The Netherlands and Islam: a test to its celebrated Tolerance

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Abstract
In a relatively short time, the Dutch political landscape has been severely shaken up. The underlying developments underpinning the change in societal and political attitudes are manifold and interconnected. Structural changes in governance, especially deregulation and Europeanization, made for a loss of policy control. Secularization and de-industrialization made traditional distinctions between left and right, between liberalism, confessionalism and socialism less prominent. The rise of an emotional and a risk culture made for a loss of willingness to live in moderateness and mediocrity. And all this together, combined with the advance of digital communication means, made social cohesion along the traditional lines crumble. While those structural modifications created an enabling background, the main shock has derived from the sudden introduction of a new line of political positioning: on immigration and especially on Islam. In the last decade, pioneer parties emerged that negatively, but successfully, exploited this new theme. The prevailing political order and its culture of consensus were exposed as being out of line with societal demands. Now, ten years since the first introduction of the immigration-theme by the late Pim Fortuyn, confrontation prevails, the inclusive discourse has become more exclusive. The crystallizing points of contention of the immigration-debate being views on “Islam” and its interaction with the much celebrated idea of “Dutch tolerance”. This paper explores the role of immigration and Islam in the change from consensus to confrontation within Dutch politics. Along the road, it explains why “tolerance” has become the main focus of the “Islam debate”, and not, as for example in Italy, the interaction with Christianity, or, as in France, the consequences for state secularism. By tracing the country-specific roots and evolution of political and societal attitudes on immigration and Islam in the Netherlands, the aim is to add to the idiosyncratic elements of the “Europe and Islam”-debate.

Keywords: The Netherlands, immigration policies, Islam, national identity


Introduction
Traditionally, the Netherlands have been depicted as a walhalla for political, ethnic and sexual minorities. In the tiny, densely populated country bordering the North Sea, policies based on consensus, compromise and inclusiveness are believed to have generated societal tolerance and well-being. That perception is backed by data: the Netherlands steadily top the lists regarding competitiveness, human development, democracy, quality of life and political integrity. But notwithstanding the praise and pride, the last decade has added some dark spots to such a rosy picture. With the assassination of politician Pim Fortuyn in 2002, the Dutch experienced their first political murder since William I of Orange (1584). Two years later, the controversial cineast Theo van Gogh was brutally assassinated by a group of Dutch Muslims, pinning – using a knife - a letter to his chest addressed to Ayaan Hirsi Ali, ex-Muslima and back then, Member of the Dutch Parliament. At the level of society as well as of politics, confusion and disorientation crept in. Party consensus turned into more personal confrontation, traditionally inclusive discourse turned more exclusive. And the ingrained motto “Act normal, that is already weird enough”, seemed to lose much of its aptness.

The reasons for the changes in societal and political attitudes in the Netherlands are, predictably, manifold and interconnected. Over the years, several relevant global, regional and domestic factors have been assessed. Put together, a rather persuasive picture of what is “wrong” with the Netherlands emerges. Structural changes in governance, such as deregulation and Europeanization have made for a loss of policy control. Secularization and de-industrialization made traditional distinctions between left and right, between liberalism, confessionalism and socialism less prominent. The rise of an emotional and a risk culture have made for a loss of willingness to live in moderateness and mediocrity. And all this together, combined with the advance of digital communication means, made social cohesion along the traditional lines crumble.

While those structural modifications created an enabling background, the main shock has derived from the sudden introduction of a new line of political positioning: on immigration and especially on Islam. In the last decade, pioneer parties emerged that negatively, but successfully, exploited this new theme. In this context, large-scale immigration has amplified a certain national

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3 See for example Human Development Index and OECD rankings
4 See among others, work done by Han Entzinger, Jan Rath, Maarten P. Vink, C. Joppke, Han Entzinger, Huib Pelikaan, Hans Vermeulen and Rinus Penninx.
insecurity and the questions of identity set in motion by above mentioned factors. The prevailing political order and its culture of consensus were exposed as being out of line with societal demands. Now, ten years since the first introduction of the immigration-theme by the late Pim Fortuyn, confrontation prevails and the inclusive discourse has become more exclusive.

The political and societal debates on immigration are marked by two crystallizing points of contention: views on “Islam” and its interaction with the much celebrated idea of “Dutch tolerance”. For some, Islam has been gradually defined as the antithesis to this “Dutch tolerance”, for others tolerance has been the cause of many societal problems, and for still others the problems stem from the fact that we have forgotten that the Dutch historically are tolerant and only with reinventing this tolerance the national identity remains unchanged.

The following pages explores the role of immigration and Islam in the change from consensus to confrontation within Dutch politics. Along the road, it explains why “tolerance” has become the main focus of the debate, and not, as for example in Italy, the interaction between Muslim immigrants and Christianity, or, as in France, the consequences for state secularism. By tracing the specific roots and evolution of political and societal attitudes on immigration and Islam in the Netherlands, the aim is to add to the country-idiomsyncratic elements of the “Europe and Islam”-debates.

The central notion of “tolerance” in the Dutch psyche
What is behind the concept of “Dutch tolerance”? Just as every other nation-state, the Netherlands has created its own national myths. As in every process of nation-state building, the authorities have structurally emphasized certain positive aspects of history. As such, it has created founding concepts for the nation in the hope of extracting communal loyalty to the state. In line with this view, it is here assumed that a national society is, in Benedict Anderson's terms, an “imagined community” open to political manipulation.7

For the Netherlands, “tolerance” was singled out as one of the core tenets of its own national myths. For centuries, Dutch soil has been praised for its inclusiveness, especially regarding minorities. At the height of the Spanish Inquisition, the Dutch compassionately welcomed Sephardic Jews fleeing the Iberian peninsula. At the end of the seventeenth century, the French Huguenots were accommodated, just as during World War II, the story of Anna Frank became “representative” for the nation's feelings towards the German-imposed minority policies. More recently, from the 1960s

onward, tolerance has been applied domestically to sexual and societal minorities, resulting for example in the legalization of gay marriage and the granting of gay adoption rights. It also shaped the so-called “policy of tolerance” (gedoogbeleid) regarding drugs, alcohol and certain minor violations of the law. Internationally, The Netherlands – the land of Hugo Grotius – has promoted itself as the cradle of international justice – the ultimate protector of minorities.

The decades long advocacy of such a liberal national character has been effective. The Dutch self-image is one of being a “Guiding Country” with a certain “moral superiority”. History had taught that progress meant downplaying differences, especially those religious or ethnic cleavages most easily exploited politically. Conflicts between distinct world views and societal desires were curbed through negotiating consensus while working together to generate economic growth. Strong emotions were judged undesirable and rather barbaric, bound as they were to lead to exclusion and, thus, to conflict.

A two-level tolerance

A glance at the history of the Netherlands clarifies why consensus had become the preferred formula for the political system. For centuries, the country had been deeply split between Catholics, Protestants (Lutheran, Reformed and Dutch Reformed), Liberals and later on Socialists. Arend Lijphart famously coined the system that was created to deal with these societal cleavages, the “consociational democracy”. The system's core mechanisms are guaranteed intergroup consultation and inclusive elite-negotiation. Party-competition is kept at a minimum and decisions are based on accommodation, solidarity and agreement.

But while the elitist political component of the system was indeed based on intergroup interaction and negotiation, the related societal system was built purely around intragroup interaction. A closer look shows that the much celebrated Dutch model of consensus and inclusiveness did not have strong roots in society. With the politics of “consociation”, corresponded a system of societal “pillarization”. At the level of society, the core mechanism was one in which Catholics, Protestants, Liberals and later on Socialists moved within their own distinctive “pillar”. Each pillar had its own

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8 The slogan “Nederland Gidsland” has been well-spread since the 1960s. See for example W.J. van Noort (2006) Nederland als voorbeeldige natie (Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren).
9 Lijphart, Arend (1968) The politics of accomodation (Yale University Press). Lijphart emphasized in later books that the term was not invented by him, but that it had been borrowed from David Apter's 1961 study on Uganda, while the term itself dates back to the 17th century writings of Johannes Althusius, using the Latin word consociatio. In later works, Lijphart also liked to use the term “power sharing” better, as that was easier to communicate to policy makers than the difficult term consociational.
10 A similar practice was present with regard to economic issues. Trade unions, employer's organizations and experts negotiated with government representatives on what course of action to take.
political party, newspaper, television channel, school, hospital, trade union, sports clubs etc. Personal lives were arranged around these community facilities. Intergroup contacts were judged unnecessary and undesirable. For the simple individual, there was no uncertainty regarding world view, societal behavior or political preference.

In sum, tensions have always existed between the self-perception of being tolerant and inclusive, and the fact that tolerance was imposed from above and never really had to be implemented at grass-root level. Different societal groups simply did not interact, only the political elites did. Thus, while the concept of “tolerance” has often been used for political reasons to define what constitutes the Dutch nation (that is, the people), the reality was that it were predominantly the state institutions that were tolerant and inclusive. “Dutch tolerance” constitutes foremost a mechanism for experts to reach lowest-common denominator agreements in a pragmatic, de-politicized and run-of-the-mill way, with the masses remaining compliant: they observed, but did not participate. The ruling elites believed in their ability to “manage society” (maakbaarheid van de samenleving). For long, they were right. Where else could a Prime Minister stroll without bodyguards and did ministers bike to the office?

Indeed, for quite some time this consociational model was praised for its dull but stable and effective outcomes. In the last decade, however, scholars have started to assess also the weaknesses inherent to the system. The combination of indirect representative democracy and a non-majoritarian system is believed to bring imperfections such as avoidance, ostrich behavior and back room politics.11 Next to that, a peculiar kind of leadership is needed to keep the model running: one of keeping things together, acquiescent, moderate and anti-ideological. And worse, as some others argue, in the end, pluralist bargaining, compromise and decentralization will move political life toward stagnation and atrophy, which at its turn would spawn demands for more charismatic, less political correct and more decisive leadership.12

Initially in the Netherlands, these weaknesses were judged as minor in comparison to its strengths. That assessment gradually altered from the late 1960s onwards. Economic internationalization and especially Europeanization challenged sovereign policy control. Next to that, a rapid secularization put question marks at the static logic of the established “pillars”. To illustrate, in 1860, the country was still strictly Christian, with 60 percent Protestants (mainly part of the Reformed movement), the rest Roman-Catholic. In 1899, only 2 percent stated not to belong to a certain religious

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11 Hendriks (2009) 482.
group. In 1960 this was still only 18 percent, but in 1990 this number increased to 40 percent.\textsuperscript{13} Church attendance dropped even faster. Hence, just as other elements of personal life, religion was becoming ever more individualized.\textsuperscript{14}

As a result, impositions from central authorities lost legitimacy in a similar pace. Social cohesion based on pillars was crumbling - with intermarriage between Protestants and Catholics finally becoming acceptable. The first clear translation of these societal changes at the political level was the successful appearance of a new party, “Democrats ’66”, playing into individualism and pragmatism. Their political view included more citizen participation in politics and pragmatism, thereby openly challenging the mass-elite divide as well as the societal division in pillars. A second breach of the traditional order came in 1977, with the merger of the Catholic and Protestant party into a Christian-democratic party (CDA).

\textbf{Two-level tolerance and immigration}

Mass-immigration added a deeper layer to the range of societal pluralism. Up until the 1940s, the Netherlands, while divided on Christian doctrines, had been extremely ethnically homogeneous – and overall Christian. As we saw before, the consociational system is based on plurality, but in the case of the Netherlands, that plurality was built upon a population in which, in 1940, only 1.1 percent had roots abroad. In perspective and with hindsight, diversity was real, but also one of Freud's narcissism of small differences. Fundamental questions of \textit{national} identity did not have to be posed.

That picture would quickly alter, with the discourse turning from one of Catholics and Protestants to one of \textit{autochtonen} (natives) and \textit{allochtonen} (non-natives). In theory, somebody is considered \textit{allochtoon} if at least one parent is born abroad. Those born on foreign soil are referred to as first generation \textit{allochtonen}, with a second generation born on Dutch soil. A third generation technically deserves the label \textit{autochtonen} (and does so in statistical data) though in daily discourse this is scarcely practiced that way. Needless to point out, it has long been acknowledged that dividing society into two simple anti-poles is highly questionable, unnecessarily polarizing and simplifying – but it is by now ingrained in the relevant debates, and will be difficult to eliminate.

Initially, postwar immigration stemmed from the (former) colonies. Indonesia (former Dutch East Indies) became independent in 1949 and New Guinea in 1958. As a consequence, some 300,000

\textsuperscript{13} Interestingly enough, after that, the percentage has stagnated.CBS Rapport (2009) \textit{Religie aan het begin van de 21ste eeuw}. and CBS Statline database.

\textsuperscript{14} In 2008, average numbers had dropped to 19%. (against 37% in 1971).
“immigrants” settled in the Netherlands. As they were Dutch citizens by default, mastered the Dutch language and had been made familiar with Dutch history, its norms and its values, labeling them immigrants is theoretically incorrect. In society, their loyalty to the Kingdom of the Netherlands was not questioned and no problems arose about differing cultural heritages.\textsuperscript{15}

By the end of the 1960s, immigration changed face. While the independence of the Dutch colony of Surinam (1975) still spurred a large wave of immigrants, the main sending countries would from then onwards historically be less related to the Netherlands. The new relations were of economic nature. The postwar boom had made for a shortage of Dutch labour – and a dislike for unhealthy, badly paid jobs. Fortunately for the Dutch economy, the countries around the Mediterranean offered a perfect match: an abundance of labor existed with a willingness to do whatever job. In this context, several governmental agreements were signed, especially with the Turkish and the Moroccan government.

Thus, the roots of large-scale immigration to the Netherlands are to be found on the one hand in post-colonial immigration (Indonesia, Suriname, Dutch Antilles and Aruba) and on the other hand in economically motivated immigration from – mainly - Morocco and Turkey. While the first group was considered as permanent residents from the start, the second was considered as a temporary exchange of labor. The latter's permanence only emerged after the oil crises of the 1970s when many single male “guest worker” decided that instead of returning home, it was wiser to bring over the family.

The following table gives an overview of the absolute numbers of non-natives in the Netherlands (first and second generation). As a percentage of the total population, the total number of non-natives was 9.9 per cent in 1975. In 2009, this was close to 20 percent, with non-western non-natives now making-up for 11 percent. As can be seen in the table, the immigrant population originating from Morocco and Turkey have witnessed the largest increase.

\textsuperscript{15} To illustrate, the Dutch often joke that if they take foreign guests out for “typical Dutch food”, they end up in an Indonesian restaurant.
The Dutch and the “Muslim migrant”

As the result of the influx of guest workers and their families, Islam has become the largest non-Christian religion of The Netherlands. While statistics on this subject are never perfect, the most reliable state that in 2006, 5 percent of the population declared him or herself “Muslim”, that is circa 850,000 people. Turks and Moroccans constitute the largest groups, followed by Surinamese, Afghans and Iraqi. There are around 12,000 Dutch converts. To contrast, in 1971, the total estimated number of Muslims had been 50,000.16

The first, small group of Muslims came from Indonesia. In 1947, former members of the Dutch Royal Colonial Army are believed to have constructed the first mosque in a wooden barracks. While numbers steadily increased from then onwards, until the mid-1970s, Islam remained fairly invisible. The main purpose for Turkish and Moroccan young men had been to earn money for the home front; their communal life had remained limited in space and scope. But the family reunions after the oil shocks of 1973 and 1979 increased the absolute numbers of Muslims exponentially, with the effect that Islam became more visible and active in an increasing number of societal spaces. It can therefore be stated that the native Dutch population only became aware of “Islam” with these family reunion waves;

How then was the new religion received in the land of inclusion and accommodation? At the level of state institutions Islam could be accommodated fairly easy, given their ingrained tolerance towards minorities. Legally, the Dutch state does not have an established church and is supposedly neutral to all religions. As such, the existing framework of laws turned out to be rather flexible in incorporating Islam. In many cases, it has been possible to apply legal provisions in place for more established religions, such as tax exemptions for religious practices and protection of hate speech.

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16 CBS Statline database.
Special arrangements that were in place for Jewish and Christian minorities, for example on ritual slaughtering of animals, exceptions regarding religious holidays at work, circumcision practices and burial rites were extended to include Islamic practices.\(^\text{17}\)

Nonetheless, while the existing laws accommodated and incorporated many aspects of Islam, some issues had to be dealt with at the level of politics. One of the first points of discussion had been the construction of mosques. With the neutrality of the state, officially no state subsidies for places of worship exist. However, since 1963, a Church Construction Premium Act had made it possible to work around this. However, the Act had expired at the moment that the large demands for mosques was only about to start.\(^\text{18}\) For many, this was indirect discrimination, as Islam had not received an equal chance to provide itself with the necessary infrastructure. As a result, two subsequent ministerial subsidy regulations were passed, pertinent to mosques.\(^\text{19}\) Also, given that mosques traditionally combine social, cultural, educational and religious functions, subsidies could be arranged through ethnicity-oriented funds such as provided by the Ethnic Minority Policies. Overall, the outcome has been that the number of mosques grew quickly, to around 500 these days.

Next to mosques, other Islamic organizations saw the light. The first Islamic schools were opened in 1988 in Rotterdam (Al Ghazali) and Eindhoven (Tariq ibn Ziad). By now, some forty Islamic schools are registered, including primary, middle and high schools.\(^\text{20}\) Founded on Islamic principles, these schools still include the standard curriculum and are, just like all other schools, subject to state inspection. Since 1997, Rotterdam has an Islamic University, which however is not recognized by the Ministry of Education. Next to schools, broadcast rights were granted to Muslim organizations, Islamic banks were set up and other social infrastructure was built.\(^\text{21}\) The institutionalization of Islam did however not go as far as creating a Muslim “pillar”, as some point out.\(^\text{22}\) There was indeed no Islamic trade union, no Islamic swimming pool and, more tellingly, a Muslim Party utterly failed.

Islam could also not be expected to become another “pillar” (indeed, in a de-pillarizing society).

\(^\text{18}\) A government committee had been set up to investigate the issue and the related Working Group Waardenburg had advised that the state should subsidize the construction of mosques.
\(^\text{21}\) The main ones became “Dutch Muslim Broadcast” and “Dutch Islamic Broadcast”. After a range of scandals and a bankruptcy in 2009, they were closed down.
For the first decades, the minority hardly had an elite. With time, Muslim elites sprung up in all parts of life, but often had no desire to be involved in the Islamic cause. Also, behind “Islam” different ethnicities could be distinguished and setting up a representative umbrella organization proved difficult or undesired. The Turks, the Surinamese and the Moroccans all had their own group dynamics. Only in times of external hostility or scarcity of resources, “Islam” became a common denominator. Eventually, in 1992 the Dutch Islamic Council was founded, grouping together the biggest Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese organizations. But in the same year, nine smaller Islamic institutions founded a counter organization, the Dutch Muslim Council. More recently, the Islamic Council has been rebranded the Contact Group Muslims and Authorities, which in 2004 was appointed as the official interlocutor for government. But in general, the conclusion has to be that the “Muslim Community” is all but homogeneous. Something a majority of Dutch Muslims would most likely confirm.

Nonetheless, in the eyes of the natives, a collective entity was being built up at the moment theirs were being built down. And that perceived “Islamic community” was, still in the eye of the native, creating problems not experienced before in society. As pointed out, Dutch societal group tolerance was traditionally based on a “don't bother me, and I won't bother you”-attitude. But with immigrants initially having to make use of one of the established infrastructures, flag points of inter-group confrontation sprang up. Examples are manifold and range from problems of mixed groups in kindergarten, gym classes and swimming classes in schools, habits of socializing on the streets outside – which the Dutch rather not do -, to refusals to be treated by a doctor of a different sex and refusals to give a woman a hand. Needless to say, language barriers amplified the complexity and the social miscommunications.

After an increased visibility, came an increased vocality. Language barriers were more often torn down, and Muslim voices became more audible (and comprehensible). But with increasing dialogue, natives also heard expressions of different attitudes regarding gender equality, homosexuality, sex, abortion, euthanasia, and freedom of expression. Attitudes the Dutch, “the Guiding Country” perceived as having to be overcome with time and education, which would lead to tolerance.

From the ingrained Dutch thinking in terms of “progress”, the immigrants were simply judged to lag behind, to be stuck in an un-Enlightened “stage” of community-based thinking, of superstitious, irrational religious behavior and old-fashioned views. However, the conclusions drawn from this observation led to two opposite lines of thinking: a dominant majority believed that “progress” would ultimately also touch the Muslim immigrants, while others stressed that Islam was different. In the
latter view, Muslim immigrants eroded the social progress generated with so much effort by the natives, as Islam was perceived as inherently intolerant to exactly those freedoms and tolerances of life in the Netherlands the Dutch were proud of.

Not to forget, next to “cultural” frictions, statistics on crime and welfare-(ab)use became much quoted number in the “immigration and Islam”-debates. As shown in the following tables, static snapshots of numbers would give the more skeptical good ammunition, while looking at the dynamic trends, would favor those arguing that time was healing the wounds. For example, with a static snapshot, we can argue that in 2008, Moroccans tended to be three times more often unemployed than Dutch natives (and thus, living much more often on state money). With the static view, the conclusion would be that clearly, integration is failing. However, looking at the developments over time, the argument would be that unemployment of Moroccans dropped from 27,3 percent in 1996 to 10,2 percent in 2008. In this light, the conclusion should be that clearly, up until now, integration has been quite successful.

Unemployment in percentages (of labour force):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Native Dutch</th>
<th>Non-western non-native</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Suriname</th>
<th>Dutch Antilles and Aruba</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1996</td>
<td>6,3</td>
<td>21,6</td>
<td>23,9</td>
<td>27,3</td>
<td>14,2</td>
<td>21,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>20,3</td>
<td>21,3</td>
<td>21,8</td>
<td>13,1</td>
<td>20,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>4,2</td>
<td>15,5</td>
<td>14,7</td>
<td>20,3</td>
<td>11,3</td>
<td>16,2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>3,5</td>
<td>13,2</td>
<td>12,9</td>
<td>14,9</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>13,4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>3,0</td>
<td>11,0</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>13,0</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>8,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>2,9</td>
<td>8,5</td>
<td>7,7</td>
<td>8,9</td>
<td>6,9</td>
<td>9,1</td>
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<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>3,4</td>
<td>9,8</td>
<td>9,5</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>7,1</td>
<td>10,3</td>
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<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td>13,7</td>
<td>13,1</td>
<td>17,9</td>
<td>9,7</td>
<td>14,1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>5,3</td>
<td>15,9</td>
<td>15,4</td>
<td>19,3</td>
<td>12,2</td>
<td>15,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>5,2</td>
<td>16,4</td>
<td>14,8</td>
<td>18,8</td>
<td>13,7</td>
<td>15,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>4,4</td>
<td>14,3</td>
<td>14,4</td>
<td>16,1</td>
<td>10,7</td>
<td>14,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>3,7</td>
<td>10,3</td>
<td>9,1</td>
<td>11,1</td>
<td>8,0</td>
<td>10,0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>3,2</td>
<td>9,0</td>
<td>8,1</td>
<td>10,2</td>
<td>6,4</td>
<td>9,7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>4,0</td>
<td>11,0</td>
<td>10,2</td>
<td>12,3</td>
<td>10,1</td>
<td>11,1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CBS Statline

Similar stories of differences between the first and the second generation and convergence towards the natives-benchmark hold for criminal records, as depicted in the table below, but also for example regarding fertility rates, command of the Dutch language, level of education and identification with the Netherlands. Im sum, a static view gives the idea that the non-native lags behind, while the dynamic
view shows that while true in absolute numbers, over time the gap has been closing rapidly.

Criminal records in percentages:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime against property</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total population</th>
<th>Native Dutch</th>
<th>Non-western non-native</th>
<th>Morocco</th>
<th>Dutch Antilles and Aruba</th>
<th>Turkey</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>33,6</td>
<td>28,6</td>
<td>44,0</td>
<td>47,8</td>
<td>51,1</td>
<td>29,4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>27,5</td>
<td>23,7</td>
<td>35,6</td>
<td>42,4</td>
<td>39,9</td>
<td>25,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vandalism, disturbing public order</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>19,6</td>
<td>20,5</td>
<td>18,1</td>
<td>20,5</td>
<td>15,8</td>
<td>18,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>21,3</td>
<td>22,4</td>
<td>19,3</td>
<td>21,3</td>
<td>18,4</td>
<td>19,5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>23,7</td>
<td>21,1</td>
<td>30,3</td>
<td>33,6</td>
<td>30,8</td>
<td>32,4</td>
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<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>29,6</td>
<td>27,1</td>
<td>35,5</td>
<td>37,2</td>
<td>35,6</td>
<td>37,2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traffic violation</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>29,4</td>
<td>34,3</td>
<td>18,1</td>
<td>15,3</td>
<td>15,2</td>
<td>25,9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>25,7</td>
<td>29,4</td>
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<td>13,4</td>
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<td>Other</td>
<td>1999</td>
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<td>12,9</td>
<td>16,9</td>
<td>16,8</td>
<td>19,4</td>
<td>17,6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>16,7</td>
<td>16,4</td>
<td>17,6</td>
<td>17,8</td>
<td>18,8</td>
<td>18,7</td>
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Source: CBS Statline

Politics and the societal discontents

Over the years, with immigration and Islam changing face, the governmental approach towards those subjects has changed as well. Initially, the government left developments to private initiatives made possible by the state institutions in place. Politicians remained neutral bystanders. However, with temporality of immigrant's stay turning into permanence in the late 1970s, politicians realized that those structures alone did not suffice. Consequently, politics started to have a stake in integrating minorities. As such, starting from having no policy, the governmental approach went from a more paternalistic phase of socio-economic adjustment policies in the 1980s to a more nationalistic phase emphasizing “Dutchness” and cultural adjustment in the 1990s and 2000s. Currently, arrows point into the direction of more intolerant demands for assimilation, with over the entire period a discourse change from the rights of ethnic and religious minorities to their duties. And while initially the focus was on all minorities, in the last years, Muslim minorities have been singled out specifically.

In the first period witnessing mass-immigration, any discourse of assimilation was outrightly rejected, so shortly after WWII. Assimilation was judged despicable as an ideal and had proven unworkable in reality, needless to say at great cost. As in many other places in Europe, the Jewish community in the Netherlands had been decimated during the German occupation. There had been several concentration camps on Dutch soil and a certain national guilt would for long mark Dutch policies towards ethnic or religious minorities. Thus, initially, there was no noteworthy integration policy. There seemed no need for it either. As pointed out, immigrants from former colonies were on paper already integrated and were supposed to have no difficulties finding a place in Dutch society.
Turks, Moroccans and other guest workers were simply believed to leave. With regard to the Islamic faith, as pointed out, the law seemed sufficiently flexible to absorb the tiny bits of Islam present at that time. Islam did not appear on the political agenda and Islam was not considered different from any other faith.

The awareness that Muslims were there to stay after the economic shocks did not instantaneously create the ideal of a multicultural society. In 1973, a somewhat restrictive immigration policy was tried, but turned out pointless in combination with the fundamental right to family life, the legal underpinning of family reunion. In 1979, for the first time, the Scientific Council for Governmental Policy suggested governmental intervention, so as to prevent socio-economic disadvantages and cultural isolation.\(^{23}\) In the early 1980s, the government started to describe Dutch society officially as an immigrant society. And when the government started implementing the policies of multiculturalism, it acted on a form of realism, rather than idealism.

Accepting the fact of permanency, the focus shifted to integration, but as had been the state philosophy, it came with the slogan “integration but not without preserving cultural identity”. Thus, as it had done throughout recent history, a compatibility was assumed between integration and keeping different cultural identities. In 1983, to emphasize the acceptance of the permanent multicultural character of the country and to prevent discrimination on any ground, article 1 of the Dutch Constitution was changed to include a more comprehensive non-discrimination clause:

“All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in all circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted”\(^{24}\)

In the same year, the full range of legislation was scrutinized and rid of clauses that were in one way or the other in tension with the new Article 1.\(^{25}\) In a similar vein, in 1986, the Dutch Nationality Act was changed to include more \textit{ius soli} instead of mainly \textit{ius sanguinis}, so as to make naturalization less troublesome. Obtaining double passports was allowed for several years and a National Minorities Consultation point saw the light. With all these legal tools, minorities were assumed to become well-

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\(^{24}\) Dutch Constitution Art 1: Allen die zich zich in Nederland bevinden, worden in gelijke gevallen gelijk behandeld. Discriminatie wegens godsdienst, levensovertuiging, politieke gezindheid, ras, geslacht of op welke grond dan ook, is niet toegestaan.’

integrated in the open, tolerant societal space the Netherlands offered them.

Unsurprisingly, reality turned out not all that simple. Since the 1960s, the government had lost most of its direct influence on the labour market. Efforts to guide the distribution of jobs equally among the different ethnic groups were in vain, based as they were on merely voluntary agreements. Only in the public sector the government could actively implement its envisioned equality directly. In other sectors however, Dutch society was at unease with the Islamic newcomers. Their dress, views of life, different practices and different demands were judged as incompatible with the liberal philosophy of many schools or companies. The government reacted, in 1994, with an Equal Treatment Act and the setup of an institution to examine cases of direct and indirect discrimination, especially with regard to education and employment. Contrary views were silenced with the buzzwords of “non-discrimination” and “tolerance”. Nonetheless, the simple exclamation of “Discrimination!” as many saw it, turned into a powerful instrument of (Muslim) migrants. Needless to say, sometimes justified, sometimes not.

In the political capital The Hague, culture or religion had long been disregarded as possible factors in causing problems. Conflict-avoidance and depoliticization of cultural issues were the rule. However, several dramatic events in the Islamic world, including the 1979 Iranian revolution and the Salman Rushdie Affair a decade later, made that Islam got a more negative connotation than other world views. Migrants from countries with a Muslim background were discovered as “Muslim migrants”.

Gradually, the Muslim culture became acceptable as an explanatory variable for societal discontents. In the early 1990s, the liberal politician Frits Bolkestein was the first of the mainstream political establishment to question the acquiescent governmental policies towards Muslim immigrants. His widely published view was one in which Islam formed a threat to liberal democracy and a hindrance to the integration process. Geert Wilders – who would enter stage a decade later – was one of his policy assistants at that time. The next milestone in breaking the practice of depoliticization of the issue was the article by Paul Scheffer in a well-read daily newspaper. In his “The Multicultural Drama”, he questioned whether Dutch accommodating views on Islam were not somewhat too tolerant and positive, as, with more than 1 million Muslims at home in the near future, one could only hope for

27 Ordeals range from “a man running a bike parking, was ruled to act against the Dutch Constitution when he made a rule that men had to stall their bikes in the upper bicycle racks, and women in the lower racks” (ordeal 2010-63). But mainly deal with ethnicity and religion cases.
a liberal and secularized Islam, but there was no guarantee.28

Strangely so, while many in society seemed to share these views, all that time, there had been a political party saying exactly that. But the Centrum-Democrats led by Hans Janmaat, up until 1998, had been able to capture only 0.6% of the vote. To get Islam truly on the political agenda, a better political entrepreneur was needed who would link the issue to a more broader lingering discontents: the gap between the new society that had been emerging since the 1960s, and the old-fashioned back room politics aimed at consensus and compromise.

**Pim Fortuyn and the 2002 electoral revolt**

In 2001, Pim Fortuyn entered stage with a bestseller, directly attacking the incumbent governmental coalition.29 His main claims were that 1) the time had come to topple the old-fashioned, back room, paternalistic, ostrich-like politics and that 2) one should take off the blinders regarding the ideals of a multicultural society and the hopes for a liberal Islam. Fortuyn skillfully connected the two lingering sources of discontents: the individualization and equalization of society that challenged the prevailing mass-elite division, and the societal belief that, while Muslims had been treated as the weaker party or as victims, the real victims were Dutch society and its values of democracy, inclusiveness, freedom of expression and overall tolerance.

In a widely published interview, Fortuyn stated:

“Yes, the Islam, it isolates people. They see us as an inferior kind of people. Did you notice that Moroccan boys never steal from other Moroccans? But they are allowed to steal from us. And with regard to me, it would count double, as I am not only a Christian Dog, but am worth less than a pig [referring to his homosexuality]. If I could make it legally possible, I would simply say: no more Muslim will enter the country! But I cannot do that, legally speaking. But Islam is a backward - I will just say it - it is simply a backward culture.”30

In the 2002 elections, surfing also on a wave of global anti-islamic outcries, his party won 26 out of

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29 Pim Fortuyn (2001) *De puinhopen van Paars* [The Purple Mess]. Purple was the color of the then incumbent government.
30 Frank Poorthuis en Hans Wansink (2002) “De Islam is een achterlijke cultuur”, *De volkskrant*, 9 februari
http://www.volkskrant.nl/den_haag/article153195.ece/De_islam_is_een_achterlijke_cultuur%C2%A0
150 seats. In terms of the fragmented Dutch party landscape this meant an electoral earthquake. By politicians and pundits alike, it was judged a “non-Dutch” election, just as Fortuyn's assassination several days before the elections was judged a “non-Dutch” act. One has to add that he was killed by a fanatic environmentalist and not by a fanatic Muslim.

While Fortuyn's party, without his beguiling leadership, imploded rather quickly and new elections made for a return to traditional party rule within a year, the episode left its “lessons learned”. For the electorate, it had shown that politicians could actually appeal to the people and were allowed to address the issues that they considered relevant. “At your service!”, Fortuyn's slogan had been and its echoes are to be heard for a long time to come. For the political establishment, the lesson was that immigration, integration and especially Islam had to be placed as “problematic issues” on the political agenda. The ethnic-religious cleavage was introduced and its success indicated it was there to stay. To remain in the game, politicians also had to change their political style, including dress and discourse.

Thus, while the changing mood had been in the air for quite some time, it would not be an exaggeration to state that Fortuyn turned theory and practice of Dutch politics upside down. In the turmoil, cultural arguments became not only acceptable, but politically necessary. Political parties were to have an opinion on Islam, and if they did not want to have one, they had to explain why not. In general, survey results show that positive attitudes towards Turks and Moroccans dropped after 2001, whereas the feelings toward the Surinamese and the Antillean did not change from 2001-2004. Clearly, Islam had become an issue.

Dutch politics and Muslim migrants in a post-Fortuyn era

Pim Fortuyn “discovered” Islam as the thorn in the flesh of society. But with immigration being transformed into an “other”, questions arose about the “self”. Integration issues were related to issues of “integrating into what?” As pointed out in the beginning of this article, a strong national identity had never really flourished in the Netherlands, exactly because that identity historically had been merely a bundle of different world views and beliefs able to live next to one another because of the inclusiveness

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32 With all this came, important for the overall mood, a change in the style of politics. As Wouters has argued, the Netherlands used to be a country with severely tempered public emotions. But they changed course and where the compression of emotion went further than elsewhere, the decompression of emotion went further too (Wouters 2007) With emotions running high, the discourse changed as well.
33 Coenders et al , 279
34 Plus, the percentages of political trust started to drop remarkably after 2001. While they had been one of the highest in Europe up until then, they have been getting ever closer to the bottom Hendriks (2009).
of state institutions, the politics of accommodation, the discourse of tolerance and the societal pillarization.

Against the advice of the Scientific Council for Governmental Policy, the government engaged in the construction of a more stringent picture of a national identity. The overall aim was to give non-natives a road map to cultural integration, and maybe also to assert the natives that they had a national identity to preserve. As a result, the chapter of symbolic nation-building was reopened. New guidelines for history text books appeared, a plan for a National Historical Museum made headlines, and an election of the Greatest Dutchmen in History took place. Interestingly enough, William of Orange and Pim Fortuyn had to share the first place.

That identity construction on purely “Dutch” terms had become rather problematic was soon discovered. Citizens from former colonies objected, as did certain regions, as did a second generation of Muslims, perceiving this exercise as aimed directly at excluding them. In the debate on whether there is a place for Islam in Dutch national identity, the opinions of the young group of (ex)Muslim elites are important sources. Ayaan Hirsi Ali from Somalia promoted an evil, violent and un-Enlightened side of Islam, the Dutch-Iranians Afshin Ellian and the youngster Ehsan Jami also criticized Islam. Their views however have been balanced by views and practices of, among others, the Dutch-Moroccan politician Ahmed Aboutaleb, currently mayor of Rotterdam, the Dutch-Moroccan politician Ahmed Marcouch, the Dutch-Turkish politician Nebahat Albayrak, Dutch-Moroccan comedians such as “The girls of Halal” and Najib Ahmali and authors such as the Dutch-Moroccan Abdelkader Benali. Clearly, for all, personal experiences with Islam have shaped their views on what Islam stands for, whether it would fit in something like a Dutch national identity or whether it would be able to deal with the practices of “Dutch tolerance”. The view of a Somalian, an Iranian or a Moroccan are often, and understandably, miles apart.

The timing of the debate, compounded by international and domestic events putting Islam in a negative light, has given more weight (or at least media attention) to those criticizing Islam. 9/11, the

35 Problematically for the Dutch establishment, other than expected, a large group of the second generation discovered Islam as an important personal identifier – not all that different from the Islamic revival in the Middle East and North African region. The common religion was on the one hand a safe-haven between the two, rather different, identities that they had grown up with, on the other hand it was a symbol of resistance against the establishment. When asked what students identify most with (host country, home country or religion) 32 percent of the Turkish respondents had said in 2007 that their first identification is with their home country; for Moroccans this was only 19.5 percent. Moroccans tended to identify most with their religion (73 percent), against Turks with 56.8 percent and against the native Dutch community with only 5.7 percent. That was not to say that they did not feel at home in the Netherlands, and other figures show that the second generation in general identifies much more with the Netherlands than the first generation did. Still, Muslim minorities, other than other minorities, are twice as likely to be judged as more loyal to their own country and government than to Dutch society. (See WWR and CBS)
2003 Madrid bombings, the 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, the related Hofstad-
group trial and the 2005 London bombings certainly scarred the debate. In the aftermath of those
events, politicians seemed to feel more comfortable adopting not too optimistic a view. For example,
the 2004 report of an independent parliamentary committee stating that integration had been partially to
to entirely successful, but that government actions had not had much influence, was disregarded.36

Thus, in the post-Fortuyn period, much attention went to the revision of immigration and
integration policies. Rules became stricter, and the overall process got a more nationalistic flavor. The
“Dutch Iron Lady” Rita Verdonk, Minister of Immigration and Integration from 2003-2007, has lput the
most visible stamp on the changed treatment of immigrants. Among other things, the age for family
reunion through marriage was lifted to 21, bringing a spouse became possible only when earning at
least 120 percent of minimum income while the partner has to pass a costly exam abroad. The exam
includes a language and a culture assessment.37 Especially the video distributed for the cultural part
caused furore, as it unofficially made for a view of what the undefined Dutch national identity should
be. It shows topless women on North Sea beaches and gay couples making out in public under the
banner: this is what you should expect and be able to tolerate in the Netherlands. The video is
obviously directed implicitly to prospective Muslim immigrants.

In the last years, while political programs first positioned only implicitly and indirectly on
Muslim migrants, the trend has been toward a more explicit positioning. Of the largest parties, the
Christian Democrats (CDA) are the one exception to this. As a traditionally religious party, it has been
rather reluctant to having a debate on Islam, as it could affect religious rights and privileges in general.
The social-democrats (PvdA), having the largest share of the non-native vote, accepts that Islam is to
be part of the Dutch “culture”. But instead of being neutral to religious practices, they make a case for
supporting a “liberal” Islam. They do so however without formulating a longer term view on what this
would look like. In 2008, the Liberals (VVD) released an entire official party nota on Islam. But the
real heir to the Fortuynist line introduced ten years ago, has been Geert Wilders and his Freedom Party
(PVV). For him, Islam is the main focus of the political program. Like Fortuyn, his strategy is one of
simultaneously attacking the old established parties, while doing so by ridiculing their views on Islam.
For example, the PvdA he persistently calls the “Party of the Arabs”, while Wilders' reaction - to the
VVD nota on Islam was:

... the Liberals are totally blind for the totalitarian Islamic ideology, in which the Qu'ran is the literally
word of Allah, to be obeyed by all Muslims in all times. Jihad is the duty of each and every Muslim and
therefore the limits of Islam are never stable. World dominance is Islam's goal. Muhammed is the perfect
man and his behavior has been made in the stringent example for every Muslim. This, as well as the
literality of the Qu'ran impede Islam to ever be able to change. There might be moderate Muslims,
but there is no such thing as a moderate Islam. We are dealing with a problem without a solution. That is
why the Netherlands needs less Islam. By giving Islam equal space to Christianity or the Jewish faith,

37 The Law on Civic Education Abroad, 1 January 2007.
the liberals are putting the Dutch identity on sale.”

[add successfulness (if any) after 9 June elections]

Clearly, the Fortuynist style of personal confrontation and conflict has gotten more established in Dutch political practices. As a group of Dutch scholars concluded in 2008: “Dutch traditions of consensus, cooperation and seeking compromise by means of consociational practices appear to have evaporated”.38

The new conflictual positioning line is one that goes to the heart of the Dutch self-perception, challenging article 1 of the Constitution guaranteeing inclusion and non-discrimination for all possible minorities. The outcome of the elections . . shows that the subject will remain a contentious point on the political agenda for the years to come.

Conclusion

Ten years since Pim Fortuyn and 9/11 shook up the Netherlands, Dutch political practices have undergone substantial change. Consensus and inclusiveness turned toward more confrontation and exclusiveness. The concepts of “tolerance” and “Islam” have been centrifuged out as issues on which fundamentally different societal views clash. The main questions posed in the debate regard the level and limits of tolerance of the native Dutch, as well as the level and limits of tolerance of the Dutch Muslims. Singling out exactly these concepts reveals the idiosyncratic nature of the Dutch debate on Islam within the broader “Europe and Islam” debates.

With the Muslim population growing steadily, views on an (in)compatibility of Islam with “Dutch tolerance” simply range from an explicit yes to an explicit no. The differences in view are present both at the level of “Muslim” opinions as well as at the level of “native”-opinions. There is therefore no clear correlation between the two notions. For every position, a certain practice of Islam can be found to confirm the view, and a certain practice of Islam can be found to reject the view. As such, the debate will never have a satisfactory outcome for any participant, but is nonetheless useful for the creation of a more subtle understanding of the issues at stake.

Because of internal and external developments and events, politicians have felt the necessity to profile themselves on Islam. The successful attacks from a new group of political entrepreneurs willing to politicize Islam for their electoral wins, have made a reaction of the traditional parties indispensable.

As a result of the politicization of Islam, immigration policies have become stricter, and integration policies have shifted from promoting socio-economic adjustments to demanding more cultural adjustments. At the same time, governments have been trying their hands at “defining” a Dutch national identity. But the failure of these efforts, more than anything else, reveals once again why the concept of tolerance historically was made such an important tenet of the Dutch national myth. Because, when ploughing in history in search for a stronger national narrative, what one finds in between the red-white-blue and orange, are for example stories about how, until the end of the eighteenth century, the protestant majority denied all religious minorities the right to worship. The suppression of minorities was especially aimed at the Catholics, as they were believed incapable of being loyal to the Dutch state institutions. Their loyalty, so it was argued, remained abroad, with the enemy: the Vatican and the Pope.

Thus on a positive note, as time and experience eventually made Catholics into Dutch citizens, a similar tendency can be witnessed regarding the Muslim minority. Of the second and third generation Dutch Muslims a vast majority speaks the Dutch language, participates in the public sphere, and is clearly ever more rooted in the Netherlands. Currently, Muslims climb up the social ladder, get more self-assured and are able to show in practice that being Muslim and being Dutch can be combined or “integrated”. With this development, the debate has potential to turn into one that is not only about Muslims, but also with Muslims. For long, politicians could make decisions over the heads of the Muslim population. The trend however is one in which the Muslim (Dutch) voice becomes louder, creating on the one hand a new pool of information and informed opinions, while on the other hand putting limits to the government's playing field.

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