

Self-responsibility in Germany and France: A comparative discourse analysis

Bachelor Thesis Public Administration

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Abstract

Self-responsibility has been discussed in a wide variety of research, ranging from education to health care and social studies.

In this thesis the comparison has been made between the position of self-responsibility in German and French politics, and in particular the way that political parties address the topic in their manifestos. For this research the model of Ossewaarde (2006) has been used, classifying self-responsibility in the categories of *power*, *accountability*, *task*, and *virtue*.

The parties that have been chosen for analysis are three high-ranking parties from each country. In this analysis, this means that the parties have generated high results in government elections over the years from 2000 and up, or have received much publicity in this period.

The way in which the research has been conducted is in the form of a discourse analysis. This means that the views of the parties have been analyzed, interpreted and described in terms of the theory and following this, a conclusion has been drawn concerning the position of self-responsibility in the both national cases.

In short, it seems that in Germany, citizens enjoy more self-responsibility, as the parties in that country address the topic in a more extensive and diverse manner than this is being done in France. The focus is on making arrangements to act responsibly for citizens, by creating opportunities of choice in for instance health care. Also there is a large manner of attention for stimulating citizens to enter into social groups. In France, the focus is mainly, and almost solely, on the creation of possibilities to act responsibly.

While the focus in this research has been on only three political parties per country in a certain period of time and using a specific theoretical framework, other results are possible if one of these parameters is altered. There are many variations to be made concerning these parameters, and thus a large amount of further research should be possible concerning this topic.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Motivation

In the contemporary Dutch society, it said that the citizens enjoy more and more freedom and responsibility for how they behave. The state does not watch over them in all the aspects of their daily lives, but it leaves them free in a lot of these. The individual citizen has more freedom to organize his own life, without the government looking over his shoulder all the time to check if he is acting in the 'right' way. This situation is best described by the Dutch word *betuttelend*: the government knows best how people's lives should be organized and the individual freedom is reduced. But over the past few years, society in the Netherlands is developing a new form of welfare state in which the government is assumed to be slowly retreating from the personal lives of its citizens, with more individual freedom of choice and responsibility for its citizens. This societal movement can be described by the development of self-responsibility for the individual citizen. However, government has not retreated completely from the lives of the individual; some sectors will still have to be monitored closely such as security and defense.

In modern day, it is not just the national situation we have to consider, but also the wider, European, dimension. The Netherlands are one of the founders of the 'nation-state' we know as the European Union, and still the country has considerable influence on the European level. Because of this, it is an intriguing question to see if the developments that have taken place in Dutch society have spilled over into other member states of the European Union. Has the way of creating more freedoms for the individual citizen found enthusiasts in other European governments? And should this be the case, to what degree and in what ways have these ideas been implemented? These are interesting questions to review, as the European Union is becoming an ever closer, supranational, organization in which many matters of public governance and national organization are already becoming more and more harmonized to create a strong international federation.

As there are momentarily 27 member states in the European Union, it is almost an impossible task to compare all of them. Therefore I have chosen to examine the situation in the Netherlands as the basis for my comparative analysis, as it is my home nation and the self-responsibility concept has been widely discussed. From the other member-states of the European Union I have selected Germany and France. The reason for this is that these nations are the largest and possibly most influential ones in the European Union, and I find it interesting to see how the most influential nations deal with these types of subjects.

1.2 Objective, problem definition and research questions

The main objective of this thesis is to see if the self-responsibility that has taken shape in Dutch policy has also formed in other member states of the European Union. Because there are currently 27 member states within the European Union, it is an almost impossible task to review all of them. For this thesis I have therefore chosen to focus my attention on Germany and France, with the Dutch model being the basis for my comparison.

My main research question in this thesis will therefore be:

To what extent has the concept of self-responsibility for the individual citizen developed in German and French policy texts, compared to the Dutch model and each other?

The reason I have chosen to formulate my central research question in this way is that I will use the Dutch model as my starting point and the other cases have to be compared to this model. On the other hand I believe it is interesting to see how the different societies have developed in the light of this concept and if there are any large differences or similarities to be noted between them.

To answer this main research question, the following questions have to be answered first:

- 1. What does self-responsibility mean and why is it important?*
- 2. In which forms can the concept be observed?*
- 3. How has the concept developed in the Netherlands?*
- 4. Which forms has the concept assumed in Germany and France?*
- 5. How can the different cases be compared and what are the main similarities and differences?*

To answer the questions posed I will have a look at theories and literature about self-responsibility. The first three questions will be used to form the theoretical framework which will be used to analyze the several national cases and which will form the back-bone of my thesis. The data here will be based on literature concerning the concept of self-responsibility. To analyze the different national cases and thus to answer the fourth (and partly also the third) question, I will use political party. For the more theoretical part, being the theoretical framework and the methodology, I will use academic literature from the fields of political science and sociology. The fifth question will be answered by giving the most notable differences and similarities that stand out from the answers to the preceding four questions. After this I will present an overall conclusion about the development of the concept of self-responsibility for the individual citizen in the studied national cases.

The thesis will take the shape of a comparative literature study. This means that the empirical data will be gathered through a documentary analysis of literature published by the political parties of the several countries; there will be no interviews or other means of data gathering. These documents will be analyzed to form a comprehensive view of the concept of self-responsibility and what forms and dimensions it can take in the nations that are being studied. I believe that this way of working in this thesis is the most appropriate one because it is hard to retrieve usable empirical data about this topic from interviews. The concept itself is not very well known by the public, and I believe that it is, in this case, best to see in what ways the national governments and their advisors (in the Netherlands, for instance the Council for Societal Development, Dutch: Raad voor de Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling) have made plans to bestow more freedoms on the individual citizen and how they have eventually done this in practice.

The case of self-responsibility in the Netherlands will form the basic case of my analysis, to which I shall attempt to compare the situations in both Germany and France.

In the next chapter, I will lay out the theoretical framework that I will use in this thesis. The concept of self-responsibility will be explained, including its different shapes. In the third chapter, I will address the methodology by which I will conduct this research. The fourth chapter will contain the comparison between the nations analyzed and in the fifth chapter I will present my conclusions about the degree in which self-responsibility is used and promoted by the political parties under study.

Chapter 2: The concept of self-responsibility and its forms studied and looked at from the Dutch perspective.

2.1 Introduction

To be able to measure a concept in a proper way, it has to be clearly defined before starting with the analysis. This is what I will do in this chapter of my thesis. I will use several sources to shed light on the concept of self-responsibility, as well as describe a number of measures that can be used to categorize and analyze the concept in a proper way. A main guidance in this description will be a report published by the Dutch Council for Societal Development (*Raad voor Maatschappelijke Ontwikkeling*, from now on designated as the RMO) from 2006, in which the concept is categorized in several distinguishable ways, and a report that supports this RMO-report written by dr. Ringo Ossewaarde in 2006, in which the concepts are operationalized in the Dutch situation. In this way, I believe that I will be able to create a solid theoretical framework from which I can analyze the development and state in Germany and France. This chapter will be organized in the following manner: First, I will look at the concept of self-responsibility in general: why and how has it developed throughout the years and how has this development been able to take place? After I have described the concept in general, I will have a look at the different aspects that make up self-responsibility; what are the main components that make up a society in which self-responsibility can develop. After this I will describe several shapes that self-responsibility can take, followed by the ways in which it can be promoted, operationalized and controlled. When the general part of this section is completed, I will focus on self-responsibility in Dutch society based on the report by dr. Ringo Ossewaarde, as this will form the basis for my analysis of the German and French cases later on in this thesis.

2.2 What is self-responsibility?

To start off with the description of the concept in general. Self-responsibility is said to be an aspect of many parts of contemporary society. It can be witnessed in sectors like higher education, immigration, and health care. A way of living and acting is envisioned in which the individual has the possibilities to act and acts in a manner that is socially desirable; one looks after his/her fellow citizens so that all can benefit from each other's actions. This can be in a way of participating in social associations for example. Here, we will focus on the self-responsibility of citizens and their ways of dealing with government services and public interests in society.

The emergence of self-responsibility as a concept within society can be traced back to the development of the welfare state. In the Netherlands, the RMO has conducted intensive studies around the concept. In the last decades of the twentieth century, European societies developed into welfare states: the state looked and still looks after its citizens and it provides them with the needed services like health insurances, education and financial support in ways of subsidies.

However, during the last ten years or so, the relationship between the state and her citizens has changed in a sharp way. Citizens became more and more demanding of the government and they were becoming more and more informed. The state was no longer the superior entity in society, and because of these developments the relationship between the state and its citizens became less hierarchical than it was before (RMO, 2006, p.25). There are two sides to this situation; the one of shifting relations between the state and the citizens, and the one of shifting relations between the citizens amongst each other (RMO, 2006, p.26). Malpass et al. describe this development as the emergence of the *consumer citizen* who expects his government to respond in a dynamic and effective way to the demands that originate from society (Malpass et al. in Bevir & Trentman, 2007, p.231). They continue that an essential part of the developments in society over the last years can be attributed to the emergence of the will to choose amongst citizens. They are not interested in receiving standard government services anymore, but they want to choose which government services they use. Choice of public services leads to a certain degree of responsibility for how people make use of these services; not only responsibility for themselves, but also for other citizens and even for society as a whole. For the government, this can lead to having to make a change in its ways of governing because of this new 'relationship' between state and citizen. Newman (2007) calls this new contract between the different players in society 'governing of the social' (Newman in Bevir & Trentman, 2007, p.51) in which notions of cohesion and responsibility, being aspects of active citizenship, are the main drivers.

The question of why self-responsibility has developed can thus be answered by looking at a shift in societal relations concerning the relationship between state and citizens, with the citizens becoming more demanding and transforming into a form of *consumers* of public services. This drive to be able to choose 'personalized' public services brings with it a matter of being responsible for how you use these services, not only towards your own personal sphere but also towards others in society. The question remains why self-responsibility is important in contemporary society. As stated above, this can be explained through the fact that citizens are becoming more demanding, and as a result of this the provision of public services is taking the shape of a non-hierarchical market of supply and demand. When citizens 'buy' services at this market they have to take responsibility for how they use them. They have to use them in a 'right' way in which no others will be disadvantaged.

2.3 Aspects of self-responsibility

Now that I have discussed the reason for and way of development of self-responsibility and its importance in contemporary society, I will look at how the concept can be broken down in several aspects. In an article in *Research in Higher Education* from 2007, Thornton and Jaeger describe five key aspects of self-responsibility (they call it civic responsibility): a) knowledge and

support of democratic values, systems and processes; b) a desire to act beneficially within the community and toward its members; c) the use of one's knowledge and skills for the social benefit of all; d) appreciation for and interest in others unlike the person himself; and e) personal accountability for one's actions (Thornton & Jaeger, 2007, p. 994). From this perspective, it seems that it is not that easy to act in a socially responsible way; one has to have a considerable concern for how a democratic system is shaped and how the different actors within this system relate to one another; democratic freedoms have to be known and respected and the societal system/structure has to be clear. Also, to use a degree of self-responsibility in a good way, one must have an altruistic mind-set: one has to think about the other people concerned with his or her choices and their consequences. Actions must be aimed at increasing the greater good in society. This matches with aspect c) in the way that if one has the understanding and will to act in the best interest of society, one should use the knowledge, skills and means available to achieve these goals. To be able to understand what is the best for one's surroundings and for society as a whole, one has to be interested in others and in their views and perceptions, even if these are not in line with one's personal ideas. Then, we come to the final aspect of being prepared to account for your actions. This is what it is all about in creating a manner of self-responsibility. The citizen wants to 'buy' services from the state that are more or less suited to his needs, but in doing so he has to be prepared to act in the best interest not only of himself but also for society and to be responsible for his own actions in using these public services.

2.4 What shapes can self-responsibility take?

The concept of self-responsibility can take many different shapes. The *RMO* has mentioned four of these explicitly in the report *Verschil Maken: Eigen Verantwoordelijkheid na de Verzorgingsstaat* (*RMO*, 2006, p.p. 47-50). First, it treats self-responsibility as a form of power; one has to have the capacities and possibilities to act responsibly. The government has to provide for the space for its citizens to use these capacities and it has to provide them with the means and skills to be responsible. Second, the report treats the concept as a form of accountability. This is related to the power-variant because one who has the power and capabilities to be responsible also has to be able to account for his actions. This way of interpreting is mostly applied in the creation of markets: the government offers the citizens choices of services they want to use. With this offering of choices, citizens automatically receive a certain degree of accountability for their choices. This view corresponds with the ideas of Malpass et al. (2007) in saying that when citizens become more and more like consumers they receive more responsibility because now they can choose what to use in government services (Malpass et al in Bevir & Trentman, 2007, p.231). Because all citizens pursue plural goals, when making choices they have to act socially responsible to make sure they do not hinder others in pursuing their goals (Malpass et al. in Bevir & Trentman, 2007, p.233).

The third way of describing self-responsibility by the *RMO* (2006) is in the shape of a task. Citizens are called to act responsibly from the position they fulfill in society, be it a parent or neighborhood inhabitant. In this perspective, citizens receive the freedom of choice in public services but they have to act in accordance with their role in society. For example parents are in some cases being held responsible for the behavior of their children. The government binds her citizens to certain tasks and duties through rewards and punishments.

The fourth and last type of self-responsibility the *RMO* describes is in the shape of a virtue. Certain behavior can be seen as being positive when one shows responsible behavior towards for example family or to the society as a whole. Here, self-responsibility can be seen as responsibility for someone else. It can be seen in government policy in ways of development of competences like empathy and societal involvement. The government strategy that fits this variant best is called *Empowerment* (*RMO*, 2006, p.49); this means that the government pressures citizens to become 'better' citizens to eventually reach the situation in which they work together in a responsible way to counter the strict ways of working of the bureaucratic institutions.

As has been described, the concept of self-responsibility can be seen in several, varied, approaches. Ranging from a power to be able to use responsibility to the virtue of being responsible for the people around oneself. The spectrum around which it can be analyzed is broad, and cannot be understood in one single way.

2.5 Formation and operationalization of self-responsibility

Now that we know what types of self-responsibility can be used by governments, we turn to the ways the government can use to promote the formation of self-responsibility. Here as well, the *RMO* (2006) mentions four ways of promotion, corresponding to the four previously named types of responsibility.

First, the *punishment and reward* method (*RMO*, 2006, p. 50). Through ways of punishing or rewarding citizens for their actions, it is believed that they will rely more on their own social responsibilities than on those of others; people will less try to profit from one another. Second, the way of *market mechanisms and supervision* is mentioned (*RMO*, 2006, p. 51). Citizens are seen as autonomous, rational choosing consumers on the market of government services. To be able to let people choose their products a market for these products has to exist. When citizens 'buy' the government services on the market, they will be responsible for using those products in the socially right way. The third way that is mentioned is the way of *binding citizens to obligations*. This corresponds with responsibility as a task. People are bound to the obligations they have from buying certain goods on the government-market. This is done by setting several roles in society and making citizens aware of the role they play and the tasks and duties corresponding with that role (*RMO*, 2006, p.53). The fourth way described by the *RMO* of

stimulating self-responsibility is that of *development of competences*, related to responsibility as a virtue. It leads to a state of mind that is roughly translated into English as 'civil virtues' (RMO, 2006, p.55). These virtues are not explicitly mentioned in policy documents, but are more like assumptions that every citizen is acting through one's best virtues related to their role in society. A way to stimulate these civil virtues is by the state not intervening in society until the citizens cannot come to a solution to certain problems.

As can be seen from this paragraph, self-responsibility can be stimulated and promoted in several ways. Each of these manners can be associated with one of the shapes the concept can take. The manners range from relatively high levels of government intervention through punishment for not acting socially responsible to the precautionary shaping of responsible character traits for citizens. Thus, governments have a wide range of tools for promoting self-responsibility at their disposal.

2.6 Self-responsibility in the Netherlands

Now that we have seen the ways self-responsibility can be shaped within society, I turn to how it is organized and shaped in the Netherlands, as that country will function as the basis of my analysis of the German and French situations. For this view of the Dutch situation I will follow a report written in 2006 by dr. Ringo Ossewaarde for the RMO. In this section the previously mentioned types of self-responsibility (power, accountability, task, and virtue) will be described in conformity with Ossewaarde (2006).

To start off, Ossewaarde makes the division between individual and citizen. In short, he mentions that the individual is merely interested in the fulfillment of his own needs and interests without looking at the interests of society as a whole. On the other hand, the citizen is a person who lives to practice different virtues that will make him more free of dominance by a.o. the state and that empower him to make his own decisions and shape his own life (Ossewaarde, 2006, pp. 25-26).

Ossewaarde (2006) sheds his light on four different sectors of policy in which self-responsibility is being applied. These are integration, safety, mental healthcare and youth care.

When discussing the concept of self-responsibility as a *power* of the citizen, the first two policy sectors incorporate this way of working. In integration, immigrants that come to the Netherlands have the responsibility to blend into society; they have to adapt to the rules and habits of society to eventually form a part of it as a 'citizen' of the Netherlands. Self-responsibility is seen here as the power to participate in the process of integration. An illustration of a framework that is set up in this case is the Report on Integration Policy (Rapport Integratiebeleid) of 2003. Ossewaarde (2006) names the case of mainly immigrant women who should participate and if they do not do this, it is their own responsibility (Ossewaarde, 2006,

p.33). The other policy domain where this form is adapted is that of safety. This can be seen as citizens that help the police to keep their neighborhood safe by keeping an eye out to see if nothing strange is happening. Instruments implemented by government to support this form of responsibility are the 'Kliklijn' and safety hallmarks. Citizens can use these to assist the police in reducing crime; they receive the power to do or not to do this and the responsibilities corresponding with those choices.

The second type of self-responsibility that has been discussed is that of *accountability*. Ossewaarde (2006) states that in the recent years, there have been statements by different political parties in the Netherlands that the citizens are more and more individualizing. This is seen by many as a sign of progress. This process of individualization has led to the formation of a growing number of markets in which citizens can 'buy' goods and services from the government and, related to this, it has formed new ways in which tasks and responsibilities have been organized. It can be seen that through this process in the fields of policy discussed by Ossewaarde the position of the citizen towards government and market has been strengthened (Ossewaarde, 2006, p.35), along with the responsibility of the citizen to use that power in a right way and to be able to account for the results of his actions. An example mentioned is the 'zorg op maat' program in which the supplier of health care supplies care in a way that is fitting to the individual client and not a single, overall, package of healthcare. In integration in the Netherlands, the concept of an 'integration services market' has been developed, to give the immigrant the choice by which organization he wants to be integrated into Dutch society. The immigrant is responsible for his own choice in this matter and he can be held accountable for his decision. The concept of self-responsibility in the way of accountability is linked to the task of the government to monitor the supply of the possible goods and services in a right way. This leads to a situation in which the consumer receives more power to make his own choices, while at the same time he is faced with more government control.

The third form of self-responsibility described is the form of a *task*. In the Netherlands, this form has its roots in what is called an offensive of civilization in which both citizens and government are to behave in a decent or civil way. Awareness of how one should behave is one of the core values of this way of thinking. Doctors are responsible for their patients and thus should behave in an according manner; the same applies to for example police officers in relation to civilians and offenders. In integration policy, this 'task' can be seen as an immigrant who wishes to integrate into society, making this his 'task' and thus carrying responsibility for the correct execution of this task. In safety, citizens and companies are more and more involved in their own security, so it is their responsibility to arrange this (again, their 'task'). Also, parents are held responsible for the actions of their children in youth care, so their self-responsibility as a task is to be a good parent and make sure that their children do not stray. In the Netherlands,

the Law on Youth Care (Wet op Jeugdzorg) of 2005 is an illustration of the way this form of self-responsibility is being applied (Ossewaarde, 2006, p.38).

The last form of self-responsibility that is discussed is the form of a *virtue*. In integration, it means that citizens should strive to form new and collective virtues through participating in the different social arenas. This would require a high degree of empathy and tenability of all involved. In this way, the immigrant will not be seen as such, but as an equal citizen (Ossewaarde, 2005, p.42). In the sector of security this form of self-responsibility is expressed in the fact that citizens should not just assist the police in surveillance in their own neighborhood and exclusion of unwanted individuals, but also in stimulating their fellow inhabitants to behave like it is expected from good citizens; so also in the actual prevention of crime in their own neighborhood. The arena could take the shape of one in which competences are developed and different virtues are discussed to eventually come to a conclusion about how one should behave in the neighborhood. When both adults and youths have been taken up into the different associations, they can then be formed into righteous citizens. This can also be seen in youth policy, in which the focus is no longer on restriction of certain types of behavior but on the development of youths so this behavior never surfaces (Ossewaarde, 2005, p.p. 42-43). The self-responsibility as a virtue can be seen, in short, as the responsibility towards each other to enter into discussions about how to live alongside one another in society (or even just in the same neighborhood) and to exchange virtues to come to a situation in which good citizens and individuals are created.

In this paragraph, we have discussed the ways the different forms of self-responsibility are organized in the different policy sectors described by Ossewaarde in his report. It can be concluded that in every policy sector, more than one form of self-responsibility can be seen, and there is not one form that has an exclusive position in one of the described policy sectors. However, at the moment this can just be stated for the Dutch situation, as the report by Ossewaarde mainly focused on that country. What can be concluded from this, however, is that in the following chapters of this thesis that discuss the German and French situation concerning self-responsibility, we should be aware that there is no single 'mold' of self-responsibility that can be placed over a sector of policy very easily, maybe even impossible.

2.7 Chapter Conclusion

When looking at the information given in this chapter of my thesis, it can be easily concluded that the concept of self-responsibility cannot be described in an easy manner. There are multiple interpretations possible, each with its own views and properties. Also, the way in which the concept can be implemented and controlled in society cannot be described in a single manner. Each interpretation brings with it a different way of implementation, where some can in fact be used in multiple interpretations. In the actual analysis of the German and

French situation, I will not focus on the four specific policy sectors that have been a significant part of Ossewaarde's (2006) analysis. However, I will use the different interpretations and implementation methods mentioned as a guidance in my analysis, as I believe that one should be able to perceive these general aspects and characteristics in every situation.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

As has been stated before, the concept of self-responsibility does not let itself be practically measured very easily. Therefore, a method of analyzing this concept will have to be defined to make sure that the analysis will provide us with the right outcomes. The shape in which this will take place in my thesis will be a comparative literature study, or documentary analysis. This means that the data about the different national cases will not be gained by conducting interviews or by any other form of empirical data-collection. Instead, the way I will gather empirical data to measure in what manner and shape self-responsibility has positioned itself in the views of political parties in Germany and France will be through an analysis of different documents that have been published by the parties themselves in the form of manifestos. The reason why I have chosen to follow this approach in my thesis is related to the fact that manifestos display the general views of the political parties over the long-term. Party programs display the views of the party for the short term, mostly around the period of elections. This could mean that matters are being displayed in a too positive sense. Party manifestos, however, give the view of the party on how matters should be done in general, without addressing the concrete situations in society. I believe that one can get a better image of how the party thinks about self-responsibility out of these manifestos than out of party programs for this reason.

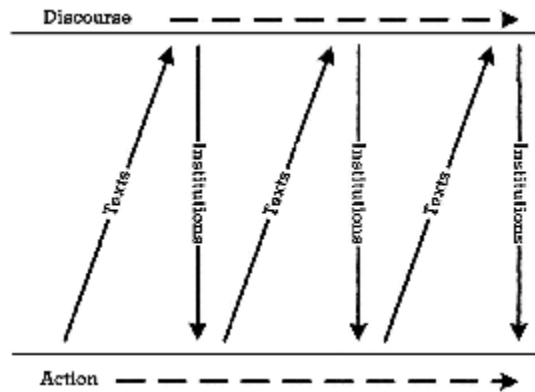
It will not be in the best interest of the thesis to conduct interviews with large numbers of individuals of the national governments; also, because of the international character of the thesis this will be almost impossible. Therefore, I have chosen to conduct a documentary analysis of textual party manifestos. This way of analyzing different texts and views on certain matters that together give a form to the concept in question is called a *discourse analysis*. Accordingly, as stated by Philips et al. (2004), [... "*discourse analysis involves the systematic study of texts—including their production, dissemination, and consumption—in order to explore the relationship between discourse and social reality*"] (Philips et al, 2004, pp.636-637). It is not the goal of this type of analysis to support or reject any of the views that are presented in the discourse. It strives to construct a better view about how the development of the concept under discourse has proceeded in the political views.

3.2 What is discourse analysis?

The concept of discourse analysis has been in existence for a long period of time now. In contemporary social sciences, the concept is presented with a few very distinct usages. For instance, it is used within the analysis of speech and conversation to bring out the dynamics and rules governing particular social situations like for example an office or a classroom. Here, the different ways of speaking and conversing with one another can be analyzed to expose the

underlying hierarchical relationships that make up these social environments. If we translate this to the level of a society, the subjects of analysis could be the different actors within this society and especially the way these actors interact with one another; through this analysis we could see how the different actors are positioned in society in ways of influence and power to form the policy that has to be followed.

There are two main models to be noted in contemporary discourse analysis. First, there is the Anglo-American model as presented by amongst others Coulthard in his book *Introduction to discourse analysis* (1977), which focuses on the various forms of oral communication within a certain social setting from a viewpoint of interactionality and the different methods that people communicate with one another, to investigate how power and authority are distributed in conversations between persons. Second, there is the French movement of discourse analysis. This way of thinking was mainly propagated by social scientists like Michel Foucault (in *L'Archéologie du savoir (The archeology of Knowledge)*, 1969) and Louis Althusser, and focuses on the analysis of the discourse as being a study of the different written materials that exist within the field of study within the institutional, social and political contexts of this field. Foucault believes that the social world and the relations of power and (hierarchy) that characterize it are dependent on the composition of the actors that form the discourse in a certain period of time, decided in a unanimous way (Philips et al, 2004, p.637). But on the other hand, critical discourse analysts state that discourses are always in motion and never really are able to classify the social reality completely (Grant et al, 1998). In society, these written texts could be the different policy documents like political manifestos that are being produced by the political parties of a country. Thus, discourse analysis in this sense is defined as the analysis of the different parties in a particular social setting. As stated above, discourse analysis focuses on written documents to acquire a better view of how certain (social) situations are formed and why. In other words, it can be an interesting tool to gain knowledge about the formations of institutions in society, like in this thesis the institution of the responsible citizen. The creation of these kinds of institutions does not take place at first instance because people see others acting in such a way, but because written documents like policy-documents and government papers explained and promoted it, as comparably written by Philips et al. in the situation of large organizations (Philips et al., 2004, p.639). When this 'social procedure' is drawn in a figure, it will look somewhat like this:



1

Figure 1: The relationship between Discourse and Action

As can be seen from figure 1, the formation of institutions in a society can be seen as a way of interaction between discourse and actions. In the first place, texts are written and published by government to express the policy it wants to follow. Secondly, the process enters the area of the discourse, in which the texts are discussed and 'rated', also by actors outside the government level like national advisory organs. After this discourse has more or less ended, institutions are formed according to this (in this thesis, that of a responsible citizen) and the process of institutionalization continues in the realm of actions in which the formulated policy (for example) is given shape through the actions of those who are subject to it. This is a short illustration of the process of interaction between policy formations, the discourse following this, and the eventual actions that are taken by citizens. In this thesis, I will focus on the first step of this cycle, being the expression of the different views concerning self-responsibility.

In her article *Policy Analysis as a Discourse*, Louise G White (1994) distinguishes three ways of discourse analysis. First, there is that of *analytic discourse*, which focuses on the bringing together of multiple views and analyzing the discourse that goes on between these different actors. Second, there is the concept of *critical discourse*, that focuses more on a value analysis within the analysis of the discourse. And finally there is the concept of *persuasive discourse*, in which the focus lies on the way the analysis is conducted and not simply on following the framework that is set out by the social sciences (White, L.G., 1994).

3.3 Discourse Analysis in this thesis

In this thesis, I will analyze the discourse about self-responsibility in society according to the French model of discourse analysis as propagated by amongst others Michel Foucault. This means I will focus on an analysis of written documents by political parties of Germany and France. The choice for the French approach has been made because this model focuses more on the written materials in among others institutional, social and political settings. This way of

¹ Figure adopted from Philips et al., *Discourse and Institutions*, 2004, p.639

working matches with the way of the *analytical discourse* way of analyzing as described above, as the views of multiple actors will be viewed to eventually arrive at a fitting analysis.

The subject under study in this thesis is a subject of both social and political interest, so in that area of choice the decision to use the French model is fairly easy. Also, because the formation of self-responsibility is realized through the formation of certain ideologies originating from the state level, it is unlikely that large parts of the discourse under study can be found outside the written documents and thus in conversation analysis and other forms of study of oral communication.

3.4 Implementation of discourse analysis to the cases

As I have stated before, I will conduct my analysis on the basis of political party manifestos. However, to analyze the manifestos of all political parties in both countries would become much too elaborate. To cope with this potential problem of having to analyze a specific concept in an almost too elaborate amount of documents, I have decided to analyze the views of the political parties that have had a high profile over the recent years. By recent years, I mean from the year 2000 and later.

I have made this choice because I believe that these parties have been able to leave their mark on the political agenda over the past few years in a more influential way than the smaller parties could have done. They have been in government, or have received many votes during elections without becoming a government party. A high number of votes for these parties means that they have a large portion of the population behind them and thus represent significantly more of the populous than the smaller parties.

In the selection of parties, I will use only the results of the presidential and National Assembly elections, as from these positions parties can influence policy nationwide, other than from elections on a municipal, regional, or European scale. For my data concerning the parties from Germany and France, I will use in my analysis, I will consult the websites of the Ministries of the Interior and other sources concerning election outcomes like statistics bureaus.

While I choose to follow this approach, other case-selection choices can be made, for example to analyze all political party manifestos or to widen the period of analysis to include for example the 1990's. These approaches would generate different results, but because of the limited time and size of this thesis I have chosen to limit my research to the above boundaries.

The link between the theories about self-responsibility, discourse analysis and the cases that I am going to analyze, lies in the fact that in their manifestos, political parties underline their ideas of how society should be formed. They indicate how parties believe citizens should behave. The link to the theory here is that I will, as stated, attempt to place the views of the different parties into the framework that has been formed according to the opinions and descriptions of Ossewaarde (2006). Discourse analysis can be seen in the fact that I will analyze

the manifestos of several political parties and thus create an image of how these parties are oriented in the spectrum of views on self-responsibility as described in the theories. In general, links can be seen in that the views of several parties will be analyzed so their approach to self-responsibility can be explained, thus forming a variant of discourse analysis containing elements of Ossewaarde's theory.

After I have found and selected the parties that answer to the criterion I have stated before, I will conduct research on their political manifestos. These represent the views of the parties on various matters, also on the way the citizen should be seen in society and the position he/she should be having. Next to analyzing the views, I will attempt to place the views of the political parties into the categories as described by Ossewaarde (2006).

3.5 Chapter Conclusion

When looking at discourse analysis, two ways of approaching can be defined, the Anglo-American and the French style. In addition, three viewpoints can also be distinguished, being analytical discourse, critical discourse and persuasive discourse, which can be connected to the different approaches. I have chosen to use the French approach mentioned by Michel Foucault because of the fact that the discourse under study in this thesis will not involve hierarchical or power positions as stated by Coulthard, but focuses on the interactional 'game' of policy formations in which every actor has his own views and demands concerning a particular situation. When these actors meet one another, a discourse is formed about what the eventual shape of the national policy will be concerning self-responsibility. However, the matter I will analyze in this thesis will restrict to the description of the views of different political parties in the national cases and not to give a description of how these different views merge or collide to eventually form effective policy. The focus will be on high-profile political parties which have reached good results in past elections or have been in the news relatively many times. When the views of the parties have been analyzed and categorized according to Ossewaarde's (2006) categories, I will form a conclusion on how these views have contributed to the formation of self-responsibility in Germany and France.

Chapter 4: Analysis of the views on self-responsibility in Germany and France

In the previous chapters, I have laid out the theoretical frame on which I will base my analysis of the position of self-responsibility in the views of political parties in Germany and France. This chapter will contain the actual analysis of these situations, based on the theoretical framework.

The chapter will take the following shape. First I will give a short overview of the political parties I have selected for this analysis and why I have done this. After this, I will describe the German situation, followed by the French one. In these chapters, I will lay down a number of aspects of how the party sees the position of self-responsibility for the citizens: in which matters can the citizens receive responsibility? Also, I will attempt to rhyme these views with the different categories described in the theoretical framework. I will end this chapter by giving a short overall conclusion and comparison between the selected countries.

4.1 Germany

Introduction

The parties I have selected in Germany are the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU), the Christlich-Soziale Union (CSU) and the Sozial Demokratische Partei (SPD). I have chosen these parties, as described in the previous chapter, because they have had a strong position over the past years concerning the political situation in Germany; the first two as government parties, the third as being a large party, but not always in government but in the opposition. I will discuss these parties in the order I have just named.

Christlich Demokratische Union

Being a democratic party, the CDU emphasizes that the people should be able to participate in politics and in the way everyday life is oriented; people should have the possibility to let their voices be heard. That is why the party explicitly names these matters in her manifesto. It states that citizens should have freedom in their family and neighbourhood and that they shall participate, choose and act responsibly (CDU, 2007, p.7). So citizens should be free in how they organize their lives. This is supported by the statement that those who have freedom must also apply themselves to create and preserve these freedoms for those who do not acquire these so easily (CDU, 2007, p.8). This does not just involve citizens in our time, but also concerning future generations.

In the light of the theories in this thesis, this statement can be seen as wanting to construct self-responsibility for the citizens in the state, and giving them this responsibility; thus as self-responsibility as a *power*.

Also, the manifesto displays that everyone has the right to freedom and the duty and responsibility to act solidarily with one's fellow citizens as to support the state in constructing a socially strong society. Going on about creating responsibility and freedom for its citizens, the CDU states citizens should be free to develop their responsibility and the aspects that are connected to it (CDU, 2007, p.11). "

All of these points from the CDU-manifesto can, in my opinion, be ranked under the header of the first type of self-responsibility being the *power* to act responsibly: in the eyes of the CDU, the government should make arrangements to provide citizens with the possibilities of acting in a responsible way; citizens should be able to participate in society, making their own choices and expressing their viewpoints on certain matters of national concern.

The CDU is a party which is not in favor of letting the state take care of all matters in society just like that. She advocates solidarity and cooperation in society (CDU, 2007, p.24).

So in the eyes of the CDU, all participants in society should be able to contribute to the way society is formed. It should not just be the national government, but citizens also have the responsibility of improving society.

Just opening up to self-responsibility in society is not enough if citizens do not fill their position in that society in a right way. Therefore, the CDU also speaks of citizens who have to 'play their part' in society in the way they are supposed to do this. The manifesto of the party speaks of parents who are the primary persons to educate children in basic values (CDU, 2007, p.31).

Also, teachers should be able to perform their jobs in a right way, so good training for them is essential to improve their skills (CDU, 2007, p.34). The method of promoting self-responsibility here is the *development of competences*. Teachers can be trained to perform even better in class, thus making them more capable of fulfilling their role in society in a good and responsible manner.

Also in health care, self-responsibility is promoted by the CDU. In its manifesto, it states that the prevention of illness should become a pillar of its own in the spectrum of the healthcare system, next to the rehabilitation and nursery. This prevention pillar should be a direct responsibility of the citizens themselves, and it could be a step towards a new system of choosing personal insurance-packages and the offering lower own-risk tariffs for citizens who approach health in a responsible manner (CDU, 2007, p.61); these goals can be seen as stimulation methods of acting responsible concerning personal health care. The method of upholding responsible behavior here can be the *punishment and reward* method as citizens can be rewarded with lower tariffs if they act responsible concerning health care and punishments by charging higher tariffs when they do not act in this way.

Conclusion

Overall, the CDU is a party that is greatly in favor of promoting self-responsibility for the citizens in the German state. It believes that the state is not the actor that has to shape society on its own; citizens can help in this by acting in a responsible manner for themselves and towards each other. This can be seen in the statement of citizens having to act in solidarity with one another. Also, the party states that when citizens have the possibility to act in a responsible manner, they should be solidary with their fellow citizens; as stated, citizens should act in such a way as to bear responsibility for their own actions, as well as to preserve and support others who do not acquire these freedoms so easily. Third, self-responsibility as a virtue is addressed in stating that parents are the first persons to educate their children in basic values, this implies that they have to act like this and fill their role in society in a good manner; the same applies to teachers.

All in all, the CDU is, when looking at its manifesto, a party that sees a good potential in the development of self-responsibility in the German state. It tries in several ways to implement, improve, and strengthen it.

Christlich-Sociale Union

The CSU states in one of the first chapters that it is essential to differentiate between the tasks the government must perform in society and which tasks can better be left to the citizens themselves (CSU, 2007, p.18). This can be seen as a way of stating that self-responsibility should be promoted towards citizens.

The party focuses on the responsibility that citizens should have towards each other. In her manifesto, it is stated that everyone is responsible for the development of his or her capacities and that only that attitude can stimulate people to develop their personalities; not at the cost of others, but especially for the benefit of all in society (CSU, 2007, p.28). To promote this way of thinking among citizens, there should be education and training, in the eyes of the CSU.

Looking at this, it can be stated that the CSU aims for a self-responsibility in the form of a *power* as well as a *virtue* here where the possibilities are created for everyone to develop and use his or her potentials for the benefit of all, supported by ways of competences-development.

Or, as it is stated: "*Wer je nach seiner Begabung das Beste aus seinem Leben macht und dabei Selbstentfaltung nicht auf Kosten anderer lebt, leistet viel für das Allgemeinwohl*" (CSU, 2007, p.35)

Responsibility in the shape of a task can also be noted in the manifesto in the aspiration towards the proper education in values towards children, by making the parents and teachers responsible for these matters (CSU, 2007, p.36). On top of this, the CSU states, are parents primarily responsible for the raising of children. It is seen as their task to act responsibly in this matter.

Also in healthcare, the party states that self-responsibility should be applied, as all citizens should have the duty to help themselves within the framework of their capacities (CSU, 2007, p.110). This can be seen as self-responsibility in the shape of a task; whenever one has the capacity to act (help him,-/herself) in certain situations, one should act accordingly.

Conclusion

All in all, the CSU does not mention self-responsibility much in its manifesto. However, it can be stated that the party does want to create the opportunity for citizens to act in a responsible manner in society. The core matters that are addressed in this respect are being responsible for others in society; if you have the capacities to help others, you should take the responsibility to do so: one has to act in such a manner that others in society can be able to benefit from each other's actions. Also, the correct execution of the task of several types of citizens is addressed, with the according responsible way to act; parents are the primary people responsible for the correct value-education of their children, and teachers have to act responsibly from their role in society in education and developing the children that they teach in class.

Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland

Of the three German political parties I have chosen for this analysis, the SPD makes the least notion of self-responsibility in her party manifesto.

In the eyes of the SPD, democracy builds on citizens who take responsibility and who stand up for one another. The party sees this mainly in the form of people taking part in social activities like clubs and foundations (SPD, 2007, p.17). This can be seen as a form of self-responsibility as a virtue, as people actively commit themselves to, and take responsibility for, the forming of a better and closer community life in their neighborhood (and maybe even beyond that).

Another aspect of society that is treated is integration of foreigners into the German society. The SPD thinks that immigrants should integrate themselves while society offers them the possibilities to do so (SPD, 2007, p.20). It is seen as a task of both sides (immigrants and residents) to make the process of integration work. So here it is responsibility as a task for both sides; as the immigrant has the social task of adapting to the 'new' culture he is entering, and the native residents have the social task of receiving the immigrant in a socially acceptable and open manner.

The third aspect of society in which self-responsibility can be noted is that of consumerism. Here it is more of a responsibility for manufacturers and sellers of products to make sure that consumers are aware of how the products and services they purchase are created and rendered. So in this way the opportunity to choose products responsibly is being strengthened, if it is up to the SPD (SPD, 2007, P.29). Citizens will have a better position to act and purchase responsibly, for example concerning the use of expendable resources, than they had before.

Conclusion

The SPD does not mention self-responsibility much in her manifesto. Then again, in certain areas the party does make it clear that it should be promoted and rewarded more. This is mainly done in the area of participation of citizens in organizations, in the social way of participating in the process of integration and the creation of the opportunity for citizens to buy their products in stores while being well-informed of possible environmental consequences, improving their freedom of buying goods that are also socially acceptable.

Conclusion

In the table below it can be seen how the different political parties in Germany mention self-responsibility in their manifestos in the light of the theories used in this thesis. The most noticeable conclusion one can draw from this overview is that the shape of *accountability* is hardly to be seen in Germany; all of the analyzed parties focus on creating possibilities for citizens and stimulating them to enter into a social life with their compatriots.

Also, one can see that the CDU is relatively the most 'developed' when it concerns self-responsibility; the party mentions the concept in the most explicit manner of the three parties analyzed.

Political Party	CDU	CSU	SDP
Type of self-responsibility			
Power	X	X	X
Accountability			
Task	X		
Virtue	X	X	X

4.2 France

Introduction

The parties I have selected for my analysis of the position of self-responsibility in the views of French political parties are the Union pour un Mouvement Populaire (UMP), the Parti Socialiste (PS), and the Front National (FN). The choice for the first two parties is based on their prominent position in the French politics, as well as those parties having supplied the final two

contestants for the last French presidential elections. The Front National has been chosen because it has been, and still is, one of the most outspoken opposition parties in the French political system, under the leadership of Jean-Marie Le Pen.

Union pour un Mouvement Populaire

The UMP provides for a complete chapter on responsibility in its manifesto of values. "Being free, is being responsible" is one of its core sentences in this chapter. It seems from this statement that the party is largely in favor of providing the French citizens with the opportunities to be free and act in a responsible manner towards each other. According to the UMP, responsible behavior is seen as having certain rights but also obligations towards others. The main focus here is that citizens should be aware of their responsibility towards future generations concerning their choices (UMP, ?, p.2).

Also, the party emphasizes social responsibility within the family. Older people should look after the development of the young ones, whereas the younger people should take care of their elders (UMP, ?, p.3).

In their long-term plan, the UMP advocates that people who are unemployed should take the responsibility to make attempts to end this situation. This would be in the best interest of the social system of France, according to the party (UMP, 2006, p.5). This form of responsibility can be classified in the category of a *task*; citizens who are unemployed but fall within the potential labor-population should fulfill their task in society in the right way, which is (trying to) find work and not profiting of the arrangements that are available while they are fit to go to work. In addition to this, everyone who is still of the working ages is called upon to find an activity that is best suited to their possibilities (general interest activities, group-work, etc.) (UMP, 2006, p.38). This phenomenon can be classified as self-responsibility as a form of *accountability*, as these people receive government support and they should use this support to eventually return in the labor-process in whatever form.

In another field, the responsibility of the families and parents is encouraged. The UMP believes that the family is indispensable to the formation and education of the new generations; they are the main institutions through which basic values are being taught to the younger generation. The party believes that the family supports the state in a great number of areas (UMP, 2006, p.41). This conception can be seen as a way of promoting self-responsibility as a task; Parents should raise their children according to the values that are accepted in society and not in deviant values, thus fulfilling their task in society.

The third and last spearhead in the documents of the UMP is the creation of more freedom and responsibility for women. Women should have more choice in how they live their lives. This falls into the category of self-responsibility as a power; women should be given the possibilities

to act in a responsible manner with the pro's and con's that are associated with that kind of life. On the other hand, men should be pushed more into the role of the parent, thus creating a self-responsibility as a *task* for men to raise their children in a correct way (UMP, 2006, p43).

Conclusion

Overall, self-responsibility for the UMP takes its shape mainly as a task; people who are able to work should not be profiting of the government but they should try to find some kind of work so they can contribute to society and not parasitize on it. This could also be classified as self-responsibility as a *virtue* as people should be stimulated to act socially responsible. Another way of promoting the *task*-side of responsibility is stimulating the role of the family in society; the family is important to the value-education of children and parents should carry out their task as such in a responsible and socially correct way.

Finally, the opportunity to act responsibly should be created for all, according to the UMP. Women should also have the opportunity to make their own choices in life and to act responsibly in this.

Parti Socialiste

The Parti Socialiste, or Socialist Party, is mostly state-oriented in her manifesto. Self-responsibility does not play a large part in it. The party believes that there should be a permanent redistribution of resources and financial means to offer all citizens equal chances to live their lives (PS, 2008, p.2). Though not explicitly stated, this may mean that the PS does want to construct a society in which people all have the same possibilities to live a free life, with the responsibility that comes along with that. This would fall in the category of self-responsibility as a power; wherein the government creates opportunities for its citizens to act responsibly.

Furthermore, the party believes that all citizens should have access to proper educational facilities during their entire lifetime to make sure and promote that people live their lives in a socially responsible way (PS, 2008, p.3). This can be seen as a *strengthening of competences* as related to self-responsibility as a task and virtue.

Conclusion

About the Parti Socialiste we can be short concerning self-responsibility. The party does not speak of it in an extensive matter in her manifesto. However, it is in favor of providing equal chances to all citizens in areas like law, labor and the resulting freedom. So eventually, the goal is to make all citizens receive equal chances to develop (a.o. socially) in society.

Front National

The situation of the Parti Socialiste also comes up in the manifesto of the Front National. The party does not speak of self-responsibility in an extensive way in its documents, but more about the role of the state in social matters (FN, 2007, p.11).

However, there is one point of notice that the FN addresses concerning responsibility of its citizens. The party believes that the parents are primarily responsible for the correct raising of their children, as can be seen in the documents of other parties discussed in this thesis, but here the party believes there should be an opportunity to choose for the parents to lead a family life or to aim for a professional career (or a combination of both) (FN, 2007, p.16). So the FN wants to create freedom for the parents to choose the way they want to live their lives.

Conclusion

All in all, I can be short about the position of self-responsibility in the views of the Front National. The party does not mention it explicitly in its manifesto; instead it is more concerned and gives more attention to the position of the state in both national and international matters. There is some attention being given to the fact that parents should be given more of a choice in how to organize their lives, thus creating more freedom for them along with more responsibility, but more is not addressed concerning responsibility.

Conclusion

What can be seen in the French situation is that the political parties in general do not give extended attention to implementing self-responsibility amongst the citizens. The UMP does state some matters that can be related to self-responsibility, but the other two parties that have been analyzed mention it a little bit to totally not.

Political Party	UMP	PS	FN
Type of self-responsibility			
Power	X	X	
Accountability	X		
Task	X		X
Virtue			

4.3 Chapter Conclusion

Now that we have looked at the position of self-responsibility in the views of several political parties in both Germany and France, several matters are to be seen.

First of all, in Germany the concept seems to have acquired a relatively more influential place on the political agendas of the parties than in France. All examined German parties make more or less explicit notions in their manifestos of the fact that citizens should be provided with more self-responsibility. Also, the areas in which it should be promoted are quite clearly defined. In France, however, parties seem to be less interested in promoting responsibility for citizens. The concept is less explained than in the German manifestos, and it seems that the state will continue to maintain a relatively high level of control concerning the lives of the French citizens.

Second, it can be seen that in both countries the emphasis lies in the solidary actions amongst the citizens. In all manifestos, if there is notion of self-responsibility, this notion focuses mostly on the interaction between citizens in society, and on a lower scale on the freedom of citizens to develop themselves as individuals.

A third and last point that catches the eye is that in both countries, responsibility for future generations takes up an important position in the manifestos of the parties. Citizens should not only carry responsibility for their actions towards their fellow citizens, but as well towards the generations that will follow them.

When comparing the position of self-responsibility in Germany and France to the situation in the Netherlands as described in the theoretical framework, it can be seen that the concept takes a significantly lower place on the political agendas in these countries, whereas in the Netherlands, the concept is being applied in several sectors in the Netherlands in a more or less explicit way, if following the 206 report by Ossewaarde. Of the two countries, in Germany the concept seems to be shining through the most; parties there seem to be more open to the active participation of citizens in social life, making notions of the importance of the social role of parents, teachers and people participating in social organizations. On the other hand, in France the parties seem to be more reluctant concerning these matters, looking at the amount of attention they give to promoting and emphasizing the roles of previously named groups in society.

All in all, I believe that the German political parties approach the situation in the Netherlands the most, whereas in France self-responsibility is still given a more or less secondary role in the views of political parties.

Analyzed country	Germany	France
Type of self-responsibility		
Power	3	2
Accountability	1?	1
Task	1	2
Virtue	3	0

This table gives an overview of how self-responsibility is mentioned in political party manifestos in Germany and France by indicating how many of the three parties analyzed in each country have mentioned the type in their manifesto. The conclusion that has been put forward above is illustrated here in that self-responsibility is mentioned more in Germany than in France.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

In this thesis I have made an attempt to encompass the position of the concept of self-responsibility in the views of leading political parties in Germany and France.

Of course, self-responsibility can be classified in a various number of ways, however for this analysis I have stuck to the categorization that is described by Ringo Ossewaarde in his 2006 report *Eigen Verantwoordelijkheid, Bevrijding of Beheersing?* in which he outlines four categories in which self-responsibility can be organized. These are: as a *power*, as *accountability*, as a *task*, and as a *virtue*.

To analyze the different party manifestos of the German and French political parties, I have followed the ways of a discourse analysis. There are two ways of conducting this type of analysis; the Anglo-American way which focuses mostly on power relations, and the French way which focuses on the opinions and views of different actors in a (political) arena. I have chosen for the second approach, as this thesis is not aimed at analyzing which party has the most influence in the arena but on what position self-responsibility takes in the views of the different parties and what this means for the position of the concept on the political agenda.

To make a proper analysis of the position of self-responsibility in German and French politics, I have focused on the manifestos of several leading parties in these countries. The reason I have chosen to analyze only their manifestos is that because these documents display the views of the party over a longer period of time and not focus on a specific moment. Through this broader view I believe that they can give a more accurate image of how certain concepts and ways of thinking are embedded in the party's views.

Having conducted the analysis, a few interesting matters can be distinguished. First, it seems that in the German politics, the leading parties are giving more attention to self-responsibility than in the French situation. Citizens are, in the party manifestos, given more importance in the development of the fields of health-care, education and social life. The parties believe that citizens can contribute in a large manner to the formation of a more solidarily organized state. However, although these images are drawn in the manifestos, the concept is not used in a very large scale. Attention is given to the societal strengthening of the position of the citizen, but the information was not very extensive.

In the French situation, it seems that political parties mainly want to attempt to keep the control mostly at the state level. Self-responsibility is given a place in the party manifestos, but it is not a very significant one. The focus that can be seen when we look at the parties together is that all are trying to stimulate the role of the parents in society to play a responsible role in the education of the younger generations. Mostly in France, the focus lies on the responsibility

of citizens as a *task*. The emphasis lies in the citizens acting according to their role in society, being a parent or a labor-skilled person.

When looking at both countries, it can be seen that self-responsibility has a stronger role in the views of political parties in Germany than in France. The parties in Germany emphasize more on the role of the citizens themselves, having the views that parents should take the responsibility of raising their children in a proper way and the responsibility of their personal tariffs and packages in health-care. In France, it seems that self-responsibility has not developed in the same way; it is still comparatively small in the manifestos of the analyzed political parties. It can be concluded that self-responsibility is, at the moment, not very high in on the political agenda in both countries, however in Germany it is developing at a faster rate than in France.

Compared to the situation in the Netherlands, however, both countries give a lower amount of attention to the concept of self-responsibility in their manifestos; whereas in the Netherlands the concept is widely discussed in several fields. The German parties approach the Dutch situation in the best way, but there is still a considerable gap between the attention given to self-responsibility in the Netherlands and in Germany or France.

Discussion

Having come to the end of this thesis, some questions still remain. For instance what do the results of the research actually mean? Is it the case that in Germany citizens are more addressed and stimulated to choose freely and are motivated more by government to act in a socially responsible way, looking out for each other and the good of all of society, while in France the government believes that citizens should not be concerned with the social organization of society, but that the state is practically the sole actor to make sure society remains pleasant for all citizens? I believe it is too short-sighted to make this conclusion based on my research. Of course, from the results it can be seen that in Germany, citizens enjoy more responsibility in the views of political parties than in France, but to conclude that they *actually* enjoy more freedom and responsibility there will have to be more elaborate studies on this topic for which the timeframe for this thesis is not extensive enough.

When looking at the types of self-responsibility that have been noticed in the national cases, there is a difference in that in Germany the emphasis is mostly on self-responsibility in the form of a power and a virtue, while in France virtue is not to be noticed. Does this imply that in France, the stimulus from the political parties to citizens to participate in social groups and associations does practically not exist? Again, I believe that this research is not extensive enough to make this conclusion. Further, more elaborate research will be necessary to be able to connect concrete answers to this question.

What I believe this thesis has made clear is that there are some significant differences between how political parties in Germany and France concern themselves with self-responsibility for their citizens. Concrete conclusions cannot be drawn, however, because of the limited size of my thesis, but one can state that in Germany the state is more concerned with giving citizens freedom and responsibility than in France. A reason for this can be that the German government is of a less centralized order than in France and does not want to maintain control over all matters in society, whereas in France it wants to keep this form of control. To gain a complete insight of the exact position of government concerning self-responsibility and the manner of wanting to control from the government, more elaborate research will have to be conducted.

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