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Dynamics of power in Dutch integration politics

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6. Contesting Culturalism. Anti-racism, Pragmatism and Civil Islam

The previous chapter noted that culturalists were prominent in successive episodes of integration politics. But it also became clear that the power of Culturalism was ambiguous and contested. In this chapter we investigate actors who promoted alternatives to Culturalism, focusing in particular on three discourses: Anti-racism, Pragmatism and Civil Islam. Supporters of these discourses criticized Culturalism for polarizing society and stigmatizing minorities, but did so for very different reasons. As the opponents of Culturalism do not form a coherent group (Chapter 5), this chapter first dissects the integration debate through a correspondence analysis of the different discourses and their promoters. The subsequent sections explore the milieus where these discourses were cultivated, identify their bases of support and analyze their relationships to Culturalism.

Alternatives to Culturalism

To explain the presence and power of the many critics of Culturalism, I use the properties database introduced in Chapter 3. Through a correspondence analysis of the authors and the discourses they promote, we can examine the discourses' distinct bases of support. Figure 6.1 presents the results of this multiple correspondence analysis⁴⁶. As we would expect, Culturalism finds support among right-wing politicians. We also see that contributors to the newspaper *Trouw* are prominent supporters of Culturalism, due to the efforts of the editors of the *Letter & Geest* section to draw attention to the cultural dimensions of social life, not least to the purported superiority of the West over Islam. The "small minority" group is close to Culturalism; it includes non-Western migrants but not those from the four largest groups living in the Netherlands (Moroccans, Turkish, Surinamese and Antilleans). This group includes people like Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Afshin Ellian who criticize the minority groups living in the Netherlands for failing to meet the standards of enlightenment. They urge the Dutch to become more militant and passionate about defending liberal democracy against the alleged threat posed by radical Islam. The figure shows that the large minority groups, in contrast, support Anti-racism and Civil Islam. The results, in short, confirm and refine the analysis of Culturalism in the previous chapter.

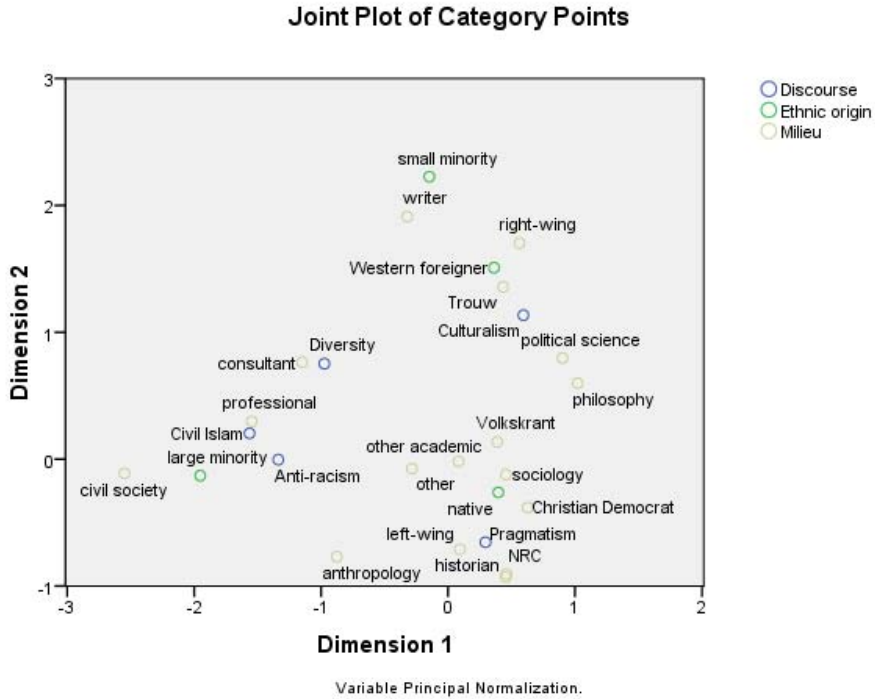


Figure 6.1 Multiple correspondence analysis of newspaper articles: discourse promoted, affiliation and ethnic background of the (first) author ($n=588$)

The plot features a discourse that I refer to as “Diversity.” Its promoters focus on the positive aspects of diversity for societies, companies or cities, arguing that growing cultural diversity is positive for business and government organizations as it helps to generate new ideas and to connect to increasingly diverse customers and citizens. Because the diversity discourse is comparatively weak⁴⁷ and is discussed in detail in Chapter 9, I do not examine it here. But what about the other discourses? With the aid of correspondence analysis and Table 6.1, the subsequent sections discuss first Anti-racism, then Pragmatism and finally Civil Islam.

Table 6.1 Relative and absolute support for five integration discourses in five different periods (unknown/other [n=118] not shown) (reproduction of Table 3.1)

	<i>Culturalism</i>		<i>Pragmatism</i>		<i>Civil Islam</i>		<i>Anti-racism</i>		<i>Diversity</i>		<i>Total</i> N
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1990 to 1994	17	14.8	73	63.5	11	9.6	10	8.7	4	3.5	115
1995 to 1999	11	17.5	27	42.9	9	14.3	6	9.5	10	15.9	63
2000 to 9/11	15	23.1	41	63.1	4	6.2	2	3.1	3	4.6	65
9/11 to 6 May 2002 (Fortuyn murder)	16	34.0	17	36.2	9	19.1	1	2.1	4	8.5	47
6 May 2002 to 1 Jan 2006	95	29.6	157	75.1	42	20.1	16	7.7	11	5.3	321
Total	154	25.2	315	51.6	75	12.3	35	5.7	32	5.2	611

Anti-racism: a marginal discourse

Introduction

New social movements proliferated in the Netherlands in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. Although the movement for migrant rights and against racism was never as strong (or as well-documented) as some other movements, it was an integral part of a wider network struggling for social justice and equal rights (see, e.g., Van der Valk, 1996). The association NBK (*Nederland Bekent Kleur*, Holland Admits Color) organized mass demonstrations of around 100,000 people in the early 1990s, including many prominent politicians, intellectuals and celebrities. Measures against discrimination and racism were part and parcel of government policies: the 1983 revision of the constitution institutionalized the prohibition of discrimination in Article 1, while subsidies were made available for centers monitoring and acting against racism and discrimination.⁴⁸ In sum, Anti-racism was supported by social movements and state institutions in the 1980s. But was it also a powerful discourse among civil elites in the 1990s and 2000s?

There is considerable dispute among scholars over the power of Anti-racism. Many suggest there is a taboo on critical remarks about migrants and minority cultures. Ian Buruma, for instance, writes that both Frits Bolkestein and Paul Scheffer were “denounced as racists” when they warned against the deleterious consequences of mass migration (Buruma, 2006, p. 53). Ruud Koopmans similarly suggests that there has been “a sense of postcolonial guilt and

[an] ever-present fear among authorities of being accused of racism” (Koopmans *et al.*, 2005, p. 15). Other commentators suggest that Anti-racism has been weak in the Netherlands compared to countries like the United States or the United Kingdom. Philomena Essed observes that Dutch scholars have been reluctant to use the word “racism,” instead opting for concepts and measures suggesting that minorities suffer from a deficit (Essed, 1987; Essed and Nimako, 2006), while Teun van Dijk argues that elites blame racism on marginal groups (such as Janmaat’s party), thereby reproducing rather than confronting systemic racism (Van Dijk, 1992, 1993, 2003). Ellie Vasta argues that “structural marginalization and racist discourses have reinforced the exclusion of ethnic minorities...” but “the Dutch” fail to recognize this since “they are not as accommodating as they, and others, think they are” (Vasta, 2007, p. 735). To assess the power of Anti-racism and to analyze its civil vocabulary, I first assess its articulation power and identify its bases of support: how many articles were coded as “anti-racist” and which actors produced these pieces? I then sample some fragments to illustrate variants of Anti-racism before turning to the experiences of anti-racists in the debate and in the policy field.

Articulation power and support base

Only a relatively small portion of the articles were coded as anti-racist. This was not due to overly restrictive operationalization. As Appendix 1 explains, all articles that exclusively or for the most part address the dangers of discrimination, prejudice, racism or stigmatization were coded as anti-racist. The use of the word “racism” was not a criterion for inclusion, but even with this broad definition of Anti-racism, the share of articles does not exceed 10 per cent in any of the periods. The high-point for Anti-racism was in the 1990s, with a modest resurgence after 9/11 (Table 6.1). The correspondence analysis shows that Anti-racism finds support especially among civil society associations and migrant professionals but not among politicians, academics or journalists (the three groups that respectively account for 24, 22 and 27 per cent of the articles in the database).

Discursive milieus and civil vocabularies

The articles coded as “anti-racist” cover a wide range of positions from radical to moderate. Radical here means that authors use heavy symbolism to make their point. One such article, authored by the Jewish writer Anne-Ruth Wertheim, draws upon the most charged metaphors of the civil sphere when warning that the fear of migrants could result in massive racist violence: “If Jewish history teaches us anything, it is that pestering and humiliations can lead

to mass murder. We have to be alert to forms of racism that can be a precursor to large-scale eruptions of violence” (Wertheim, 2004). The article is exceptional in that it uses the term “racism” and portrays the Netherlands as a country about to fall victim to the darkest of forces. Other actors aim to treat racism and discrimination as soberly as possible. The director of the anti-discrimination agency Meldpunt Discriminatie Amsterdam, pleased that the issues of discrimination and racism are not as charged as they were in the 1980s, expressly limits herself to technical and juridical procedures (Silversmith, cited in Blokker, 2000). Most of the anti-racist articles fall inbetween these extremes and address the pernicious consequences of increasingly hostile integration discourses and policies. For instance, Kees Groenendijk, a professor of law at the Free University, argues that measures to reduce immigration and discipline migrants have made migrants into second-class citizens: “the results are disastrous for the position of migrants and the relationship between migrants and the majority of the population. Most measures lead to exclusion rather than integration” (Groenendijk, 2004).

The only actor with an anti-racist discourse who received sustained media attention was Abu Jahjah, the leader of the Belgian-based Arabic European League. This was partly because Jahjah is so different from migrants who staff subsidized and institutionalized minority organizations: he is radical. His politics is a fusion of Arab nationalism and the civil rights discourse of Malcolm X (see, e.g., Jahjah, 2003). Jahjah had firsthand experience of Israel’s war against Lebanon and his condemnation of Israel could count on support among some migrant groups. He also took a strong stance against Culturalism. Rather than arguing for integration or dialogue, he claimed that the only way forward was to struggle for full civil rights:

Natives enjoy their civil rights 100 per cent. Migrants get 70 per cent. I also have a right to 100. I am not going to humbly wait till I get those rights and then be grateful. Because I will not get them. So I take them (cited in De Gruyter & Olgun, 2002).

Jahjah explicitly rejects the notion of integration because, in his view, it implies assimilation. He argues for multiculturalism because he feels that full recognition of the identity and culture of minorities is the only way not to exclude minority groups. But the most distinctive feature of his interventions is his constant stress on discrimination as an infringement of civil rights. The difference between the 70 and 100 per cent is due to employers, banks, landlords and the police, all of whom, according to Jahjah, routinely discriminate against migrants regardless of their citizenship status, in violation of anti-discrimination legislation (*ibid.*).

Jahjah's solution is to mobilize so that the abstract rights enshrined in the constitution materialize in practice.

Resonance and consonance power

Contributions addressing the consequences of ethnic or racial domination appeared only incidentally and were written by actors on the margins of the civil sphere. The only person with an anti-racist discourse who achieved a relatively high level of centrality was Abu Jahjah. In contrast to others whose articles were coded as anti-racist, Jahjah had considerable resonance power; his Page Rank score is much lower than Hirsi Ali or Fortuyn though he still ranks third in the period between the Fortuyn and Van Gogh assassinations with 3.9 per cent of the period's resonance power. However, he did not garner much support and had unusually low consonance: 39 negative references versus 4 positive ones. Jahjah thus seems to be the exception that confirms the rule: Anti-racism is a marginal discourse that encounters massive opposition when it moves closer to the core of the civil sphere.

One way to cross-validate these results is to see what the actors in the debate – and not just authors of articles coded as anti-racist – say about racism. If we search the database for the words “racist”, “racists” or “racism” and make a rough distinction between fragments criticizing racism and those criticizing anti-racism, we find that the latter are more numerous: racism is identified as a problem 35 times and anti-racism 61 times. If we examine these fragments in their contexts, we find that racism is normally not associated with Dutch society or with Dutch politicians. Some actors talk about the need to remain vigilant of the dangers of racism, while others speak of racism in other countries such as Belgium, France, Germany, the United States or the United Kingdom.

Subjective experiences: feelings of discursive subordination

How do anti-racists 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? Anti-racists, in providing a radical critique of Culturalism, act with the same fervor as culturalists. Like culturalists, they seek to radically transform power relations, albeit in the opposite direction. While the substantive content of Anti-racism is a mirror image of Culturalism, its structural location is very different: anti-racists are in marginal positions, their power has been decreasing, and they seek to defend the interests of groups – migrants, minorities, Muslims – whose members have increasingly been portrayed as unworthy or incapable of incorporation into the Dutch civil community. Whereas culturalists like Afshin Ellian and Paul Scheffer (see

previous chapter) have recently been afforded professorships at Dutch universities, some of the most central anti-racists in academia – Philomena Essed, Chris Mullard, Teun van Dijk, Miriyam Aouragh – have moved abroad. In interviews and articles, they express great frustration over the academic and political climate they left behind. Where culturalists feel that the debate is now (more) “balanced,” anti-racists feel that it is, in the words of one of my respondents, “not even a debate. A debate implies that there are different parties. What you have now is not a debate but the same old rubbish ... of the same old people. Once in a while there is some opposition but it is an illusion to think that this is a public debate.”

Anti-racists feel stigmatized. “The real taboo is racism” is a recurrent phrase in their discourse. When they use the r-word, they are often castigated as censors who seek to suppress criticism of religions or cultures. Stigmatization sometimes borders on, or becomes, intimidation. Some of my respondents were ridiculed in such settings as the popular right-wing website – or shock blog – *Geenstijl*. Several respondents had received threats by email or telephone. One of my student assistants managed to arrange an interview with the chairperson of the Arabic European League (AEL), a man of Moroccan descent who worked as an account manager at a large company. He agreed to the interview on the condition that his last name be kept secret; he did not want to risk a smear campaign that would hurt his career. One AEL activist stated that she did not know whom to trust anymore after finding out others in the movement had been informants or undercover agents of the Dutch intelligence agency.

Anti-racists experience exclusion, not just symbolically but practically. In contrast to the culturalists discussed in the previous chapter, anti-racists have great difficulty accessing the opinion pages or other central settings of the civil sphere. They therefore have to organize outside of it. The anti-racist movement tries to frame the grievances of both migrants and natives who are concerned about the movement I label culturalist but that anti-racists refer to as xenophobic or racist. To tap into these feelings of frustration, and to counter complacency, the anti-racist movement tries to create discursive milieus where the balance of power is radically different from the central settings of the civil sphere. They invite speakers who articulate the same basic message – Islamophobia and the right-wing revolt endanger minorities and society at large – in different ways. One central figure of the International Socialists, a Trotskyist association that supported several campaigns against racism, stated that debates, events and demonstrations should give people the skills and confidence to take unpopular positions. The goal is to “give back pride to people. To offer a stage where they can express their grievances and where they hear arguments that they can use. ... *That* is what

people want. People don't need another debate of left versus right, of Muslims versus VVD [right-wing Liberals].”

The sudden growth of the AEL and considerable turn-out at some anti-racist events (several hundred at a debate, several thousand at a demonstration) fuelled the belief among some anti-racist organizers that there was widespread support for a collective response to the onslaught of Culturalism. But there were also considerable obstacles. In the policy field and in civil society, anti-racist associations have to compete – for members, influence and activists – with actors that have much greater access to state resources. They therefore tend to shy away from radical critique. While anti-racist associations may receive funds from (subdivisions of) charities or donations, they do not have structural access to state funding and therefore lack the infrastructure to sustain mobilization.

Conclusion

The above findings contradict claims that accusations of racism were frequent. They furthermore corroborate claims that elite denials of Dutch racism were commonplace.⁴⁹ There were strong discursive restrictions on anti-racist discourse, while personal accusations of racism were altogether absent. The subjective experiences of anti-racists and the structural position of Jahjah (central because of intense criticism) indicate that Anti-racism was very weak. These results are in line with the findings of the previous chapter: culturalists are not hindered by taboos or powerful antagonists, but their critics are. Actors who attempted to blame Dutch natives rather than migrants were marginal figures who received very little space and had virtually no consonance. While there were signs that anti-racist discourse was growing stronger in response to the rising power of Culturalism, the increase in articulation power was limited and Jahjah was central to the debate only during a very brief period. In short, Anti-racism was subordinate to Culturalism. The other discourses had more ambiguous relations to Culturalism.

Pragmatism: a resilient discourse

Introduction

After the emergence of Pim Fortuyn, commentators in and of the Netherlands observed a dramatic shift away from multiculturalism towards policies aimed at assimilation. But the Netherlands never pursued multiculturalism.⁵⁰ Intellectuals who explained and espoused its principles were notably absent, as were any attendant policies. The word “multiculturalism”

in fact appears in the database for the first time in 1995 and was used almost exclusively by its opponents. The only exception was Abou Jahjah. It could be argued that this absence was merely semantic, that the word was not used but that the ideas and notions were there. But this would miss the crucial point that the protection and preservation of minority cultures – a central component of any coherent multiculturalist discourse – was never a goal of policy. As Chapter 4 showed, the goal of the minorities policy, and of the integration policy following it, was to *prevent* the process of minority formation, routinely conceptualized as the formation of an ethnic underclass (*cf.* Van Amersfoort, 1974; Penninx, 1988b; Scholten, 2007). Policies thus exclusively targeted stigmatized ethnic groups in lower class positions.

It is essential to understand this prehistory of integration politics to appreciate what exactly culturalists challenged. They did *not* introduce the idea that migration causes problems, that migration had to be curtailed, that migrants had to become autonomous citizens, that unemployed and unskilled labor migrants had to become productive workers, or that some cultural practices (such as forced marriages or domestic abuse) had to be ended. All of these ideas were well-established by the late 1980s and the early 1990s (see also Tijdelijke Commissie Onderzoek Integratiebeleid, 2004, pp. 436-445). The designers and defenders of the minorities and integration policies sought to put these ideas into practice through a combination of “poldering” and paternalism. Because they want to solve integration problems as practically and efficiently as possible, I refer to these actors as *pragmatists*. To assess the strength of Pragmatism and to analyze its civil vocabulary, I first look at its articulation power and support base: how many articles were coded as “pragmatist” and who produced them? I then quote fragments to illustrate the different variants of Pragmatism before turning to the experiences of pragmatists with the media and policy field.

Articulation power and base of support

Most of the critics of Culturalism were classified as “pragmatists.” While their share of articles decreased over time, Pragmatism remained the most articulated discourse throughout the period of investigation. Although support for Pragmatism was highest before 9/11, there has been no sharp downward trend in its relative power since then (Table 6.1). Pragmatism has been resilient. Given its strong presence on the opinion pages, it is hardly surprising that it drew support from many different sectors. The correspondence analysis shows that three sectors distinctively support Pragmatism: left-wing politicians, academic sociologists, and the editors and journalists of *NRC Handelsblad*. These actors all belong to or identify with the governmental elites responsible for integration policy. Below we examine actors from these

three sectors and the type of discourse they promoted.

Discursive milieus and civil vocabularies

Since their inception, the institutions of the minorities policy have maintained close relations with left-leaning parties, particularly the Labor Party. Labor traditionally receives a large proportion of migrant votes and recruits politicians and administrators through the institutions of the minorities/integration policy (expertise centers, consultative bodies and civil society associations). Prominent migrant politicians have also arisen through this party (see Chapter 10). Other left-leaning parties likewise have ties to this field. For instance, one of the leaders of the Greens (Mohammed Rabbae) used to work as a director for the Netherlands Center for Foreigners; a progressive Liberal, Roger van Boxtel, was the first Minister of Integration. Together the left-leaning parties account for 61 articles, or just over 20 per cent of the total coded as pragmatist.

Though pragmatists from these parties share some fundamental notions, there are important variations. Within the Labor Party, there is a continuum between politicians who emphasize the obligations of Dutch society and those who emphasize the obligations of migrants. Examples of the former include Ed van Thijn (Minister of Interior Affairs in the 1980s and mayor of Amsterdam in the late 1980s and early 1990s), Hedy d'Ancona (Minister of Welfare in the early 1990s) and Job Cohen (Junior Minister of Justice in the 1990s, mayor of Amsterdam between 2001 and 2010, Labor Party leader since 2010; see Box 6.1). These individuals, while acknowledging that mass migration causes problems, argue that elites have the responsibility, in Cohen's words, to "keep things together." Ed van Thijn argued, *contra* culturalists, that in times of transformation, "governmental elites ... have to be aware of their educational mission and to prepare the way for a society that combines socio-political integration with cultural diversity" (Van Thijn, 1997). On the other end of the continuum are pragmatists who emphasize the obligations of migrants, including Aad Kosto (Junior Minister of Justice and Minister of Interior Affairs in the early 1990s), Wouter Bos (Labor Party leader between 2002 and 2010) and Ahmed Aboutaleb (alderman of diversity in Amsterdam in the early 2000s and since 2008 mayor of Rotterdam). Governmental elites, they argue, have underestimated the problems arising from migration; there is a need, in the words of Wouter Bos, to attend to the "problems that a diversity of cultures can create," particularly the threats posed by "political Islam" (cited in Wansink & Du Pre, 2004). But regardless of the variation in emphasis, these politicians felt that a mixture of "soft" and "hard" measures were necessary to induce migrants to integrate, thereby safeguarding the unity of the nation as a civil

community.

Box 6.1 Job Cohen – a passion for moderation

With his gentle, suave smile, calm voice and serious expression, Job Cohen (1947) perfectly reflects the image of the polder model where leaders are responsible and skillful executioners rather than mobilizers of the masses. Cohen has been an administrator since his time at high school in Haarlem. He served as a class representative and had a position on the board of the school orchestra (Kleijwegt and Van der Vlugt, 2008). At Groningen University he was among the first students to participate in the democratized governing bodies. An academic career as a legal scholar took him first to Leiden University for his dissertation but he focused on academic governance and eventually became *rector magnificus* (the Dutch equivalent of vice chancellor) of Maastricht University. For the Labor Party he took up high-profile positions in the government (as Junior Minister in 1993-1994) and the Senate (1995-1998). His most notable achievement is a new immigration law that made the migration regime of the Netherlands into one of the most strict and restrictive in Europe (Entzinger, 2002). But for Cohen stopping the influx of migrants was not something to boast about, just something that had to be done with prudence and commitment. As the mayor of Amsterdam, Cohen introduced or defended many repressive measures – preventive searches, camera surveillance, raids – but always presented them as part of a more comprehensive approach to “keep things together.” He frequently declared his willingness to work together with migrants and their associations, believing that accommodation and incorporation would reduce resentment and lead to the development of a liberal Islam (see Chapter 10). What defines Cohen’s position is his passionate support for moderation and consensual politics. The move away from the center of politics is of great concern to him. “It is bad for the balance in society” (Kleijwegt and Van der Vlugt, 2008). And balance is something Cohen cherishes. The preservation of social cohesion and social peace is the cornerstone of his approach and central to his understanding of integration politics.

Sociologists, though not the only academics promoting Pragmatism, were the most present. With 38 articles, sociologists published almost twice as many articles as their colleagues from other major disciplines (philosophy, anthropology, political science and history have around 20 articles each). Twenty-three of these articles by sociologists were coded as pragmatist (60.5 per cent). Even more than left-wing politicians, pragmatist sociologists emphasize that heated emotions have no place in integration politics. One sociologist, for instance, stated that there is a need for a “distanced analysis of the goals and effects of policies” (Burgers, 1996); another that integration policies require patience and care rather than the “verbal violence” of party programs (Entzinger, 2002). In the articles and in interviews, these pragmatist sociologists present themselves as intellectual technocrats serving society through relevant insights and reliable findings. The heavy presence of sociologists among academics in the integration debate and their support for Pragmatism is due to their traditional role in monitoring multicultural society and conducting research for integration policy (Essed and

Nimako, 2006; Schinkel, 2007). Though they did not wish to be identified with any particular ideological or political position, pragmatist sociologists were very critical of culturalists, arguing that many other factors besides migrants' cultural backgrounds explain their disadvantaged position.

Alongside sociologists and left-wing politicians, the editors and journalists writing for the *NRC Handelsblad* constitute a third category of actors who form a bastion in support of Pragmatism.⁵¹ Of the 90 articles they produced, 74 per cent were coded as pragmatist. Their support of the discourse, however, fluctuated over time: when Scheffer (himself a regular contributor to *NRC*) published "The multicultural drama," support for Pragmatism was comparatively weak. But in the early 1990s and especially after 9/11, it was very strong. The contributors to *NRC* mostly supported Pragmatism as part of a more general aversion towards populism (which characterized much but not all culturalist discourse). Regular contributors like Elsbeth Etty (15 pragmatist articles) and Sjoerd de Jong (11 pragmatist articles) were fascinated by the growing popularity of populist politicians and tried to place the phenomenon in wider historical and sociological context. Of course their analyses contained a – partly explicit, partly implicit – valuation of civil ideas, notions and symbols. Etty's analysis of growing nationalist sentiment was typical of this denunciatory explanation:

The longing for the strengthening of national identity arises from the fear for the loss of the particularity of Dutch cultural expressions in an era of internationalization and European integration. But even if the fear of an erosion of national culture would be warranted, an argument for a "Dutch we-feeling" in relation to culture amounts to little more than regional folklore (Etty, 2001).

Many such passages can be found: the presentation of culturalists is first criticized (anxiety over Moroccan delinquents or Islamic extremists is in fact a sublimated fear of globalization) and then their agenda is declared irrelevant. Rather than engaging directly with culturalist discourse or its implications for degraded groups (as anti-racists do), such reflections serve to create distance between the analyst and the analyzed, with the former putting the sentiments of the latter into perspective. Other pragmatists writing for the *NRC* identified with disgruntled natives and felt that elites should incorporate rather than denounce culturalists.⁵² Whereas previously it was only migrants who had to be accommodated, now resentful natives had to be taken seriously as well, so that they will not grow (even more) resentful towards political and other elites.

Resonance and consonance

Despite their ambitions of civil unification and social harmony, pragmatists with reasonably central positions are focal points of discursive conflict. They are criticized at least as often as central culturalists. Between 2000 and 9/11, the Minister of Integration, Roger Van Boxtel, was a central figure and attracted much more criticism (14 times) than praise (twice). After 9/11, Job Cohen became a central figure and he, too, was much more often criticized (51 times) than praised (8 times). Most other pragmatists, with the possible exception of some policy sociologists, did not achieve centrality. Especially Han Entzinger – a professor of sociology, former civil servant, and one of the designers of the integration policy – had a small but sustained presence on the opinion pages. Compared to most others, he received many neutral references (39) and had a relatively favorable ratio of criticism and praise (9:5).

Subjective experiences: the calm confidence of pragmatists

How do pragmatists 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? The discourse that I refer to as Pragmatism covers a wide range of positions. Most of the articles on the opinion pages were produced by persons whose prestige derives in large part from their position within the state: politicians who seek to govern, academics who do research for the government, and experts who gather information and produce advice. They are part of a policy field in which integration is researched, discussed and managed; each day there are dozens of expert meetings, conferences and lectures revolving around the question how diversity should be governed. While there are disagreements, the shared desire to devise practical strategies binds the actors together. For them, integration is a matter of technique, not ideology.

Many pragmatists complain that integration politics has gotten out of hand. They occasionally participate in the media debate but feel uncomfortable with mediatized politics. This passage from an interview with a pragmatist social scientist is typical:

You do research and this gives you a certain claim to, well, to a part of the truth. And this is what you should contribute. After all, it's the taxpayer's money and so you have the task to contribute. But it has to be a debate that does not speak without nuance about, well, jeez, about Muslims, as is happening at the moment. No, you should show nuances. It is all more complicated... Yes, there are scumbags. There are

fundamentalists too. But there are also fundamentalists that are different.

Another academic complained that he had to communicate his findings in sound bites. He occasionally had his articles published in newspapers but felt that he could not get the message across in the space allotted to him. These experiences are typical of researchers in the policy field. They experience a loss of discursive power when they move into the media and are especially frustrated by accusations that their work is multiculturalist ideology dressed up as science (e.g. Ellian, 2005; Scheffer, 2001; Sommer, 2002). When I asked a researcher how he felt about the accusation that he promotes multiculturalism, he grabbed a pile of his publications and threw it before me. He exclaimed that he “*never said anything* like that” and invited me to check. Such feelings of frustration are indicative of discursive subordination. The dispersion of integration politics into the media results in the loss of status based on bureaucratic routines and scientific authority (see also Hajer, 2009). A professor who feels that his work is highly valued in classrooms and expert meetings can be reduced to a mere ideologue in another setting.

However, most of the time pragmatist researchers were calm and confident in their positions. They operate in a policy field that is much less dynamic than the debate on integration in the media and parliament. Policy objectives and media issues may change quickly but power relations in the policy field are robust. One researcher at the University of Amsterdam’s Institute for Ethnic and Migration Studies (IMES) – a bulwark of Pragmatism – told me that the ministries did not call as much after the right-wing cabinet of 2002 had been installed but he did not really mind. After all, he said, the government has no other place to turn to if it wants to devise a strategy against radicalization among Muslims. The IMES indeed received the first large grant for studying radicalization (see Buijs *et al.*, 2006). Since then, the IMES has developed a very strong position in the expanding field of radicalization studies. Centers like Forum, the Amsterdam Center for Foreigners and the Moroccan Platform Netherlands (*Samenwerkingsverband Marokkanen Nederland*) have jumped on the train and developed courses and programs against radicalization. People working in these institutions feel that the fear of radical Muslims is exaggerated but are nonetheless happy to offer their services. Many of the programs previously aimed at promoting dialogue or emancipation have been adjusted to fit the new policy objectives.

Examples of this sort of adjustment abound (see also Hay, 1995). One senior civil servant who had worked closely with left-leaning administrators for years was surprised by my question whether his work had changed after the siege of Fortuyn’s party. “Of course not!

Everybody is for social cohesion,” he said. And he was right. The right-leaning government of Rotterdam had expanded most of the community work programs introduced under previous governments, changing the emphasis from social contact to social control (Uitermark & Duyvendak, 2008). Something similar is true at the national level. The right-wing Liberal Rita Verdonk used her power as a minister to promote a culturalist discourse but her so-called &-program was remarkably similar to the left-leaning government of Amsterdam’s policies to fund initiatives transcending ethnic divisions (discussed in Chapter 9). The institute Forum coordinated the program and supported associations and initiatives to break down the barriers Rita Verdonk – nick-named “iron Rita” (*ijzeren Rita*) – had erected. Far from demotivating pragmatists, culturalists seem to have breathed life into a policy field whose legitimacy is based on the idea that integration is neither unproblematic nor impossible. As long as integration is a topic of controversy, the policy field can count on investments.

Conclusion

Although the articles coded as pragmatist vary, their authors share a commitment to an approach based on dialogue and inclusion. Nevertheless, it was clear that not all migrants or Muslims are to be incorporated in the same fashion. Whether they emphasized the obligations of society to include migrants or the obligations of migrants to integrate into society, pragmatists supported measures that restrict immigration and punish transgressors of civil norms. Rather than siding with natives with revanchist sentiments or migrants with fears of xenophobia, they reasoned on behalf of the state in order to help it maintain the civil unity required for the legitimate exercise of power. It is for this reason that pragmatists do not simply have an antagonistic relationship with culturalists. The ascendancy of Culturalism is taken as a sign that there are integration problems that need to be solved and conflicts that need to be resolved.

The widespread feeling that past integration policies have failed has undermined the legitimacy of left-wing administrators and policy sociologists but it has also – paradoxically – created new divisions and tensions that pragmatists can now promise to overcome. Something similar is true for the pragmatist intellectuals writing for *NRC* and other periodicals. Although they are subordinate to culturalists in the sense that they have lower consonance power and much lower resonance power, the parallel increase of culturalist and pragmatist articles indicates that the rise of Culturalism has encouraged pragmatists’ entry into civil arenas. Pragmatists thrive on the feeling that there is a process of polarization between migrants and natives that requires the kind of interpretation, reflection and management that they can

provide.

Civil Islam: an emerging discourse

Introduction

The *fatwa* against Rushdie and Bolkestein's claim to civilizational superiority placed Islam on the agenda of Dutch integration politics in the early 1990s.⁵³ The images of burning books and Bolkestein's statements dramatically raised the question whether Islamic beliefs and civil engagement can coexist. Culturalists have since argued that this is impossible or improbable, implying that identifying with Islam precludes or constrains membership in the Dutch civil community. Especially after the assassination of Pim Fortuyn, the integration debate no longer focused on "foreigners" or "minorities" but on "Muslims" (see Figure 3.1). Fortuyn termed Islam a "retarded culture" and specifically stated that Muslim immigration should stop.⁵⁴ Ayaan Hirsi Ali likewise argued that confrontational politics was necessary: the strategy to compromise and accommodate would only allow orthodox Muslims to cultivate and disseminate their anti-democratic, misogynist and homophobic ideas (e.g. Hirsi Ali, 2004).

These notions reverberated throughout the civil sphere but did not go uncontested. As the debate evolved, a discourse crystallized that I refer to as Civil Islam. The core premise of this discourse is that Islam allows or even demands full participation in society and commitment to the values and norms enshrined in the Dutch constitution (see for a more elaborate definition Appendix 1). This process of discourse development takes place in everyday life (Buitelaar, 2006; Entzinger & Dourleijn, 2008; Van Tilborgh, 2006) but also in discursive milieus composed of associations, meetings, books, websites and friendship networks (Buijs, 2009; Maussen, 2009; Roy, 2004). Chapters 10 and 12 identify some of the discursive milieus located within the associational networks of the Netherlands' two largest cities (Amsterdam and Rotterdam) and show how the proponents of Civil Islam argued that the religion is not the same as ethnic tradition and can be used to critically interrogate and reform traditional practices. While these ideas and notions had been cultivated for many years and in many parts of the world, after 9/11 and the assassination of Theo van Gogh they also found their way into the opinion pages of Dutch broadsheet newspapers. To assess the strength of Civil Islam in this setting and to analyze its civil vocabulary, I first examine the number of articles coded as "Civil Islam" and the actors who produced them. I then provide fragments to illustrate that Civil Islam does not just negate Culturalism but crucially depends upon and interacts with it. I then investigate what accounts for the consolidation of Civil

Islam and why some actors promoting this discourse have relatively high popularity.

Articulation power and base of support

Civil Islam found support especially among anthropologists and representatives of civil society associations (Figure 6.1). The institutional location of the discourse seems similar to Anti-racism but the dynamic is different. Whereas Anti-racism remained stagnant over our period of investigation, the articulation power of Civil Islam was on the rise: from 11 per cent of the articles in the period 1990-1999 to 14 per cent in the period after 9/11 (Table 6.1). These general figures conceal two developments. One is that the Christian Democrats did not sustain their initial support (and partly turned to Culturalism). The other is that increasing numbers of migrants appeared on the opinion pages after 9/11 to promote Civil Islam. Not all migrants supported the discourse but after 9/11 it accounts for almost 28 per cent of the articles by non-Western migrants ($n=39$) and 36 per cent of the articles by authors from the four largest minority groups ($n=22$).

Although there are sociologists and philosophers who promote Civil Islam, the correspondence analysis suggests that anthropologists are the most prominent academic supporters of this discourse (Figure 6.1). Anthropologists such as Thijl Sunier, Wasif Shadid and Peter van der Veer argued that migrants' religious beliefs and practices were changing to meet the demands of their lives in the Netherlands (Shadid, 2002; Sunier, 1997; van der Veer, 2001). They emphasized that because there are numerous interpretations of Islam (see also Van den Brink, 2004), it is problematic to speak of "the Muslim community" or to view Islam as a monolith. There were also many actors who argued as Muslims that their (or the true) interpretation of Islam implies good citizenship. I do not have precise figures on the religious beliefs of authors on the opinion pages but my estimate is that slightly more than half of the articles categorized as Civil Islam were written by Muslims. These intellectuals and representatives certainly did not speak with one voice, but argued and indeed exemplified the idea that Muslims should participate in the debate on their religion. One prominent proponent of this discourse, Tariq Ramadan, was at the time a professor at Freiburg University. Ramadan had become an influential commentator in the international media and Dutch newspapers published his pieces in translation. Right after 9/11, *Trouw* published "An open letter from a Western Muslim":

The starting point has to be an unconditional denunciation of the attacks... The horrible events in the United States force us to engage in wholesome self-criticism and to stop

allocating blame to “the others.” ... Only a minority of Muslims exhibit Muslim citizenship. The large majority of Muslims are in the social and cultural margin and as soon as something happens – first the Rushdie affair, now the attacks – we see the fractures, the distrust and the mental ghetto. Wisdom ... demands that we are present, that we express ourselves, that we explain the Muslim religion with its spirituality, its principles and its demands for justice and peace (Ramadan, 2001).

Ramadan explicitly called upon Muslims to speak out in the civil sphere and to view and present themselves as members of the civil community. In his writings, including those articles in the database, Ramadan argued that Islam requires respect for the constitution and active engagement in political, cultural and social life (*cf.* Ramadan, 2004). He moreover expressed optimism over the growing civil engagement among Muslims:

Progress is necessarily slow but it is real: among the second and third generations there are more and more Muslim women and Muslim men who stand up for both their Muslim convictions and their Western culture. With respect for the constitution they defend citizenship and an open identity, and they promote an American or a European Islamic culture (Ramadan, 2001).

For Ramadan, commitment to Islam entails civil engagement: Muslims have to participate in society and contribute to it. They also have to struggle against injustice, including injustices perpetrated by dictatorships under an Islamic flag: “our ethics of citizenship require us to interpellate our governments, to call upon them to break their ties to dictatorships and to promote pluralism and democratic rights in all countries” (Ramadan, 2001). Ramadan did not have a strong presence on the opinion pages (2 articles) but his views are emblematic of a growing number of Muslims who seek to reconcile religious and civil engagement. Among the other proponents of Civil Islam, we find some actors emphasizing the need to protest against the injustices of Dutch society and some mainly critical of their own communities. The former were mostly affiliated to migrant or religious associations, the latter to government institutions or political parties.

An example of an actor who is especially critical of Dutch society is Mohammed Cheppih, a Muslim preacher who briefly served as the leader of the Dutch branch of the Arab European League. Cheppih, who plays a pivotal role in local networks of Islamic youths, feels that “The Dutch only want to hear that Islam is retarded and evil. Anybody who says that gets

plenty of space. Anybody who goes against it is a fundamentalist and extremist. That is what they think of me” (Cheppih, cited in Olgun, 2003).⁵⁵ The journalist and presenter Samira Abbas is a more moderate critic who appeared on the opinion pages when her book “*The Muslim does not exist*” (Abbas, 2005) was published. In it she presented an overview of Dutch Muslims’ interpretations of Islam, ranging from the liberal to the orthodox. She said she desperately tries to build bridges between Muslims and natives but receives no help from the latter. Paul Scheffer, for instance, refused to write the preface for her book because he felt Abbas should have been more critical of Islam (Abbas, cited in Knols, 2005).

Examples of actors especially critical of their own communities include Ahmed Aboutaleb (Box 6.2) and Hacı Karacaer, both prominent members of the Labor Party.⁵⁶ They had more articulation power than the other actors promoting Civil Islam, producing 7 and 6 articles respectively, of which 3 and 6 respectively were coded as Civil Islam. As the director of Forum, Aboutaleb criticized his fellow-believers for failing to understand their religion: “Muslims in the Netherlands should think better” and acknowledge that “Islam is a flexible religion” that allows and requires its adherents to adjust to circumstances (Aboutaleb, 2002). In the aftermath of the Theo van Gogh assassination he intensified and dramatized this discourse. He told an audience at a mosque that “the Muslim community would be wise to not have its religion hijacked by extremists.” In a remark that could have come straight out of one of Scheffer’s articles, he called upon the Moroccan community to engage in restorative work: “I want to say that the Moroccan community is burdened with the extraordinarily heavy task of cooperating to restore peace and quiet and working on the production of ‘counter poison’ against intolerance” (Aboutaleb, cited in Hajer & Uitermark, 2008, p. 11).

Box 6.2 Ahmed Aboutaleb – building bridges between pragmatists and culturalists

Ahmed Aboutaleb (1961) was born in the village of Beni Sidel on the northern coast of Morocco. He migrated to the Netherlands when he was fourteen. After getting a degree at a polytechnic, he started a career in journalism, working especially for minority media that were, at the time, heavily subsidized by the government. He moved on to become a public relations worker for Hedy d'Ancona when she was Minister of Welfare. As someone who had intimate knowledge of migrant communities but was not immersed in an association or institution promoting a particular (minority) interest, he was perfectly placed to lead Forum. He was hired as director in 1996 when Forum was created out of several interest groups. Unlike its predecessors which were expected to organize and represent groups, the new institute was to perform as an “expertise center for multicultural development.” Aboutaleb believed that such a transformation – from interest representation to expertise – was necessary, and tried to reform or cut off subsidized migrant associations. Under his leadership, the institute opened up channels to Culturalism. In 1998, it requested Jos de Beus, a professor of political science at the University of Amsterdam and prominent member (and critic) of the Labor Party, to write an essay on the “cult of avoidance” (De Beus, 1998). In 2000, the director of the Social and Cultural Planning Agency, Paul Schnabel, was requested to deliver the institute’s annual lecture. His argument that assimilation should be encouraged had strong resonance in the period when the debate revolved around Paul Scheffer’s “multicultural drama” (see Chapter 5). Some time after publishing “The multicultural drama”, Scheffer joined the Forum board.

These examples show the forces under which Aboutaleb developed his civil habitus. The institute and Aboutaleb moved away from representing particular minority interests and increasingly passed on the expectations of civil elites to minority communities. Aboutaleb embodied the idea that migrants have to integrate, uttering it time and time again in columns, lectures, interviews, expert meetings and countless other occasions for ceremonial discourse production. In 2003, Aboutaleb joined the Municipality of Amsterdam as a top-level civil servant. He worked as an advisor to diversity alderman Rob Oudkerk and succeeded him when Oudkerk had to resign after a scandal. Aboutaleb’s disposition to critically address minorities was valued especially in the aftermath of the Theo van Gogh assassination. Aboutaleb was constantly in the media with a dual message: Muslims and Moroccans had to behave as responsible citizens and right-wing politicians should not treat all Muslims as radicals, a stance that earned Aboutaleb praise from both pragmatists and culturalists.

Haci Karacaer was a member of the Labor Party and at the time aspired to be an alderman. He was also the director of Milli Gorus, a transnational Turkish Islamic association that, like the Turkish AK Party, has its origins in Erbakan’s National Salvation Party in Turkey. Karacaer observed that the traditional Turkish nationalist discourse of Erbakan no longer spoke to the younger generation:

Young people say: what does that do for me ... in the Netherlands? So we decided to become part of the mainstream in the Netherlands. ... We could have continued to stay at

the edge and to dangle in the margin of society but we do not want to do that anymore. We want to participate. Our guiding notions now are: integration, participation, emancipation and performance (Karacaer, cited in Janssen, 2003).

For Karacaer this meant that he responded as much as he could to the requests of political parties, government agencies, newspapers, television channels and cultural centers to participate in debates or to provide commentary. Milli Gorus is a conservative association but Haci Karacaer promoted a discourse emphasizing the moral obligation of Muslims to honor and protect liberal democracy. Although he occasionally criticized Dutch politicians, he achieved his central position thanks to his fierce criticisms of Muslims and particularly his own constituents who *have* to integrate:

I organized language courses for my constituents, for the older migrants [*oudkomers*]. There is place for sixty people but so far only twenty or thirty people registered. That was a disappointment. So I told the director of the social services: come to the mosque and say “guys, if you do not take the course, you do not have to try to get money next month.” ... We do not want more people [getting benefits from] social service; we want to develop an Islamic middle class.

Karacaer was criticized from within his own organization, especially for his participation in activities promoting rights for homosexuals (interview Karacaer). His remark that “Islam is not retarded but some Muslims are” angered the conservative segments of his organization, well aware that Karacaer was referring to them (interview Milli Gorus).⁵⁷ But as Karacaer lost support among some of his constituents, he strengthened his association’s position in local governance networks (see Chapter 10; see also Uitermark & Gielen, 2010).

Resonance and consonance

Although many actors promoting Civil Islam criticized Dutch or Western society, the most prominent and influential proponents of this discourse almost exclusively allocated blame to migrants. Karacaer and Aboutaleb were central in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 and remained prominent afterwards. They were not only central; they were popular. In contrast to all other central actors, Karacaer received more praise (12 times) than criticism (9 times). Aboutaleb received slightly more negative than positive references (27 versus 22) but this was only because one actor (the culturalist *Trouw* columnist Sylvain Ephimenco) trashed him.

These scores are exceptional in that they are much more positive than those of central culturalists and incomparably more positive than those of central pragmatists and anti-racists. The praise was due to various reasons⁵⁸ but the most important was that they were Muslims sternly addressing their own community. Pragmatists embraced them as “bridge builders”; culturalists considered them as positive exceptions. Aboutaleb and Karacaer did indeed build bridges, but not necessarily between migrants and natives – they bridged the divide between pragmatists and culturalists.

Subjective experiences: a passion for norms

How do actors promoting Civil Islam 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? Although Ahmed Aboutaleb, Haci Karacaer and other leading Muslims are often portrayed as idiosyncratic individuals, we need to analyze their success in relation to more general transformations of the integration policy field and the civil sphere. While in corporatist institutions minority leaders are expected to represent their communities, the mediatization of integration politics requires that they authentically address the interests and concerns of core groups. “Authentically” is crucial here; migrant politicians are commonly perceived as acrobats who have to maintain a delicate balance between their communities and society at large (Cadat & Fennema, 1996). But in a highly emotive and mediatized civil sphere, strategic considerations are at best ignored and at worst rejected as expressions of hypocrisy. In order to credibly play the role of a civil leader, it is essential to passionately lament ideas or actions repelled by core groups, such as intolerance towards homosexuals or apologetic remarks about crime or radicalism. And this is what Aboutaleb and Karacaer did: they castigated Moroccans and Turks for being backward, passive and oversensitive. They referred to Islamic principles to argue against insolence, intolerance, and for education, political participation and decency.⁵⁹

It is no coincidence that Aboutaleb and Karacaer (and several other local leaders that we encounter in Part III) were members of the Labor party. The Labor party was always slightly to the right of the Socialist left in that it sought to uplift and educate (rather than mobilize and represent) the masses. Aboutaleb and Karacaer embodied the promise of this civilizing mission as they had wrestled themselves from humble backgrounds and risen to prestigious positions. As a cleaner in Schiphol, Karacaer knew he wanted to move up:

I am a social person, so I drink a cup of tea with the Dutch foremen. The Turks there

felt that I was flirting with those Dutch guys. But I have always been a rebel, arrogant. So one day I go to the foremen and ask: what do I have to do to get at your side of the table? “You cannot,” they said. And then I said: “Just wait.” Later I met a Dutch professor when I was organizing a conference and he said: “it’s ridiculous that you do cleaning work.” That was the turning point to quit what I was doing and to re-educate myself to work in ICT (Karacaer, quoted in Ham & Uitermark, 2007, p. 84).⁶⁰

Aboutaleb speaks in the same angry manner of people from his own community who try to keep him back. “The Moroccan community can be like a box full of crabs; when one tries to get out, the others pull it back” (Aboutaleb, quoted in Ham & Uitermark, 2007, p. 91). Both leaders blame members of their ethnic community for not seizing opportunities. Aboutaleb states that “when you talk to Moroccans, you have to address the issue of the victim role (*slachtofferrol*)” (*ibid.*, p. 81). The “victim role” refers to the mentality of blaming others, and especially discrimination. Migrants may indeed encounter discrimination but Karacaer feels that it is “an illusion” to think that “16 million Dutch people will change because of some pitiful Moroccans and Turks” (Karacaer, quoted in Ham & Uitermark, 2007, p. 85). Because – unlike most Labor party notables and members – they are migrants and have lower-class backgrounds, they can more persuasively claim that migrants in the Netherlands can succeed if they want to. Interestingly, both Aboutaleb and Karacaer do not take strong positions against the culturalist right. They may criticize Pim Fortuyn or Geert Wilders but they do not get angry with their supporters. Whereas frustrated migrants can count on fierce criticism when they “play the victim role,” Karacaer and Aboutaleb do not lecture natives about victimhood when they complain about migrants.

Their relaxed attitude towards Islamophobic natives and their relativizing stance towards discrimination and racism are often met with criticism from their own ethnic and religious communities – a diffuse and fragmented opposition of orthodox (*salafi*) Muslims, left-wing migrants, internet warriors, street delinquents and elderly conservatives. Such criticisms, however, do not weaken Karacaer or Aboutaleb’s zeal; they only reinforce their conviction that there is a need to stand up to the uncivil parts of their communities. As long as they receive credit from some migrants and much recognition from core groups, they can speak with a confidence and passion rarely found among pragmatists. Whereas many other Muslims share Karacaer and Aboutaleb’s criticisms of migrant communities, they speak out more explicitly against discrimination and therefore do not receive as much recognition within the civil sphere and also feel more frustrated about the debate on their religion. But

unlike the promoters of Anti-racism, they feel that the lack of recognition is due to ignorance. Their solution is therefore to inform people and engage in dialogue. While these promoters of Civil Islam have yet to gain significant articulation power on the opinion pages, Chapters 10 and 11 show that they have already accrued considerable discursive power in local debates in the large cities.

Conclusion

Only Muslims who were (very) critical of their own (ethnic and religious) community had ample space to promote their discourses. It is remarkable that two Muslims – Karacaer and Aboutaleb – were the exceptions to the rule that central actors receive more criticism than praise. Promoters of Civil Islam who were less critical of minorities did not receive anywhere near as many references as Aboutaleb and Karacaer. But the fact that the promoters of Civil Islam increasingly found their way onto the opinion pages indicates that this discourse had a productive relationship with Culturalism. While the supporters of Civil Islam countered the culturalist charge that Islam is inherently uncivil and accused culturalists of stigmatizing Muslims, their discourse shares with Culturalism the idea that migrants exhibit a disturbing lack of will to integrate and participate in society. Actors promoting Civil Islam voiced strong criticisms of migrants committing crimes, underperforming in school, disrespecting women, neglecting their children and committing other civil vices. In contrast to pragmatists and anti-racists, they often did not hesitate to blame traditional Turkish, Berber or Moroccan culture. And in contrast to Culturalism, Civil Islam suggests that the solution to (what it frames as) scandalous and massive transgressions is to adhere to the Holy Scriptures and the teachings of the prophet Muhammed. Civil Islam in a sense transcended the division between pragmatists and culturalists.

The emergence of these groups and discourses seems to be the outcome of a specific mechanism that could be referred to as the “compulsion of the civil sphere”: pollution creates a demand for reparation and it is those subjects whose identities have been tainted who are best positioned to do the repair. Those Muslims who express themselves on the opinion pages generally declare their commitment to the constitution and the values enshrined in it, such as non-discrimination and freedom of expression. They thereby cleanse the stigma attached to Muslims through statements and performances negating the culturalist premise that Islam and integration are a contradiction in terms. The compulsion of the civil sphere is contradictory in its origins – there is a demand for dignified representatives from stigmatized groups – and ambivalent in its effects: while Muslims are degraded, it is precisely this devaluation that

prompts some actors to intervene in core civil arenas.

Conclusion

What can we conclude from this and the previous chapter about discursive power relations between culturalists and their antagonists? There is no doubt that Culturalism has gained power. The breakthrough came with Bolkestein's intervention in the 1990s. The resurgence and expansion of Culturalism occurred in the new millennium. Paul Scheffer first made Culturalism acceptable to the progressive middle classes. The electoral success of Pim Fortuyn subsequently demonstrated that blunt criticisms of Islam in combination with sensational performances could entice and mobilize previously disenfranchised segments of the population. The turbulent life history of Ayaan Hirsi Ali and her unsettling appearance finally gave Culturalism an icon that cultural elites, too, could support or even adore.

Whereas support for Culturalism was initially restricted to the right-wing Liberals of the VVD, its base of support diversified and expanded after 2000. Culturalists could now mobilize sentiments and enfranchise groups through civil channels that were previously closed or non-existent. One expression of culturalists' growing discursive power was their ability to neutralize opponents: since accusations of racism and discrimination were declared taboo in the early 1990s, culturalists have rarely been associated with the dark side of the civil sphere. While the three alternative integration discourses considered in this chapter provide both radical and moderate critique, their promoters are forced to respond to culturalists and therefore do not have agenda-setting power. Let me consider these three discourses and their relations to Culturalism in turn.

Anti-racists offered a radical alternative to Culturalism. Their discourse portrays racism and discrimination as clear and present dangers to the civil community and its values. Anti-racists suggest that a crucial precondition for a well-functioning civil sphere is undermined when migrants and Muslims are portrayed or treated as second-class citizens. Like their culturalist adversaries, anti-racists have a controversial and outspoken discourse. But unlike their adversaries, anti-racists were on the margins of the civil sphere. Anti-racism found support among civil society associations representing lower-class and stigmatized groups and academics on the margins of the university system; it did not enjoy support from journalists or political parties (the two groups most present on the opinion pages). The only time an anti-racist achieved centrality in the debate was when Abou Jahjah was working on the Dutch branch of his Arabic European League. But he encountered fierce opposition and in

the end his efforts were unsuccessful.

Pragmatists also offered an alternative to Culturalism and had many opportunities to articulate their discourse. Pragmatism found support among actors in policy circles, left-leaning political parties and the most intellectual quality newspaper (*NRC Handelsblad*). Pragmatism remained resilient in the face of the growing power of Culturalism and its challenge to established interests. This would have been inconsistent were there a zero sum relationship between the two discourses. But Culturalism and Pragmatism are in a symbiotic relationship: culturalists break open the debate by violating the civil norms of pragmatists, giving them ample opportunity to rebut. Rather than pushing Pragmatism out of the civil sphere, Culturalism pulled it in. We also saw that many ideas and notions that pragmatists previously never had to defend became highly contentious. For instance, the idea that confrontation and polarization are bad was no longer self-evident; some of the most central pragmatists (such as Job Cohen) provoked strong opposition when they argued for accommodation and dialogue.

But when we observe that pragmatists were unsuccessful in opposing Culturalism, we should keep in mind that this was never their main goal. The problem that occupied pragmatists was migrants not integrating, not the emergence of Culturalism. Culturalism and Pragmatism share two fundamental notions: first, migration undermines civil unity; second, migrants' lack of civil engagement is a problem requiring state and political attention. Although the discourses have different ideas on how civil integration should be achieved, they are not diametrically opposed: culturalists stand up for Reason, pragmatists argue for reasonableness; culturalists want to confront problems, pragmatists want to handle problems; culturalists say that policies have failed, pragmatists that they have not fully succeeded, etc. There was, in Bourdieu's terms, complicity between the antagonists where different parties compete but also cooperate (Bourdieu, 1984a, pp. 113-114). They mark their positions through their opposition and owe a part of their discursive power to the fact that they constantly provoke and invoke one another.

Civil Islam, too, has a tense yet symbiotic relationship with Culturalism. It differs from Culturalism in that it ascribes civil value to a religion that culturalists frame as a threat or problem. Small but growing numbers of Muslims found their way into one of the core arenas of the civil sphere – the opinion pages – and demonstrated, in words and performances, that there is no contradiction between civil and religious engagement. But Civil Islam did not just negate Culturalism; the discourses share an agenda of norm enforcement. Promoters of Civil Islam claimed that it is indeed the moral responsibility of Muslims to act as assertive

citizens (the critical variant) or to obey the social and legal rules set by both the nation and the religion (the liberal variant). Even though it was obvious that many engaged Muslims and Islamic associations were deeply hurt by the suspicions and accusations of culturalists, many share the idea that Muslims should leave behind their traditional culture and insert themselves into the Dutch civil community. As we will see in Part III, this means that culturalist and pragmatist governments increasingly consider them as vital partners in generating civil engagement, preventing radicalization and promoting civil integration.

The general effect of the various developments analyzed in this and the previous chapter – the ascendancy of Culturalism, the marginalization of Anti-racism, the resilience of Pragmatism and the emergence of Civil Islam – is that the signifier “integration” is filled with ambitions and emotions; *this* is what we need to achieve. As Culturalism consolidated, integration came to mean more than just economic, social or even cultural integration. It is now crucially about *civil* integration: there is a strong demand for migrants and especially Muslims to extend and demonstrate their loyalty. For culturalists, this means that Muslims have to renounce or criticize their religion and communities; for pragmatists, it means they have to engage in dialogue and show commitment to the government’s integration agenda. In this sense, discursive conflict is a tool for integration: it brings together (in struggle) actors who pursue a common yet intrinsically volatile objective – civil integration.

These findings suggest that there was no simple shift in the debate on integration. While positions and oppositions in the debate transformed and the debate’s intensity fluctuated, there was no overall development that can be characterized as, say, a transition from “multiculturalism” to “assimilationism.” Such a characterization would reduce to a single movement what was in fact a complex reshuffling of relations among actors as well as discourses. The divisions and exclusions are complex and contested because different discourses suggest different civil hierarchies and courses of action. Nevertheless, it is clear that there is now more pressure on migrants – especially Muslims – to integrate into Dutch society. What culturalists sought to achieve through strict enforcement, pragmatists sought to achieve through “poldering” and paternalism: the civilizing of minority groups.

How have these discursive processes and policies affected the proximate referents of integration discourse? Are minorities marginalized because they fail to meet the norms that civil elites impose on them? Or do such demands generate countervailing power? Since cities are prime sites where civil integration is negotiated, Part III of this thesis examines how the governance of diversity has transformed in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The two largest cities of the Netherlands are where most migrants live; they also function as real-time laboratories

for Pragmatism (Amsterdam), Culturalism (Rotterdam) and Civil Islam (both cities). How do the different discourses play out in these two cities? This is the question that Part III attempts to answer.