism), and Nisbet (conservatism). Personally, as a teacher I would be confused in what to teach in this three thick and complex books on these ideologies. I cannot imagine that secondary school students are able to read them or understand them by themselves. Even though this concept is considered as a deepening of the curriculum, I perceive it as too difficult to teach. I think would result in reading a summary. In the discussion part of this research, I will address the concept of 'ideology' and its complexity as the main reason why the Portuguese editors should make a book especially for the course on politics. A didactical responsible conceptualisation will help both the students in better understanding and the teacher in explaining.

The Essener method starts with explaining that political parties can be categorised in four conceptual pairs: progressive vs. conservative, left vs. right, confessional vs. non-confessional and ideological vs. pragmatic. The students start with a short philosophical history of those conceptual pairs. In the progressive/conservative pair the students need to know John Locke (as progressive) and Thomas Hobbes (as conservative). Political parties that fit into progressive are the Labour (PvdA), GreenLeft (GL) and Democrats 1966 (D66) parties. On moral issues, the Liberals (VVD) are as well progressive. Conservative political parties are the Christian-Democrats (CDA), Liberals (VVD) and the Freedom Party (PVV). The Netherlands also has two parties that would like to reverse current policies. Those are called reactionary parties. These are the Reformed Party (SGP), that want to reverse moral policies such as gay marriage and abortion, and the Freedom Party (PVV) that wants to 'give back the Netherlands to the Dutch.' (Schuijt et al., 2013: 108-109)

The left-right scale is still often used, for instance in the GreenLeft or the far right, but the concept is stated to be outdated. Political left these days could be characterised as political parties that would like an active government to protect the weak persons, while the political right will argue for a passive government on economic issues. Here, the left-right divide is mainly anchored on economic issues. Since several other issues are also important these days it might be better to project the political party space two-dimensional or with the horseshoe model. The left-right dimension is considered only to be useful to 'meet' the political system (Schuijt et al., 2013: 109). Confessional political parties are political parties based on a religious ideology as Catholic, Protestant or Islamic faith. Non-confessional are political parties based on another ideology such as socialism or liberalism.

Ideological parties base themselves on 'a coherent entirety of ideas about the human race, human relationships and the design of the society.' (Schuijt et al., 2013: 111) Opposite to ideological political parties are pragmatic parties that do not have particular principles but look at solutions fitting to specific problems. D66 is a party that fits in the pragmatic approach, yet most parties are still (slightly) based on ideology. Due to the de-ideologisation of the Netherlands, most political parties have lost their core of ideology. Current ideologies are liberalism, socialism, and confessionalism. Before those three sets of ideological beliefs are addressed, I need to take a closer look into the following functions of ideology: (1) to provide intellectual ground, (2) an interpretation frame to answer several societal phenomenon, (3) to provide orientation for the goals one wants to achieve, (4) a contribution to one's own identity, and (5) a justification for several ideas and political acts. Ideology can be normative, analytical and operational on values, socio-economic structures or the distribution of power (Schuijt et al., 2013: 111).

Considering this, a brief explanation of the most important ideologies (liberalism, socialism, and confessionalism) is required. Liberalism focuses on the personal development of the individual. Individual freedom and rights are the core concepts. Some characteristics are economic and political freedom, the principle of the constitutional state, and rationalistic individualism. The Dutch state on its own is liberal in this perspective (Schuijt et al., 2013: 114). Socialism is based on three important cores: socio-economic equality, against capitalistic exploitation (protection of workers) and the principle of the welfare state. The welfare state and social rights were adopted

in the 1983 constitutional changes. Socialism includes two groups: communism/socialism and social democracy. Currently the Netherlands has two political parties based on socialism: the Labour party (social democrats) and the Socialist Party (SP). Until 1991, the Netherlands also had a communist party that is now the GreenLeft party (Schuijt et al., 2013: 115). Confessionalism is based on religion, mostly Christianity. It is characterised by values such as harmony, stewardship and the principle of shared responsibility. The Netherlands has a Christian-Democrat party, the left-wing Christian Union and the reactionary right-wing reformed party. Other ideologies students need to know about are fascism, national-socialism, ecologism, and feminism (Schuijt et al., 2013: 116-117).

Ideology is considered as a highly problematic and contested concept. The *Political Companion* therefore defines it loosely as ‘any system of ideas directing political action.’ (Leach, 2008: 132) An ideology firstly involves an interconnected set of ideas that forms a perspective on the world. Secondly, ideologies might have an impact for (and on) political behaviour. Political ideologies normally contain three key elements: an analysis of existing social and political arrangements, a political ideal or vision for the future, and a strategy for accomplishing that ideal (Leach, 2008: 132).

Since in both courses the concepts of confessionalism, liberalism, and socialism are mentioned, I shall discuss these three ideologies here as well. Confessionalism as a concept is not particularly present. Instead two other concepts might be important: Christian-democracy and conservatism. Christian-democracy for a long time was a dominant ideology in Western European party systems. Its influence was particularly noticeable after the Second World War. Christian-democrats are considered to be centre or right wing-oriented in the party spectrum (Leach, 2008: 114). Christian-democracy fits for a big part into the ideology of conservatism. Conservatism is an approach that would like to keep (‘conserve’) things as they are. Historically seen, conservatives have been suspicious of change and hostile to the new ideas especially associated with the Enlightenment period. Conservative thinkers such as Burke have emphasised the limitations of human reason and rational plans for change, preferring to know the unknown, and practical experience to intellectual speculations. However, in practice conservatives have often embraced limited or gradual reform as best means of maintaining stability. For instance, they embraced democracy (Leach, 2008: 118).

Following Leach, liberalism is the dominant paradigm in the current Western world. Key concepts within the ideology of liberalism are freedom, individualism, rationalism, toleration, and free market. Liberals consider the individual as the starting point for any theorisation about society, politics, or economics. The society is seen as an aggregate of individuals, whom all pursue their rational self-interest in freedom. Individuals should concede a similar freedom to others to pursue their own economic, political, or religious freedom. Nowadays, no consensus about the concept of liberalism exists, since different cultures perceive it differently. For instance, in Europe liberalism is considered more right-wing politics, while in the United States it is considered as centre-left. Liberalism now needs a hybrid scheme of concepts such as ‘economic liberal’ or ‘progressive liberal’ to differentiate between conflicting interpretations of the concept (Leach, 2008: 140-141).

Even though socialism has been variously defined, it can be seen as an alternative to capitalism or liberalism. Socialists emphasise social welfare, cooperation, and collective ownership. After the First World War two groups appeared: socialists and social democrats. Socialist was considered to be Soviet dominated and promoted revolution to achieve goals. Social Democrats had become a widely used term to describe a moderate, reformist parliamentary form of socialism. In Western Europe, after the Second World War the values of social democracy were apparently so widely endorsed (also by other parties!) that soon it became known as the ‘social democratic consensus’ which later became known as neoliberal (Labour in the UK and the Netherlands). This ‘shift to the right’ makes it nowadays difficult to identify what exactly is social democracy. Fairness and equality are still endorsed by social democrats, although in theory this means the pursuit of greater equality rather than absolute equality. There is little evidence of significant support for more traditional socialist policies from the diminishing industrial working class or the broader electorate (Leach, 2008: 160-161).

11. The concept of ‘Political Participation’

Pasquino states that political participation is ‘a set of actions and attitudes that aspire to influence directly the legal decisions of those in power as a political organization or as an individual.’ (Pasquino, 2002: 50) Political participation can be invisible, latent, or visible. Invisible political participation could be voting, for instance, while visible political participation involves actively participating for a certain political

party. One can think about campaigning or attending a party meeting. An example of latent political participation is a group of people who is interested in politics, but is rarely activated to participate in politics, but perhaps only participated once in a protest (Pasquino, 2002: 50).

Pasquino furthermore focuses on electoral participation. For most people, this might be the only time in four years they are politically active. Particularly important is political participation during democratisation processes. Four elements are especially important: (1) whether participation leans on legitimisation, (2) whether political participation is incorporated in the system, (3) what are the barriers for representation, and (4) how does the executive power react on participation, in other words, do they listen to those who participate in politics (Pasquino, 2002: 54). In a democratisation process, social mobilisation is important. Five characteristics must be outlined: (1) the movement of the population from the countryside to cities, (2) the movement of the population from agriculture to the industrial sector and later to the tertiary sector, (3) growing population and change on the composition of the population, (4) increasing alphabetisation, and (4) greater exposure to the mass media (Pasquino, 2002: 55). This type of social mobilisation is important for developing countries but does not cover anymore the conceptualisation of political participation in modern democracies. In a later section Pasquino discusses the different types of modern political participation: (1) to take part in electoral campaigns, (2) to vote, (3) to develop collaborative actions with (pressure) groups, and (4) to contact politicians and non-governmental organizations (Pasquino, 2002: 68).

In a short section, different types of political participation are discussed in Essener. Electoral participation is voting during elections or helping during the electoral campaign. Non-electoral participation is individual participation, such as participating in a demonstration or signing a petition. The most extreme example of non-electoral participation is citizens' initiative allowing them to put an issue on the political agenda. The issue should be concrete and with specific goal and, more importantly, it was not a political agenda point for two years and at least 40.000 people have signed the initiative. Another way of participation is becoming a member of a political party or a pressure group. See the other sections on 'political parties' and 'pressure groups' on these issues (Schuijt et al., 2013: 67).

In Hague and Harrop, political participation in liberal democracies is categorised differently. They recall a research by Milbrath and Goel (1977: 11, cit. in Hague & Harrop: 2007: 165) that divided the American population into three categories and later is applied to several other democracies. These three categories are: (1) 'gladiators,' (2) 'spectators,' and (3) 'apathetics.' In their research they state that gladiators are active in the 'political battle' as for instance active campaigners, matching to around 5 to 6 per cent of the population. Spectators are people who observe the contest but rarely participate beyond voting (around 60 per cent). Apathetics are those unengaged in formal politics, representing around one third of the population. In most democracies, participation is greatest among well-educated, middle-class, middle-aged, white men (Hague & Harrop, 2007: 166). The authors try to solve the participation bias by recalling Putnam's theory: 'The law of increasing disproportion seems to apply to nearly every political system; no matter how we measure political and social status, the higher the level of political authority, the greater the representation for high-status social groups.' (Putnam, 1976: 33 cit. in Hague & Harrop, 2007: 166)

12. The concept of 'European Union'

Students in Portugal start the study on the European Union (EU) with three theories on European integration: functionalism, federalism, and intergovernmentalism. According to the theory on functionalism, the integration process started when states decided to put certain economic activities in common. In general, it is likely that integration will continue, since the success of cooperation brings opportunities of collaboration, and benefits for member states' growth. This theoretical approach is used to explain the start of the European Communities as a supranational polity (Pasquino, 2002: 352). Federalism, on the other hand, states a transfer of powers towards the federal government in order to achieve security and prosperity. The EU does only partly fit with this perspective, since every member state still has its own army and the EU is not a sovereign polity. One army is an essential feature of federal states. The argument on transferring powers in exchange of prosperity could be valid, however (Pasquino, 2002: 352). The third theory is intergovernmentalism. This theory implies that European integration only has to do with the economic interests and preferences of the member states. National leaders are only concerned with the wellbeing of their own country (Pasquino, 2002: 353).

Essener focuses mainly on the governance of the EU. Dutch secondary school students learn that the EU legislative power is in hands of the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament. The executive power is in hands of the European Commission and the European Court is the judicial institution. The European Commission has 28 commissioners, which are appointed by the 28 member states, but act separately from national governments. The European Commission is the only European institution allowed to propose European laws. Besides that, the commissioners are, like the ministers in the Netherlands, the executive body. The European Parliament votes the president of the European Commission. He decides the political agenda of the Commission. The Council of the European Union is the most important legislative body of the EU. All member states are represented with a minister. Depending on what is on the agenda, different ministers attend the meetings. When ministers do not reach an agreement, the heads of state meet. This body is called the European Council. The European Council meets officially two times per year, but in reality the President calls the meetings more often. The European Parliament has two tasks: a legislative function and a control function. Since the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, the parliament's legislative powers increased, but the European Parliament does not have the right to initiate laws itself. The European Parliament is chosen directly by the citizens of the member states, but they vote for national candidates since a number of seats are reserved per member states. The parliament has 751 seats. The European Court of Justice is the judiciary and its most important task is to control countries, EU institutions, companies and individuals to respect their legal obligations coming from the application of EU law. Every EU citizen, the European Commission and member states are allowed to submit a case to the European Court of Justice. Because of the Court, European agreements, rules, and laws are eventually more important than the national regulations (Schuijt et al., 2013: 90-92).

A second important issue the students need to know are the objectives of the EU. Following Essener, those are: (1) to execute common economic policies, (2) to develop a common foreign and security policy, and (3) to collaborate on monetary issues. After the chapter with factual information on the EU, the course offers another chapter with the complexities the EU faces. Students are challenged to think about EU citizenship, the sovereignty question, military collaboration, the enlargement of the EU, financial problems, the democratic deficit, and the complexity of policy-making. These matters

are discussed because they are mostly recognised in Eurosceptic reasoning (Schuijt et al., 2013: 95-97).

In Cini's *European Union Politics* (2010) the conceptualisation of the EU runs through (neo-)functionalism and intergovernmentalism. Important features of neo-functionalism are:

1. It focuses on the supranational institutions of the EU;
2. Its main focus is on 'factors' that drive integration, such as the role of member states' governments and supranational institutions;
3. The driving force of integration is the self-interest of groups and institutions.
4. European integration is an elite-driven process.
5. Spillover¹ is the key concept, which could be functional, political, or cultivated (Jensen, 2010: 73).

The second important theory on European integration is intergovernmentalism. The most important feature is that the states play a zero-sum game in the European integration process, and thus 'European integration is driven by the interest and actions of the nation states.' (Cini, 2010: 87) At the heart of intergovernmentalism lies the principle of sovereignty. This implies a share of power instead of a transfer of powers to the supranational institutions (Cini, 2010: 89).

The institutions of the EU are big in numbers and complex to explain. An attempt is done in this research to briefly address the European Commission, the Council of the European Union, European Parliament, and the European Court. The other institutions will not be included since the courses do not capture them. The European Commission (EC) has a political executive department and an administration department. This makes that the EC has a wide range of functions: policy initiation, monitoring policy implementation, and external representation. The EC has 28 members, one from every member state. Only the EC is allowed to initiate legislative or new policies as an exclusive agenda-setting institution. This makes that the EC is active at almost all levels of the European policy-making process (Egeberg, 2010: 126-128).

The Council of the EU is considered as the institutional heart of the decision-making process. The institution is designed to represent the member states. The Council of the European Union needs to approve legislation before the regulations will be

¹ Spillover is the notion that integration in an economic sector will create strong impulses for integration in further sectors, in order to fully capture the perks of integration in the sector in which it started (Jensen, 2010: 73).

implemented as national laws. This makes the Council a sort of senate. Not all states have the same influence in the Council. Member states with more citizens and large territories have more weight. For instance, Germany has 29 votes, while Malta only has 3. Two-thirds of all member states must vote in favour and the qualified majority vote should represent at least 62 per cent of the EU population (Lewis, 2010: 142; 150).

The European Parliament started to be a directly elected body from 1979 onwards. From the 1990s onwards the EP appoints and supervises the European Commission. Because of its legislative and control functions, the parliament is now more influential over policy than many national parliaments. Elections for the EP are held once per five years. Campaigns are mainly focussed on national parties that after the elections will join a party group with parties from other countries. The three biggest party groups are the European People's Party (EPP), the Party of European Socialists (PES), and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats (ALDE). Although the parliament slightly gained more influence, the turnout for the elections is still low, around 45% (Scully, 2010: 172). This brings the legitimacy of the EP in doubt for some scholars and politicians (Scully, 2010: 163-174).

The European Court of Justice was founded in 1951 and currently has 28 judges and eight General-Advocates. Both individuals and member states can go to the Court. The decisions of the Court have a considerable political impact, not only on the relationship between the EU and member states, but also on EU inter-institutional relations because of broadly interpretative formulations in the EU Treaties and the possibility of the European Court of Justice to create new jurisprudence. National courts and governments appear to support Court's rulings despite occasional opposition. Member states can only restrict the Court's power through treaty changes or an opt-out. In sum, the Court is considered a useful tool in advancing and harmonising European legislation due to its strong commitment with the European integration process (Kapsis, 2010: 177-186).

Conclusion

The concluding chapter will enclose the general findings of previous chapters in order to answer the research question “*What are the main differences and similarities in teaching politics to secondary school students in Portugal and in the Netherlands?*” In the first section the findings will be briefly addressed. In the second section some questions that rose during the research and the curiosities in the outcome will be discussed. The third and last section will include some general recommendations for further research and reflections on the limitations of this research.

1. General Conclusions

1.1. Didactics and pedagogics

In chapter 1 I examined several theories on teaching and development psychology. I discussed the differences between several points of view on teaching to distinguish relevant didactical theories. On the one hand I explained objectivism and behaviourism, and on the other hand cognitivism and constructivism.

Connecting the two points of view with considerations on teaching politics to secondary school students, I came to the conclusion that the teaching process could be mainly connected to the constructivist approach. The main reason for this assumption is due to the fact that it is assumed that students already have precognitions about the society. They probably had some contact with the social context they grew up in, and they possibly already formulated (political) opinions about this social context. I found that the guided participation and scaffolding theories, as described by Brunner and Ausubel, are of valuable significance, since these theories connect the adaptation of new information with precognitions and the help of experienced adults to guide students. The aim is to support the cognitive, moral, and affective development of adolescents. When a student is able to connect his/her cognitive abilities with moral and affective development, this connection will help with the formation of self-concept and identity. The value-education that is a part of moral development is relatively important. This could be considered as one of the main reasons to teach politics in secondary schools. The main goal of training active citizenship is to guide students towards higher levels of cognitive, social, and moral development. In order to understand society and to actively participate in it, students need to have adequate information about the social environment they live in.

After writing this chapter, certain questions remained open. In chapter 3 I saw signs of behaviourist ways of teaching. That leads to the question of whether politics is taught according a behaviourist or a constructivist approach. Secondly, in the chapter on didactics and pedagogics I addressed the role of political learning at home. It is questionable to what extent adolescents learn politics at home, or that perhaps the role of the teacher in political education is underestimated. These issues will be discussed in sections 2.1 and 2.2 of the concluding chapter.

1.2. Education systems and the design of the courses

In chapter 2 I examined the legal framework of the different educational systems in Portugal and the Netherlands and the position of political learning within these educational systems. In short, the Portuguese educational system is basically the same for all Portuguese secondary school students. The *ensino secundário* includes the last three years of the whole school system and covers the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grade. These last three years are not mandatory. Students who choose to enrol in the secondary school program will be taught in such a way that they will develop reasoning, learning to reflect, and exploring scientific curiosity with in-depth investigations. Schools provide a platform for critical reflection on the society and promote active citizenship. Considering this, it is interesting to see that a course on politics is only taught as a voluntary course in the twelfth grade and that numerous schools do not provide the course due to budget restrictions. It appears that a certain gap between the government's goals and reality. This shall be discussed in section 2.3. The role of the teacher is particularly interesting in the design of the course. As pointed out earlier, students are dependent on the transfer of information by the teacher since no specific method to teach politics exists. This might imply that the curriculum is ambitious.

The Dutch educational system is rather difficult to trace out and to investigate. After primary school, Dutch students have to choose a level of education, varying from four to six years of secondary school. This research limited itself to the last three years of the six-year VWO programme, due to the fact that these three years are considered as preparation for the state exams. Two types of courses on learning politics are present in these last three years. One of the courses is the mandatory Society Studies (*Maatschappijleer*). The other one is the voluntary Social Studies (*Maatschappijwetenschappen*). In Society Studies every student has to take the school exam, while only those who choose the Social Studies course will have a state exam on politics and

other issues. It makes sure that every student has at least a basic knowledge in order to be capable to participate in the society, but only a few learn about the concepts and theories on political science in depth. Section 2.3 will discuss to what extent Dutch secondary school students really learn about politics. This shall be connected to the outcome of section 1.3.

1.3. General findings in the comparison between concepts in Portugal and in the Netherlands

In chapter 3 I found that Portuguese teachers have to undertake relatively more efforts in order to teach politics than Dutch teachers. The Portuguese curriculum consists of a relatively complete overview of concepts that should be taught, but the teacher needs to examine the concepts because a students' learning method for the course on politics does not exist. This makes students highly dependent on the teacher's preparations and teaching method. This especially becomes a problem when difficult concepts need to be explained, like 'ideology'. I have noticed that the suggested resources were big in number. This suggests a sustainable basis for political learning but, on the other hand, political concepts will not be taught properly. This has to do with numerous factors. One of these factors could be the working pressure of the teacher. High working pressure would imply that the teacher could not be able to prepare the class properly. Secondly, it lacks a precise definition that the students can use to learn the concepts. This causes obscurity and perhaps wrong cognitions with a concept if a teacher is not capable to explain it properly. This shall be further discussed in section 2.4.

In the Dutch case I found that the opposite might be the case. I found that the Essener method has given a definition for almost all concepts. In comparison with the Portuguese curriculum, the Dutch curriculum demands a lot from students with twice as many concepts as the Portuguese. Whereas the Portuguese course explores the concepts in depth, the Dutch method encompasses a widening approach on political science. In other words, it implies that the Dutch method's main aim is to provide a superficial knowledge about political science concepts. It depends on the teacher whether students discuss issues in depth. One can say that this approach of 'basis to exploration' functions relatively well, but it should be taken into account that only the information in the method is examined in the state exam. Thus, it could imply that teachers might not challenge enough students in their moral, social, and affective development. The degree

of freedom in teaching and the tightness of conceptualisations shall be discussed in section 2.5, below.

I found that in both courses the concepts on ideology, democracy, parliament, and political actors are especially important. One can say that the Portuguese course focuses more on the concepts and the Dutch course mainly focuses on the political process, its actors, and implications for society. Governments decide the minimum knowledge of political science that has to be taught. Teachers decide what they teach besides the basic minimum and in what didactical way they would like to do that. It should be taken into account that a teacher in Portugal mainly teaches according to a scientific method, while the Dutch method simplifies the concepts to make them understandable for all students participating in the course.

2. Discussion

2.1. Teaching politics within the behaviourism or the constructivism approach?

When a concept needs to be learned in the way it is described in the method or taught by the teacher, it is not directly assumed that students are concerned with self-exploration. This is especially true for the Dutch case, where all the concepts are described in the teaching method. In the Portuguese case, it is possible that teachers in some sense ‘indoctrinate’ students with ideologically shaped information, since no written definitions of the concepts exist. In both cases the main goal is to shape new behaviour that leads students to active citizenship. This is called ‘successive approximation’. Both arguments contain signs of a behaviourist approach in teaching politics to secondary school students. Although this could be true, in both countries the curriculum states that it seeks to promote independent individuals.

The constructivist approach states that students need to be actively involved in their own learning process. It could be discussed to what extent students are actively involved in their own learning process when the teacher provides them the concepts and does not challenge the students to explore definitions of concepts beforehand. The theories on discovered learning, guided discovery, and participation might be of better use for moral, affective, and social development of the adolescents to explore their own values within the existing social environment. It would be logical to say that behaviourism is still used to provide a conceptual basis. For reasoning and value-education purposes, constructivism is better for teaching because it highlights the self-

exploration of values and trains cognitive schemas, while any type of direct indoctrination is not self-evident. In both cases, it would suggest the teacher first lets students to discover the concepts themselves before they are introduced to the method or an explanation is provided.

2.2. Is politics learned at school or at home?

Based on the assumption that teaching is done within a constructivist approach, it is expected students already have precognitions about the social context they grew up in. This would imply that students already know about politics when they go into the classroom for the first time. Within the scientific world, tensed discussion is going on about where politics is learned. Some scholars argue that politics is learned at home and that the school only needs to provide factual information about the social context. This conclusion can be perceived as true when politics and other social issues are discussed frequently at home. These students often have better-justified political opinions, but it does not necessarily imply they have the factual knowledge to judge in an objective way. The opposite could also be true when politics is barely or never discussed at home. This could imply that the family context does not politically socialise adolescents, but that they need to learn their political opinions elsewhere. This does not only imply learning about factual information, but that these students also need guidance towards a political self. The teacher can assist as a helpful peer in this process, but it is questionable to what extent the teacher is responsible for that. Following the principle of active citizenship, it can be perceived as a teacher's responsibility. Scaffolding could be the basis in this process, but the teacher has to be watchful on whether he or she does not become too big of a role model for adolescents as it could limit students' transformation into independently thinking individuals.

A follow-up question then would be how to handle with different cultures, levels of political knowledge, and precognitions in the classroom. In a classroom with plurality of cultures, teaching in a neutral way is more challenging than in a homogenous classroom. Teachers have a bigger task of binding students together in a multicultural class. Concepts might be differently conceived in such a multicultural class, and some students know more about politics than others. How to keep the course interesting for all students? Perhaps some more research on classroom dynamics in political science courses could be done to conclude on this issue.

2.3. Politics in the educational systems and restrictions for citizenship formation

I noticed that political learning, as part of education programmes, is present in policy papers, but that these policy papers do not match with reality. Politics does not have the prominent place in the educational systems as promised. This is particularly true for the Portuguese case. Too few schools provide the course and, as explained earlier, it lacks a clear and unified teaching method. In the Netherlands this is slightly better arranged with the mandatory course on politics and other society issues, but not all schools provide the state exam course. In both countries, citizenship formation is a priority on the political agenda. I have not done specific research about this topic, but my perception is that especially in Portugal the government's aims do not match with the reality in the schools. A possible reason is the economic crisis that made implementation of the course in all secondary schools difficult. Further research on this topic would be necessary, thus.

In the Dutch case, citizenship formation is done partly in the society/social studies course, but also in courses such as Dutch and History (for the Portuguese case this is true as well for Portuguese and History). The main aim is to provide a basis to promote active citizens. In the mandatory course, students get this basis. It is expected that the teacher discusses the theory with students. In reality, Society Studies is still an under-valued course taught by teachers that are not necessarily officially competent to teach. It is doubtful to what extent citizenship formation takes place if the teacher is not competent enough to guide students towards active citizenship. Another problem is the access to the state exam course on Social Studies. Since not all schools provide this course, and it is not a mandatory course for schools that do provide it, citizenship formation appears to be primarily in other courses. The influence of Social Studies on citizenship formation could be a recommendation for further research.

2.4. Portugal: unclear on what to teach?

Comparing the concepts mentioned in the Portuguese curriculum, I soon found that the curriculum provides a lot of concepts. This gave the impression that the content of the course *Ciência Política* was rather complete. Yet, I observed some problems in the definitions that need to be taught accordingly. Definitions need to be examined by teachers in the suggested resources. These resources are based on academic publications. This is a strong feature, but because of the density of the information it might be unclear for teachers what to highlight in a class with 18-years old students. An

example was found in chapter 3, while comparing the concept of ‘ideology’. This is a concept that students need to be studied in depth. Several books were suggested, including philosophy books. I can imagine that not all students at that age are capable of understanding this type of academic language and that they might eventually get confused with the texts, simply because the vocabulary does not fit with their cognitive abilities. Intended learning efforts will not be achieved in this case. To get maximum learning efforts, guided participation could be helpful, but I can also imagine that teachers do not exactly know what to teach and will make their own assessments on this topic. This might cause that in school A students learn other information on ideology than students learn in school B. A standardised method within this course, which is also the case for courses as Portuguese and Maths, would be of consideration because it would eliminate doubts in what exactly to teach to students.

2.5. The Netherlands: too tight conceptualizations?

Students in the Netherlands learn about politics within a predetermined method. All concepts are provided with a definition. All definitions are supposed to be adjusted to students’ comprehensive abilities and learning strategies. Students need to learn the definitions of many concepts. Thus, they will learn about a lot of concepts only ‘on the surface’. This ‘basis of exploration’ could be used for teachers to in-depth investigate topics with students, but it could be doubtful to what extent this would be the case. A lot of concepts need to be tackled in a short period of time, since political science is only a part of a broader course on the society. This could imply that the program for teaching politics is too tight and leaves no space for further in-depth exploration of concepts. In some sense, it suggests that teachers lose their freedom to teach, but on the other hand it suggests that every secondary school student has the same basis on political knowledge. It could be questioned to what extent students are stimulated to further explore concepts and theories, since everything is written down in the method. Thus, the teacher is still a factor the students need to rely on in exploring the concepts. It could be questioned to what extent this is connected to cognitivism, which appears to be an important aspect of the Dutch educational system. Further research is required in order to estimate the impact of the Dutch course *Maatschappijwetenschappen* on students’ political knowledge.

3. General recommendations for further research

In order to answer the research question properly, an important statistical test to measure political knowledge amongst secondary school students in Portugal and in the Netherlands is missing. When having statistical results on political knowledge, a better conclusion can be drawn because real differences in teaching politics can become clear. Therefore, further research on this topic could be considered.

Another important measurement that should be done is to what extent definitions fit with didactical theories. Theories and concepts should not be too difficult to understand for secondary school students. It would be wise to assess whether conceptualisation fits with students' cognitive abilities and their learning processes. Only after the suggested follow-up research, valid recommendations could be provided on, for example, the need of a unified Portuguese teaching method or the suggested changes in the Dutch course design.

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Appendix 1: Complete overview of Concepts in Essener

A.	Classical constitutional rights	Democratic deficit of the European Union
Action group	Classical Democracy Theory	Democratisation movement
Action organisation	Classical view on International Relations	Democrats 1966 (D66)
Active voting rights	Coalition	Demonstrating Dictatorship
Administration	Coalition formation	Dictatorship of the Coalition Agreement
Administration bureaucracy	Coalition party	Dilemma of Collective Action
Advisory organs	Coalition party group	Direct democracy
Aggregation function	Collective goods	District system
Algemene Maatregel van Bestuur (General Adjustment of Administration)	College of Mayor and Aldermen (B&W)	Dualism
Amendment	Comment and opinion function	
Animal Party (PvdD)	Commercial advisory office	E.
AROB-procedure	Commissioner of the King	Easton, David
Articulation function	Communism	Ecologism
Authority	Confessionalism	Education council
Autonomy	Conservative	Election battle
	Constitution	Election programs
B.	Constitutional Monarchy	Election threshold
Back-room politics	Constitutional rights	Electoral participation
Balanced representation	Consultation in the Prime Minister's Tower	Electoral quota
Barrier Model	Contextual factors	Elite theory
Budget rights	Control function	European Commission
	Control power	European Council
C.	Corporative system	European Court for Human Rights
Cabinet	Council of State Act	European Court of Justice
Cabinet under resignation		European Economical Community
Cabinet's crisis	D.	European Parliament
Census voting right	De-ideologicalization	European Union
Central Planning Office (CPB)	Debate	European Union Council
Chamber of Reflection	Decentralisation	Executive power
Chosen Mayor	Decision in name of the King	
Chosen prime minister	Democratic constitutional state	F.
Christian Democracy		Fascism
Christian Union (CU)		Feminism
Christian-Democratic Appeal (CDA)		Formateur
Civil disobedience		
Civilian initiative		

Freedom Party (PVV)	International Organizations	Non-electoral participation
Functions of political parties	International Relations	Non-Governmental Organizations
G.	K.	North-Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)
Gatekeepers	King	O.
Gedeputeerde Staten (executive body of provinces)	Kingdom of the Netherlands	Output
Government	L.	Output phase
Government policy	Labour Party (PvdA)	P.
Governmental Declaration on Agreement	Law proposal	Parliament
Governmental officials	Left	Participation function
GreenLeft (GroenLinks; GL)	Legislative power	Party discipline
H.	Legitimacy	Party group discipline
Head of party list	Liberalism	Party group specialist
Hobbes, Thomas	Lobbying	Passive voting right
I.	Locke, John	People's Party for Freedom and Democracy (VVD)
Ideology	M.	People's representation
Impeachment	Majority Cabinet	Pluralistic Democracy Model
Informateur (explorer of coalition possibilities)	Majority system	Polarisation
Information function	Marx, Karl	Poldermodel
Input phase	Mayor	Policy preparation
Interest group	Members of the Crown	Policy regulation
Intergovernmental policymaking	Miljoenennota	Political actors
Intergovernmentalism	Minister	Political agenda
International Agreements	Ministerial consult	Political constitutional rights
International Cooperation	Ministerial responsibility	Political culture
International Court of Justice	Ministry	Political functions of the media
International Criminal Court	Minority Cabinet	Political group assistants
International interdependence	Monism	Political ideology
	Monopoly of violence	Political participation
	More, Thomas	Political parties
	Motion of disapproval	Political policymaking
	Municipal administration	Political primate
	Municipal council	Political problem
	Municipal council elections	
	N.	

Political renewal	Social and Cultural
Political system	Planning Office (SCP)
Politics	Social constitutional
Populism	rights
Post-classical view on international relations	Social Economical Council (SER)
Power	Social problem
Pragmatism	Social-Democracy
Presidential system	Socialism
Pressure groups	Socialist Party (SP)
Prime Minister	Solidarity
Principles of legitimacy	Sources of power
Prisoner's Dilemma	Sovereignty
Progressive	Speech of the Throne
Public agenda	Spin-doctor
	Spread responsibility
R.	Staten-Generaal
Reactionary	Stewardship
Recruit function	Subsidiarity principle
Referendum	Supranational
Reflection function	policymaking
Reformed Party (SGP)	Supranationalism
Representation	Swing voter
Representation Democracy	System Model
Research function	T.
Resigning government	Transfer phase
Right	Treaty of Maastricht
Right of dissolution	Trias Politica
Right of initiative	TV-democracy
Right of interpellation	
Right of investigation	U.
Right of motion	United Nations
Right of questioning	
Rights of the parliament	V.
	Voters' turnout
S.	Voting right
Second Chamber ('Tweede Kamer')	Voting systems
Secretary of State	
Security Council	W.
Selection function	WOB (Law on
Senate ('Eerste Kamer')	Transparent Administration)

Appendix 2: Courses in Portuguese Secondary School System

<i>Disciplines</i>	<i>Disciplines</i>
Anthropology	Physics and Chemistry
Applied Maths to Social Sciences	Political Science
Arts	Portuguese
Arts History	Portuguese literature
Biology	Psychology
Biology and Geology	Psychology and Sociology
Chemistry	Sociology
Classical Literature	Spanish
Communication	
Descriptive Geometrics	
Drama	
Economy A, C	
English	
Fine Arts A	
French	
Geography A, C	
Geology	
German	
Greek	
History A, B	
Informatics	
Latin A, B	
Law	
Materials and Techniques	
Maths A, B	
Migration Studies	
Multimedia B	
Philosophy, A	
Physics	

