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In the Netherlands and in other Western countries one finds a hostile image of Islam. Only recently we saw this image influencing the panicky reactions to the terrorist attacks on the USA by Arab Muslims. With great speed this attack was connected to statements of a general nature on the essence of Islam and of Muslims. Dutch politicians and Islam scholars spoke in public about the age-old frustration of Muslims that was presumed to be the background of this attack. Almost immediately the question of the loyalty of Muslim immigrants to the Dutch state and to Dutch norms and values emerged in public debate. Opinion polls showed quickly how fickle that loyalty is and how methodologically shaky opinion polls are. This was followed by attacks on mosques and Islamic schools. The urgency of a more sophisticated analysis of the relationship between the Netherlands and Islam is self-evident.

This article is an adapted version of Professor Van der Veer's lecture at the occasion of the Dr Hendrik Müller Award, which he received on 8 October 2001 from the Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences for his contribution to the social science study of religion. The Müller Award is the most important prize for social science research in the Netherlands.

The general view is that Islam in the Netherlands is a very recent phenomenon. That is certainly true if one only looks at the Netherlands on the North Sea and at the immigrants from Turkey and Morocco. However, if one takes a historically and geographically more extended perspective, the Dutch state, like other European states such as England and France, can be seen to have been dealing with Muslim subjects already for a long period of time. I am referring to the overseas colonies, Indonesia and Surinam, whose decolonization is as much part of the emergence of a postcolonial world as the new forms of labour migration to Western Europe and to other regions in the world. A nationalist perspective in which the Netherlands on the North Sea forms the frame for the understanding of social cohesion in a multicultural society can never provide an understanding of processes of globalization, the rise of the network-society, or the North-South problematic, which are essential to the problems that the Netherlands is facing. The simple fact that only now does the Dutch government acknowledge that the Netherlands has become an immigration country demonstrates the long-term nationalist denial of global processes. In the English literature on multicultural society is what I state here, expressed in the slogan 'The Empire strikes back'. In the case of England and France this seems more evident, since many immigrants come from former colonies, but in fact this is part of the same historical transition. In short: West European states have colonized peoples and territories overseas and have modernized themselves and their

Repairs at the Abibakr School in Nijmegen following arson.

colonies, a process resulting in a world-system of independent nation-states. In the final stages of this process a reversed migration from the South to the North has emerged in which, in principle, independent nation-states attempt to control the flow of people.

The Netherlands is at present a postcolonial society, an immigration country with a relatively large number of immigrants whose religion is Islam. Not so long ago the Netherlands was a colonial society in which a majority of the population was Muslim. In my view the 'question of Islam' in the colonies can, in a number of aspects, fruitfully be compared with the current problematic of the integration of Muslims in the Netherlands. The present postcolonial government, as did the colonial government, tries to make Muslims into modern citizens, but it is hard to combine this policy with the principle of the separation of church and state.

The colonial state

According to influential, liberal policy makers in the early 20th century, such as Christiaan Snouck Hurgronje, the task of the colonial state is to make Islam into a modern religion. This means secularization, that is to say a separation of church and state and, furthermore, an opposition to militant Islam. It does not mean that the government should interfere with the religious character of Islam. In the liberal view the principle of freedom of religion is to be maintained. Freedom of religion, however, does not imply cultural relativism. It is seen as the task of the colonial government to effect a change in the backwardness of Muslims, but the government should do so slowly and prudently. On the other hand, however, the state has to repress the mixture of religion and politics in Islam, because it obstructs progress.

In short, Indonesians were allowed to be Muslim, but should not organize themselves on the basis of Islam. Education was seen as the instrument for modernizing Muslim society. Muslims had to be educated in Dutch (secularized) culture in order to get past the political and social significance of religious

difference. It is interesting that these policy views were articulated in a period in which the political organization of the metropolis was still largely based on religious difference. In the Indies, however, subjects still had to be educated to become citizens.

We know now that the secularization of the Indies has not been successful. Islamic organizations are crucial in the political constellation of postcolonial Indonesia. As in many societies it is the army that tries to control these organizations and sometimes this is successful for a period, as in Suharto's New Order. These Islamic organizations do not want to connect politics and religion in a medieval fashion, but want to formulate a modern Islam. They do not aim at the establishment of an original *khalifat*, but are inspired by modern ideas about democracy and nationalism. As in Tocqueville's description of Christian organizations as the basis of democratic America, in Indonesia too Islamic organizations can constitute the basis for a democratic nation-state. In Western societies such as the Netherlands and England, religious organization has been foundational in the formation of the nation-state. In contrast to the views of liberal thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Snouck Hurgronje, there is no inherent opposition between religion and democratic freedom. In fact religious mass movements such as the 19th-century anti-slavery movement have played a significant role in the creation of public opinion and a public sphere. The colonial notion that the state has to repress the combination of religion and politics in Islam emerges in fact from the desire to control society without being legitimated by the population. In the liberal view religion has to be transferred from the public domain to the private domain, but the state is not willing to leave the private domain alone. In postcolonial societies such as Indonesia there is a struggle between centralizing state institutions and more localized Islamic organizations to control daily life. Education is the focus of that struggle. In the end the struggle is about conflicting perspectives on civilization and political participation. Such perspectives are not static and cannot be summarized in easy dichotomies. The Indonesian case shows clearly that religious organizations can play an important role in the furthering of political participation of citizens. There is no inherent opposition between Islam and democracy. The concept of democracy, however, is far from simple and has to be understood in a comparative-historical manner. In Indonesia one finds a growing political participation, while in the West one finds a declining participation. Should we now introduce formal, quantifiable criteria to establish whether Indonesia becomes more democratic and the Netherlands less? It is more fruitful to analyse changing power configurations less ideologically and to attempt an interpretation of the effects of growing or declining participation of citizens on regional and global political processes.

Dilemmas of modern states

In my view modern states, colonial and postcolonial, share a number of fundamental objectives. The historical analysis of the colonial period provides some insight into

the dilemmas of modern states. In the first place modern states have to make individuals national citizens. That is to say that educated subjects have to be made loyal to the nation-state. Secondly, the state derives its legitimacy from a process of political participation of citizens. A public sphere in which social movements and voluntary organizations operate is essential to that purpose. Thirdly, the modern state needs to protect the liberty and equality of all citizens. At least this is the enlightened ideal, however much historical reality may differ from it.

The first element then is that of citizenship and loyalty to the nation-state. From the Reformation there has been a problem concerning the political loyalty of religious groups that did not belong to the state church. This problem is for a large part solved in the modern nation-state, in which national identity and not religious identity is the basis of political loyalty. Secularization theories have assumed that this would also imply the privatization of religion, but that is not true. Religion remained significant as a foundation for social and political organization. In the Dutch case of 'pillarization' we find a pacification of religious and ideological oppositions, but also a model for participation in a plural society. The first social science theory of plural society, formulated by Furnivall, is based on Indonesia, and indeed the postcolonial *pancasila* concept has been inspired by Dutch pillarization. The idea is that religious identity is the channel through which one arrives at national identity and the two remain connected. The colonial distrust of political Islam was fed by the idea that this kind of religious mobilization might bring an end to colonial domination. In contemporary Dutch society, Muslim citizens are in more ways than one still connected to their countries of origin. Moreover, their religious identity is (not yet) connected to Dutch national identity. Their connection with Mecca can perhaps be compared to the earlier anti-national loyalty to Rome of Dutch Catholics that was assumed by anti-papist groups – with the difference that religious identity is now buttressed by ethnic identity. The state attempts to use education to integrate Muslims in Dutch society, but one must realize that the possibilities of the state to nationalize citizens have declined. In other words, homogeneity cannot be reached as easily as in the 1950s. Like Indonesia, the Netherlands is a plural society in which individualism and group identities make national identity of only relative importance. This is a process that seems inescapable. It has been analysed as the emergence of the network-society or the post–national state. If networks that are based on group mobilization are indeed becoming more important this would mean a bright future for religions like Islam. The little-centralized Islamic forms of organization with their shifting sites and sources of authority are pre-eminently suited for such a society.

The second important element in the development of modern society is political participation. On the basis of race, sex, and class the modern state has long excluded subjects from the democratic process. Slowly general suffrage has emerged, although an age criteria has been maintained. The most important justification for excluding

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the colonized peoples from the political process can be found in John Stuart Mill's and Snouck Hurgronje's idea that these peoples should be considered as 'children'. This 19th-century liberal notion remained in force until nationalist movements put an end to colonial domination. The Indies were governed through indirect rule. The elite was identified and used as brokers between government and society. The colonial society was prevented from self-organization. This procedure resembles the way in which the postcolonial government tries to find brokers in its dealings with ethnic and religious minorities. As such one can understand the sometimes comical discussion about imams in the Netherlands. The government feels a strong need to speak to Muslims via their leaders. The problem is that these hardly exist, since imams are often poorly educated prayer leaders who have some influence, but one that is not to be over-estimated. Some universities in the Netherlands that have little-attended theological seminaries have proposed that they could give these imams a thorough theological and pastoral education. This is a perfect example of indirect rule, according to which groups do not organize themselves but are represented by leaders created by the government. The latter not only creates leaders, but also forces people to make use of ethnic and religious channels to voice their views vis-à-vis the government. The problem here is that one wants to have people participate in the political process in ways they have not chosen. At present political participation in the Netherlands and in other Western countries has declined considerably and it is not to be expected that newcomers expend much energy in this domain. It is more likely that people will be mobilized around certain issues, such as the environment, traffic and spatial mobility, and education; and that also religious issues will be introduced. When there is a public debate about, for example, headscarves in

schools, people are mobilized around the issue and their religious organizations are happy to step in. In this way, Muslims follow the pattern of involvement of their non-Muslim co-citizens.

The neutral state

The last element is that of freedom and equality as the ideals of the modern nation-state. An important element here is the separation of church and state. Neutrality of the state in matters of religious choice has to be guaranteed as a political principle, although one has to observe that there are vast differences between the USA, the Netherlands, France, Turkey, India, Indonesia and other modern nation-states in the implementation of this principle. The US was the first state in which the separation of church and state was rigorously applied with the paradoxical effect that public religion is of great political importance there. In the Netherlands there is, among others, the Free University (which is Protestant) and the Catholic University of Nijmegen, both of which count few Protestant or Catholic students, but nonetheless have religious foundations and full government financing. An old problem is the definition of freedom and the fact that procedures of freedom can be used to promote un-freedom. Everyone will be convinced of the liberating effects of modern science. The biological theory of evolution is science and creationism is a belief. In the USA religious activists try to introduce creationism in the curriculum of public schools, because they are of the opinion that evolutionism and creationism are equal sets of belief. The polemic between these positions exists already since the famous debate between the scientist Thomas Huxley and the Anglican Bishop Wilberforce in Oxford in 1860. The term 'fundamentalism' originates from the important Scopes trial in the US in 1925 where the bible was pitched, as it were, against Darwin. The problem of the modern state is that good education,

based on scientific knowledge and a particular form of rationality, is essential to its development, and that the government has to be neutral towards religious opinions in society. The introduction of Hindu, Muslim, and Christian curricula is thus only acceptable when they do not conflict with scientific knowledge. For such conflict-ridden debates there are no simple solutions and, again, people can be mobilized around issues, such as creationism.

Network society

Thus far I have emphasized the role of the nation-state, but can the postcolonial state still be called a national state in the present era? In social science debates about globalization it is sometimes argued that the 19th century nation-state is on its way out and is succeeded by global actors, such as the UN and the World Bank. Such a position goes too far in my opinion, but what we do see is a transformation of the national state and the rise of what the sociologist Manuel Castells has called 'the Network Society'. In his argument emphasis is given to the declining capacity of the state to satisfy the demands and requirements of citizens, but he forgets that this capacity has only been available to the welfare states of the West. In most other regions of the world welfare has never existed. The decolonized areas that Clifford Geertz in the 1960s called 'new states in old societies' have never seen an effective battle against poverty and illiteracy. In those areas one finds a general disillusionment with respect to the powers that be, which have promised so much and delivered so little. What seems to connect the entire world, from the US to India, is the notion that the state does not offer the solution for problems but is itself the problem. Migrants try to avoid the state in building transnational networks. This is obviously true for large-scale illegal migration, but it is also true for legal migration. An important indication is the fact that money transfers of

transnational migrants in 1995 were estimated to exceed 70 billion dollars according to the IMF. National governments try to control these transfers, but are not capable of doing so. It is important to see that this kind of large-scale monetary traffic enables transnational entrepreneurship. Integration in a nation-state is not the aim of these entrepreneurs, although they may well be citizens of the states of immigration. They want to be flexible, to be able to respond quickly to changes in political and financial circumstances. They constitute transnational networks with junctions in a number of nation-states.

In cultural and religious aspects these networks are supported by transnational movements, such as the Pentecostals in Christianity, the World Council of Hindus in the case of Hinduism and the many missionary movements in the case of Islam. These movements are crucial in the creation of transnational identities that connect to the universal message of these religions. While most of them are quietist and expect salvation from the ultimate conversion of all the citizens of the world to the universal Truth, there are also extremist and violent movements among them that aim at more direct political goals. Already in the colonial period these movements were feared by the Western governments. Especially the so-called pan-Islamism was closely watched. For instance, Snouck Hurgronje's stay in Mecca was subsidized by the Ministry for the Colonies since it wanted to have information on the Indonesians who were living in Jeddah and Mecca. With the rise of independent states in Africa and Asia the political mobilization of Muslims seemed to be channelled into nationalist movements and focused on the national arena. In that way the danger of pan-Islamism seemed to have disappeared, but if we ever harboured such an illusion, it will have dissipated after the events of 11 September in the US. That this was indeed an illusion should not surprise us since local, regional, and national conflicts constantly have international and transnational effects. Not only nation-states are crucial in military conflicts but also transnational networks of militant groups. This was true for the Comintern and it is also true for the pan-Islamist groups which have been fighting in several conflicts in Bosnia, Egypt, Afghanistan or the Moluccas. After the collapse of the Soviet Union – partly by their own doing – they are constantly confronted with the US and its allies. When one takes into account the role of the US and the West in supporting the repressive regime of Israel, some anti-Western and anti-American feelings might be expected. The terrorist attack has suddenly made us much more aware of the negative effects of postcolonial globalization on the Western world. One can no longer assume that conflicts in the South, in which the North, particularly the US, is involved will be contained there. Moreover, with the rise of the network-society the possibilities of states to guarantee security within territorial borders have declined. Responses to this situation cannot be limited to conventional military and political options, but have to emerge from clear-minded analyses of the transformation of the national state. To transnational challenges one has to give transnational answers. The demonizing of Muslim immigrants who are perceived as symbols of the large-scale upheavals of today's world is the opposite of such an answer. It brings us back to old nationalist reflexes that want to bring back that which has already disappeared: the homogenous nation-state.

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Lifecycle rituals of Muslims in the Netherlands

Nathal Dessing, ISIM Educational Coordinator, defended her Ph.D. dissertation entitled *Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands* at Leiden University on 19 September 2001. In her dissertation, now published by Uitgeverij Peeters, Dessing examines the effects of migration on the lifecycle rituals of Moroccan, Turkish, and Surinamese Muslims in the Netherlands. She explores how Islamic rituals marking birth, circumcision, marriage, and death have responded and accommodated to the Dutch legal and social context. After setting out the relevant Islamic prescriptions, Dessing draws on her fieldwork in Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht to chart how each ritual has evolved through migration, and compares the ritual practice in the Netherlands and the countries of origin. Dessing thereby sheds light on the meaning, experience, and organization of lifecycle rituals in the migration setting.
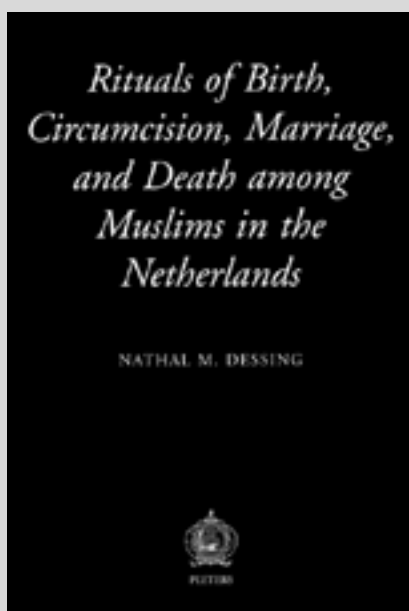
Nathal M. Dessing, Rituals of Birth, Circumcision, Marriage, and Death among Muslims in the Netherlands *(Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters, 2001). ISBN 90-429-1059-3*

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