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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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5. The ascendancy of Culturalism

In the image of the Dutch civil sphere sketched in the previous chapter, there is no place for a dominant conception of Dutch identity and culture.³¹ Relations between groups and their representatives were characterized by pragmatism and the avoidance of conflict. The Netherlands was a country of minorities; it was both practically difficult and morally suspect to claim that one culture is worthier than another. Culturalism thus cannot be understood as a “Dutch discourse.” The promoters of Culturalism, in fact, sought to redefine the Netherlands and transform its political culture. This chapter shows that Culturalism is a discourse of ascendant elites who challenged this pragmatic political culture and its dignitaries. The chapter examines which elites embraced Culturalism, why they did so, and their relative power compared to their antagonists. The first section identifies some of the milieus in which culturalist ideas and notions were cultivated before the 1990s. The subsequent sections analyze the evolution of Culturalism through an analysis of its most prominent representatives: Frits Bolkestein in the 1990s, Paul Scheffer immediately after 2000, Pim Fortuyn after 9/11, and Ayaan Hirsi Ali after the assassinations of first Fortuyn (May 2002) and then Theo van Gogh (November 2004). The sections first examine the discourses of these central figures and subsequently identify their bases of support. Finally, the chapter identifies the kind of power that culturalists exercise and the networks and class fractions that sustain it.

A pragmatic tradition and the seeds of Culturalism

There were already signs that politics was breaking out of the bounds of consensus and accommodation in the 1980s. While parliamentary elites and their associates in civil society were firmly committed to accommodation, actors on the margins were sowing the seeds of the symbolic revolution that would occur through shocks in 1991, 2000 and 2002-2005.³² We can distinguish three distinct milieus where Culturalism was cultivated in the 1980s, each with its own particular class composition and discursive codes.

The extreme right's challenge

First of all there was the extreme right. Hans Janmaat and his Center Party (later the Center Democrats) saw minorities as intruders to be removed from the civil sphere. In local elections, the Center Democrats and the Center Party sometimes won a considerable share of the vote in urban neighborhoods. In newspaper and television interviews, lower class natives complained

about the arrogance and impotence of the established political parties. To voice their discontent they cast “protest votes” – a novel phenomenon that exemplified the corrosion of the traditional institutions of socialization and mobilization in urban areas. In national and European elections the extreme right occasionally succeeded in passing the electoral threshold; since 1980 it has had a parliamentary presence in the person of Hans Janmaat.

Nevertheless, the Center Democrats and the Center Party were tainted with the stigma of racism. Other political parties made every effort to portray their xenophobic colleagues as reincarnations of the ideologies defeated in the Second World War. They ignored Janmaat, walking out of parliament during his speeches and refusing to answer his questions (Koper, 1995). Left-wing groups meticulously monitored the party and used both violent and non-violent strategies to prevent the Center Democrats and Center Party from gathering and organizing. Public prosecutors made every effort to convict the extreme right for “sowing hate” and were successful on several occasions. The symbolic, physical and legal assaults against his party frustrated Janmaat’s attempts to communicate an image of respectability. Although the Center Democrats formally distanced themselves from racism, some of its key figures had been convicted of inciting hatred or racist attacks. There were also obvious connections between the party leadership and Nazi and fascist organizations and gangs. The party attracted mainly disenfranchised lower class people who were routinely portrayed as political illiterates, drunks and hooligans (see, e.g., Frequin, 1994). Despite the efforts of the extreme right to present itself as mainstream – through slogans like “not left, not right” – it did not gain the acceptance of the mainstream parties. The stigma of the extreme right was so strong, in fact, that culturalists either had to moderate their discourse or risk being identified with civil pariahs. But the fact that such a thoroughly stigmatized party could attain electoral success showed that disenfranchised and anxious natives might support a discourse that simultaneously degraded established elites and minorities.

Experts against advocates

A very different kind of culturalist challenge to pragmatist politics came from the experts involved in the minorities policy. As Chapter 4 showed, tension between policy experts and minority advocates was built into the minorities policy from the beginning. Some experts complained that minority spokespersons were not really representative of their communities but were only interested in subsidies or were overly sensitive to criticisms of minority cultures (e.g. Köbben, 1983). The journalist Herman Vuijsje was prominent among those trying to liberate negative opinions and statements about minorities from the stigma of racism; he

brought this discourse out of the policy field and into civil arenas (Vuijsje, 1986, 1997; see also Prins, 2004). One minority researcher told Vuijsje in the mid-1980s that “many people in this milieu have turned away from a love for the underdog to having reservations. After some time you get more spiteful. All those piles of reports on my desk are full of compassion and empathy and at some point you respond; the scales tip in the other direction. I know some people who now take that attitude” (cited in Vuijsje, 1986, p. 68). Another native Dutch researcher claimed that she was “almost lynched” at a sociology conference for her study of Turkish women, but that “after the session at least twenty people [expressed] their admiration for her courage” (cited in Vuijsje, 1986, p. 46). Vuijsje’s reports, however, are so full of people proudly breaking the taboo of examining ethnic differences that it is difficult to maintain that there was such a taboo. Instead, Vuijsje and his interviewees were shifting the balance of discursive power: migrant representatives and antiracists were losing power at the expense of policy researchers much more likely to explain criminality, unemployment and the like by referring to migrants’ cultural backgrounds (see also Mullard *et al.*, 1990). The message of these policy experts was that the minorities policy and its institutions were too respectful of migrants and minority cultures.

Unlike the extreme right, policy experts received positive coverage and were often invited to discuss their ideas in the media or at public debates. The database of newspaper articles contains several articles from 1990 that illustrate the controversies of the time: a professor of discourse analysis at the University of Amsterdam argued that a new anti-crime policy targeting ethnic groups was emblematic of the government’s tendency to adopt rather than resist the racist discourse of the Center Democrats (Van Dijk, 1990); a civil servant of the Municipality of Amsterdam expressed his frustration about taboos of political correctness (Beerenhout, 1990); the director of the Netherlands Center for Foreigners warned that a fee for returning guest workers could be seen as a sign that they were no longer welcome (Rabbae, 1990); and professionals talked about strategies to reduce crime among Moroccan youths (Mejatti *et al.*, 1990). The disputes were fierce: some in the policy field were trying to widen the discursive space available to address migrants’ cultural deficiencies; others were trying to foreground issues of discrimination and racism. Experts, however, spoke as individuals, not as representatives of movements or segments of the population. While discussions among policy-makers occasionally trickled into civil arenas, there was no public debate where different camps formed around focal points or central issues. While professionals and experts promoting Culturalism were gaining ground in the policy field (see Mullard *et al.*, 1990; Prins, 2004), their influence remained limited within public debates.

Intellectual flirtations with Culturalism

Literary and intellectual elites who sought to defend artistic liberties against anti-racist and Islamic attempts to constrain their expression constituted a further culturalist challenge to pragmatist politics. Intellectuals criticized cultural relativism and multiculturalism in periodicals like *De Groene*, *Elsevier* and *Vrij Nederland*. In essays, satires, parodies and caricatures, native cultural elites ridiculed and criticized both Muslims and antiracists.³³ The respected and best-selling writer Gerrit Komrij, for instance, felt that “All the welfare work and the waffling about anti-racism; it was all for nothing. A waste of effort. Money thrown away. There is not a hint of reasonableness or tolerance in that group, which has lived here so long, in a society that actually had much to offer” (Komrij, cited in Van Dijk, 2003, p. 27). Artists and intellectuals who wished to be more hard-hitting in their criticisms complained about the cultural and legal norms that supposedly constrained their expression.

The most bewildering manifestation of the drive for spectacle was the appearance of an author who hid his identity behind the pseudonym Mohammed Rasoel. “Rasoel” made his first appearance on the opinion pages of the *NRC Handelsblad* on 6 March 1989, where he stated that he was a Muslim who had spent the first twenty years of his life in Iran before migrating to “the country of naive fools that goes by the name of The Netherlands” (Rasoel cited in Van Dijk, 2003, p. 25). The author ridiculed those who failed to anticipate Khomeini’s fatwa. “The West could have seen this coming. I could have predicted this response 15 years ago. The West could have known about the kind of fanatical responses that we Muslims are capable of and how much aggression we have inside of us” (Rasoel, cited in Tinnemans, 1994, p. 355). A year later, in 1990, “Rasoel” published *The Downfall of the Netherlands: Country of Naive Fools*. Its simple message – Muslims are inherently aggressive and the Dutch are too ignorant to acknowledge this – was delivered with literary sophistication. The prose of the pamphlet differed from the propaganda of the extreme right in that it was fluent and witty. “Rasoel” now appeared on television shows, on the radio and in prestigious and popular publications. The mystery of his identity – his face was covered with a Palestinian shawl and sunglasses – further fuelled the spectacle. Rasoel’s success was nevertheless short-lived. Several organizations filed complaints of racism. As the joke spiraled out of hand, those behind the pseudonym made every effort to remain anonymous. Teun van Dijk’s research, however, traces “Rasoel” to a group of respected native writers, translators and publishers, while the persons posing as “Rasoel” had been hired and instructed by this group (Van Dijk, 2003). “Rasoel” had given a team of intellectual conspirators the means to express what – in

spite of, or due to their prominence – they could not state openly. Anonymity allowed them to express subaltern sentiments and to become the sophisticated racists that they could not be in real life. The resonance of Rasool's discourse demonstrated the demand for spectacular Islamophobic expressions. But the fact that native intellectuals did not dare to come out into the open illustrated that, in the late 1980s, such expressions did not accord with the norms of good taste.

As these snapshots of the different discursive milieus demonstrate, Culturalism was present in the 1980s and growing in power. Culturalists in the political, bureaucratic and literary fields claimed discursive space to criticize minority cultures for different reasons: the extreme right capitalized on feelings of exclusion and cynicism among the disenfranchised lower classes; experts engaged in a struggle for professional authority with minority representatives and anti-racists; artists and intellectuals sought to gain or regain their power to offend sensitivities. The ingredients for the culturalist movement were thus already in place: hostility towards the political establishment, a desire to criticize minority cultures, and the drive to make policies more stringent. However, the class and cultural differences were so great that the forces from these disparate discursive milieus did not converge into a single movement.

Economic liberalism and cultural protectionism: Frits Bolkestein in the 1990s

The idea of clashing cultures gained a strong presence in the central arenas of the civil sphere only after 1991. Frits Bolkestein, the leader of the right-wing Liberals, was absolutely central to the debate in this period. In 1991, he argued that Western civilization is fundamentally different from – and vastly superior to – Islamic civilization. He unfolded his vision at a meeting of European Liberal parties in the Swiss city of Luzern on 6 September. *Trouw* and *NRC* reported on the lecture but Bolkestein's opinion article in *De Volkskrant* – “The minorities policy needs to be handled with guts” (Bolkestein, 1991) – became the debate's focal point. Its central message was that the government should take robust measures to prevent or reduce the formidable problems arising from mass-migration. In his speech, Bolkestein drew upon the WRR's first report on integration issues:

Very important aspects of our Western culture like individual freedom and equality are under pressure of another culture in a sometimes militant way. In cases of confrontation, when a compromise is a practical impossibility, there is no other

choice than to defend our culture against competing claims (WRR 1979, cited in Bolkestein 1991).³⁴

The WRR had arrived at these conclusions in the wake of the Moluccan hijackings and at the time of the incipient Islamic revolution in Iran. By the time Bolkestein delivered his speech, he could appeal to new global signifiers generated during the Rushdie affair:

Islam is not just a religion; it is a way of life. And as such it is at odds with the liberal division between church and state. Many Islamic countries have hardly any freedom of speech. The Salman Rushdie affair is perhaps an extreme case but it shows how much we differ from another in these matters (Bolkestein 1991).

Bolkestein saw himself as an exponent of the enlightenment and Western civilization, praising the achievements of intellectual icons like Goethe and Plato.³⁵ But he also presented himself as belonging to the “ordinary people” – those who had to shoulder the consequences of mass migration (Prins, 2002). Bolkestein observed that Dutch natives were developing a counter discourse behind the veil of private life:

There is an informal national debate that is not held in public. Voters feel that politicians are not sufficiently aware of their problems. The minority issue is constantly discussed in places like bars and churches. If this is not sufficiently represented in The Hague [the seat of parliament, JU] people will say: why should I vote anyway? (Bolkestein, cited in Prins, 2004, p. 28)

Bolkestein had a higher class background (see Box 5.1) but nevertheless presented himself as a redeemer of unjustly marginalized lower class discourses: “a representative who ignores the people’s concerns is worth nothing” (*ibid.*). “The people” here specifically refers to Dutch natives living in disadvantaged neighborhoods, people with experience, knowledge and, indeed, discourses that are not sufficiently valued in core arenas. Far from being the perpetrators of racism, they are victims – the “autochthonous minorities in poor neighborhoods in the big cities who are living in the midst of an allochtonous majority” (*ibid.*).

Box 5.1 Frits Bolkestein – an elite discourse for lower-class natives

Bolkestein (1933) embodied a vast amount and variety of elite capital. He studied mathematics, science, Greek and philosophy in Amsterdam and graduated with a law degree from Leiden University, thus combining education in the premier milieu for cultural elites (the canal district of Amsterdam) and a premier milieu for governmental and business elites (the law faculty in Leiden). Bolkestein was a member of the Amsterdam student fraternity and a president of the student union. As a student in the late 1950s, he briefly wrote for the satirical literary magazine *Propria Cures*. Like many other editors of the magazine, he wrote on the silliness of religion and Catholicism and cultivated a disposition for polemics. But he was also an aspiring politician who, at the time, put his energies into solving the shortage of student housing in Amsterdam (he failed). The farewell editorial of the magazine described him as as “bustling young man occupied with lofty matters” (cited in *Propria Cures*, 1988, p. 6). After his education, he began working for Shell, one of the world’s oil giants. Some of his first encounters with Islam must have taken place in the 1970s during his time as a coordinator of Shell Chemistry for the Middle East, Asia and Australia. Bolkestein thus cultivated his dispositions in various elite circles and, as a politician, was able to create a stir without losing respectability – a privilege Hans Janmaat and others on the extreme right lacked. After he stepped down as the leader of the right-wing Liberals, Bolkestein became a European commissioner for the internal market. Throughout his career, he remained at the very top of the national market for speakers. In 2009, he received around 15,000 euros per performance (Conijn, 2009).

Culturalism counterposes superior civilizations to inferior civilizations and argues that the mingling of different cultures leads to the disintegration of the national body. As many observers have noted, this scheme has analogies to many racist ideologies (Stolcke, 1995). But precisely because Culturalism is akin to racism in some respects, its claim to civil virtue depends upon its discursive dissociation from racism. Bolkestein has repeatedly stated that discrimination should be combated; in the early 1990s, he participated in large anti-racist demonstrations. In fact, Bolkestein saw his interventions as an effort against Janmaat. “Those who ignore the anxiety will feed the resentment against minorities they oppose,” is the title of one of his articles; in it, he pleads to liberate the discourse on minorities from the envy, anger and apathy that are about to take possession of the electorate: “a distasteful and xenophobic party will not stop me from voicing my opinion. ... If we do not fix the problem our descendants will curse us” (Bolkestein, 1992).

Bolkestein mobilized culturalist discourse to appeal to segments of the population that had previously been socialist (*cf.* Van der Waal *et al.*, 2007). The state, in Bolkestein’s view, should be strict on immigration: to promote integration, the right hand of the state (Bourdieu, 1999, pp. 182-187) should strengthen its grip on those lower-class migrants living in the country but outside the civil community. Bolkestein’s attack on the minorities policy

paralleled his attack on the Rhineland model which, in his view, lacked flexibility and was burdened by too many consultative and regulatory structures (Bolkestein, 1996). Bolkestein's stated goal is the creation of a state in which economically independent citizens can prosper in safety (*ibid*). The ideal of collective and state-supported emancipation enshrined in the minorities policy thus ran counter to his ideas, which favored neoliberalization as a condition for integration. Rather than promoting social harmony, the welfare state created dependence and inertia. And his critique of the minorities policy showed that this applied particularly to lower-class migrants who did not partake in the culture of individual responsibility that Bolkestein associates with the West (e.g. Bolkestein, 1991, 2000).

Resonance and consonance

Bolkestein was severely criticized, receiving 93 negative and 28 positive references over the period 1991-1994. Journalists, academics, Christian Democrats and Social Democrats all argued that he had been too blunt in his criticisms of minority cultures. Bolkestein received praise from actors critical of his discourse who nonetheless felt that his person and intentions were beyond reproach. Especially Labor politicians were keen on differentiating the legitimate Bolkestein from the illegitimate Janmaat. Prominent politicians like Thijs Wöltgens and Ed van Thijn criticized some of Bolkestein's views but praised him for opening up the debate (Wöltgens, cited in Banning & Eppink, 1991; Van Thijn, 1993). Aad Kosto, the Junior Minister for Immigration, similarly made a sharp distinction between Janmaat ("an idiot") and people nursing xenophobic sentiments – in his view an understandable response to the very real problems that plague multicultural neighborhoods (Kosto, 1992). Though Labor politicians and other critics did not agree with Bolkestein's views on Islam, many acknowledged him as a worthy opponent. With one notable exception (Labor minister Hedy d'Ancona), only marginal actors accused Bolkestein of stigmatizing migrants and playing into the hands of the extreme right (d'Ancona, 1992).

Bolkestein and the transformation of the integration debate

Frits Bolkestein is the godfather of Culturalism in the Netherlands. Culturalism – which had been emerging in several discursive milieus – was elevated by Bolkestein into a prominent discourse in the core arenas of the civil sphere. Bolkestein anticipated many of the ideas and notions that culturalists in later periods would promote: the notion that the lower classes deserve cultural (rather than economic) protection was adopted by Pim Fortuyn, the idea that Islam has yet to go through a process of enlightenment became a cornerstone in Hirsi Ali's

discourse, and Paul Scheffer would walk in Bolkestein's footsteps in stressing the importance of national self-assertion. All of Bolkestein's successors agreed that a generous welfare state exacerbates the problems of integration. Bolkestein's intervention thus marked the breakthrough of Culturalism in central civil arenas and its definitive dissociation from racism. The success of the right-wing Liberals in the elections of 1994 showed that Bolkestein's tough stance on immigration and integration also appealed to a substantial segment of voters (see Kleinnijenhuis & De Ridder, 1998).

Bolkestein's legitimacy and that of his discourse hinged on his identification with the political establishment. While his interventions challenged Pragmatism, Bolkestein sought to establish or retain political consensus on minority integration. Immediately before and after his intervention, he declared in parliament and in private conversations with other party leaders³⁶ that he did not want to turn integration politics into a battle between political parties. This, then, was the part explicit, part implicit trade-off: critics would not associate Bolkestein with the extreme right while the right-wing Liberals would not exploit xenophobic sentiments for electoral purposes. Bolkestein further moderated his discourse when the right-wing Liberals entered the so-called purple coalition with the progressive Liberals and the Social Democrats in 1994. In fact, the entire debate cooled after 1993 (Figure 3.1). The parties in the purple coalition government hid their political differences under a managerial discourse that centered on economic growth, efficient government and job creation. The bracketing of both cultural and class politics depolarized integration politics. The transformation of the minorities policy into an integration policy – underway since the late 1980s – was formally consolidated with the post for a “Minister of Integration” (and big cities) within the purple cabinet in 1998, signaling broad agreement on integration between the right-wing Liberals and the Social Democrats. Or perhaps it would be better to speak of a *modus operandi* since its practices and concepts were designed to suppress rather than express meanings and emotions. Integration politics had been made into a managerial affair for administrators and experts rather than an issue of civil politics for politicians and activists.

The civilizing mission of progressive elites: Paul Scheffer's “Multicultural drama” in 2000

As a contributing editor for *NRC Handelsblad* and a prominent member of the Labor Party, Paul Scheffer was an unlikely candidate for revitalizing Culturalism. But precisely because Culturalism was associated with the political right, his page-long essay “The multicultural

drama” in *NRC Handelsblad* was an immediate hit. The debate blossomed; the number of articles in the database exploded from 8 in 1999 to 43 in 2000 while the number of hits increased from 86 to 222 (see Figure 3.1). “The multicultural drama” became the focal point around which oppositions took shape. The essay posited that there was a process of underclass formation that had accelerated over the last decade:

Overseeing all the available data, one comes to a sobering conclusion: unemployment, poverty, dropping out of school and criminality are increasingly concentrated among minority groups. The prospects are not favorable, in spite of individual success stories. The number of migrants without prospects is enormous and they will increasingly burden Dutch society (Scheffer, 2000).

Scheffer could marshal extensive data on the performance of minorities in various policy domains (see Chapter 4). The results always showed migrants lagging behind, though many researchers concluded that there was movement in the right direction and that policy investments were paying off (e.g., Penninx, 2000). Scheffer, however, perceived migrants’ under-performance through an entirely different scheme of perception. He blamed Dutch culture and specifically Dutch elites. The individual success of some migrants, he argued, should not be interpreted as a sign of collective emancipation – large numbers of people will increasingly burden society as they “lag behind and are bound to fail (*kansloos*)” (Scheffer, 2000). In spite of the clear and present danger posed by mass migration, the Dutch persisted in their culture of relativism, complacency and consensus. “In 1994 the government had expressed its concerns about the position of minorities” but

the solicitude has evaporated in the bliss of the polder model. Many have the misunderstanding that the integration of ethnic minorities will evolve in more or less the same way as the peaceful reconciliation of religious groups, ... that the rules and customs of consensual democracy [*pacificatiedemocratie*] can be used to assuage the new division. The situation is reminiscent of the faith in the neutrality policy on the eve of the Second World War. Everyone was convinced that what had succeeded a quarter century earlier – namely to stay out of the First World War – would have chance of success. And thus an entire nation lost sight of reality (Scheffer, 2000).

For Scheffer, this culture of appeasement is the thread that runs through the minorities policy,

multiculturalism, cultural relativism, pillarization and the polder model. All of these policies, beliefs and institutions in his view fail to respond to the problems of integration because they do not foster national awareness. If the Dutch fail to acknowledge their national identity, migrants will not become part of the nation:

An ease-loving multiculturalism is gaining ground because we do not articulate what binds our society together. We do not say enough about our limits, we do not maintain a relationship to our own past and we treat our language carelessly. A society that belies itself has nothing to offer to newcomers. A majority that denies that it is a majority, has no eye for the hard-handedness of integration, which always entails a loss of one's tradition. Who does not understand what is being taken, does not have much to give (Scheffer, 2000).

In Scheffer's discourse, national awareness is the first step towards civil integration, a strong national identity the prerequisite for openness and cosmopolitanism (see also Scheffer, 2004). Both the traditional politics of pillarization and modern-day cultural relativism must be abandoned; the nation needs to reinvent and reassert itself in order to absorb migrants. Though Scheffer shares Bolkestein's commitment to cultural self-assertion and his antipathy to relativism, he did not adopt Bolkestein's economic liberalism. Seeing parallels between the "social question" of the early 20th century and contemporary integration issues, Scheffer has called upon Dutch elites to uplift the masses (see Box 5.2). His article is a plea to reinvent the civilizing offensives of those times, the difference being that now migrants rather than the lower classes have to be transformed into virtuous citizens.

Box 5.2 Paul Scheffer – the anxiety of the progressive middle classes

Paul Scheffer (1954), with his jeans, wild curly hair and casual shirt, looks every inch the progressive Dutch intellectual (Buruma, 2006, p. 126). “If I look at my own role, I would never describe myself as a scientist, but also not as a journalist or a politician, and certainly not as a policy-maker. I like the term ‘public intellectual.’ I have a rather romantic image of engaging the world with my pen as an individual” (interview Scheffer). As many other intellectuals and politicians of his generation (including Pim Fortuyn), Scheffer was a member of the Communist Party and part of the student movement in the 1970s. This is where he cultivated his critical stance towards established interests and his appreciation for the combined power of ideas and mass movements. Years later, after working as a historian at several universities and for the scientific institute of the Labor Party, his position as a regular contributor to *NRC* gave him the possibility and incentive to think and act as a guardian of the general interest *vis-à-vis* power holders. As in his student days, he searched for how elites failed to live up to their promises of accountability and responsibility. Increasingly he felt that the failure of the elites was most apparent in their treatment of the cultural and social consequences of mass immigration. Scheffer often refers to a 1993 visit to Istanbul as the turning point in his thinking on integration:

There I encountered the political and intellectual inner circle and they were all extremely negative about immigration from Anatolia. They talked of barbarians who were destroying the open character of Istanbul with their traditional ideas about religion and family. That was the first time that I realized that immigration does not automatically lead to cosmopolitanism (interview Scheffer).

Identification with the secular elite – and not with lower-class Anatolian and Kurdish immigrants – came naturally to Scheffer. As with many radicals of his generation, he had become part of the progressive elite dominating the arts, universities and the left-leaning political parties. In his many public performances in front of middle class audiences, he discovered that they were anxious in much the same way as the Turkish elite. He wrote the first draft of “The multicultural drama” in 1997 and noticed how it struck a chord with his audiences:

I tried out the piece as a lecture, as I often do. I noticed that there were a lot of people in the audience who were also worried. Everywhere I talked about it, you could notice that there were people thinking “ah, finally, someone with an impeccable background who is not associated with the wrong sort (*foute*) of sympathies.”

Scheffer thus emerged as an organic intellectual of the progressive middle classes, articulating and legitimizing their (previously suspect) sentiments. His opponents were not migrants but elites who, in his view, lacked a sense of purpose. When I asked him who he had in mind when he wrote about the “apologists of diversity,” he did not mention – as I had expected – policy-makers or politicians but the writer Adriaan van Dis who had said, to Scheffer’s dismay, that “integration issues will be solved in bed” (interview Scheffer). Such making light of the problems of integration disturbed Scheffer. He found inspiration in the works of his grandfather, who had been in charge of spatial planning in Amsterdam, including the construction of the postwar suburbs which in the 1990s became emblems of integration gone wrong. As a progressive heir to this tradition of social planning, he sought to devise an approach that would allow governmental elites to get a grip on urban reality: “Confronted with a new social problem – that has, as before, an outspoken cultural dimension – there is no other way out than to search anew for new ways to make the city” (Scheffer, 2004, p. 39).

Resonance and consonance

Scheffer had a slightly higher approval/disapproval ratio than Bolkestein in the early 1990s (Scheffer received 30 positive, 67 neutral and 84 negative references; Bolkestein 28 positive, 51 neutral and 93 negative references). But more interesting are the backgrounds of those who supported him. The Social Democratic element within Scheffer's culturalist discourse (migrants were an underclass in need of emancipation) helped to win support among groups who had previously opposed Bolkestein: Labor politicians, editors and journalists. The growing acceptability of Culturalism among governmental elites is perhaps best illustrated by the intervention of Paul Schnabel, the director of the Social and Cultural Planning Agency. This government think-tank had been critical of multiculturalism for at least a decade (see SCP, 1986, 1998).³⁷ Just before Scheffer published his article, the director of the Agency publicly spoke out in favor of assimilation. He did so first at the annual meeting of Forum, the government think-tank for multicultural development (Schnabel, 1999), and later in various media (e.g. Schnabel, 2000). Whereas Bolkestein's criticism of the minorities policy had appealed to right-wing Liberals and a few individuals from other sectors, Scheffer's discourse made criticisms of multiculturalism and minority cultures accessible and acceptable to left-leaning cultural and governmental elites. While political parties persisted in their technocratic understanding of integration issues, newspapers endorsed Culturalism much more after Scheffer's intervention, making it the most prominent discourse among journalists and editors.³⁸ Whereas around 15 per cent of articles promoted Culturalism in the period 1990-2000, after Scheffer's intervention the figure was around 23 per cent (Table 3.1).

Scheffer and the transformation of the integration debate

Scheffer's style radically differed from that of the purple government and its administrators. Under the purple government, politics was more management than drama; the government's role was to coordinate social affairs and to promote economic growth. Integration was a technical manner, something that had to be monitored and managed with skill and tact – the polder strategy. Scheffer provided a radical alternative as he articulated and called for grand narratives about the nation and integration. The policy discussion on minority integration became a civil debate about envisioning a new society and redefining the Netherlands. The number of public lectures, television programs and magazine issues on minorities and integration increased rapidly. But though integration politics proliferated and came to function as a – perhaps *the* – key issue through which divisions in the civil sphere were articulated, it still remained a debate between intellectual, political and governmental elites. Migrants were

virtually absent from the debate. So, too, was the popular media, such as the tabloid newspaper *De Telegraaf*.³⁹ After 9/11 the focus of the debate shifted to the position of Muslims within society (see Figure 3.1). The debate exploded.

Pim Fortuyn and the spectacularization of Culturalism

Dutch politics was far from exciting under the purple government. Its managerial approach had been challenged by Scheffer and others but the sea-change occurred only after the attacks of 9/11. The towers collapsed in New York but the Netherlands was in crisis too. A frenetic search for meaning ensued. What was under attack? Who were the perpetrators? How should governments respond? While 9/11 raised these questions in many countries, in the Netherlands the shock coincided with the resignation of the purple government.⁴⁰ This, together with the heightened anxieties over global security, created the ideal conditions for the emergence of Pim Fortuyn, whose dramatic and sensational performances contrasted sharply with the managerialism of the purple government.

Box 5.3 Pim Fortuyn – organic intellectual of the *nouveau riches*

As long as he could remember, Fortuyn (1948) had been special: “I wanted to belong but I did not. From my earliest childhood I had the experience that I was different ... in speech, dress and behavior.” He stood out and this, he said, “had something to do with his homosexuality” but also with his opinions: “I always thought I knew better. And, it has to be said, I was often correct” (cited in Pels, 2003, p. 63). As a teenager and young adult in the 1960s and 1970s, he distinguished himself with his impeccable suits and extravagant style. Fortuyn’s autobiographies and biographies show that he desperately wanted his peers to love him as much as he loved himself. With wits and enthusiasm he managed to satisfy his thirst for recognition. This sensitivity towards his cultural and social environment perhaps explains Fortuyn’s chameleon-like changes with the times. In the 1970s he was a Marxist and member of the Communist Party, in the 1980s he wanted to renew social and corporatist democracy and was a member of the Labor Party, in the 1990s he embraced free market ideology and was a member of the right-wing Liberals.

While discontinuities mark Fortuyn’s ideology, in each period he aligned himself with movements growing in power and challenging established interests. Fortuyn had the temperament and skills to divide the world into antagonistic poles and to devote his energies to challenging established interests. Students at Groningen University successfully campaigned to have him appointed as assistant professor of sociology due to his commitment to Marxism. But Fortuyn did not just want to challenge the elites, he wanted to become one of them. He tried to attain positions of power within the university and mainstream political parties, but to no avail. His appetite for conflict, his self-aggrandizement and his desire to be at the center of attention made it impossible for party and political elites to accommodate him.

In 1990 Fortuyn accepted a position as extraordinary professor at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam, financed by employers’ organizations and labor unions. But while Fortuyn was writing frenetically and taking part in heated debates, he felt that the university was no longer the place for polemics and passion. During his time as extraordinary professor, Fortuyn found a more rewarding milieu: the rapidly expanding market for opinions in the form of columns and speeches. From 1993 Fortuyn wrote a column for the right-wing weekly *Elsevier*. After 1997 he was the star of the Speakers Academy, a company that organizes speakers’ events. It arranged fifty to sixty bookings for him per year, at 7,000 euros per performance. This is where Fortuyn was at his best and he felt it. He spoke without embarrassment about his “charismatic appearance” and his capacity to “electrify a room.” The audience was “psyched and charged” by the prospect of experiencing the “myth Fortuyn” (Fortuyn cited in Pels, 2003, p. 139). The columns and speeches further cultivated Fortuyn’s talent for rhetoric and one-liners. “A little bit of magic and charisma is required for a good performance” and he learned how to “climb into hearts” with a mixture of “humor and utmost seriousness” (*ibid.*, pp. 138, 139).

Fortuyn’s extravagant style was an instrument to break the power of the people and parties that had rejected him in his younger years. Fortuyn felt that a closed circle of around 20,000 people had created among themselves a consensual culture of mediocrity that worked to exclude all those who have passion and vision (Pels, 2003, p. 171). His discourse appealed to *nouveau riches* whose wealth and status had risen but who remained marginal in terms of culture and state power. They felt excluded, degraded and exploited by the state and its servants, and were willing and able to pay Fortuyn handsomely to discursively retaliate. They made Fortuyn a self-made man. Fortuyn provided a discourse that revalued entrepreneurship and common sense as the highest civil virtues while degrading the jargon, compromises and consensus typical of bureaucracy and polder politics. Through grand narratives and spectacular performances he wanted to become an “incarnation of the people” (cited in Pels, 2003, p. 66). Of course some groups – especially natives with lower levels of cultural capital frustrated with taxes, minorities and bureaucracy – were much more likely to feel that Fortuyn incarnated them.

While Fortuyn had long aspired to a political career, the established political parties offered him little. Livable Netherlands, a newly established party rooted in local oppositional politics, furnished him with a platform. In a landmark interview in *De Volkskrant*, Fortuyn presented Livable Netherlands as a challenger to the status quo: “We agitate against the culture of the polder model. A culture that is closed to outsiders and that does not recognize new interests” (cited in Poorthuis & Wansink, 2002). But he deviated from the party line when it came to asylum seekers, Muslims and discrimination. In violation of a motion passed by the party assembly, Fortuyn said that the Netherlands should no longer accept asylum seekers. He also stated that he wanted to “stop the insanity that three-quarters of the Turks and Moroccans who were born here get their wife from a backward region” (*ibid.*). Fortuyn also broke the informal rule of painting Janmaat as a civil pariah, although he, as Bolkestein before him, distanced himself from the (now inactive) politician:

I say: everyone who is in, will stay in. They are our Moroccan rotten boys, we cannot burden King Hassan with them. ... [Janmaat] wanted to encourage people to take a single trip back home. You will not see that with me. But I do say that it should be over now. We have enough. Forty thousand [asylum seekers, JU] per year: that is a city the size of Groningen in four years. People should realize that. And often a trip straight into the underclass. Well, I do not like that. I guess we should stop for a moment. Janmaat was partly right. And because of the demonization – to which your newspaper contributed too – that could not be said (cited in Poorthuis & Wansink, 2002).

Fortuyn wanted to open discursive space for some of Janmaat’s ideas – ideas that had been relegated to the far margins of the civil sphere. Fortuyn also challenged one of the fundamental rules of the civil sphere, namely Article 1 of the constitution. The article, formulated in 1983, named discrimination as a civil and indeed legal vice: “Discrimination because of religion, convictions, political orientation, race, sex or any other ground, is not permitted.”⁴¹ Article 1, technically speaking, is not the one that forbids racist or xenophobic remarks. Fortuyn nonetheless attacked it as a symbol of discursive oppression:

I am completely in support of Voltaire: I may find your opinion abject but I will defend your right to voice it. I am in favor of absolving that strange article in the constitution: thou shalt not discriminate. Fantastic. But if it means that people cannot make discriminatory remarks any more – and they are easily made in this country – then I say:

this is not good. Let those people make those remarks. There is a limit and I find that very important: you can never incite physical violence. A state of law cannot afford that. But if an imam likes to say that my [homosexual, JU] way of life is completely reprehensible and lower than that of pigs, well, he should just say that (cited in Poorthuis & Wansink, 2002).

Fortuyn desired public debate in which gut feelings about other groups could be voiced without restraint. In his columns for the right-wing weekly *Elsevier* and in his essay on the *Islamization of our culture* (1997), Fortuyn made his views on Islam crystal clear. He characterized Islam as a backward or “retarded (*achterlijke*) culture” (cited in Poorthuis & Wansink, 2002). The achievements of the progressive movements of the past, he claimed, were under threat: “I do not feel like doing the emancipation of women and homosexuals all over again. In high schools there are numerous teachers who do not dare to express their identity because of Moroccan and Turkish boys. I find that a disgrace” (Fortuyn cited in Poorthuis & Wansink, 2002). He traced youth violence, sexism and homophobia to Muslim immigration: they either had to be stopped at the border or disciplined to enforce civil norms.

Fortuyn was kicked out of the party for his interview in *De Volkskrant* but this only boosted his renegade image. He had no interest in honoring the informal pact not to dramatize integration politics; his words and plans were meant to challenge the consensus culture from which he had been excluded (see Box 5.3). With financial support from business interests, in particular real estate and property developers, Fortuyn created his own party, Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), less than 100 days before the elections of May 2002 (Storm & Naastepad, 2003). Fortuyn now launched a frontal attack against the government. Instead of a party manifesto, he wrote an indictment of the purple coalition: *The ruins of the purple government* (Fortuyn, 2002). While Fortuyn’s discourse was hard-hitting, his fame came from his media appearances. Night after night, Fortuyn provided prime time political drama. And night after night, he stole the show. The occasions where he outperformed his competitors are numerous but let me mention two.

In the first television debate (on 6 March 2002) featuring the leaders of the five largest parties and Fortuyn, the representatives of the established parties made a dismal impression. Fortuyn’s place at the table was due to his astonishing electoral success in Rotterdam (see Chapter 11) and his meteoric rise in the polls. Nevertheless, the others made it clear that they did not want to debate the upstart. Ad Melkert (Labor Party, PvdA), Hans Dijkstal (right-wing Liberals, VVD) and Thom de Graaf (progressive Liberals, D66) sat limply in their chairs

while Fortuyn veered forward and dominated the debate. He reiterated that the purple government had failed to stop the influx of foreigners and that the waiting lists for health care were unacceptably long. Most importantly, Fortuyn emphasized that *he* was the visionary who would lead the way out of the crisis. The other debaters tried to focus on Fortuyn's lack of a party manifesto and detailed budget as well as his lack of political experience – in effect treating him as an incompetent and unreliable intruder into the civil sphere. But Fortuyn had been in this position before (see Box 5.3). He presented himself as an analyst who had written more books and articles than the other candidates and announced the publication of his indictment of the purple government (“192 pages, sir!”). Fortuyn's performance thus transgressed the discursive and performative codes that the leaders of the purple parties embodied. The leader of the Social Democrats, Ad Melkert, “was the biggest loser... With every inch of his body he expressed that he did not feel like it at all. He had an almost physical repulsion for Fortuyn” (Hartman cited in Monden, 2002). The failure of the other candidates was so obvious that their campaign teams sent out statements admitting their dismal performance. But the leaders of the purple parties clearly could not unlearn their dispositions to appear distanced, objective and sober. Time and again, they struggled to get television time while the channels fought to have Fortuyn.

Another landmark performance was the debate that the leaders of the largest parties (and Fortuyn, who polled around 20 per cent) had in the television studios of the Sound Mix show on 28 April 2002. In a quintessential fusion of politics and entertainment, the commercial channel RTL4 had programmed a debate among the candidates as an intermezzo for their talent hunt. The party leaders had no more than 15 seconds to give their view on an issue before the quiz master stirred debate. Audience members could then vote to select their favorite candidates. Fortuyn began with 30 per cent and during the program increased his share to just over 40 percent.

Interestingly, the leader of the Christian Democrats, Jan-Peter Balkenende, did not suffer the brunt of Fortuyn's scorn. While the two had agreed not to attack each other for strategic reasons, there were also discursive affinities between the stiff Christian Democrat and the flamboyant populist. Balkenende explicitly rejected the idea that society should be multicultural and that an Islamic pillar was something to applaud. He spearheaded a segment of the Christian Democrats that emphasized the importance of order and thrift. Society, in his view, could not be an aggregate of multiple cultures; it should be a coherent civil community with shared norms and values (Balkenende, 2002a). He rejected any form of *gedogen*⁴² and argued that politicians as well as the government were responsible for defining what was

permissible and what was not (Balkenende 2002b). While his plea for moral values and civil norms did not immediately arouse interest when he articulated these ideas in early 2002, it was the first step towards the establishment of a right-leaning government of Christian Democrats, Pim Fortuyn's party and the right-wing Liberals following the elections of 2002.

Fortuyn was shot dead on 6 May 2002. The assassin was a native Dutch environmental activist alarmed by his rise in the polls and his omnipresence in the media. An assassination of a politician is of course quintessential civil drama. Political leaders expressed their horror over the assassination; Fortuyn's supporters mourned his death at mass ceremonies. He was praised as a civil martyr who had stood up for "the people," for which he paid with his life. The villain in their story was not just the activist who killed Fortuyn, but the political elites and especially the left, who were accused of demonizing Fortuyn and creating the context in which he could be killed. Fortuyn's supporters now began a crusade against statements and ideas that had contributed to the demonization of culturalist discourse. As his political party disagreed with a proposal to postpone the elections, they took place 9 days after the assassination.

Resonance and consonance

Fortuyn enjoyed success mainly among disenfranchised segments of the population, not among civil elites. He nevertheless received no less than 355 references in the period after 9/11 (until 2006). There is no evidence that Fortuyn was "demonized" by the mainstream media as some commentators and many of his supporters have suggested (see, e.g., Bosman & d'Haenens, 2008). Had this been the case, Fortuyn would have been criticized (much) more often than others. But the opposite was the case: his ratio of criticism to praise (1.94) is slightly better than average (2.31), both before (2.13) and after (1.88) his assassination. Interestingly, the share of neutral references to Fortuyn is unusually high (71.8 per cent, $n=255$). This suggests that civil elites, rather than engaging with his views, chose to reflect on the Fortuyn phenomenon. Indeed, even actors who criticized or praised Fortuyn often balanced their judgments (first praising then criticizing or *vice versa*). The result of these micro-strategies was that, in the period between 9/11 and his assassination, there were no clear divisions in the debate on the opinion pages (see Appendix 3). In this setting Fortuyn only had a handful of supporters and critics; a large majority of those who referred to him posed as neutral by-standers. Undoubtedly, this is because the action took place elsewhere. Although Fortuyn sometimes granted interviews to newspapers (including the infamous interview in *De Volkskrant*), television was his main stage.

Fortuyn's ideas appealed especially to segments of the population with relatively low levels of education, people who valued conformity and felt alienated from established political parties – a group that had grown as the pillars (vehicles for inter-class integration *par excellence*) corroded. So long as politicians did not exploit their sentiments, they had remained inactive and cynical. But once Fortuyn emerged on the scene, his appeal was instant (Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). Seventeen per cent of voters supported Fortuyn *post mortem*. Their profile did not deviate from the average in economic capital (as measured by income) but they generally had lower levels of cultural capital (as measured by education) (*NRC Handelsblad*, 2002). Cynicism towards politics had grown in the preceding years (e.g. Van Praag, 2002) and Fortuyn had managed to capitalize on these feelings, as shown in the high turn-out and support among voters who had previously abstained.⁴³ Statistical analyses of voter motivation showed that fear of asylum seekers and cynicism towards government correlated (to roughly the same degree) to the decision to vote for Fortuyn (Bélanger & Aarts, 2006; Van Holsteyn & Irwin, 2003). While the LPF fell apart after it entered government, Fortuyn clearly had an impact outlasting the party that carried his name.

Fortuyn and the transformation of the integration debate

After Fortuyn was killed, his supporters heralded him as the inventor and maestro of the “new politics” – transparent, passionate and thorough as opposed to the soulless compromises of the “old politics.” It is certainly true that politics has aroused more passion since Fortuyn. He turned the election campaign into a spectacle, his wits and energetic appearance reducing his opponents to pitiful grayish bureaucrats. Fortuyn redefined the logic of politics through a style that could mobilize an electorate cynical of established parties and anxious about social transformations, including the growing presence of minorities and Muslims. But it was not only his style that was new. While apprentice politicians normally learn to adapt to the mores of the party, in Fortuyn's case the party was built around him. It could be argued that Fortuyn never had time to develop his party. But it appears that he pioneered a particular form of political organization. Rather than a political bureaucracy – with regulations, manifestos, programs and the like – the party functioned as a marketing bureau that organized events and campaigns around its one and only brand. Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders, two culturalists who broke away from the right-wing Liberal party VVD to establish their own parties, later radicalized this model. Instead of a party where members can vote or convene, they created restricted associations over which they exercise full control. These “parties” are designed to

minimize internal disputes, maximize their resonance in the media and appeal to sponsors (especially the real estate and development industry) who seek to translate their economic power into political influence.

After Fortuyn, there has been a permanent presence of renegade culturalists in core civil arenas challenging established political parties and playing upon the opposition between parliamentary elites (who pamper unworthy minorities) and political renegades (who stand up for hard working and law-abiding citizens). They have challenged not only certain ideas about integration but also the *modus operandi* of politics. For these self-styled renegade politicians, stirring controversy is essential: they rely on the media to communicate to their prospective supporters and to cast themselves as challengers. Whereas under the purple government politics had been reduced to conflict prevention and the sorting of preferences, in the wake of 9/11 Pim Fortuyn injected passion and spectacle into politics – now an arena where renegade politicians compete for the lead role in civil drama.

Ayaan Hirsi Ali and enlightenment Culturalism

Ayaan Hirsi Ali made her first recorded public appearance during a debate on enlightenment in the cultural center De Balie in Amsterdam, one of the intellectual nerve centers of the Netherlands. *Trouw* editor Jaffe Vink narrated her electrifying presence:

... When a philosopher on the stage relativized the foundations of the Enlightenment and went too far in her praise of multiculturalism, a woman stood up to retort. She spoke Dutch with a light accent and she was black – and then it is dead quiet in a place like this. The woman castigated the Dutch philosopher and said she had no idea about Islam. ... [Hirsi Ali] made a plea for ... addressing rather than downplaying the severity of the contemporary state of Islam (Vink, cited in Prins, 2004, p. 143).

A few weeks later, Hirsi Ali published her first article on the opinion pages of *Letter & Geest*, a supplement of the newspaper *Trouw* and a prime milieu of culturalist discourse. While the media's gatekeepers are generally very willing to provide a stage to prominent figures (politicians, writers, etc.) who want to promote Culturalism, the editors of *Letter & Geest* were searching for new personalities. The section had published translated articles from American neoconservatives as well as long and controversial pieces from Dutch culturalists. *Letter & Geest* was the first media outlet to offer a stage to Hirsi Ali's criticisms of Muslims.

She called upon her readers to give dissidents a stage so that they could provide “a counter weight to the one-sided and mind-boggling religious rhetoric that millions of Muslims hear on a daily basis. Let the Voltaires of our time work on the enlightenment of Islam...” (Hirsi Ali, 2001). Immediately after the publication of her article, Hirsi Ali received offers from publishers and invitations for public lectures. As she gained in stature, tensions within the scientific bureau of the Labor party (a discursive milieu for Labor supporters as well as Labor critics like Scheffer) grew stronger. Her colleagues requested Hirsi Ali to tone down her criticisms of Muslims and especially of Labor politicians (see Vink, 2002). The definitive break with the Labor party came when the right-wing Liberals offered her a seat in parliament. In her explanation of her decision to accept their offer, Hirsi Ali expressed her unqualified support of liberalism:

I want to contribute to the struggle for the emancipation of (Muslim) women and to strive to transform the individual who has coincidentally been born in a group culture into a free and responsible citizen. This striving goes to the heart, to the foundations, of a Liberal party for which life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness acquired through fair labor are guiding principles. A party that feels that universal human rights are inalienable and inviolable. ... I realized that [accepting the invitation of the right-wing Liberals] would give me the chance to address the abuse of migrant women who have to hide in shelters [from their men] and the socio-cultural causes that underlie their subjugation and to ... place these themes directly on the political agenda where they belong (Hirsi Ali, 2002).

Hirsi Ali shared Fortuyn’s antipathy towards Islam as well as his drive to challenge the culture of consensus, which she experienced firsthand in the Labor party and in Dutch politics more generally. “I ... realized that Fortuyn had not only been correct about Islam but also with respect to the condition of established politics. We are still going round in the same little circles. Still. We avoid any risk, we do not want to offend or upset anyone. Everything is in the service of harmony” (Hirsi Ali, 2003). Hirsi Ali sought to shock Muslims out of their orthodoxy and Dutch politicians out of the slumber of the polder model.

Box 5.4 Ayaan Hirsi Ali – a Somalian warrior in Dutch polder politics

Ayaan Hirsi Ali (1969) was born in Somalia. Her father, Hirsi Magan Isse, was educated as an anthropologist at Columbia University and a prominent opponent of the socialist dictatorship of Siad Barre. Hirsi Ali's mother was one of four wives. Her mother and grandmother, who wanted to raise Hirsi Ali according to their clan's interpretation of Islam, had her circumcised when she was five. During Quran lessons, critical questions were not allowed. Hirsi Ali's teacher once hit her so hard that she suffered a fractured skull (Van Tilborgh, 2006, p. 23). Her father accepted the traditional upbringing and its horrors but ensured that his daughter receive a proper education at the English-language Muslim Girls' Secondary School.

Hirsi Ali was a stern believer, sympathized with the Muslim Brotherhood and participated in the book burnings of Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*. She nevertheless longed for freedom from misogynist doctrines. She had read about the position of American and European women in the Valley Secretarial College in Nairobi (Kenya) and this made her decide to escape from an arranged marriage with a Canadian Somali. She bolted during a family visit in Düsseldorf and took the train to Amsterdam, where she requested political asylum. She learned Dutch quickly and pursued a master's in political science and political philosophy at Leiden University.

Her faith wavered when she, in her side-job as translator, came into contact with Somali women in asylum centers and hostels for battered women. She saw husbands and male family members using religion to legitimize physical and mental abuse. When she joined a research project on migrant women at the scientific institute of the Labor Party, Hirsi Ali incessantly addressed the hardships that Muslim women and children suffer at the hands of their relatives. She was dismayed that most people in the Labor Party did not share her diagnosis and were unwilling to recognize the link between Islam and the oppression of women. Her identification as a Muslim suffered another blow after 9/11: she was horrified by the attacks but felt that the Quran legitimized the violence. Reading the *Atheist Manifesto (Atheïstisch Manifest)* of Leiden philosopher Herman Philipse was an ultimate revelation and in 2002 she renounced her faith. Shortly afterwards she joined the right-wing Liberals and entered parliament with 40,000 preferential votes.

Hirsi Ali's openness about genital mutilation and other forms of abuse as well as her graceful appearance made her an object of intense media attention. Her higher-class upbringing as well as her devoted supporters (colloquially known as "the friends of Ayaan") gave her the power – the confidence, eloquence and determination – to translate her particular experiences into a universal discourse of liberation from religious oppression. Initially unaffected and later appalled by the culture of consensus and compromises, she argued for full discursive conflict: "dare to clash. It is inevitable. The Netherlands needs to get rid of the fear to stigmatize." The angry responses of Muslims merely reinforced her sense of purpose: "every group that goes through a transformation has to go through such rage" (cited in Van Tilborgh, 2006, pp. 32, 33). The same is true, *in extremis*, of the countless death threats she received. The assassination of Theo van Gogh and the letter to Hirsi Ali that Mohammed Bouyeri stuck into his chest with a dagger – "oh Hirsi Ali, I am certain that you will falter..." – was the final confirmation that her calling was to provoke Islam to take "a shortcut to enlightenment" (the name of her current movie project).

While Hirsi Ali was similar to Fortuyn in some ways, she was different in others. She had previously been a Muslim, and argued against Islamic doctrine in the name of women's liberation. Like many converts, Hirsi Ali had extraordinary zeal and unshakeable convictions (Box 5.4). Due to the abuse she had suffered and her attempts to confront Muslims, she was

the feminine antithesis to pragmatist political culture and its representatives. While many of her statements, appearances and articles aroused interest, her most notable project was the movie *Submission* made with Theo van Gogh, a filmmaker and *bête noir* of Amsterdam's intellectual elite. *Submission* was an 11-minute visual pamphlet that sought to demonstrate that the Quran considers women fundamentally inferior to men. The movie features four female actors whose faces are covered with head scarves and whose naked bodies are visible through transparent veils. The Arabic calligraphy of Quranic verses are projected or painted on the women. The voice-over narrates the horrors they have suffered at the hands of male relatives and suggests that the men use Quranic verses to justify their abuse. Six weeks after the broadcasting, the movie's director was shot and stabbed to death in Amsterdam. The Islamic extremist who killed Van Gogh plunged a dagger into his chest with a note containing threats of death to the West, the United States, the Netherlands and Ayaan Hirsi Ali.

Resonance and consonance

Like Fortuyn, Hirsi Ali blasted onto the scene: after her debut in mid-2001, the number of her appearances in the newspapers and on television skyrocketed (Van Tilborgh, 2006, p. 24). By 2003 she had become the most central figure in the debate. Between her first appearance and 2006, she received 59 positive (16.8 per cent), 177 neutral (50.3 per cent) and 116 negative references (33 per cent), making her slightly more popular than average. Like Bolkestein and Scheffer, Hirsi Ali was praised by opponents and supporters alike for her courage and for breathing life into politics. Her combination of feminine beauty and hard-hitting discourse made her a culturalist figurehead. Whereas Fortuyn had primarily appealed to the disenfranchised, Hirsi Ali had devotees among the cultural and political elite, including artists, writers, philosophers, politicians and journalists. Especially philosophers of law at Leiden University such as Paul Cliteur and Afshin Ellian supported, both in the newspapers and personally, Hirsi Ali's quest for Islamic enlightenment. Her supporters made her into a civil icon: the embodiment of democratic ideals such as freedom of speech, defiance of unjust authority and heroism in the face of death threats. Hirsi Ali's performances and the assassination of Theo van Gogh pulled writers and artists into the civil sphere. While these groups were previously marginal in the debate, they increasingly appeared on the opinion pages and often expressed passionate support for Hirsi Ali. Due to these developments, the share of articles supporting Culturalism surged to around 30 per cent (see Table 3.1). To her numerous opponents, Hirsi Ali was a mouthpiece for conservatives. Her critics pointed out that she had no special training in Islam and accused her of unjustly projecting her personal

traumas rooted in tribal customs onto Muslims as a group and Islam as a religion.

Hirsi Ali and the transformation of the integration debate

While Hirsi Ali was clearly the most prominent migrant culturalist, she was far from the only one. Other critics from countries where Islam is the dominant religion included Afshin Ellian, a legal scholar and refugee from Iran who routinely projected his experiences of Khomeini's regime upon Dutch politics and Dutch Muslims; Nahed Selim, an Egyptian writer opposed to head scarves and other Islamic commandments for women; Hafid Bouazza, a Moroccan writer and *bon vivant* critical of Islam; Ebru Umar, a writer of Turkish descent and close friend of Theo van Gogh who accused the mayor of Amsterdam, Job Cohen, of failing to protect basic civil liberties in the face of Islamic threats. The list goes on. The prominence of Ayaan Hirsi Ali – and a large number of lesser known figures – signaled a broader shift in civil politics where migrants critical of their own communities played a vital role in increasing Culturalism's legitimacy. While intellectuals, writers and artists had previously not identified with culturalists and tended to lean to the left, this time it was different: they were apparently eager to make a woman's campaign for Islamic enlightenment into a civil spectacle. Since our collection of data stops at the end of 2005, it is not possible to say whether these groups sustained their support for Culturalism after Hirsi Ali left the scene. What we do know is that in 2005, the variety and number of actors supporting Culturalism was larger than ever before.

The power of Culturalism, 1991-2005

The chapter thus far has discussed the evolution of culturalist discourse and the ways in which different civil actors appealed to specific class fractions. The question then arises: if the base of Culturalism was so diverse, did these different actors and class fractions really work together? Did the discursive divides between the different currents of Culturalism disappear? Can we discern the formation of a coherent discursive movement – an alliance of actors with discursive leaders and dense networks? If so, how did this coalition develop in relation to its antagonists between 1990 and 2006?

Proliferation and polarization

Community detection (see Chapter 4) does not always reveal clear patterns of conflict. Between 1994 and 1999, when the debate cooled, there was no straightforward opposition

between culturalists and their opponents. Between 9/11 and the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, the debate was intense. But here, too, we cannot discern straightforward opposition. Graphs for these periods show a mishmash of antagonisms and alliances that do not add up to discursive opposition at the level of clusters (Appendix 3). In other periods, we see opposition between a cluster predominantly composed of culturalists and a cluster composed mostly of its critics. Similar oppositions recurred after the interventions of Frits Bolkestein (1990-1991), Paul Scheffer (2000-2001) and Ayaan Hirsi Ali (2003-2005).⁴⁴ In each period there is a polarized figuration with two major camps and relatively few by-standers.⁴⁵ These continuities make it possible to investigate how the relationship between the culturalist cluster and the antagonistic cluster (the antipode) evolved. Below we examine these oppositions in three different periods, referring to the network graphs that visualize the oppositions as well as the statistics in Table 5.1 that summarize power relations within and between the clusters.

Table 5.1 Features of, and relationships between, the two largest clusters in consecutive periods of integration politics

<i>Period</i>	<i>Cluster</i>	<i>Members</i>	<i>Articulation</i>	<i>Resonance</i>	<i>Consonance</i>	<i>Density</i>	<i>Variance</i>	<i>Structural polarization</i>	<i>Discursive polarization</i>	<i>Discursive leaders (scores)</i>
1991 to 1994	<i>Culturalist</i>	39	40.4	46.4	-0.45	0.0108	0.62	0.92	0.39	n.a.
	<i>Antipode</i>	55	46.2	49.3	-0.33	0.0057	0.44			n.a.
1995 to 1999	<i>n.a.</i>	23	41.4	39.7	-0.18	0.0138	0.49	0.94	0.26	n.a.
	<i>n.a.</i>	36	44.8	56.1	-0.36	0.0056	0.39			n.a.
2000 to 9/11	<i>Culturalist</i>	68	43.6	67.3	-0.33	0.0070	0.67	0.95	0.38	Paul Scheffer (5)
	<i>Antipode</i>	55	45.5	28.3	-0.29	0.0040	0.25			n.a.
9/11 to Fortuyn murder (6 May 2002)	<i>n.a.</i>	49	37.8	40.8	-0.22	0.0047	0.22	0.91	0.36	n.a.
	<i>n.a.</i>	43	27.0	29.3	-0.65	0.0083	0.52			n.a.
6 May 2002 to 2005	<i>Culturalist</i>	151	31.2	49.6	-0.46	0.0043	2.51	0.9	0.47	Ayaan Hirsi Ali (14), Pim Fortuyn (7), Afshin Ellian (5)
	<i>Antipode</i>	234	57.4	44.1	-0.21	0.0013	0.68			n.a.
1991 to 2005	<i>Culturalist</i>	258	38.1	45.3	-0.41	0.0021	2.48	0.87	0.43	Ayaan Hirsi Ali (14), Frits Bolkestein (10), Afshin Ellian (7), Paul Scheffer (6), Paul Schnabel (5)
	<i>Antipode</i>	348	53.2	47.1	-0.25	0.0008	0.82			Ahmed Aboutaleb (5)

The Bolkestein period

Bolkestein was central to the debate in the 1990s. A very large number of actors directed attention to him, as represented in Figure 5.1 with many (mostly red) lines converging on the large green circle which designates Bolkestein. He is by far the most central figure but he did not only receive support from within ‘his’ cluster, which is why his score for discursive leadership is not higher than 3 (Table 5.1). Bolkestein’s cluster also contains some critics such as Wasif Shadid, an anthropology professor at Leiden University who ended up in this cluster because he shares opponents with Bolkestein. We see that the Labor Party is also in Bolkestein’s cluster; this is because some Labor Party politicians (Thijs Wöltgens, Aad Kosto) went to great lengths to distinguish the legitimate Bolkestein from the illegitimate Janmaat. The ironic consequence is that Janmaat ends up in the cluster of actors who oppose the culturalist turn in government policy (Figure 5.1). Despite these counterintuitive results (a point to which we will return shortly), it is clear that Bolkestein’s cluster is composed mostly of actors who either explicitly promote Culturalism or defend the legitimacy of his discourse. The other cluster mostly includes actors who resist the culturalist turn in government policy and the integration debate. They either support the ideal of collective emancipation as embodied in pillarized institutions or strategies of economic (rather than cultural) integration as promoted by the Scientific Council for Government Advice. The figuration in this period is balanced in the sense that the clusters have similar scores on indicators of articulation, consonance and resonance power. However, the clusters do have different internal figurations (Table 5.1). The culturalist cluster has a high variance in the distribution of discursive leadership and relatively dense networks – a first indication that culturalists tend to form different sorts of networks than their opponents.

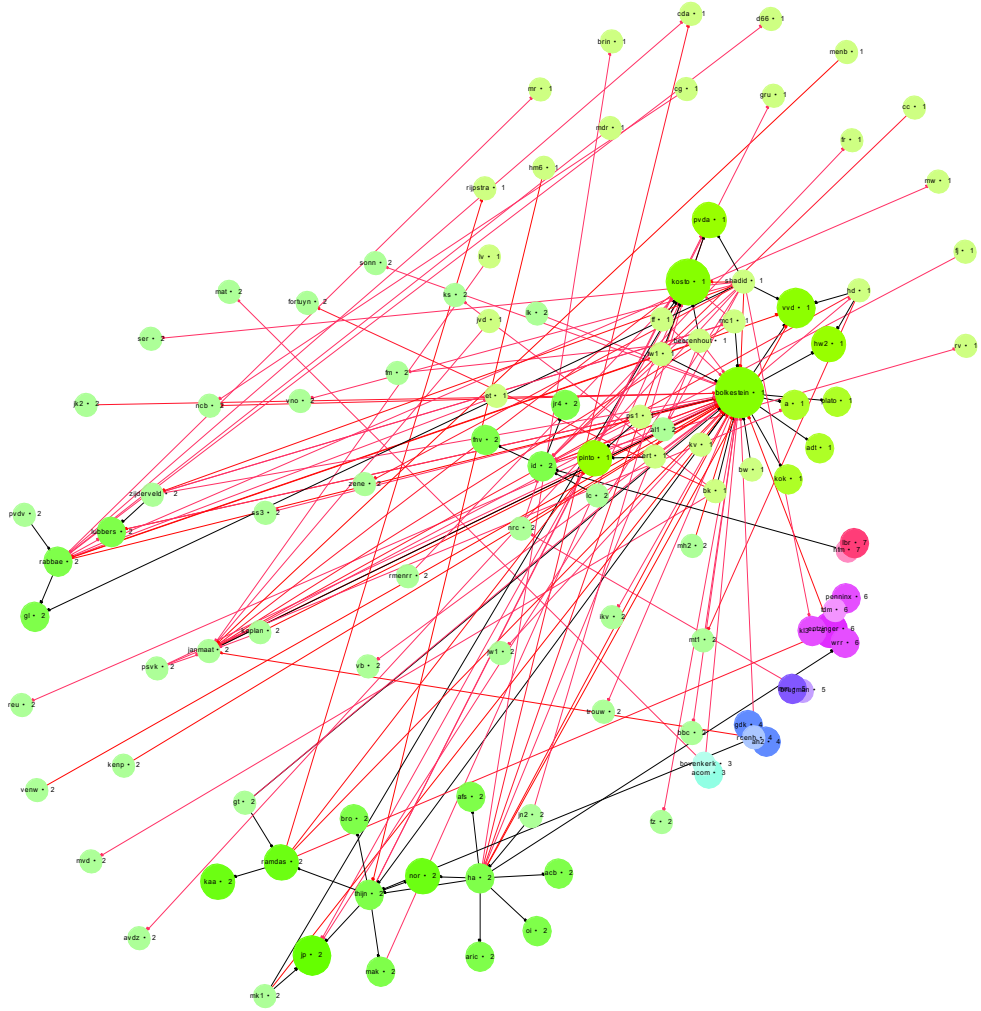


Figure 5.1 Visualization of conflicts and alliances in the period between Frits Bolkestein's Luzern lecture on integration (September 1991) and the national elections of 1994. Red lines represent negative references, black lines represent positive references.

The Scheffer period

We see similar oppositions after Scheffer's publication of the "The multicultural drama" in 2000. Scheffer is the central node in a cluster of actors who support Culturalism (cluster 1, located in the upper-right corner of Figure 5.2). This cluster has an antagonistic cluster consisting mostly of actors who resist the culturalist turn. As in the Bolkestein period, some actors within Scheffer's cluster distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate culturalists. This particularly applies to Paul Kalma, the director of the scientific institute of the Labor Party, who distinguishes between the type of discourse promoted by the columnists of *Elsevier* (including Pim Fortuyn) and the discourse of (his former colleague and fellow party member) Scheffer. The result is that some of the most radical culturalists (like Fortuyn) end up outside Scheffer's cluster and in the cluster of Culturalism's opponents. While these radical culturalists received few references, the dissociating strategies of actors like Kalma are interesting in that they mute conflict by blurring the divide between what would otherwise be more homogeneous clusters. The same happened in the previous period when actors like Shadid chose similar targets as Bolkestein, thus ending up in the cluster in which Bolkestein was the discursive leader. Although such findings initially seem counterintuitive, they reveal a mechanism typical of what Collins refers to as a "tangle of conflicts" – one which produces unexpected alliances and (thus) attenuates polarization (Collins, 2007, p. 5). Actors who distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate culturalists otherwise do not support culturalist views; they have few or negative ties with other members in the cluster, thus making the networks of both clusters less dense (if there are enough of these people, there would no longer be antagonistic clusters). Another similarity with the Bolkestein period is the pattern of a relatively tight-knit cluster dominated by culturalists in opposition to a comparatively diffuse cluster dominated by its critics (Table 5.1). The difference in the variance of discursive leadership between the culturalist cluster and its antipode is again high, indicating a high concentration of discursive power in the culturalist cluster (Table 5.1). There are also some notable differences between Scheffer and Bolkestein's culturalist clusters. Although in both periods their members, on balance, received more criticism than praise, the difference with the antipode is smaller for Scheffer's cluster (Table 5.1). Most strikingly, the resonance power of the culturalist cluster is much stronger in 2000-2001 than it was in 1991-1994: many actors opposed Scheffer and his allies but attracted little attention.

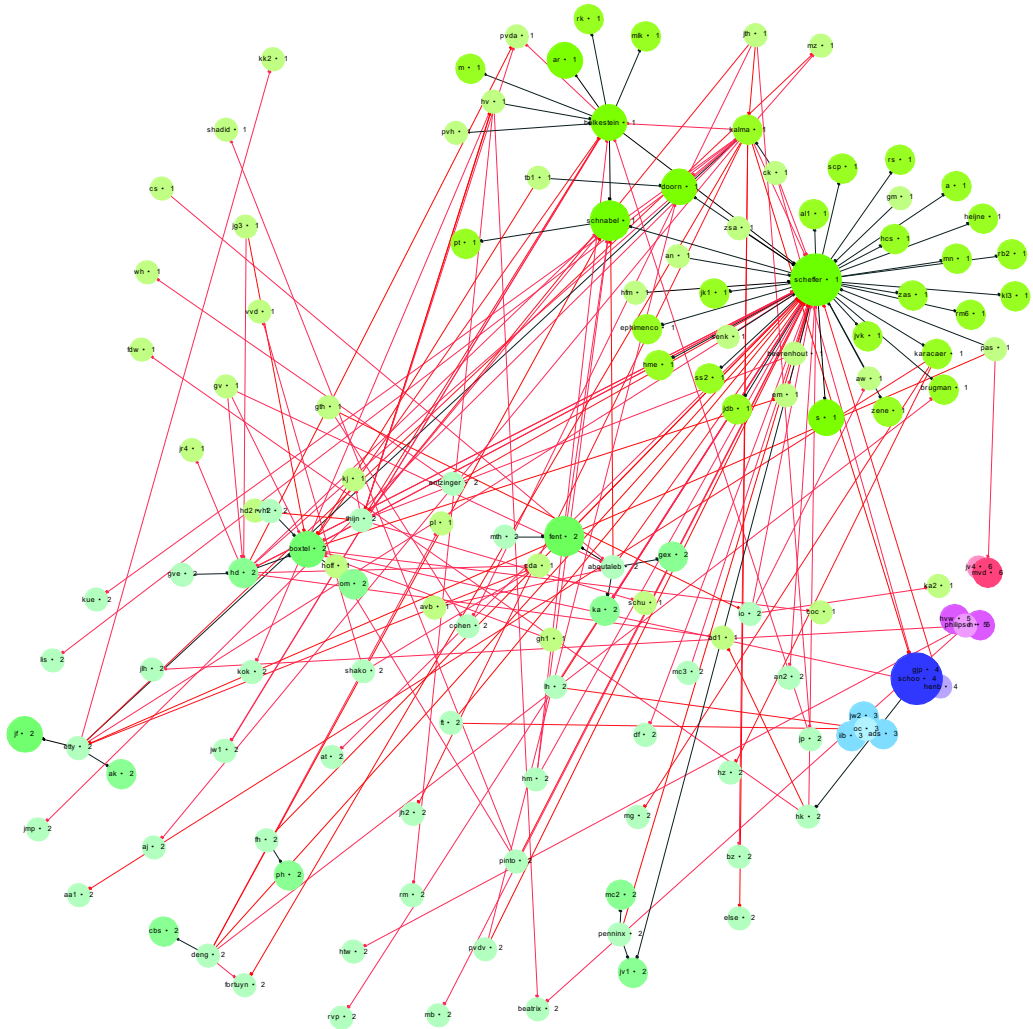


Figure 5.2 Visualization of conflicts and alliances in the period between the publication of Paul Scheffer's “The multicultural drama” (January 2000) and 9/11. Red lines represent negative references, black lines represent positive references.

The period after Fortuyn's assassination

In the period after the assassination of Pim Fortuyn – between May 2002 and January 2006 – we again see opposition between a cluster dominated by culturalists and a cluster dominated by the critics of Culturalism. The central actors no longer distinguish between legitimate and illegitimate culturalists. The oppositions that were partly muted before thus become more pronounced: the tension between culturalists and their opponents increases to levels not seen before (Table 5.1). Figure 5.3 shows a relatively small yet cohesive culturalist cluster (designated with yellow circles) facing a large yet diffuse opposition. Within the culturalist cluster there are comparatively many positive relations, as expressed in a relatively high score for density (Table 5.1). The negative relations that separate the culturalist cluster from the others are comparatively often directed to the culturalist clique; the largest cluster in the figure (designated with orange circles) has some positive internal relations but its members mostly group together because they share a negative relation to the culturalist cluster.

This time Ayaan Hirsi Ali stands out as the most prominent discursive leader of the culturalist cluster; Afshin Ellian and Pim Fortuyn also receive support. The variance of discursive leadership is comparatively high, indicating that discursive power in the culturalist cluster is much more concentrated than in the antipode. While individuals like Roger van Boxtel (the Minister of Integration on behalf of the progressive Liberals) and Job Cohen (mayor of Amsterdam for the Labor Party) receive support from within their own cluster, they also attract criticism. They therefore do not come to stand for the group in the same way Hirsi Ali does. In short, we find the same pattern that was apparent in the early 2000s (and partly in the early 1990s): compared to its antidote, the culturalist cluster has members with much higher resonance, much denser networks and stronger discursive leaders.

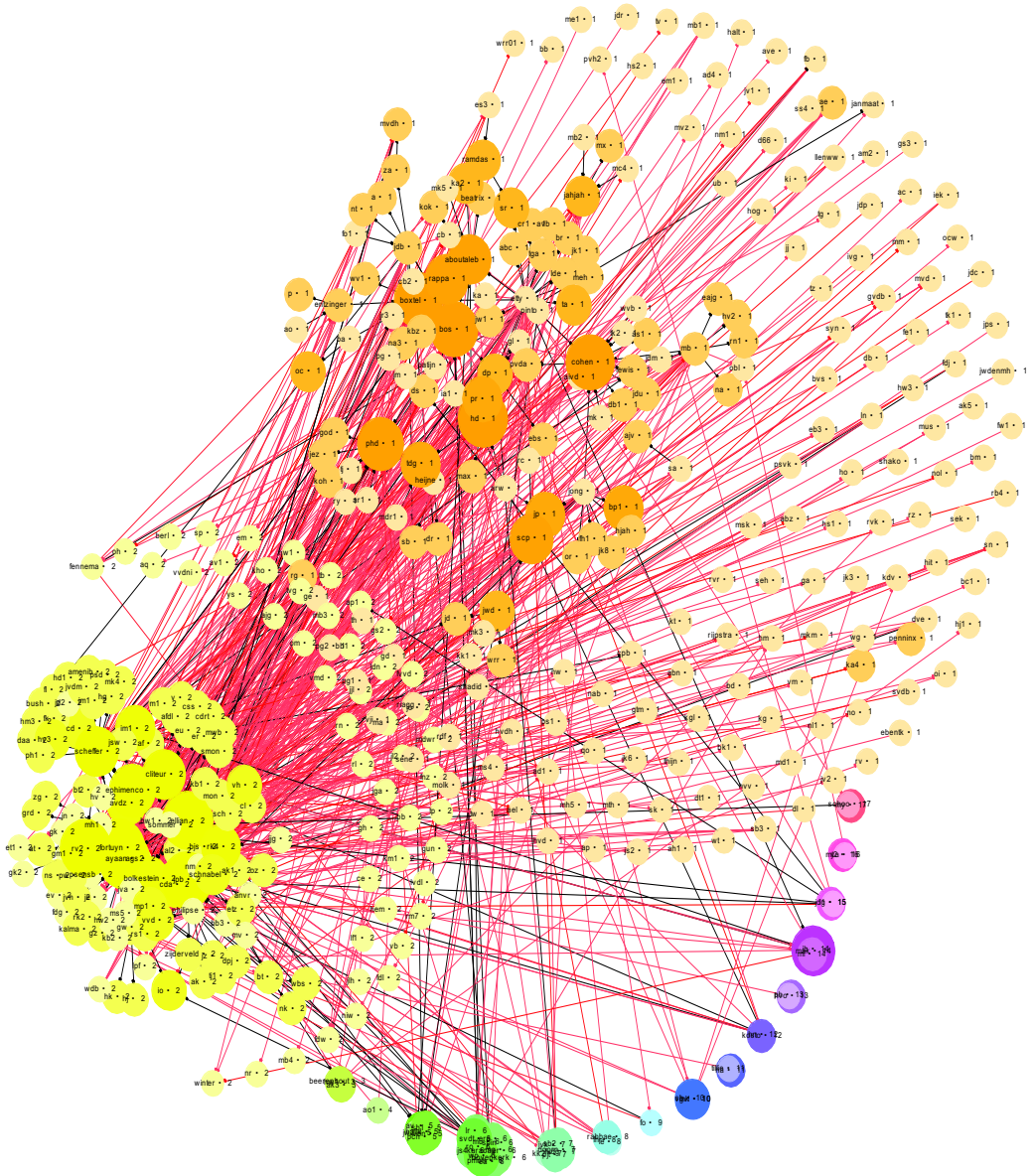


Figure 5.3 Visualization of conflicts and alliances in the period between the assassination of Pim Fortuyn (May 2002) and 1 January 2006. Red lines represent negative references, black lines represent positive references.

The period 1991-2005

“Culturalism” does not refer to exactly the same discourse in each of these periods. There are, for instance, differences of degree and kind between Scheffer’s discourse (focused on the underclass and national culture) and that of Hirsi Ali (focused on Muslims and Western culture). These differences in emphasis partly explain variations in the patterns of conflict and cooperation over time. Nevertheless, there is striking continuity over a time span of 15 years. In times of proliferation, culturalist clusters emerge with relatively strong discursive leaders and dense networks: culturalists seem to support discursive leaders and each other. Their opponents, in contrast, do not defer to leaders and tend to focus on criticizing culturalists rather than supporting their allies. If we aggregate the data for all periods, we find a familiar pattern: a large cluster of culturalists with relatively strong leaders and dense networks versus a very large cluster of their critics with sparse networks and weak leaders (Table 5.1; Figure 5.4).

The term “culturalists” of course refers not only to individuals central in the debate but also to actors who invest them with prestige and prominence. The fact that very different kinds of people become discursive leaders of Culturalism suggests that they do not lead a movement of their own making. Rather, they personify the forces latently or manifestly present throughout the period under investigation. Depending on their backgrounds and discourses, central culturalists can tap diverse bases of support (e.g. Fortuyn appealing to less educated segments of the population, Scheffer appealing to elites). But these are small variations in light of the remarkable continuities (e.g. Scheffer and Fortuyn solidly in the same cluster). While the individuals and themes change over time, the overall pattern remains remarkably stable: culturalists initiate debates and define the parameters and themes of discussion. Compared to their opponents, the resonance of the central culturalists is incredibly strong. Culturalists also tend to band together more than their opponents when the debate heats up and to rally around discursive leaders. The cluster containing most of Culturalism’s critics is very large but it is also fragmented: its networks are sparse, it lacks strong discursive leaders and its most central actors have much lower resonance than the most central culturalists. Actors in clusters other than the culturalist cluster are defined by their opposition to culturalists; they do not comprise a discourse alliance in and of itself. They share opponents, not networks or leaders.

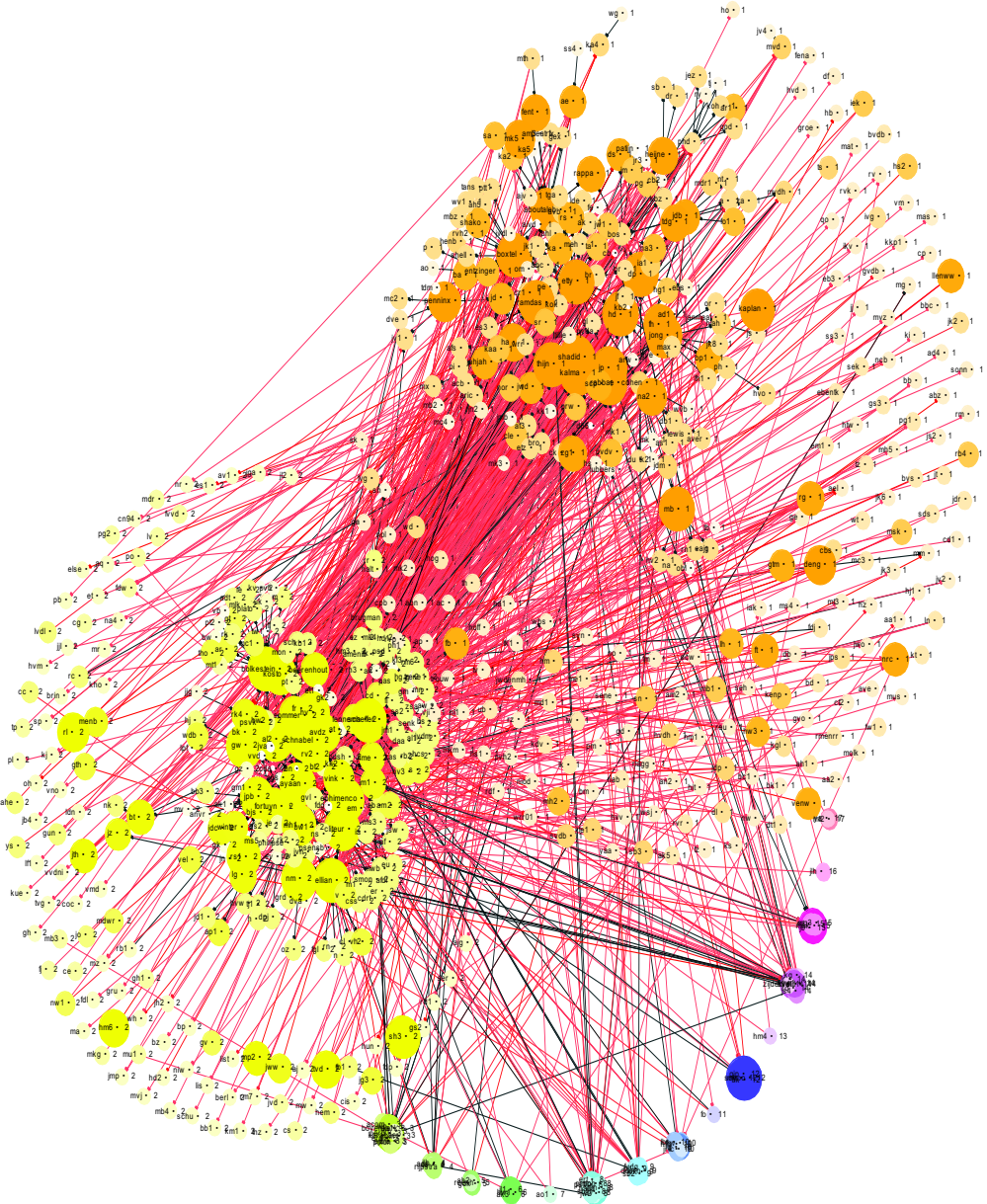


Figure 5.4 Visualization of conflicts and alliances in the period between 1991 and 1 January 2006. Red lines represent negative references, black lines represent positive references.

Culturalism: experiences of domination and subordination

How do culturalists perceive their position in the integration debate? What drives them to intervene in the way they do? And how do they operate in the policy field? While culturalists may feel that they have conquered terrain in recent years, they do not feel that their discourse has become dominant, let alone hegemonic. When they comment on the debate, culturalists often suggest that elites censor information that could undermine faith in a multicultural society. When I asked my respondents to identify these censors, I did not receive satisfactory answers. One respondent, after delivering a tirade against multiculturalists, was piqued when I asked him who he had in mind. “I do not give names,” he said, as if he was talking about a secret resistance group rather than a dominant ideology. At other times, respondents mentioned one or several people but they were typically marginal figures – individuals who could hardly be held responsible for the discursive inhibitions culturalists perceive so strongly. Moreover, those actors who had supported Culturalism since the 1980s and 1990s indicated that they received frequent invitations to speak at debates, *especially* in left-wing circles. However, opposition to Culturalism is not a figment of the imagination. Culturalists did not face a passionate opponent but, in the words of one of my respondents, a diffuse mentality difficult to pin down:

I had clear, substantive criticisms against multiculturalism. But each time I presented them, my opponents said “ah, well, if *that* is what you mean by multiculturalism, then I am not a multiculturalist.” And so they escaped every attack.

Other respondents acknowledged that “nowadays” (around 2005) few people championed multiculturalism. Nevertheless, they felt the continued presence of a culture of dogmatic egalitarianism that some referred to as “equality thinking” (*gelijkheidsdenken*), associated with the cultural heritage of Christianity, Socialism and the trauma of the Second World War. Because minorities and the poor are regarded as pitiful creatures, a number of my culturalist respondents argued, their beliefs and actions are exempt from critical scrutiny; the more reprehensible and unsuccessful minorities are, the more Dutch elites feel a need to affirm their equality (e.g., Vink, 2001; see also Bolkestein, 2009). While the resistance culturalists encounter does not take the form of a well-articulated discourse, they can nevertheless sense that they are transgressing social norms:

Just try it at a party. Just try to say something negative about minorities. You will find that people feel uncomfortable, that there is a taboo. More than that, *you* will feel uncomfortable. We have been so much accustomed to censoring ourselves that it is still very difficult to express ourselves. And when you then do express yourself, when you state it like it is and break through the barrier, then you feel a sense of liberation (approximation of interview, talk not recorded).

The above quote shows that culturalists not only struggle with their opponents but also with internalized norms. It also reveals that it can be rewarding to violate these norms. In such instances culturalists experience what social movement scholars call “cognitive liberation” (McAdam, 1982, pp. 34-35). This is not, as James Jasper emphasizes, simply a process of framing reality in a different way but of attaching different emotional values to ideas, notions and symbols (Jasper, 1997). Culturalists mark a discursive break when they feel and say: we no longer feel ashamed to speak this truth to power. Paradoxically, the feeling that one challenges a system of discursive oppression would not be so enthralling if the domination was complete. It is precisely the inability of multiculturalists, anti-racists and the politically correct to enforce these norms that makes it possible and even rewarding to break them. “Breaking the taboo” is no longer an act of individual bravery but a tested repertoire of a growing discursive movement (*cf.* Prins, 2002, 2004).

The scorn of (internalized) others is not the only thing culturalists have to fear. Especially central actors who speak out against Islam risk more than hurting the sensibilities of Dutch civil elites. Physical violence had never been entirely absent from integration politics but it had seemed far away. Khomeini’s *fatwa* was directed against a British writer. The frequent attacks against Janmaat resulted in injuries but the pain of this pariah did not hurt the civil community; when Janmaat’s wife was disabled after a petrol bomb attack from the extreme left, the mainstream political parties and the media were indifferent. This changed after the assassination of Pim Fortuyn. Though controversial, he was widely seen as part of the civil community; the shock of his death reverberated throughout the civil sphere (Pantti & Wieten, 2005). The killer was a Dutch native acting alone but Fortuyn’s supporters argued that the “bullet came from the left” and that the established parties had “demonized” their leader, thereby fostering the political climate that killed him. The killing of Van Gogh made him into a martyr for the freedom of expression and a culturalist hero. Culturalists had already cast themselves as protectors of the civil community from outside threats; violence only

confirmed their conviction that they embodied the values that (radical) Muslims sought to destroy.

The assassinations had an ambivalent effect on the (in)famous critics of Islam and their circle of friends. The chance of attack made some more careful in expressing themselves. One of my respondents decided to keep a lower profile because he felt participating in the debate had become unpleasant and perhaps dangerous. When I visited him at his work place, there was a security guard in the corridor to check visitors before letting them in through a locked door. Another respondent was extremely cautious before he agreed to an interview. When I visited him at his home, he spontaneously stated that the lack of a name tag under his bell was “not because of the threats.” When I asked him to sit closer (for the recording), he wondered out loud if I was going to shoot him. When I asked about the threats, he answered that he could not even tell me why he could not tell me.

It is difficult to gauge the effect of being surrounded by guards. But it seems that central culturalists like Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and more recently Geert Wilders, underwent a process of radicalization after they were put under constant surveillance. A more tangible consequence of the threats and violence against central culturalists was their supporters drawing together. After the assassination of Theo van Gogh, the “Friends of Theo” – the artists and intellectuals surrounding him – made many appearances on television with satire, criticism and parodies directed against Islam as well as the left (Hajer & Uitermark, 2008). When Ayaan Hirsi Ali went into hiding, the “Friends of Ayaan,” as the media called them, came together to console her. The public signs of support on the opinion pages in part reflect the private friendships that grew stronger in the face of danger. Threats and violence motivated culturalists to utter with greater conviction their discourse against Islam and the complacent left.

These snippets of experience show that Culturalism is a passionate discourse that relies on emotional symbolism. While the gatekeepers of the broadsheet newspapers are generally perceived to be left of the political center, they nevertheless take a strong interest in Culturalism. I do not have detailed data on selection procedures but editors favor contributions that relate to current affairs and that can be communicated through headlines or leads. Culturalists trigger responses and responses are valued: this power to attract attention and to stir debate – what I have referred to as resonance power – defines their power in the media. Their power is much more limited in policy circles. This is not only because many civil servants have an affinity for the left (another general impression I share but cannot prove) but also because they communicate in a vocabulary different from the visionary exclamations of culturalists. When culturalists manage to insert themselves on the agendas of

policy-makers, bureaucratic and parliamentary procedures take the sting out of their discourse. Paul Scheffer, for instance, expressed disappointment after his article was discussed in parliament:

Fundamental questions about the legitimacy of government and about living together in a country with so many differences have been evaded. ... Citizens are more and more concerned about the public cause but this is not reflected in parliamentary deliberations. The debate about the multicultural drama, for example, shrunk after two days into talk about implementation problems with citizenship courses (Scheffer, 2002).

But Scheffer himself also took the sting out of his discourse when he functioned in the state bureaucracy. When he was hired, along with two others, to select candidates for the diversity council in Amsterdam (see Chapter 9), fear of society disintegrating didn't seem to be foremost on his mind:

We looked for strong individual persons. We also wanted to have a significant share of women and ethnic minorities – *it was as politically correct as it could possibly be*. So I think they were very happy about what I did. But I have to say, I value each of the successful candidates very highly, even though most will probably not share my viewpoints. But I have looked at their biographies and qualities rather than their viewpoints. *There are just some problems that everybody has to recognize*, so we do not have to agree that there is a multicultural drama (my emphasis).

Within policy processes, different administrators, departments, quasi-governmental organizations, experts and civil society associations have to coordinate their efforts. The focus is on problems that “everyone” recognizes and these problems are usually described in the sort of bureaucratic jargon that does not offend any of the partners involved. The emotive words that enabled culturalists to take center stage in the debate on minority integration worked against them in policy circles. The pragmatic approach to integration that I introduced in the previous chapter and explore in more detail in the next seemed almost immune to culturalist criticism.

Conclusion: the expansion and transformation of Culturalism

The corrosion of established political institutions has created a pool of disenfranchised citizens apathetic or antagonistic towards parliamentary politics. They often feel that cultural and political elites fail to properly reward conformity or punish transgression. Although they may still favor the redistributive policies of the left, growing numbers of people with low cultural capital and distrust towards elites have put their faith in right-wing populists who promise to let the right hand of the state weigh down upon those who abuse or even threaten the system (Houtman, 2003; Achterberg & Houtman, 2006). Culturalism thus aims to conserve cultural values and enforce cultural norms. But it would be misleading to characterize it as a conservative force for at least two reasons.

First, conservatism is associated – in everyday speech as well as in the academic literature – with traditional family values, religious convictions and respect for authority (e.g. Hunter, 1991; Martin, 1996). But we saw that Dutch culturalist celebrities took issue with conservative values and espoused those progressive values initially promoted by the new social movements of the 1960s and 1970s (see previous chapter; Duyvendak *et al.*, 2009; Sniderman & Hagendoorn, 2007). The inequality of cultures should be acknowledged, they argued, to protect the equality of men and women, homosexuals and heterosexuals. Second, civil elites articulated a culturalist discourse as part of a more general challenge to accommodation, dialogue and moderation. Culturalism, in the specific figuration in which it was mobilized, functioned more as a revolutionary than a conservative discourse. As a contending elite, culturalists sought to change the rules of the game in order to devalue the dispositions of established elites. Through their bold discourses and sensational performances, culturalists sought to mobilize readers, viewers and voters against the experts, bureaucrats and commissions that dominated established parties and integration policy. The conflict was not simply between natives and migrants but between different ways of talking, acting and performing.

This chapter analyzed the evolution of Culturalism in the 1990s and 2000s against the backdrop of the development of the Dutch civil sphere. Looking at the class and strategic dimensions of discursive power, I observed how culturalists, especially after the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, became more diverse in their class composition, dramatized their discourse and clustered around leaders. While it is true that disenfranchised natives formed a core constituency of culturalists, the discourse was also mobilized by intellectuals, academics and politicians who sought to challenge the pragmatist political culture and to redefine power

relations in the civil sphere.

My analysis of Culturalism's development has elucidated how and why the discourse became more powerful. The analysis also suggested that Culturalism did *not* become hegemonic and that its *relative* growth in articulation, consonance and resonance power was limited. The growing power of Culturalism does not preclude the possibility of other integration discourses also increasing in power. As with all civil conflicts, conflicts over integration are not zero-sum games. The growing power of Culturalism evokes opposition and triggers transformation. The next chapter examines in more detail how Culturalism's rise has affected its opponents and how they faltered, adapted or blossomed in the face of the culturalist ascendancy.