

## CHAPTER TEN

# CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRANT INTEGRATION IN THE NETHERLANDS

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The European Union must ensure fair treatment of third country nationals who reside legally on the territory of its Member States. A more vigorous integration policy should aim at granting them rights and obligations comparable to those of EU citizens.

—European Council

Within the panoply of national citizenship and integration policies, the Netherlands was long among the most tolerant and open states. Recently, however, Dutch policy has become decidedly more restrictionist. The 1990s witnessed a debate about whether the granting of citizenship should be seen as a means of encouraging integration or rather as the statement of its successful conclusion. Political parties on the left tended to promote the former view; those on the right the latter, arguing that naturalization should be seen as the "crowning moment" at which a completely integrated person finally achieved complete legal equality. Those on the right argued that giving citizenship too easily would place in question the recipients' loyalty, while those on the left argued that naturalization inherently provided a source of loyalty. Between 1992 and 1997, the view of the parties of the left held sway. The complete toleration of dual nationality that resulted caused large-scale naturalizations, peaking at over 80,000 in 1996. The openness towards dual nationality then waned, and policies once again became more restrictionist. By 2009, naturalization was more difficult, dual nationality had become more restricted, and new laws even made it possible to strip individuals of their Dutch citizenship for engaging in activities such as terrorism. This chapter considers this seemingly complete reversal in citizenship law, situating it within the broader field of changes in Dutch immigrant integration policies.

Western liberal democracies grappling with the challenges of immigration often turn to citizenship laws and policies. The politics of citizenship are intricately related to broader questions surrounding immigration. The granting of citizenship—denoting an individual's full legal status in a sovereign state—has long been used as a tool of political integration, both of established populations and of newcomers. The long history of political accommodation in the Netherlands (Lijphart 1968), coupled with the apparent rapidity of social and political change over the past few decades, make the Netherlands a key case study for a range of questions related to explaining change and continuity in citizenship laws and policies.

Do changes in naturalization requirements, openness towards dual nationality, strategies for incorporating immigrants, and related policies and attitudes flow from transformations in cultural preferences, structural factors, institutions, or some combination—or are contingent political events the main, and therefore somewhat random and unpredictable, cause? What is the relationship between changes in migration patterns and the politics of citizenship? Or perhaps citizenship laws and policies are resistant to change and what is required is a theory explaining such “stickiness” in the face of societal changes. Answering such broad questions is clearly beyond the scope of a single chapter, but examining the Dutch case may help us to better conceptualize them. Indeed, investigating developments in the Netherlands offers more than simple conceptual clarification. By focusing on a society that has undergone rapid and dramatic shifts in citizenship laws and policies, we can shed light on the relative weight of the causes of these transformations.<sup>1</sup>

By the 1990s, the Netherlands had become famous as one of the few countries whose public policies reflected a genuine commitment to multiculturalism. Postcolonial immigrants from Indonesia, Surinam, and the Netherlands Antilles had been joined by growing immigration from new sources, particularly Turkey and Morocco, and refugees and asylum seekers from elsewhere. Naturalization was made easier and dual nationality supported. The legacy of pillarisation – the social phenomenon known as *verzuiling* in Dutch, meaning the vertical segregation of society into distinct, usually denominational, social pillars each with its own

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<sup>1</sup> See also the Money chapter in this volume for an attempt to develop a general theory of citizenship change, the Vink chapter in this volume for more on the value of Dutch citizenship policy as a focal case study, and the Peres chapter in this volume for a discussion of the end of national models of immigrant integration.

social, cultural, and political institutions – resulted in publicly-funded Muslim and Hindu denominational schools and broadcasting facilities. The welfare state provided high benefits and low unemployment while promoting cultural diversity. Then, within the space of a few years: terrorist attacks and war in Afghanistan and Iraq, an anti-immigrant politician assassinated and his upstart political party posthumously becoming the second largest in parliament, a filmmaker murdered gruesomely, repressive policies causing asylum applications to plummet and the best-educated non-western immigrants to leave the Netherlands.

For a long time, the Netherlands was widely perceived as one of the few clear examples of multiculturalism. As a leading Dutch scholar of immigrant integration noted only a few years ago: “Wake up any expert on immigrant integration in the middle of the night and ask that person to name a country known for its multiculturalism. Ten to one that answer will be Canada, Australia, or the Netherlands” (Entzinger 2003: 59). Today, the picture is decidedly different as Dutch society has undergone significant recent shocks. But perhaps both the earlier perception of the Netherlands as a multicultural paradise and the current conception of it as stuck in an illiberal and nativist nightmare are overly simplistic. It is necessary to reevaluate the Dutch case.

Recent years have witnessed an impressive number of studies of how Western liberal democracies are responding or should respond to non-Western, particularly Islamic, immigration and the demographic diversity that accompanies it. Much of the nonacademic writing (and even some of the academic literature) has been strident, even alarmist. But there is a long history of studies of immigrant integration strategies that focus on the wide variation of policy responses to immigration. Within this literature, the Netherlands was usually cast as one of the most liberal regimes, possessing a unique form of multicultural accommodation that developed from its pluralist, consociational institutions (Entzinger 2002, Kymlicka and Banting 2006).

In parallel with the burgeoning attention to the relationship between diversity—especially diversity caused by immigration—and politics, there has been renewed attention to citizenship because citizenship promises to capture contemporary transformations in political relations while also retaining the essential link between individuals and states (Kymlicka and Norman 1994, 2000, Benhabib 2002, 2004, Maas 2007). Such studies sometimes refer to earlier ones about the relationship between state-

building and citizenship (Bendix 1977, Weber 1976) but more often are silent about the political use of citizenship in plural societies.

There is a need to both revise an earlier view of the Netherlands as an idyllic multicultural society governed by extreme tolerance and deep, pluralist consociationalism and a current view of the “extreme” and hardline Dutch response to the terrorist attacks in the United States, Europe, and elsewhere; Pim Fortuyn; and the murder of Theo van Gogh. The real political development of Dutch citizenship and integration policies does not appear to fit either caricature.

### **Citizenship and Nationality**

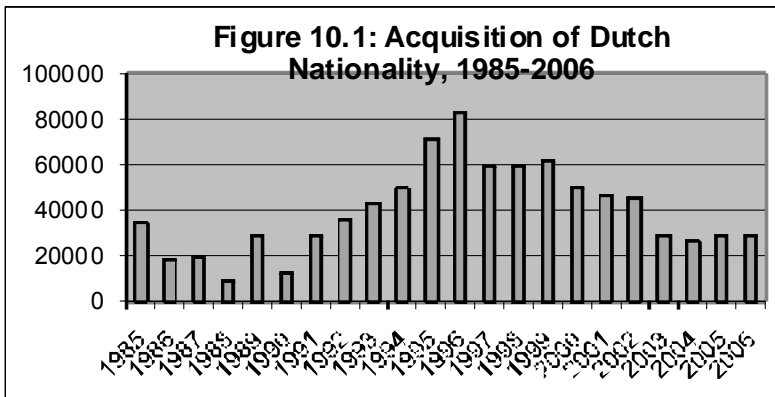
Political elites have often promoted citizenship as a tool to create a shared sense of community, but the precise ways in which public authorities do or should respond to ethnic and other diversity is a key question of political science. Modern states are expected to incorporate their people as individual citizens (Marshall 1950), but the use of citizenship as a means to achieve political integration has a long history (see for e.g. (Maas 2007, 2001, Lemke 1997, Noiriel and Offerlé 1997, Ireland 2004, Nicolet 1976). Rights usually emerge with the appearance of new social groups (Hanagan and Tilly 1999) but can also be created as a result of elite bargaining (Maas 2005). Because of the wide variation in national development, citizenship rights differ dramatically even within Europe (Hansen and Weil 2001, 2002, Preuss, et al. 2003). Some have posited that national citizenship has lost its importance as supranational and transnational rights have become more pronounced (Jacobson 1996, Jacobson and Ruffer 2006, Soysal 1994). But unless individuals possess citizenship, social rights can be withdrawn (Jones Correa 2002). National welfare states, rather than supranational sources of human rights, continue to provide the basic guarantees of rights (Maas forthcoming).

Within the panoply of citizenship policies in Europe, the Netherlands was situated at one end of the spectrum. For example, a 1998 study of foreigners’ rights in France, Germany, and the Netherlands found that the Netherlands had gone furthest, because foreigners could vote in local elections and their cultural rights were guaranteed under the minorities policy (Guiraudon 1998: 274).

The 1990s witnessed a debate about whether the granting of citizenship should be seen as a means of encouraging integration or rather as the

statement of its successful conclusion. Political parties on the left tended to promote the former view; those on the right the latter, arguing that naturalization should be seen as the “crowning moment” at which a completely integrated person finally achieved complete legal equality. Those on the right argued that that giving citizenship too easily would place in question the recipients’ loyalty, while others argued that naturalization inherently provided a source of loyalty (Groenendijk 2005: 194).

Between 1992 and 1997, the view of the parties of the left held sway: “Nationality is an expression of connection, not of indivisible loyalty. Because that connection can be of many kinds, it is possible for an individual to have connections to more than one country. Nationality should therefore no longer be seen as an exclusive link with a single country; dual nationality not a phenomenon that should automatically be opposed” (Driouichi 2007: 123) my translation). The complete toleration of dual nationality that resulted from this kind of argument resulted in large-scale naturalizations (Vink 2007: 341), peaking at over 80,000 acquisitions of Dutch nationality in 1996:



Compiled from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek data. Numbers include Dutch nationality acquired by adoption (averaging between 500 and 1100 cases annually) and that acquired by “option” (a form of simplified naturalization) such as that granted to stateless persons or to individuals who have reached the age of majority and were born in and have resided continuously since birth in the Netherlands, the Netherlands Antilles, or Aruba.

Subsequently, however, the openness towards dual nationality waned, and policies once again became more restrictionist (Penninx 2005). By 2007, the far right politician Geert Wilders was proposing that dual citizens could not be cabinet ministers, a jab at two new cabinet members, one Dutch-Turkish and the other Dutch-Moroccan. His proposal was defeated, but the government did propose making it harder for those who naturalize at the age of 18 to retain their other nationality, and new laws make it easier to strip individuals of their Dutch citizenship for engaging in activities such as terrorism.

The constantly changing rules and policies concerning the conditions for admission to citizenship are a fascinating subject in many states, not just the Netherlands. The exact relationship between levels and sources of immigration, the scale of naturalization, and the nature of debates about citizenship laws and policies deserve closer scrutiny. There are many good earlier studies of the relationship between immigration and ideas of citizenship (see e.g. (Favell 1998, Fermin 1999, de Hart 2005, Heijs 1995, Kastoryano 2002) but no book about the Dutch case (see (Driouchi 2007) for a good start, though the actual treatment of citizenship and nationality rules is brief). It is clear, however, that citizenship always privileges certain public identities over alternatives (Yashar 2005), meaning that issues of citizenship cannot be divorced from those of identity.

## **Diversity and Multiculturalism**

Questions surrounding the political accommodation of ethnic and other forms of diversity within liberal democracies continue to grow in importance and are particularly relevant for culturally-segmented states. Many such states are federal, but even unitary states like the Netherlands can possess remarkable diversity. Federalism and rights often have a mutually reinforcing impact (Lenaerts 1996), but the same could be said of other institutional ways of accommodating diversity. In the Netherlands, citizenship was for a very long time quite decentralized, with provinces and even cities taking primary responsibility for safeguarding rights (Prak 1999). The unitary Dutch state that has evolved since the departure of Napoleon's troops in 1813, however, gradually concentrated authority. The resulting centralization of responsibility for citizenship in the Netherlands can be compared to analogous processes in other states.

Unlike citizenship, immigration is an area of policy where the will of the national government and the desires of the municipalities and other

devolved authorities tasked with executing it do not always coincide. Consider the case of asylum. In the decade between 1992 and 2001, the Netherlands was the third largest recipient of asylum applications in Europe, behind Germany and the United Kingdom. Per capita, this made the Netherlands (along with Switzerland and Sweden) one of the most popular destinations in the world, at 2.27 applications per thousand inhabitants. (By comparison the rate for the United States was 0.45 and Canada's was 0.94.) By the end of the decade, however, asylum policy had become decidedly less welcoming (Van Selm 2000, Maas 2004).

At least some of this change can be attributed to a former sociology professor who styled himself as the Dutch Samuel Huntington in reference to the "clash of civilizations" thesis, Pim Fortuyn. In his book *Against the Islamicisation of our Culture*, first published in 1997, Fortuyn warned that Muslims living in the Netherlands threaten traditional Dutch values: "Because of their advanced individualization, Dutch people are not aware of their own cultural identity and the rights they have gained: the separation of church and state, the position of women and of homosexuals. Their indifference makes the Dutch an easy and vulnerable prey" (Fortuyn 2002) my translation).

At first dismissed, then vilified, Fortuyn could no longer be ignored after his party won the Rotterdam municipal elections. Nine days before the 2002 national elections, he was assassinated by an ethnically Dutch environmental activist. The elections rank fourth among all West European general elections in the period 1900-2002 on the Pedersen index of electoral volatility (after Italy 1994, Germany 1920, and France 1906), leading commentators to argue: "after many years of stability and predictability, it is more important than ever to understand the nature of the increasing volatility of the Dutch electorate and the sudden changes in the Dutch political landscape" (van Holsteyn and Irwin 2003).

Demographic developments, debates about integration (Prins 2004, Rutgers and Molier 2004), and projections for the future of the Dutch state (Lucassen and de Ruijter 2002) combined to test the limits of Dutch tolerance (Duyvendak and Veldboer 2001, Erp 1994, Koopmans, et al. 2005, Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Classic debates about multiculturalism (e.g. (Taylor and Gutmann 1994, Young 1990) seemed outdated as Dutch citizenship and integration policy shifted. One observer now notes that "the supposedly difference-friendly, multicultural Netherlands is currently urging migrants to accept 'Dutch norms and

values' in the context of a policy of civic integration that is only an inch (but still an inch!) away from the cultural assimilation that had once been attributed to the French" (Joppke 2007: 2).

Yet it would be a mistake to portray the change as a seismic shift. There were earlier examples of restrictionist policies and current examples of more open ones. For example, in mid 2007, the government granted amnesty to thousands of individuals who had been living in the Netherlands without authorization, and many mayors and town councils asked organizations working with illegal migrants to forward only those applicants who fulfil the requirements to apply for a residence permit, thereby tolerating the continued presence of unauthorized residents.

### **Pluralism and Consociationalism**

Political scientists have traditionally regarded the Netherlands—along with Switzerland, Belgium, and perhaps Canada—as a paradigmatic example of consociationalism, in which institutional arrangements safeguard the integration of societal groups united by a shared citizenship but divided by ethnicity, language, religion, or some other cleavage (Lijphart 1968). This reflects the institutional legacy of pillarisation (see e.g. (Bakvis 1981) which created a segmented society: a Catholic baby would typically be born in a Catholic hospital, attend Catholic schools, watch Catholic television, listen to Catholic radio, play in Catholic sports leagues, read a Catholic newspaper, join a Catholic union, and vote for a Catholic political party, all of which would be publicly funded.

The traditional pillars started to dissolve in the 1960s and faded rapidly in the 1970s due to secularization, but their institutional legacies continued in such areas as denominational schools and in access to broadcasting networks. Most salient is the hypothesis that consociationalism encourages appeals to a sectarian base rather than the construction of cross-communal alliances, so that existing groups are reified and communal competition for votes is encouraged yet, at the level of elites, the necessity of having to work together leads to increased pragmatism and practical cooperation (McGarry and O'Leary 2004). Despite the disappearance of the old pillars, it is relevant to ask whether the pragmatism that they engendered continues today (de Haan 1993).

The Dutch electoral system is peculiar—the entire country constitutes a single electoral district and elections are purely proportional, with no



threshold. This feature places the Netherlands at one extreme of electoral systems and makes it possible to ask whether it is in spite of its electoral system that the Netherlands can be qualified as a “consensus democracy” (Lijphart 1999). It appears somewhat remarkable that a country with around one million Muslim citizens out of a total population of around sixteen million, and a purely proportional electoral system with a 0.67% (or 1/150 seats in the lower house) threshold, has not given rise to a Muslim party; particularly when the electoral system allows such odd groups as the *Partij voor de Dieren* (Party for the Animals) to be elected.<sup>2</sup> The role of citizens of non-EU countries is changing across Europe (Maas 2008), but most Muslims in the Netherlands have acquired Dutch citizenship as a result of earlier liberal naturalization policies. Given the number of Muslims and the ease with which the proportional electoral system translates votes into seats, those who view Muslims as a single demographic bloc have difficulty explaining why there is no Muslim or Islamic political party. Perhaps one indicator that the “politics of accommodation” (Lijphart 1968) continue to operate in the Netherlands is that there are Muslim members of parliament in several longstanding political parties. Still, the classic theory of pillarisation would predict the emergence of a Muslim pillar, thus it is worth studying why this has not occurred in the way that the theory envisages.

## Demography

Contrary to the perceived “restrictive turn in Dutch citizenship policy” (Van Oers 2008: 40) the demographic data paint a more nuanced picture.

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<sup>2</sup> The party was formed in 2002 to highlight animal welfare and in the November 2006 parliamentary elections won 179,988 votes, enough for two out of the 150 seats in the lower house. The Party for the Animals thereby became the world’s first animal welfare party to be elected to parliamentary office. In those same elections, the *Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij* (Political Reformed Party), a Calvinist party that is the oldest political party in the Netherlands, won 153,266 votes, also enough for two seats. In the March 2007 elections for the upper house, the Party for the Animals won one of the 75 seats and would have gotten two seats had a GreenLeft member of the North Holland provincial council not made a mistake in voting.

**Figure 10.2: Dutch population by citizenship status**

	Total population (000s)	Dutch nationality only (000s)	Dutch and other nationality (000s)			Non-Dutch nationality (000s)	
1995	15,424	14,263	92.5%	402	2.6%	749	4.9%
1996	15,494	14,295	92.3%	472	3.0%	719	4.6%
1997	15,567	14,333	92.1%	552	3.5%	675	4.3%
1998	15,654	14,366	91.8%	608	3.9%	674	4.3%
1999	15,760	14,420	91.5%	676	4.3%	656	4.2%
2000	15,864	14,477	91.3%	736	4.6%	645	4.1%
2001	15,987	14,529	90.9%	790	4.9%	660	4.1%
2002	16,105	14,574	90.5%	841	5.2%	683	4.2%
2003	16,193	14,599	90.2%	893	5.5%	692	4.3%
2004	16,258	14,617	89.9%	938	5.8%	694	4.3%
2005	16,306	14,629	89.7%	977	6.0%	693	4.3%
2006	16,334	14,629	89.6%	1,013	6.2%	687	4.2%
2007	16,358	14,629	89.4%	1,047	6.4%	678	4.1%

Calculated from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek data. Includes only legally resident individuals. Numbers may not add to 100% because of rounding and because of a residual category which includes stateless individuals and a small number of individuals who have Dutch nationality and three or more foreign nationalities.

As shown in Figure 2, the proportion of the Dutch population with a nationality other than Dutch has been growing while the proportion of the population with only Dutch nationality has been declining. Even numerically, the number of individuals who hold only Dutch nationality has stabilized and will presumably start to decline.

The striking phenomenon is the growth of dual and multiple citizenship. The number of individuals resident in the Netherlands holding both Dutch and one more other nationalities increased from 402,088 (2.6% of the total Dutch population) in 1995 to 1,047,165 (6.4% of the total population) in 2007. (Most of these individuals hold Dutch and one other nationality; in 2007, a total of 14,371 individuals held Dutch and two other nationalities.)

At the same time, both the number and proportion of residents of the Netherlands who do not hold Dutch nationality has been declining, from 749,061 individuals (4.9% of total population) in 1995 to 677,795 individuals (4.1% of total population) in 2007.

**Table 10.3: Nationality of foreigners resident in the Netherlands. Number in 000s and proportion of total foreign population; twelve largest nationalities**

1998	2003			2008				
Moroccan	135.7	20.0%	Turkish	100.3	14.3%	Turkish	93.7	13.6%
Turkish	114.7	16.9%	Moroccan	97.8	14.0%	Moroccan	74.9	10.9%
German	53.9	8.0%	German	56.1	8.0%	German	62.4	9.1%
British	39.2	5.8%	British	44.1	6.3%	British	40.2	5.8%
Belgian	24.4	3.6%	Belgian	26.3	3.8%	Belgian	26.2	3.8%
Italian	17.4	2.6%	Italian	18.7	2.7%	Polish	26.2	3.8%
Spanish	16.6	2.5%	Spanish	17.5	2.5%	Italian	19.0	2.8%
Bosnian	14.6	2.2%	American	15.4	2.2%	Spanish	16.5	2.4%
Somali	13.6	2.0%	French	14.5	2.1%	Chinese	16.2	2.4%
Iraqi	13.0	1.9%	Portuguese	11.3	1.6%	French	15.1	2.2%
American	13.0	1.9%	Chinese	11.2	1.6%	American	14.5	2.1%
Surinamese	11.8	1.7%	Indonesian	10.8	1.5%	Portuguese	12.9	1.9%

Calculated and compiled from Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek data. Individuals who hold two or more foreign nationalities are attributed to one nationality based on a hierarchy: other EU state, other European state, non-European state.

Table 1 shows the twelve largest nationalities of the residents of the Netherlands who do not hold Dutch nationality. The most striking change is the decline in the number of citizens of Morocco and Turkey, from over 250,000 (approximately 37% of all foreigners) in 1998 to under 170,000 (under 25% of all foreigners) ten years later. This change is presumably largely due to the naturalization of Turkish and Moroccan individuals, so that they no longer appear in these statistics. The contrast with the numbers of citizens of EU member states is stark: with some fluctuations, the numbers (and hence also the proportion) of citizens of Germany, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Italy, Spain, France, Portugal, and so forth are stable or increasing gradually. (Noteworthy here is the rise in the number of citizens of Poland resident in the Netherlands. These statistics include only legally resident individuals, and anecdotal evidence suggests that 26,200 is a significant undercount.)

### **Conclusion: The politics of Citizenship and Integration in the Netherlands**

For immigrants, acquiring Dutch citizenship has clearly become more difficult over the past few years, as demonstrated by the data (presented above in figure 1) on the acquisition of Dutch nationality. But the increase in the numbers of residents of the Netherlands who hold both Dutch nationality and one or more foreign nationalities is significant: from barely four hundred thousand (2.6% of the total population) to over one million (6.4% of the total population) in the space of twelve years. Because only Dutch citizens can vote, and assuming the age structure of the dual/multiple citizen population resembles that of the Dutch-nationality-only population, this means that roughly 6.7% of the Dutch electorate now holds more than one nationality. At least partially because of the extreme proportionality of the Dutch electoral system, issues relating to citizenship and nationality can be expected to remain sensitive.

One wider point is that attempts to explain change and continuity in citizenship laws and policies should pay attention to electoral institutions as much as other factors such as cultural preferences, structural factors, or contingent political events. The relationship between changes in migration patterns and the politics of citizenship remains fertile ground for academic inquiry.

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