

Improving Dutch Immigration:

Increased Racism Through Media and Poor Integration

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Abstract

Netherlands has been an EU nation known for its welcoming nature towards immigrants in the past. They recognize immigrants as necessary to their economic growth. Increasingly strict policy changes concerning immigration and integration have been implemented. If these policies are intended to encourage highly skilled immigrants and improve integration, why is there still increasing racism towards immigrants in the Netherlands? I argue that racism towards immigration in the Netherlands has increased because of negative media in the Netherlands and integration policies that are unsuccessful in creating more interethnic contact between native Dutch and immigrants. I find that cultural differences are more influential on attitudes than economic variables. These cultural differences are focused on negatively in the media. In addition, the centralization of integration policies has made them less efficient, which has a negative correlation with immigrants' life satisfaction and their perceived racism.

Racism and Dutch Immigration

The Netherlands realizes they need more immigrants because of their growing economy and low birthrate. However, the Dutch would prefer highly skilled immigrants who will value the Dutch culture and contributions to society. So, immigration policies have attempted to ensure immigrants will share Dutch values and not become a burden to their society and specifically their welfare system. The Netherlands also has intense integration policies. Excluding refugees, if the government has created policies to ensure more qualified populations of immigrants are entering the Netherlands, why has racism from native Dutch continued to increase towards immigrants even after these policy changes?

Immigration policy has become more and more restrictive in the Netherlands for some time with the greatest overhaul coming in 2013. When will the immigration reform be enough for the native Dutch? In 2013, the Dutch Parliament passed the Modern Migration Policy Act (MMPA) and the National Visa Act into law. The MMPA requires immigrants to have an approved sponsor before entering the Netherlands. Policy changes the previous year to the Dutch Alien Act of 2000 also limited eligibility for legal family reunification and criminalized illegal residence (Zeldin, 2013). In addition to restricting border procedures and immigration policies, policy makers have also centralized efforts to assimilate immigrants to Dutch culture (Gebhardt, 2015).

The answers to the reason behind Dutch sentiment is significant because the Netherlands has been an EU nation known for its welcoming nature towards immigrants in the past. Immigrants are necessary to its economic growth. However, if immigrants are experiencing racism, it is first harmful for the immigrants themselves, but consequently harmful to the Netherlands as a growing nation. When immigrants experience racism, it can diminish their

satisfaction of life and create motivations to leave their new host country. The experience of immigrants to the Netherlands is also consequential because it is one of the primary countries other EU countries look to in assessing their own policies in the immigration and border security area (Block & Saskia, 2013).

From my initial research, I hypothesized that the increase in racism by natives in the Netherlands can be attributed to the negative politicization of the topic of immigration in the media. The media explains the dangers of ethnic minorities in their country, and immigrants continue to experience racism despite the fact that their new host country is being more selective about which immigrants to allow in. The second hypothesis is that the Netherlands' efforts to improve integration by centralizing its programs have not led to improved integration.

The Netherlands became known as the greatest example of the multiculturalist tolerant approach towards immigrants in the 1980s. Post-colonial immigrants from Indonesia and Surinam arrived, followed by guest workers from the Mediterranean, followed by their family members and later refugees and asylum seekers.

Over time, the ideals behind immigration policy in the Netherlands changed. Before 1980, policy makers believed immigration was only temporary. Government set up temporary housing and lots of welfare measures. The main objective was defined as "integration with retention of the immigrants' own identity" (Entzinger, 2014). This entailed isolating the immigrants and even teaching children their mother tongue in Dutch primary school. The "minorities policy" in the 1980s created councils on education, health care, social work etc. for minorities to have their voice heard in political decision making.

This separation made sense to the Dutch from their tradition of *verzuiling* or pillarization. Dutch nineteenth century government gave institutions to each of the major religions and

ideological communities. This type of pluralism had faded since the 1960s however because of the secularization and individualization of the community. The Netherlands, with good intentions, ostracized their immigrants, who then suffered when they had not been integrated well in the market. The economy restructured and lost many low skilled jobs. By the late 1980s, unemployment was around 40% among the Turkish and Moroccans (Entzinger, 2014).

In 1994, the “minorities policy” became immigration policy, and the state removed preservation of immigrant culture as an objective. Instead the objective was to encourage participation in Dutch society through employment, education and mandatory language and integration courses. By the end of the decade, unemployment levels among immigrants fell below 10% mostly because of the successful Dutch economy at the time. However, the school systems still were designed to support segregation, even encouraging forming Islamic primary schools. Also, the Native Dutch became concerned by high delinquency and reliance on social policy among immigrants (Entzinger, 2014).

The backlash to immigration began in the public sphere with a response from Pim Fortuyn. He spoke out against multiculturalism and accused the government of ignoring issues like national security. He was not shy about his criticism of Islam, and the 9/11 attacks seemed to prove his opinion of the backwardness of Islam. Fortuyn was shot 9 days before the May 2002 election (Van der Woude, Maartje, Van Der Leun, & Nijland, 2014) His rising right wing party came in second and for a short time was part of the coalition government.

In 2003, the EU published the Family Reunification Directive which established a minimum set of rights for migrants who would like their family members to join them in the EU. The directive intended to encourage norms more liberal than the limits. EU countries focus on

harmonization of European policy. France, the Netherlands, and Germany all converged their policy towards these lowest limits in a 'race to the bottom' (Block & Saskia, 2013).

Vasta argued that "'minorities policy' has gradually been transformed into 'majority policy'. ...causes also have to be sought in pervasive institutional discrimination and the persistence of a culture of racism in the Netherlands" (Vasta, 2007). Beginning in the 90s and gaining strength with the turn of the century, Islam became the scapegoat for all cultural evils of immigrants. In comparison even with the rest of Europe, Dutch public opinion on Islam was very negative (Pew Research Center 2005).

Regarding family reunification, the Netherlands required the immigrant member to earn 100% minimum wage which became 120% minimum wage in 2004 until the ECJ reversed this policy through a ruling in 2010. The family member in the Netherlands is required to have lived in the Netherlands at least 12 months and be above the age of 21. There is a probationary period of 3 years before reunifying members can get an autonomous residency permit, which became 5 years in 2012 (Block & Saskia, 2013).

The Netherlands was also the first to implement the efforts of integration abroad. Since 2005, Family members must achieve A1 minus level on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) and pass a test on society before entering. Since 2010 the level moved up to A1, and they must pass a reading skills test as well.

The Netherlands used the Family Reunification Directive as an excuse for these policy changes. Quoting the directive for legitimacy in this restricting direction was in essence, quoting their own opinion, as the Netherlands negotiated for these limits for the EU to begin with. They tried to write a document that supported human rights and allowed them to make as little changes as possible to their own national reunification policies (Block & Saskia 2013).

According to my first hypothesis, the role of media should be a significant factor in increased racism towards immigrants. Research done by Entzinger supports this hypothesis. He contends that the Netherlands ideologies on immigration shifted from exclusionist to multiculturalist to integrationist and finally assimilationist. This relates to the counterintuitive logic that led to my question in the first place. If the Netherlands segregated their immigrants in the first place, albeit with good intentions of preserving their culture, shifting away from that should have created less racism. And these ideologies refer more to the integrative policy rather than who or how many immigrants can enter.

According to Sniderman and Hagendoorn from Princeton University, the cultural aspect is the part that matters when it comes to racism and attitudes on immigrants. They found that the economy hardly impacted the Dutch citizens' opinions on migration (2007). "Others have noted that these opinions even become slightly more positive in times of economic crisis, which they see as an effect of declining attention for migration issues by the media in periods of economic downturn" (Entzinger, 2014). The Dutch identity is more at risk than the Dutch economy, and the concern is from Islam.

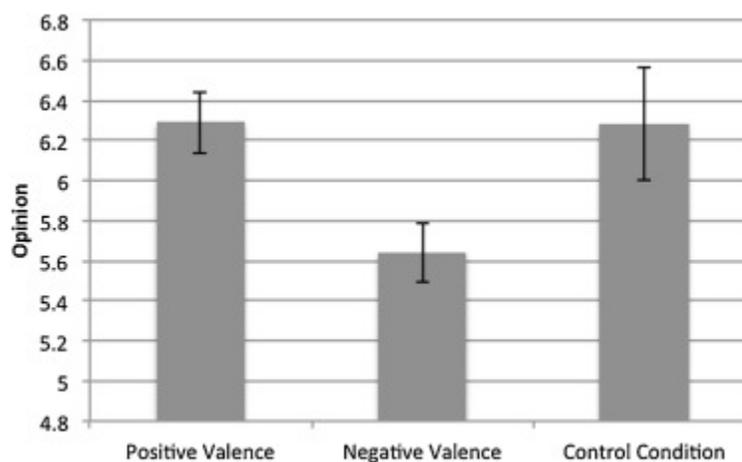
Among the youth, natives and immigrants' ideas become similar on almost all topics except for religion. "Research indicates that immigrants and non-immigrants mutually perceive a widening of the cultural distance, and they experience increased levels of discrimination" (Entzinger 2008).

Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, and Vliegenhart conducted research attempting to prove the effects of the media in the Netherlands on natives' views of immigrants. They conducted a survey that began with a news article that was written in 8 different ways. There were 4 frames (along with a control frame): the emancipation frame, "which problematizes the position and orientation of

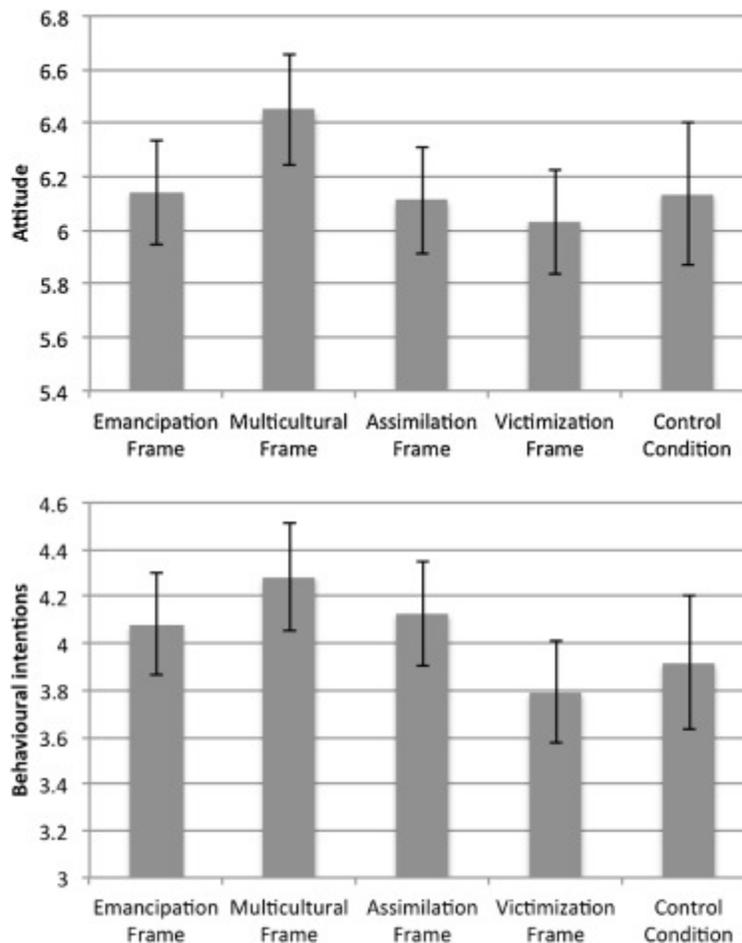
immigrants, and claims participation should be enhanced by immigrants themselves as well as by governmental policies,” the multicultural frame, “which sees (cultural) diversity as an asset that enhances the quality of society”, the victimization frame, which “deals with how women within immigrant groups are victims of gender inequality and oppression, which hinders them from participation in Dutch society,” and the assimilation frame, which suggests that assimilation is the key to removing Islam as a threat (Bos, Lecheler, Mewafi, & Vliegenhart, 2016). In addition, each article had a positive or negative valence, or evaluation.

On top of inquiring about attitudes towards immigrants, they also questioned if these factors affected willingness to support collective action and behavioral intentions. The articles were about an upcoming career event for immigrant women. The collective action was measured by the respondent’s likelihood to sign a petition to increase the number of immigrant employees in the Amsterdam labor market.

The results showed that the negative stories had an impact on support for the event but not on attitude of immigrants or behavioral intentions. The positive stories had no impact compared with the control.



Instead, the frames mattered when it came to attitude and behavioral intention. The multicultural frame had a positive impact and the victimization had a negative impact on these two factors.



These results are significant because the media in the Netherlands has been moving away from the multicultural frame and towards the victimization frame. They even clarify that the positivity of the cultural frame is not accounted for because there were significant differences when it came to the valence of the articles and both versions elicited a similar response.

My second hypothesis was that the Netherlands has had unsuccessful integration policies. I believe that Martinovic has research that is relevant because he studies the interethnic contact between natives and immigrants in the Netherlands. This contact is a useful measure of the

integration success because when immigrants and natives do have contact, it improves immigrants access to the Dutch labour market and improves their ability to speak Dutch as well (Martinovic, 2013).

Martinovic analyzed data from the Living Circumstances of Ethnic Minorities in the Cities (LAS) survey collected in 2004 and 2005. Answers came from native Dutch as well as immigrants from Turkey, Morocco, Suriname, and the Antilles. The results showed that positive intergroup affection related to more inter-ethnic contact. Opposition to ethnic intermarriage had the opposite effect for immigrants but not for natives. Higher education and occupational status in immigrants resulted in more interethnic contact while higher education and occupational status in natives resulted in less inter-ethnic contact but not significant (Martinovic, 2013).

Additionally, analysis on the immigrants alone was done for migration generation and language proficiency because these factors had proven pertinent in previous studies. Martinovic also found that second generation immigrants, and better Dutch speakers are more likely to have native friends. Education was the strongest predictor for inter-ethnic contact for immigrants. The survey also concluded that once factors of social structural constraints are removed, the role of preference is relatively weak, insinuating that opportunities matter more than preferences in accounting for inter-ethnic contact (Martinovic 2013). This support my thesis that the policies haven't improved integration on the point that if they had created more opportunities for interethnic contact, negative preferences shouldn't have been a highly relevant deterrent or obstacle.

I also find major evidence towards my second hypothesis in research done by Dirk Gebhardt. Gebhardt's research questioned the opinion that integration is being done with an increasingly local approach (2015). The Netherlands was the first EU country in 1998 to

implement a CIP (Civic Integration Programme). The WIN (Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers) developed language courses, courses on Dutch society, and vocational orientation that were mandatory for third-country nationals. Dutch municipalities ran the CIP with supervision by the state.

The policy was reformed in 2007 to be available on a volunteer basis for long-term residents and EU citizens. This created a need for contracting of private providers who could compete with public adult education centers. The policy changes also made the integration test a prerequisite for receiving a permanent residence permit. Another change was to encourage individual responsibility by requiring immigrants to pay the course fee. However, after implementation issues, municipalities were allowed to help cover these costs with public funds (Gebhardt 2015).

The last significant change to the CIP in Netherlands came in 2013 along with the policy changes to the MMPA and National Visa Act. The government repeated its initial change from 2007 to require immigrants to pay for the program themselves. The only exception is an interest-bearing loan of up to 5000 euros. And, the courses are no longer an option for EU citizens and long-term residents. With the removal of financial aid for the programs, the state also ended most of the money that allowed the cities to manage integration. This left language courses up to private companies only and cut out the city essentially.

The problem arose that the system targeted immigrants who were not necessarily those in most need of integration assistance. The local policy makers shared that they felt they were better at managing the programs based on personal needs of those interested. They also noted a dramatic support gap after EU citizens could no longer take the courses voluntarily. Even without these additional students, there still were not enough adult education language centers.

The national policy motivated the municipality of Rotterdam to attempt to gain volunteer language tutors to respond to the support gap created. Rotterdam already has 100,000 people with Dutch language deficits (Gebhardt).

This lack of support in language acquisition becomes more relevant to the increase in racism when I look at the results of experiments done by Thomas Vroome and Marc Hooghe on life satisfaction among ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. Vroome and Hooghe use Agner's definition for life satisfaction as "the cognitive component of subjective well-being and can be defined as people's evaluations and judgements about their quality of life as a whole" (2014).

They argue "subjective well-being can be an important instrument to measure group inequalities and policy outcomes, because they better reflect what people themselves want out of life than traditional economic indicators of well-being and equality such as income" (Vroome and Hooghe 2014). Previous research showed that life satisfaction among immigrant groups in Western Europe is significantly lower than the native population. Vroome and Hooghe found the same results.

They used the Netherlands Longitudinal Lifecourse Study (NELLS), conducted in 2009 to analyze whether they could use the need gratification approach to predict the life satisfaction of immigrants. Maslow's theory of motivation argues that life satisfaction is measured by "the fulfilment of human needs, including basic physiological needs and the needs for safety, love and belonging, esteem, and personal growth" (Vroome and Hooghe 2014). Based on this theory, they focused on three resources that immigrants are normally disadvantaged in: economic resources, social resources, and community resources. Vroome and Hooghe found evidence of immigrants specifically in the Netherlands showing these same disadvantages and its effects on their life satisfaction.

They did find interesting results that went against their hypotheses but support mine. If you remove the factors of disadvantage and include control variables for important factors in life satisfaction like age, gender, having a partner, having children, and education level, the immigrants did not have inherently lower scores of life satisfaction. “This means that financial problems and feelings of isolation have exactly the same effect on natives as on immigrants,...(and) it can be assumed that the inequality with regard to levels of satisfaction with life amounts to a social problem, as it indicates that the integration into society of ethnic minorities apparently has not been fully successful” (Vroome and Hooghe 2014).

The results of this research do show that immigrants have lower life satisfaction, which can be attributed to lower economic success and feelings of isolation. The research I’ve found indicates that immigrants are less equipped to form skills such as language acquisition after policy changes to integration in the year 2013. This lack of skills also demonstrates a reason behind why they feel more isolated and experience disadvantages that lead to less life satisfaction.

I will conclude that both hypotheses I made are defensible: Increased racism in the Netherlands towards immigrants can be attributed to negative media and lack of successful integration. I would not conclude these are the only factors but based on the evidence I found, I would argue they are two of the most substantive causes.

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