Multiculturalism and multicultural citizenship : public views on national belonging, equality and cultural distinctiveness in the Netherlands

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Chapter 6
Multicultural citizenship and cultural distinctiveness

6.1 Introduction

Cultural distinctiveness is the third dimension of multicultural citizenship to be examined in this study. As discussed in Chapter 1, a society can be characterized as multicultural when the three dimensions of multicultural citizenship, which also include belonging to the national group and the equality of both native and immigrant citizens, are formally and publicly recognized (Shadid 2009: 5-6). This chapter examines views on cultural distinctiveness prevalent in Dutch society, in an attempt to explore how and whether aspects of this dimension of multicultural citizenship are recognized and actually dealt with in practice.

Since the 1980s, various authors have raised the concern that extending citizenship rights specifically to certain groups, among them women and ethnic and racial minorities, has not produced the sought-after social equality (Leydet 2011; Young 1989). They are convinced that it is necessary to recognize such group differences as gender, culture and religion formally, in order to achieve citizen equality (e.g. Kymlicka 1995; Shadid 2009). If formal recognition has not been granted, it is an uphill battle to achieve equality, as 'the purported neutrality of difference-blind institutions often belies an implicit bias towards the needs, interests and identities of the majority group' (Leydet 2011, see also Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008). Consequently, this sort of recognition implies the justification of differential treatment in society and the acknowledgement of special minority rights. Examples of such policies in the Netherlands include, *inter alia*, the recognition of the right of Muslims to build mosques and the right of women to maternity leave. However, such policies, especially those to do with cultural and

religious distinctions, often referred to by scholars and politicians as multiculturalism, have been, and still are, the subject of fierce debates (Wright & Bloemraad 2012: 78). One of the arguments embraced by opponents of multiculturalism is that the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness can hinder immigrants' integration and impede the development of their loyalty to the nation-state (see also Chapter 4). Furthermore, it is argued that formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness, especially when such distinctiveness has anything to do with religion, is incompatible with the neutrality of the state (e.g. Cliteur 2004).

It goes without saying that the recognition of the cultural distinctiveness of immigrants is not, and has not been, an issue confined to purely scientific discussions, it has also fuelled political debates in the Netherlands and other nation-states with a history of intensive immigration such as the United States, Australia and Canada. As discussed in Chapter 3, the views on cultural distinctiveness taken by subsequent Dutch governments have undergone pronounced changes in the last few decades. Although the socio-cultural emancipation of immigrants was one goal of the integration policies which were developed in the Netherlands in the 1980s, this goal was abandoned in the beginning of the 1990s, and since 2003 cultural differences in society have begun to be considered to be problematic.[1]

Scientific and political debates on citizenship and cultural distinctiveness have addressed various topics, ranging from national belonging, loyalty to the nation-state and immigrant integration to equality, all of which have been examined in previous chapters. In the present chapter, the recognition of cultural distinctiveness in the Netherlands will be explored more directly, by addressing Dutch regulations, debates and views on (immigrants') distinctive cultural practices, norms and values. As has been stressed in previous chapters, the current political debates on cultural distinctiveness are primarily concentrated on the religious practices, norms and values of Muslim immigrants and their descendants (cf. Beck 2013). One very prominent example is the debate on the wearing of the Islamic headscarf. Indeed, with some perspicuity Maliepaard and Phalet (2012: 131) write that, 'Muslims represent the prototypical "other" in today's Dutch society, as in other Western European societies' (see also Ogan, Willnat, Pennington & Bashir 2014). Therefore, the discussion of the regulations, debates and views on this subject in Dutch society here will focus on interpretations of church-state relations and the perceived incompatibility between Dutch norms and values and the norms and values embraced by Muslim immigrants (cf. Gozdecka, Ercan & Kmak 2014: 54; Shadid 2009: 17). The brief discussion of regulations and debates is based on the

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[1] See, for example, Tweede Kamer (2003-2004: 8); see also Chapter 3.

current relevant literature, and the views in Dutch society will be explored by analysing empirical data collected in the quantitative and qualitative questionnaires conducted for this research. To set the scene, first of all scientific debates about the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness will be discussed.

6.2 Perspectives on the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness

Policies of the formal recognition of cultural and religious distinctions, often labelled multiculturalism, have been the subject of some heated exchanges (Wright & Bloemraad 2012: 78). Various strands of arguments can be distinguished in these debates, especially those about whether this formal recognition is compatible with the neutrality of the state. Other arguments have to do with the effects of the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness on various aspects of immigrant integration, including concerns about social cohesion, the possible incompatibility of certain norms and values, immigrants' social and political participation, their sense of national belonging and their loyalty to the nation-state. A concise review of these arguments will be presented in this section.

Some opponents of multiculturalism assert that the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness engenders relatively weak incentives to learn the language of the host country and to develop interethnic contacts. They say that the upshot of the policy is that it leads to the segregation and socio-economic inequality of immigrants (e.g. Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2005, but see Demant 2005). Others state that recognizing cultural pluralism weakens the immigrants' affective commitment to the country, and thereby endangers social cohesion, or the development of a common sense of national belonging (e.g. Miller 1995; Barry 2002; see also Chapter 3). One argument closely related to this is that formal recognition of cultural and religious distinctiveness implies a recognition of the fact that immigrants are then free to maintain multiple loyalties, not just to their ethnic groups but to their countries of origin as well, which can undermine their loyalty to the nation-state (see Chapter 4). In the same vein, it is argued that multiculturalism can lead to an emphasis of differences and even to a reification of cultural groups, which again can result in segregation, conflicts and discrimination (e.g. Barry 2002). Last but by no means least, it is said that multiculturalism can lead to the preservation of certain immigrants' norms and values which encourage the unequal treatment of women (e.g. Chesler 2010).

The great weakness in the arguments of these opponents is that they are often quick to criticize policies which they label 'multicultural', without bothering to explain how they define multiculturalism and why they label these policies as such (Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 7). Some opponents have criticized policies which

they label 'multicultural', even though these policies clearly did not fit the qualification (Duyvendak & Scholten 2012). Referring to this, Duyvendak and Scholten (2011: 338) argue that some politicians and scholars in the Netherlands use the label 'multicultural' pejoratively: to 'disqualify certain [integration] policies that allegedly have been a failure'. This conclusion agrees with Kymlicka's statement that in many debates the criticism is not directed at the reality of multicultural policies, but at a caricaturish model of multiculturalism. Kymlicka calls this model 'the celebratory model of multiculturalism', as it describes multiculturalism as a policy which takes 'familiar cultural markers of ethnic groups – clothing, cuisine, and music – and treats them as authentic practices to be preserved by their members and safely consumed by others' (2012: 4; see for similar criticism also Pakulski & Markowski 2014: 6). Kymlicka has presented in a nutshell the various ways in which this caricaturish model has been used as a straw man to criticize multiculturalism. First of all, he states that this model ignores the issue of the economic and political inequality of immigrants in society, because these issues 'cannot be solved simply by celebrating cultural differences'. Secondly, the celebration of cultural differences runs the very real risk of ignoring the inevitable fact that certain customs, such as forced marriage, conflict with laws, norms and values in society. More generally, this celebration risks trivializing cultural differences: 'Ignoring the real challenges that differences in cultural and religious values can raise'. Thirdly, this model of multiculturalism can lead to a reification of cultural groups, and this would ignore the processes of cultural adaptation, 'thereby potentially reinforcing perceptions of minorities as eternally "other"'. Once this category has become established it 'can lead to the strengthening of prejudice and stereotyping, and more generally to the polarization of ethnic relations'. Finally, Kymlicka states that this model can 'end up reinforcing power inequalities and cultural restrictions *within* minority groups', as:

> the state generally consults the traditional elites within the group – typically older males – while ignoring the way these traditional practices (and traditional elites) are often challenged by internal reformers, who have difference views about how, say, a "good Muslim" should act (Kymlicka 2012: 4-5).

This caricaturish model bears some similarities to what is called *illiberal* multiculturalism, a concept which implies the *preservation* of cultural identities, a goal which appears unrealistic given the dynamic character of social identities (Appiah 1997; see also Chapter 3).

　　This having been said, most multicultural policies can be characterized as *liberal*, implying the *recognition* of cultural distinctiveness, which does not preclude

cultural change (Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 11-12; 134). Several scholars have remarked that the central aspects or dimensions of liberal multiculturalism include the recognition of national belonging, cultural distinctiveness *and* the principle non-discrimination, the latter principle embracing both the equality of ethnic minorities and equality on other grounds such as gender and sexual orientation (e.g. Shadid 2009; Vermeulen & Slijper 2003; see also Chapter 1).

It is this combination of valuing of equality and the recognition of cultural difference at which the most criticism is levelled and which is described as seemingly ambivalent or paradoxical (e.g. Joppke 1996, see also Prins 2000). This designation is unfair, however, as the combination is only ambivalent when it is assumed that achieving equality always requires ignoring difference. The latter is not the case, as a simple example such as the right to maternity leave for women shows (see also Chapter 5). More generally, the multiculturalists' view is that the recognition of (certain) differences is a necessary precondition for equality, because, as already said in the introduction of this chapter, 'the purported neutrality of difference-blind institutions often belies an implicit bias towards the needs, interests and identities of the majority group' (Leydet 2011, see also Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008).

Furthermore, in most multicultural policies recognition of cultural distinctiveness is mainly symbolic, inserted to strengthen the sense of national belonging of ethnic minorities and to facilitate their integration (Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 134; see also WRR 1979 and Chapters 3 and 5). Giving his view on the matter, Kymlicka (2012: 5-10) argues that liberal multicultural policies do much more than celebrate cultural difference. Instead, these policies have always combined cultural recognition with addressing social issues, economic redistribution and political participation. This certainly was the case Netherlands in the 1980s, as the discussion in Chapter 5 in the present study illustrates. Cogently, liberal multicultural policies have not ignored universal human rights either by neglecting customs which violate human rights or by overlooking the real challenges posed by cultural and religious difference. On the contrary, Kymlicka says that: 'multiculturalism is itself a human-rights-based movement', and a fundamental characteristic of multiculturalism is that it is founded on principles of non-discrimination. This same development in the Netherlands is also illustrated in Chapter 5, and will be elaborated on in the present chapter. Kymlicka pursues his argument and states that the focus on universal human rights shows that (liberal) multiculturalism does not reify cultural groups or deny cultural change. Instead, Kymlicka argues that:

multiculturalism-as-citizenization is a deeply (and intentionally) transformative project, both for minorities and majorities. It requires both dominant and historically subordinated groups to engage in new practices, to enter new relationships, and to embrace new concepts and discourses – all of which profoundly transform people's identities. […] It has created political space for ethnocultural groups to contest inherited hierarchies. But it also requires groups to advance their claims in a very specific language — namely, the language of human rights, civil-rights liberalism, and democratic constitutionalism (Kymlicka 2012: 9).

Indeed, proponents of a liberal conception of multiculturalism argue that it is important to emphasize a civic conception of national belonging, that is, the view that membership of a nation is first and foremost juridical and political, requiring a citizen's respect for institutions and laws (including treating women and men equally), and a sense of national belonging (e.g. Shadid 2009). It is argued that only by granting minority rights through multicultural policies, will these 'bonds of civic solidarity' be strengthened (Kymlicka 2001: 36; Kymlicka 1995). In short, those who favour this policy are asserting that an ethnic conception of national belonging – membership of a nation defined by specific ethnic or cultural criteria – should be rejected (cf. Habermas 1998; see also Chapter 3).[2]

Many debates concentrating on the relationship between multiculturalism and the problem of immigrant integration, social cohesion, the strength of national belonging and loyalty to the nation-state are theoretical and hypothetical (Bloemraad, Korteweg & Yurdakul 2008: 160; see also Chapter 4). So far there seems to be no strong empirical evidence for the hypothesis that multicultural policies hinder the process of social and political inclusion and political engagement of immigrants. By and large it has to be said that any empirical evidence of the effects of such policies is actually pretty thin on the ground (Wright & Bloemraad 2012: 79; see also Kymlicka 2012: 10-14). This is not surprising as the processes of immigrant integration are exposed to a wide range of factors, government policies being just one element among many. This situation

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[2] Moreover, as discussed in Chapter 4, loyalty to the country is not the only nor necessarily the strongest motivation for citizens to take their country's side. After all, individuals can be strongly motivated to take the side of their country because of a commitment to protect their family, friends or certain principles, and not so much out of undiluted loyalty to their country. There is no empirical evidence to support the hypothesis that citizens' loyalty to their country is a better guarantee for furthering or protecting its interests than the other commitments of these citizens. Authors who argue that loyalty to a country is essential to protect its interests are either speculating or they are confusing matters by conflating the structure with the strength of political commitments (Keller 2009: 13-15).

complicates empirical comparisons between the effects of policies which are multicultural and policies which are not (see also Chapter 5). Certainly there are some authors who assume that government policies exert heavy pressure on immigrant integration (e.g. Koopmans, Statham, Giugni & Passy 2010), but they have plenty of opponents who dispute this view (e.g. Demant 2005). Moreover, as mentioned above, views on what exactly constitutes a 'multicultural policy' differ, which complicates the interpretation of empirical studies (Duyvendak, Van Reekum, El-Hajjari & Bertossi 2013). Nevertheless, in view of the need for social recognition, research does indicate that the recognition of cultural distinctiveness is important (see Chapter 3). Such an acknowledgement can strengthen the sense of national belonging and prevent identity conflicts (cf. WRR 1979). In contrast, a policy of assimilation, defined as the opposite of the recognition of cultural distinctiveness, can lead to polarization of ethnic differences (Vermeulen & Slijper 2003: 139).[3]

Some opponents of multiculturalism do not restrict their remarks to the possible effects of such policies on aspects of immigrant integration, they go on to say that the recognition of cultural and religious distinctions is incompatible with the neutrality of the state (e.g. Cliteur 2004). But what is the 'neutrality of the state'? There are many interpretations of and frameworks constructed for state neutrality in religious affairs. This is no surprise considering the various historically developed church-state relations in such countries as the Netherlands and France.[4] In Europe, church-state relations are certainly not monolithic and a number of variations can be distinguished (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 1995: 20-22). In Denmark and the United Kingdom, there is an official state religion and laws have been implemented to guarantee the equal treatment of other religious confessions. In several other countries, among them Belgium and Germany, religious communities are recognized by the state, which implies that religious communities have certain privileges. In France and the Netherlands, there is a separation between church and state.[5] In both countries the goal of this separation is state neutrality, but this is interpreted and implemented differently.

The French system of *laïcité* is an example of exclusive neutrality (Van der Burg 2009; 2011). It means that the state does not support any group on the basis of culture, religion or belief and therefore, theoretically at least, the public sphere

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[3] A more extensive discussion of criticism of multiculturalism can be found in Vermeulen & Slijper (2003).

[4] State neutrality is related to, but not synonymous with, the separation between church and state. An example of state neutrality in matters which are not religious is the recognition by the Dutch state of conscientious objections to compulsory military service (Van der Burg 2009).

[5] A more extensive typology can be found in Shadid & Van Koningsveld (1995).

should be free of religious expressions. The Dutch interpretation of church-state relations reflects a system of inclusive neutrality.[6] State neutrality in this system implies that anyone is allowed to express his or her religious identity in the public sphere, and any person enjoys equal entitlement to state support for religious and cultural activities. In short, this system implies formal recognition of cultural and religious distinctiveness, that is, multiculturalism.

What therefore does the Dutch system of state neutrality mean and what do Dutch political debates about multiculturalism imply? These matters will be discussed in more detail below.

6.3   Cultural distinctiveness in the Netherlands: regulations, policies and debates

In the course of the past few decades debates on immigrant integration in the Netherlands have become highly politicized. One section of these political debates has concentrated on cultural and religious practices, highlighting the norms and values of immigrants and their descendants, particularly those of Muslims. This section consists of a concise review of the main arguments in the Dutch political debates about the formal recognition and accommodation of cultural and religious distinctiveness of Muslim immigrants and their descendants. First of all, some light will have to be shed on the legal context in which these debates have taken place.

6.3.1   Legal context

In the Netherlands, the observance of religious practices and expressions of religious convictions are protected by law. Article 6 of the Dutch Constitution on protecting the freedom of religion and belief stipulates that, 'Everyone shall have the right to profess freely his religion or belief, either individually or in community with others, without prejudice to his responsibility under the law'.[7] Quite apart from this specific article on religion, the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination are established in Article 1 of the Constitution. In 1994, the principles laid down in this article were elaborated in the Equal Treatment Act (ETA), which explicitly prohibits both direct and indirect forms of discrimination (see Chapter 5).[8] Nor does it stop here. A clear example of the Dutch system of

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[6] Van der Burg goes further and distinguishes two sub-types of inclusive neutrality: proportional and compensatory neutrality. For a discussion see Van der Burg (2009; 2011).

[7] See "Nederlandse Grondwet" (in Dutch), accessed December 12, 2012, http://www.denederlandsegrondwet.nl.

[8] For a discussion of rulings of the Equal Treatment Commission regarding (perceived) discrimination of Muslims, see Rodrigues (2008).

inclusive neutrality (see Section 6.2) can be found in Article 23 of the Constitution which guarantees the freedom of education and guarantees denominational schools the same funding conditions, rights and duties as public secular schools. Quite apart from these domestic regulations, international treaties guaranteeing fundamental rights such as the European Convention on Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms also apply in the Netherlands and even take precedence over national laws and regulation (as is outlined in Article 94 of the Constitution).

The debates on whether or not a religious manifestation can be prohibited are held, indeed must be contained, within this legal context, and centre on two central questions: (1) whether the practice or manifestation concerned can be considered the result of an 'accepted' religious prescription and, if yes, (2) whether it is desirable indeed possible to infringe on the freedom of religion and belief by specifically prohibiting it (cf. Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2005: 49; Saharso 2003: 13).

Over the years, those customs of Muslim immigrants which can be considered to emanate from religious prescriptions, have been hotly debated. Among the controversial points which elicit a flood of discussions are religious symbols and dress, notably the Islamic headscarf, the refusal of some Muslims to shake hands with persons of the opposite gender, ritual slaughter and the observance of religious holidays (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 1995; 2008). On the material level, the right to build mosques and houses of prayer is also an aspect of religious freedom (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 1995: 32) and the right to found Muslim schools falls under the aegis of Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution which guarantees freedom of education. At this point, it is important to note that a certain manifestation or practice considered to be obedience to religious obligations and prescriptions is not necessarily shared by all adherents of the religion concerned or agreed upon by all denominations in that religion. After all, religion and culture are contingent on interpretation, and therefore diverse and dynamic. Examples are Islamic dressing rules for women. The term *hijab*, usually used to describe a headscarf which covers the head but not the face, also refers to an Islamic principle which prescribes dressing modestly. This principle applies in public places, more specifically to situations in which members of the opposite sex are present who are not close family. Shadid and Van Koningsveld (2005) distinguish three different views on this principle among Muslim scholars. The majority advocate the full covering of the female body, with the exception of the face and hands. A smaller group of scholars believes that modesty also requires women to cover their hands and faces, except the eyes. A third group of scholars say that Islamic prescriptions on modest dress do not apply 'in the current era' (2005: 35). In practice, the majority of

Muslim women does not wear a headscarf or face-covering veil in daily life, except during prayer or when visiting mosques (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2005: 38).

Once it is established that a certain practice or manifestation is the result of a religious prescription, logically the next question is whether it is desirable or legally possible to infringe the right of freedom of religion. Legally, it is possible to infringe the right of freedom of religion in exceptional cases, primarily when it is essential to protect the freedoms of others and in the interests of public safety. This infringement is made quite clear in Paragraph 2 of Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR), which guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This paragraph reads: 'Freedom to manifest one's religion or beliefs shall be subject only to such limitations as are prescribed by law and are necessary in a democratic society in the interests of public safety, for the protection of public order, health or morals, or for the protection of the rights and freedoms of others.' In other words, it is possible that (fundamental) rights, such as the freedom of religion and freedom of expression, might collide. As neither ECHR nor the Dutch Constitution prioritizes one fundamental right over the other, when fundamental rights do collide and the parties concerned demand a solution, a judge is obliged to take the specific context and interests into account.

Obvious examples of how freedom of religion can be limited in this legal context concern face-covering veils which are worn as religious expressions, such as the Islamic *niqab* (often confused with the *burqa*). In 2003 the Equal Treatment Commission (ETC – see Chapter 5)[9] ruled in a specific case that wearing face-covering veils at school could be prohibited by the school because it can hinder communication between students and between teachers and students.[10] However, another ruling in a case in 2000 shows that ETC does not assume that wearing a face-covering veil is always a hindrance to communication.[11] The school has to present plausible arguments that communication is indeed hindered before ETC can reach a decision about whether or not a school can prohibit the wearing of face covering veils (also see Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2005: 53). However, in other instances ETC has argued that face-covering veils can also be prohibited in schools in the interest of public safety, as these veils hinder identification which makes it difficult to prevent unauthorized persons from entering school buildings (CGB 2003).

Different problems have arisen when some public schools have argued that, in order not to impinge on state neutrality, their employees should be prohibited from expressing their religion in their appearance or dress. An example is a case in

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[9] ETC was incorporated into the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR) in 2012.
[10] ETC ruling 2003-40.
[11] ETC ruling 2000-63.

1999 in which ETC considered the argument put forward by a public school that, to uphold the neutrality of the school, a trainee teacher should be prohibited from wearing an Islamic headscarf. On this occasion, ETC decided that this ban was in conflict with the principles of non-discrimination. ETC expatiated on its decision, saying that because the trainee teacher 'professes a certain religion and expresses this by wearing a headscarf does not preclude that she has an open attitude and is capable to teach in accordance with the character of the school, being a public educational institution' (see also Saharso & Lettinga 2008: 459).[12]

That said, inevitably interpretations of state neutrality differ (as discussed in Section 6.2), and some interpretations do entail infringements on the freedom of religion in certain institutional contexts, for example, the police force. In political and public debates other arguments on such infringements have also been discussed. Among these is the one asserting that certain religious expressions adhered to by immigrants should be prohibited in order to encourage their integration. The time has now come to give a brief review of these arguments.

6.3.2 Policies and debates concerning cultural distinctiveness

Several phases can be distinguished which are closely related to the course of immigrant integration policies discussed in Chapter 5, in political debates on the cultural and religious distinctiveness of Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands. These include the phases of *laissez-faire* prior to the 1980s, *recognition* in the 1980s, *laissez-faire* once again in the 1990s, *cultural adaptation* from 2000 until 2011, and the most recent phase of *political populism* which commenced in 2011 and is still current. The overriding characteristic of this last phase is the struggle of both the populist right and ultra-orthodox Christian politicians to limit the freedom of religion of Muslim citizens (cf. Lettinga & Saharso 2012; Saharso & Lettinga 2008; Shadid 2006; Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008; Breemer & Maussen 2012).[13]

As mentioned in Chapter 5, prior to the 1980s the Dutch government had taken no steps, however tentative, to develop any structural policies which would have encouraged immigrant integration. It would have amounted to wasted effort, it was felt, as the presence of the labour migrants who had been coming to the Netherlands since the 1950s was considered temporary (Penninx 2005). Hence in this phase a *laissez-faire* approach prevailed, and little attention was paid to the cultural and religious distinctiveness of immigrants. If immigrants retained

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[12] ETC ruling 1999-18.
[13] Chapters 3, 4 and 5 also contain reviews of the development of political debates and government policies. While some overlap is unavoidable, this section will focus on the issue of the recognition of cultural distinctiveness of immigrant groups.

elements of their cultural identities, such a preservation was mainly seen with approbation as facilitating their return to their countries of origin (WRR 1979). Most scientific and policy debates about immigrants centred on such socio-economic issues as their housing and the advantages and disadvantages of certain forms of labour migration (Shadid 2006).

Once the government had woke up to the fact that most labour migrants intended to settle in the Netherlands permanently, in the 1980s it realized that steps to control their settlement were inevitable and structural integration policies, discussed in more detail in Chapter 5, were devised. The importance of these new policies was stressed in a report called *Ethnic Minorities*, published by the Scientific Council for Government Policy in 1979 (WRR 1979). Following the recommendations in this report, the new integration policies were devised with a view towards the goal of immigrants achieving equality and their participation in society (Penninx 2005). In later criticism of Dutch integration policies, it has been asserted that the policies of the 1980s mostly emphasized the necessity to preserve the cultural identities of immigrants (Duyvendak & Scholten 2011). At this point, it must be unequivocally stressed that this crticism is not correct (Duyvendak & Scholten 2012; Vink 2007). In fact, the WRR report of 1979 explicitly states that the preservation of cultural identities should not be a goal of integration policies, as such encouragement could lead to the 'cultural isolation of ethnic groups', which in the long run could hinder the participation of immigrants in society. Nevertheless, in its report WRR did recommend that it was important to *recognize the cultural distinctiveness* of immigrants. It was thought that this goal could be reached by extending the existing guarantees safeguarding cultural diversity (such as the constitutional right of freedom of religion) to (new) cultural and religious immigrant groups, not only legally but also in practice (1979: XIX; XX-XXII). The expected goal of government policies should be the socio-cultural emancipation of immigrants which, in turn, was seen as a precondition for the improvement of their socio-economic position and hence could prevent putative future identity conflicts (see also Chapter 3). Such recommendations imply a plea for multicultural government policies. However, several studies indicate that the resultant integration policies were mainly affected by the institutional legacy of Dutch pillarization,[14] for example, by extending existing rights to build prayer houses and establish denominational schools to all religious groups. The ideology

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[14] Pillarization refers to the development in the Netherlands, between the 1900s and the 1970s, in which religious and secular groups established their own separate institutions with the (financial) support of the government. Among them were political parties, (denominational) schools and labour unions (Maussen 2012).

of multiculturalism seems to have been very much an also-ran (Duyvendak & Scholten 2011; 2012).

In this context, various legal, political and general public debates started about the formal and public recognition of the cultural practices and expressions of religious convictions by Muslim and Hindu immigrants and their descendants. These debates have led, *inter alia*, to the inclusion of provisions in collective labour agreements of civil servants and in some collective labour agreements in the private sector to do with the observance of religious holidays. These accords gave Muslim civil servants the right to ask and receive permission for paid leave to observe the two generally recognized Islamic holidays – *Id al-Fitr* and *Id al-Adha*, but only when their duties would permit such leave. Several collective labour agreements in the private sector, enshrined the same conditions which likewise allowed Muslim employees to be entitled to paid leave for one, two or three day(s). Such provisions are similar to more general provisions which allow Dutch employees to be granted permission for paid or unpaid leave on religious holidays (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 162-164). In the same period, proponents of the recognition of cultural identities were arguing that mosques could be built in an 'ethnic architecture to express diversity' (Breemer & Maussen 2012: 292).[15] In a similar vein it was also said that Muslim schools could contribute to the integration and emancipation of Muslim groups (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2006: 84).

Opponents attacked this focus on socio-cultural emancipation, claiming that it could hinder integration (also see Chapter 5). They were convinced that Muslim schools would reduce the social contact of Muslim children with non-Muslim children, and that lack of experience with ethnically mixed groups would hinder the educational careers of these Muslim students (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2006: 84; see also Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 247-258).

The focus, in integration policies, on socio-cultural emancipation of immigrants came increasingly under attack during the 1990s. As mentioned in Chapters 3 and 5, in a new report WRR recommended that the focus in these policies should shift more to the improvement of the immigrants' position in the fields of education and the labour market, and that socio-cultural emancipation was the responsibility of the immigrant groups themselves – implying a governmental attitude of *laissez-faire* towards the cultural distinctiveness of immigrants (WRR 1989: 19-24). Following these new WRR recommendations, the government changed its integration policies and in 1994 presented these

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[15] Many discussions concerning mosques in this period had to do with such practical issues as the need for housing, the lack of parking space for mosque-goers , etcetera (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 58-61).

changes in a new policy document, the *Contourennota* (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken 1994; see also Chapter 5).

In the following years, various reports about the quality of education in Muslim schools were published. In 1999, the Inspectorate of Education concluded that Muslim schools had not managed to realize their central goal of raising the performance of their students to match the average level of Dutch students.[16] Nevertheless, the Inspectorate also concluded that the performance of students in Muslim schools was no lower than that of students in schools with a comparable number of students of non-Dutch origin.[17] The disappointing performance of their students was attributed to the handicaps with which they entered primary school (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 253-258).

Around the year 2000, political debates entered a new phase in which the *cultural adaptation* of immigrants emerged as a central issue. As discussed in Chapters 3 and 5, several authors claimed that government integration policies had failed. They stated that social cohesion was being threatened because these policies had focused too much on immigrants' socio-cultural emancipation and too little on the importance of protecting Dutch norms and values. [18] These authors hammered on the point that certain norms and values embraced by immigrants and their descendants, especially those of Muslims, are incompatible with Dutch norms and values. The politician Pim Fortuyn combined these ideas into one political discourse, of which important parts were copied by other political parties (Penninx 2005; see also Hoving 2011).

With this change in climate, the political debates on the functioning of mosques and Muslim schools shifted. The debates on mosques became increasingly concerned with ideas about how mosques should play a role in a development towards a more 'modern' Islam which would be compatible with Dutch norms and values (Breemer & Maussen 2012: 292).[19] The focus on Muslim schools altered to deterring the possible influence of 'political Islam' and the consequences of this infiltration for the integration of children attending these schools (for an extensive discussion see Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 258-266). In reports in 2002 and 2003 the Inspectorate of Education concluded that the education in Muslim schools was not in contradiction of the 'basic values of a democratic legal state',

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[16] Onderwijsinspectie (1999).

[17] Schools with a relatively high proportion of pupils of non-Dutch origin are often referred to as 'black schools' in the Netherlands. See Vedder (2006).

[18] Among these authors were Scheffer, Bolkestein and Fortuyn. See Chapter 3, Section 3.3.

[19] As of 2012, there are around 450 mosques in the Netherlands (FORUM 2012).

and moreover that it encouraged the integration of the students.[20] So far so good, the fly in the ointment was that the teaching quality of the religious education in Muslim schools was found to be lacking.[21] On the basis of these reports, in April 2004 the government presented a policy document, in which it stated that there was no need to stand in the way of the establishment of Muslim schools as the contribution of these schools to the problem of segregation was negligible and that the establishment of Muslim schools was in accordance with the constitutional freedom of education. The government also announced that a new teaching method was being developed to improve religious education.[22] The goal of this method, published in 2007, is to help Muslim children gain the required knowledge to be able to develop the attitudes and behaviour necessary to be able to function as a citizen in Dutch society.[23]

The individual religious expressions of Muslim immigrants and their descendants were also more frequently debated in Dutch Parliament. Among the topics broached were religious symbols and dress (notably the Islamic headscarf), the refusal of some Muslims to shake hands with persons of the opposite gender, and ritual slaughter.[24] The religious dress of public officials was a regular topic of debate between 2004 and 2006. A majority of Parliament members agreed that the neutrality of the state did not warrant the prohibition of wearing an Islamic headscarf by employees (and pupils) in public educational institutions (see also Section 6.3.1). Despite this liberal attitude, some members of Parliament still

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[20] Onderwijsinspectie (2002; 2003). In these reports, the Inspectorate also concluded that the performance of students in Muslim schools did not differ from that of students in schools with a comparable number of students of non-Dutch origin (in line with the results of the study published in 1999).

[21] Moreover, the Inspectorate of Education noted that only 0.5% of all primary school students attended Muslim primary schools, and that whether 'the contribution of Islamic schools to the integration [of their students] is negative or positive, 96% of the students of non-Dutch origin in the Netherlands attend other schools' (Onderwijsinspectie 2003, cited in Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 264).

[22] The functioning of the boards of the Muslim schools was also discussed in this policy document. Since then, the centre of attention in the political and public debate has shifted to the (administrative) problems in specific Muslim schools (Shadid & Van Koningsveld 2008: 265). Recent examples are the closure of the Islamitisch College Amsterdam in 2010 because of the poor quality of the education, and the exam fraud by students of the Ibn Ghaldoun school in Rotterdam, both schools offering secondary education.

[23] ISBO & SLO (2007).

[24] There are also discussions of cases which involve only one or a few incidents but do not seem to be exemplary of a larger group. One of these cases involves the Dutch lawyer Mohammed Enait who, in 2008, refused to rise when the judges entered the courtroom. Enait said he did not rise before the judges because of his faith – Islam – which taught him that everyone is equal. See: NRC Handelsblad (December 11, 2009), *Advocaat hoeft niet te staan voor rechters*.

argued that the principle of public neutrality necessitates that public officials in certain functions, for instance, police officers and court personnel, should not openly display their religious affiliation (Lettinga & Saharso 2012: 324). In the wake of these debates, in 2007 the Parliament decided that openly displaying religious affiliation should be prohibited in the police force.[25]

In 2005 the time was ripe for the member of Parliament Wilders, who would later found the PVV (right-wing populist Party for Freedom), to propose that *burqas* should be banned from public spaces.[26] Wilders waged a fierce opposition declaring that wearing a *burqa* is incompatible with Dutch norms and values, the norm of gender equality being that most sinned against. His motion was accepted by Parliament, not because of conflicting norms and values but because such an infringement on the freedom of religion was deemed necessary in the interests of public safety (Lettinga & Saharso 2012). Not unsurprisingly, the right wing and left wing political parties approached the *burqa* in clearly different ways. Whereas Wilders and the VVD (the right-wing liberal People's Party for Freedom and Democracy) framed the *burqa* as a symbol of the oppression of Muslim women and argued that a ban would be in the interests of gender equality, left wing parties shrugged this off and stated that not a ban on religious dress but emancipation is the key to gender equality (Lettinga & Saharso 2012).[27]

Although it cannot be denied that a majority of parliamentarians interpreted most issues of religious symbols and dress in the context of church-state relations and the ideal of the freedom of religion, the perception of conflicting norms and values also indubitably played an important role in debates on Muslims who refuse, on religious grounds, to shake hands with persons of the opposite gender. Matters rose to a head in the political discussion in 2006. The discussion was sparked by a ruling handed down by the Equal Treatment Commission (ETC)[28] on the case of a Muslim female teacher who was suspended from her job for such a refusal.[29] The ETC ruling stated that the demand of the school that employees have to be willing to shake hands when greeting others, irrespective of their gender, results in (indirect) discrimination on the grounds of religion.[30] The Minister of Alien Affairs and Integration at the time, Verdonk, criticized this ruling in the media and even

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[25] Tweede Kamer (2007-2008).

[26] Tweede Kamer (2005-2006).

[27] In 2012, the government proposed to introduce a ban on face coverings, including the *burqa*. However, as of January 2014, the Parliament has not yet voted on this motion.

[28] ETC was incorporated into the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights (NIHR) in 2012.

[29] Only very few such cases have so far come before the ETC: no more than 20 cases between 1998 and the end of 2013. Around half of these cases have led to a ruling (discrimination or not). See "Oordelen", accessed February 27, 2014, http://www.mensenrechten.nl.

[30] ETC Ruling 2006-221.

declared that ETC should be abolished. PvdA (Labour Party), D66 (liberal Democrats 66) and Green Left (all left-wing opposition parties), on this occasion joined by the right-wing government party CDA (Christian Democratic Appeal), immediately stated that in their opinion abolition of ETC was just not on the cards, although they added that they did not agree with this particular ETC ruling.[31] Similar cases in later years have also elicited disapproving reactions from politicians.[32] Some, including parliamentarians of the PVV, have taken the line that the refusal of some Muslims to shake hands with persons of the opposite gender is a denial of gender equality.[33] This, however, is based on a misunderstanding. The refusal to shake hands is not directed specifically against either women or men for that matter: this norm implies that men should not shake hands with women, *and* vice-versa. Therefore, this norm does not transgress gender equality. Instead, the refusal of these Muslims is meant as an expression of respect (Beck & Wiegers 2008). Other politicians, prominent among them the mayor of Amsterdam, a prominent member of the PvdA, have argued that shaking hands is an important and generally accepted Dutch cultural norm, and that public officials have to abide by that norm.[34] This view is a clear example of an ethnic and exclusive conception of national belonging (see Chapter 3). So far no legislation has been proposed in Parliament to enforce this cultural norm.[35]

These changes in the political debate since 2000 appear to have been mirrored by similar changes in the public debate. In an investigation of the public debate about the Islamic headscarf between 1999 and 2007, Saharso and Lettinga (2008: 469) concluded that, while the headscarf was initially mainly discussed in the context of church-state relations, in 2005 the public debate had taken a different tack and subsequently the headscarf has been discussed mainly in terms of conflicting norms and values and the emancipation of women. Opponents of the Islamic headscarf constantly denounce it as a symbol of the unequal treatment of women, an idea which is often accompanied by the assumption that Muslim women do not have a free choice in whether or not to wear the headdress (see also Chesler 2010: 31). It has also been argued that the Islamic headscarf and *burqa* are undesirable deviations from, or even threats to, Dutch norms and values. Adopting a different stance, others have argued that a prohibition of the Islamic headscarf would imply discrimination on the grounds of religion and impede the participation of Islamic women in society (Saharso & Lettinga 2008: 468-469).

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[31] NRC Handelsblad (November 9, 2006), *Verdonk wil commissie kwijt na uitspraak.*
[32] See, for example, Tillie (2011).
[33] Tillie (2011).
[34] Tillie (2011).
[35] But see Verhaar (2011).

Although the religious practices, norms and values of Muslim immigrants and their descendants could be said to have emerged as a central issue in political debates after 2000, the actual attention paid by Dutch politicians to this issue appears to have peaked in the years 2004 to 2006. The neglect of the issue by politicians since 2007 is clearly reflected in recent government policy documents on immigrant integration and in the electoral programmes of Dutch political parties. In the policy document *Integration, Belonging and Citizenship* published in 2011, the government stated that Dutch society is based on a 'fundamental continuity of values, views, institutions and customs which shape the predominant culture in Dutch society'.[36] The government continues by saying that these values and customs cannot simply be abandoned, and immigrants must adjust to the fact that: 'Dutch society, in all its diversity, is the society in which those who settle have to learn to live, to which they have to adjust and fit into.' [37] Tellingly, it chose to lay its stress on freedom of religion, which it hastened to add also applies to Muslim citizens. Certainly the government was aware of the fact that some Dutch citizens do worry about Islam, because it introduces other, alien-seeming traditions and views, and has of course recently been associated with 'violence and radicalism'. Opting to go on the defensive, the government considered it to be important to dispel these concerns, but without denying Muslim citizens their freedom of religion and without expressing a principled distrust of Islam (Ministerie van Binnenlandse Zaken en Koninkrijksrelaties 2011).

The only concrete policy measure actually announced in this document has to do with the ban on face covers, including the *burqa*. This infringement on the freedom of religion was justified by proposing a ban on all face coverings in the interests of public safety, and not by making any potentially disruptive remarks about the deviant norms and values of others. Parliament has come thus far, but of January 2014, it had still not yet voted on this motion. The views in Parliament on this issue are still divided. PVV is in favour of a full *burqa* ban, holding fast to its tenet that Islam is a threat to Dutch society and all its expressions or manifestations have to be banned. VVD is in favour of a full ban on face coverings because it thinks it is essential for people to be 'recognizable' in social interactions. PvdA and Green Left oppose a full ban. PvdA argues that a full ban violates freedom of religion, and that face coverings should only be banned in specific circumstances, for instance, in schools when they might hinder communication and compromise security. However, as PvdA pointed out in its 2012 election manifesto, such a ban

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[36] In the document the government speaks of, in Dutch, the *leidende cultuur*, possibly referring to the German term *Leitkultur*. This can be translated as 'guiding culture', 'leading culture' or 'predominant culture'. See Pautz (2005).

[37] Author's translation.

is already possible under current legislation (as is explained in Section 6.3.1 above).[38]

Apart from the debate on the *burqa*, there has also been a broad political debate in recent years on the Jewish and Islamic ritual slaughter of animals without prior stunning.[39] These debates have concerned a possible collision between the right to freedom of religion and the protection of animal rights. In June 2012, the Dutch Senate voted against a parliamentary motion to ban this type of slaughter. Senate members stated that the arguments presented to support the ban were not strong enough to warrant an infringement on the freedom of religion.[40]

Judging from the election programmes of 2012, only two political parties which still argue that the religious manifestations and expressions of Muslim citizens are undesirable in Dutch society and that the religious freedom of Muslim citizens has to be curtailed are left. PVV considers Islam to be a threat to society and proposes banning various expressions and manifestations related to it, including the Quran, mosques and minarets. On the religious front, the SGP (ultra-orthodox Protestant Reformed Political Party) is calling for a limitation on manifestations of 'cultures and religions that do not belong in Dutch society'. The party most certainly does not consider Islam an enrichment for Dutch society, and in its protests stresses the 'fanatical and extremely violent aspects' of Islam. It has called for the construction of mosques to be stopped, and has demanded that the public call to prayer from minarets be banned.[41] The proposals of these two parties not only violate freedom of religion, they also run counter to the principles of non-discrimination, as what they are asking for does not contain demands for any similar bans on manifestations and expressions of other religions (see Section 6.3.1 above and Chapter 5).

This discussion has clearly revealed that the Dutch Constitution, especially the articles guaranteeing non-discrimination and freedom of religion, provides the legal context for the formal recognition of cultural and religious distinctiveness in the Netherlands. Whether and how to limit the freedom of religion of Muslim citizens in the Netherlands has been debated from every conceivable angle, especially between 2000 and 2006. After that point, in recent years only the populist right and the ultra-orthodox Christian politicians have been left still battling the tide and trying to limit this right. It is now time to move on to explore the views current in society about the recognition of the religious distinctiveness of Muslims.

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[38] GroenLinks (2012); PvdA (2012); PVV (2012); VVD (2012).
[39] For more information on this practice see Shadid & Van Koningsveld (2008: 151-154).
[40] Questions were asked about whether ritually slaughtered animals suffer more than animals which are stunned prior to slaughter.
[41] PVV (2012); SGP (2012).

6.4   Views in society on cultural distinctiveness

In this section, the views prevalent in Dutch society to do with (immigrants') distinctive cultural practices, norms and values will be examined by analysing empirical data collected in the two questionnaires conducted for this research. As these questionnaires were conducted in 2012 and 2013, the answers reflect the situation as it was several years after the political debates on this issue peaked (see Section 6.3). The analysis consists of two parts. In the first part, the views in society on the value of cultural diversity will be examined, and in the second part the ideas about the recognition of religious distinctiveness will be explored.

6.4.1   Views in society on the value of cultural diversity

To explore general views on the value of cultural diversity, respondents were asked whether they considered the cultural diversity resulting from immigration to be an enrichment or an impoverishment of Dutch society. The analysis indicates that around 42% do consider the cultural diversity resulting from immigration to be an enrichment of society. Nevertheless, almost one-fifth (19%) thinks that it has caused an impoverishment, and one-third (32%) have no opinion about whether it results in either an enrichment or impoverishment.

   Those who consider cultural diversity to be an enrichment for society referred to its value as a resource for learning and mentioned the value of such well-known cultural markers as cuisine, music and dance. The general theme reflected in what was said was that living in a culturally diverse society improves reflective, critical and creative thinking: 'It is easier to find solutions to problems when you are confronted by and acquainted with the various points of views resulting from cultural difference', as one respondent said. Ely and Thomas (2001: 240) call this kind of enrichment an 'integration-and-learning perspective', when cultural diversity is considered to be a 'resource for learning and adaptive change'.

   Those who considered cultural diversity to be an impoverishment of society referred above all to the religious practices, norms and values of Muslim immigrants, which they consider to be incompatible with Dutch culture. They referred to Muslims' unequal treatment of women, their negative attitude towards homosexuality and their intolerance of non-Muslims. These arguments will be discussed more extensively in the next section.

   To explore the relationships between the appreciation of cultural diversity and variables such as gender, age, educational level and political preference, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was carried out.[42] These relationships can be seen in the following 'joint plot of category points' where the strength is indicated by

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[42] See Chapter 2 for an explanation of exploring data using MCA.

the distance between the categories in the plot: the smaller the distance, the stronger the relationship.
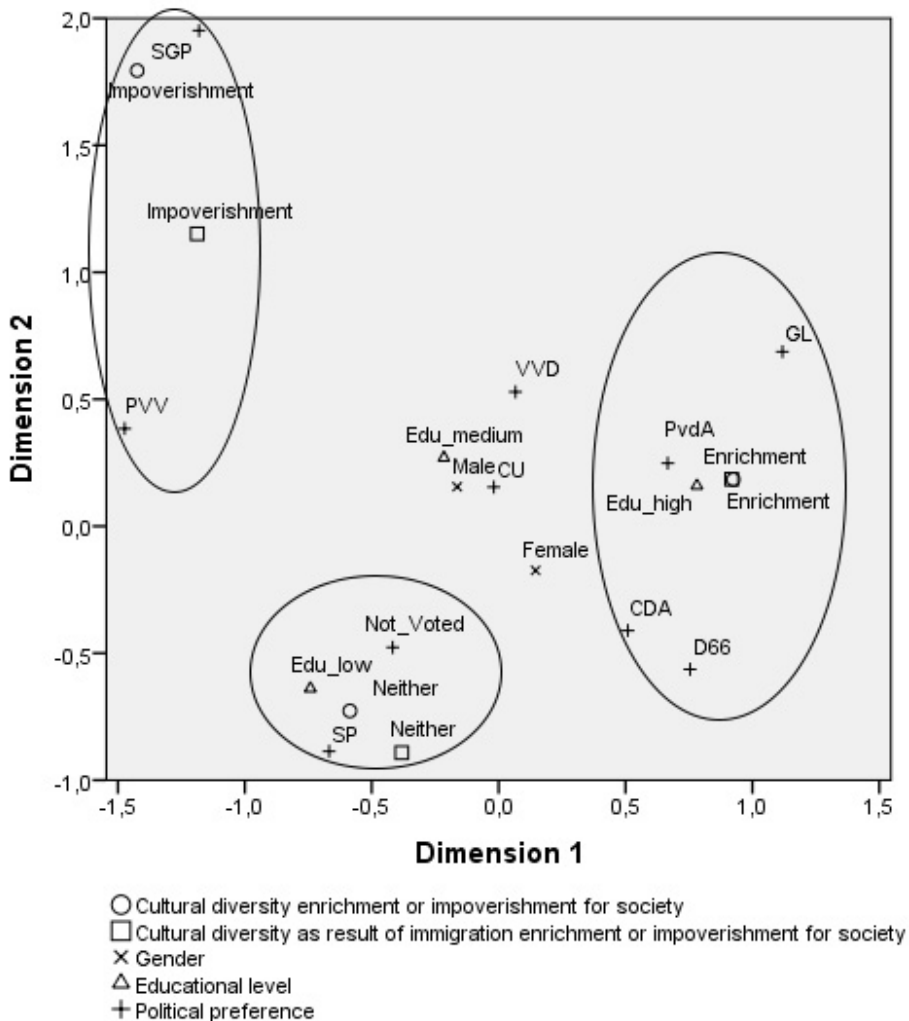

Figure 6.1: Joint Plot of Category Points. Multiple Correspondence Analysis of appreciation of cultural diversity and other factors. All respondents (n=710). (Variable principal normalization.)

As the ellipses in the plot indicate, three clusters can be distinguished. Each cluster is represented by the categories of the items measuring the appreciation of cultural diversity: 'Enrichment', 'Impoverishment' and 'Neither'. As the two items measuring this appreciation appear to be strongly correlated, these items were used to construct a summated scale describing the level of this appreciation of cultural

diversity.[43] A Categorical Regression analysis was carried out to assess more closely to what extent this appreciation is related to the above mentioned variables.[44]

This analysis and the plot presented above indicate that respondents in the first cluster, on the left in the plot, can be characterized as *rejecters* of cultural diversity. The majority of them voted for the political parties PVV or SGP (political preference: β = .28, p < .001).[45] In contrast, respondents in the second cluster, to the right in the plot, can be characterized as *appreciatives*, the majority of whom have voted for the left-wing political parties PvdA, D66 and Green Left or for the Christian CDA. The third cluster includes those who think cultural diversity neither enriches nor impoverishes society. Many of them voted for the left-wing SP (Socialist Party) or did not vote at all. The voters for the VVD and CU (Christian Union) are clearly divided on the issue. Furthermore, cultural diversity appears to be more appreciated by those with a higher level of education (β = .33, p < .001) and by women (β = .10, p < .05). Not surprisingly, the analysis also indicates that immigrants of both non-Western and Western origin are more appreciative of cultural diversity than are the native Dutch (β = .18, p < .001).

As mentioned already, respondents who do not appreciate cultural diversity tend to refer to the norms and values of Muslim immigrants, which are perceived to be incompatible with Dutch norms and values. To explore views on the preservation of Dutch norms and values, respondents were asked whether and why this preservation is important. A large majority (88%) indicated that the preservation of Dutch norms and values is important, and 10% did not have an opinion on the issue. The former applies to more than 95% of voters for Christian and right wing parties (CDA, SGP, CU, VVD, PVV) as opposed to around 82% of the non-voters and voters for left-wing parties (PvdA, D66, SP, Green Left) (β = .28, p < .001).[46] In expressing their views on this preservation in concrete terms, they mentioned such cultural items as the equal treatment of women and homosexuals, freedom of speech and tolerance of cultural diversity. Those who do not consider the preservation of Dutch norms and values to be important and those who do not have an opinion on the issue argued that it is far from obvious which norms and values are typically Dutch and that culture changes over time.

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[43] Cronbach's Alpha for these two items is .81.
[44] This analysis included the variables age, gender, educational level, income, descent and political preference. In the CATREG procedure, the summated scale was specified as ordinal and discretized by ranking, as the scale was derived from ordinal items.
[45] All mentioned βs in this Chapter are standardized.
[46] A Categorical Regression analysis was carried out to explore the relationship between political preference and the importance attached to the preservation of Dutch norms and values, in which was controlled for age, gender, educational level and descent.

However, they did agree that human rights, including equal treatment of women and homosexuals, should be protected.

6.4.2 Views in society on the recognition of religious distinctiveness

In the previous section, it was made clear that respondents who are of the opinion that cultural diversity is an impoverishment for the Netherlands tended to harp on the incompatibility of Dutch and Muslim norms and values. This is not surprising, considering the fact that the political debates on cultural distinctiveness in the last two decades have primarily pivoted around the religious practices and the norms and values of Muslim immigrants and their descendants (see Section 6.3). To examine this finding in more depth, this section will explore the views held on the recognition of religious distinctiveness.

A fifth (21%) of respondents considers Islamic and Dutch norms and values to be compatible. They explained that individuals interpret their religion, including Islam, in various ways and that only the specific norms and values of a small majority of Muslim, Christian and other religious citizens are unacceptable to the majority of Dutch citizens. In contrast, the majority (61%) considers Islamic norms and values to be incompatible with Dutch norms and values. This idea is reflected in respondents' views about wearing religious symbols and specific items of dress. Although a small minority (9%) disapproves of the wearing of *any* religious symbols and dress in public space, a considerably larger proportion of respondents (21%) disapproves of Muslim women wearing a headscarf in public space.

The opposition to certain aspects of the *formal* recognition of religious distinctiveness is even larger, as can be seen in Table 6.1 below. To explore views on these aspects, respondents were asked whether certain expressions and manifestations of religion of 'new' religious groups in the Netherlands should be allowed.

Table 6.1

Opinions on formal recognition of religious distinctiveness of 'new' religious groups (all respondents).

Expression or manifestation	Yes (%)	No (%)
Right of public officials (including teachers) to wear Islamic headscarf	41	47
Right to build prayer houses	56	34
Right to establish denominational schools	22	69
Right to observe religious holidays	58	31
Right to ritual slaughter (without prior stunning)	20	69

Note. n = 710. Weighted disproportionate stratified sample, consisting of 3 sub-samples, including native Dutch (n_1 = 468), non-Western immigrants (n_2 = 202) and Western immigrants (n_3 = 33) (see Chapter 2).

The table shows that more than two-thirds (69%) opposes both the legal right to ritual slaughter and granting new religious groups the right to establish their own denominational schools. There is much less opposition to granting new religious groups the right to build prayer houses (34%) and to observe their religious holidays (31%). Respondents tend to be more divided on the issue of public officials, including teachers, wearing the Islamic headscarf, with almost half (47%) opposed.

Those who oppose a formal recognition of the expressions mentioned in the table above argued that manifestations of Islamic culture, such as the Islamic headscarf, mosques, Muslim schools and Islamic holidays, do not belong in the Netherlands. 'Dutch employers should not take Islamic holidays into account, after all, we are in the Netherlands,' one respondent said. They also mentioned the incompatibility of Islamic and Dutch norms and values. They argued that Islamic norms and values are contrary to the principles of the equal treatment of women and homosexuals, and that Muslims are intolerant of non-Muslims. However, although these respondents were of the opinion that the Islamic headscarf does not belong in the Netherlands, only a few considered it to be a symbol of the unequal treatment of women.

Another argument brought forward is that Muslim citizens who observe their religion tend to force their culture and religion on non-Muslims. This can be considered a prejudice against Muslims, especially as those respondents could not substantiate their opinion. Some said that wearing the Islamic headscarf is 'provocative' or 'intentionally conspicuous' in order to force Islam upon non-Muslims. In the same vein, it was argued that there should not be too many manifestations of Islam, because this would force Islam upon non-Muslims.

'Muslims could take over,' respondents said, and 'They have to adapt to our culture, we should not adapt to theirs'. Likewise, some respondents argued that teachers in public schools should not wear an Islamic headscarf because it is too conspicuous and forces the religion of the teacher upon the children. Strikingly, the religious expressions of Christian and Jewish teachers were not considered to be a problem because they are 'less conspicuous' and because 'wearing a cross or yarmulke is typically Dutch, unlike the Islamic headscarf'.

These findings tie in with results of studies discussed by Maliepaard and Phalet (2012: 131-132), who conclude that the 'religious identity, values and ways of life [of Muslims] are devalued by large parts of the majority' of Dutch citizens, and that more than half of the Dutch 'hold unfavorable views of Muslims' and view Dutch and Muslims values as incompatible (see also Huijnk & Dagevos 2012).

Some respondents mentioned arguments which voiced concern about the effects on integration. They were insistent that Muslim schools should be prohibited because they will hinder integration, but Christian and Jewish schools do not. Others worried about problems with the financial and organizational administration of Muslim schools. These arguments about integration seem to be similar to claims made by critics of multiculturalism discussed in Section 6.2, among them Koopmans, Statham, Giugni and Passy (2005). Nevertheless, respondents palpably consider Muslim schools, and not the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness as such, to be an obstacle to integration. Only a few respondents argued that all denominational schools, including Christian and Jewish schools, should be banned in order to prevent segregation and facilitate integration. In short, it appears that respondents who oppose the aspects mentioned in the table above do not oppose the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness in itself, but reject the presence of certain manifestations of Islam in the Netherlands.

These respondents did not believe that the formal recognition of cultural distinctiveness – for example, allowing police officers to wear an Islamic headscarf – would conflict with the neutrality of the state, in contrast to the ideas of such opponents as Cliteur (2004), mentioned in Section 6.2. Likewise, the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness, such as the freedom of religion, was not associated with the risk of multiple loyalties or decreasing loyalty to the nation-state by respondents, in contrast to the arguments espoused by several Dutch right-wing politicians and scholars, such as Huntington (2004) (see Chapter 4).

Respondents who are in favour of the formal recognition of the religious manifestations mentioned in the table above stress the importance of equal treatment and the freedom of religion. They were also convinced that it is important for children to be able to become acquainted with cultural and religious

diversity at school. In their view, the Islamic headscarf should be allowed in school to show children that tolerance of cultural and religious diversity is an important cultural aspect, and that the headscarf is no more and no less than a religious expression of individuals. However, both the opponents and proponents of the formal recognition of Islamic expressions agreed that the *burqa* should be banned because it hinders communication.

The arguments mentioned in relation to ritual slaughter were clearly different. Opponents did not argue that Islamic and Dutch norms and values are incompatible, but referred to animal rights. They were concerned that ritual slaughter (without prior stunning) causes animals suffering. In contrast, those who did not oppose this doubted whether ritual slaughter causes more suffering for animals than conventional ways of slaughtering.

To explore the relationships between views on the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness and such variables as gender, age, educational level and political preference, a Multiple Correspondence Analysis (MCA) was carried out.[47] This analysis included 4 of the above-mentioned items to do with the freedom of religion, and 2 items measuring whether employers and healthcare providers should take the cultural and religious distinctiveness of employees and clients into account.[48] The relationships can be seen in the following 'joint plot of category points' in which relationships between the categories are displayed. The closer the categories in the plot are to each other, the stronger their relationship.

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[47] See Chapter 2 for an explanation of exploring data using MCA.
[48] This analysis includes the religious manifestations mentioned in Table 6.1 above, with the exception of the item on ritual slaughter, because the discussion on ritual slaughter appears to be more about animal rights than about the perceived incompatibility between Islamic and Dutch norms and values.
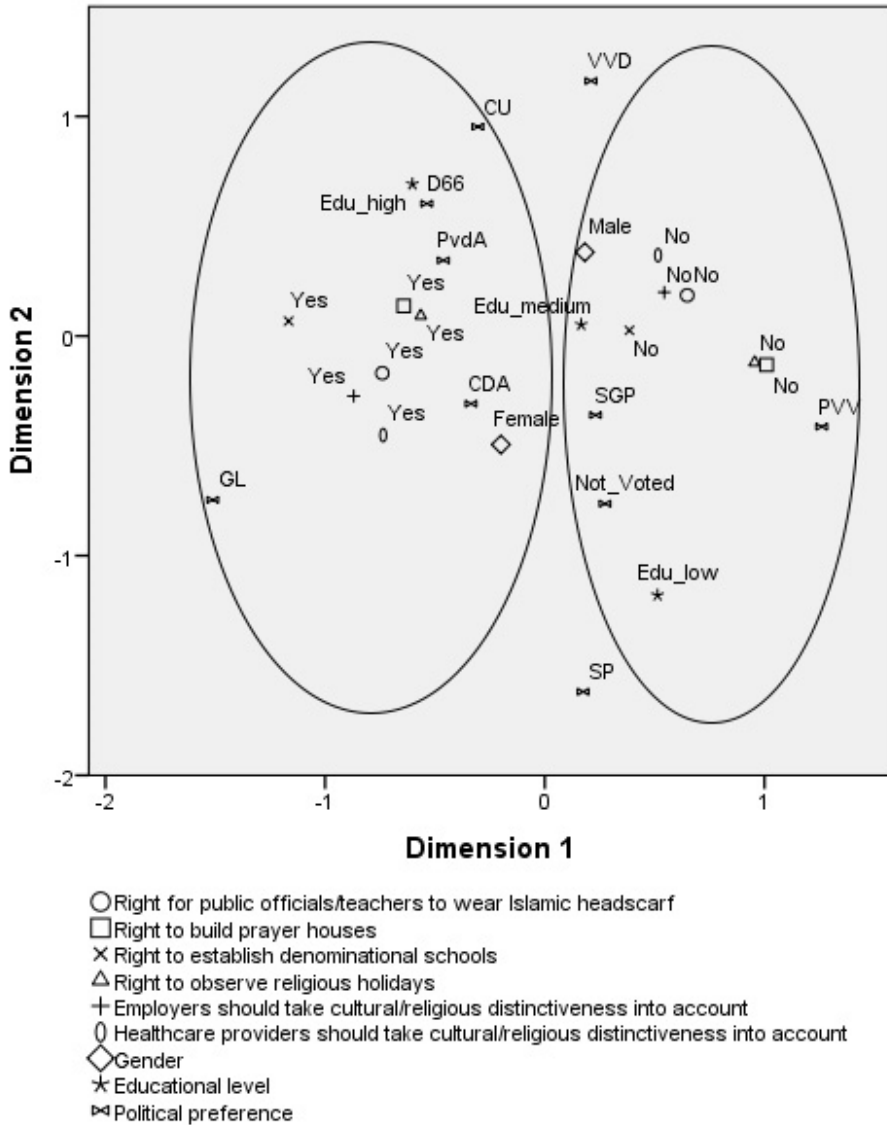
Figure 6.2: Joint Plot of Category Points. Multiple Correspondence Analysis of aspects of formal recognition of religious distinctiveness and other factors. All respondents (n=710). (Variable principal normalization.)

The ellipses in the plot indicate two clusters. Each cluster is represented by the categories of the items measuring views on the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness: 'Yes' indicating approval and 'No' indicating disapproval.

As the items measuring these views appear to be strongly correlated, a CATPCA analysis which included these items was carried out. In this analysis, two components were extracted.[49] The first component includes the items to do with religious freedom, and hence represents *tolerance of religious distinctiveness*. The second component represents *consideration for cultural distinctiveness*, as it includes the two items on whether employers and healthcare providers should take the cultural and religious distinctiveness of employees and clients into account. These items were used to construct summated scales to describe the levels of this tolerance and consideration.[50] A Categorical Regression analysis was carried out to assess to what extent these two scales are related to the above-mentioned variables.[51]

This analysis and the plot above indicate that respondents in the cluster to the left in the plot can be characterized as *tolerant of religious distinctiveness*. They are in favour of granting ('new') religious groups the right to build prayer houses, establish denominational schools, observe their religious holidays and the right of public officials and teachers to wear the Islamic headscarf. By and large, they are considerate of cultural distinctiveness, that is, hold the view that employers and healthcare providers should take the cultural or religious distinctiveness of employees and patients into account. These respondents generally voted for the left-wing parties PvdA, D66 and Green Left and the Christian parties CDA and CU. The cluster on the right includes respondents who can be characterized as *intolerant of religious distinctiveness* – those who are not in favour of the aspects mentioned above. They generally voted for the PVV and SGP. Voters for the VVD and SP, between the two clusters, appear to have an average level of tolerance for religious distinctiveness (political preference: $\beta = .31$, $p < .001$). These results are similar to those presented by Ogan, Willnat, Pennington and Bashir (2014: 40), who found that in France, Germany, Spain and the United States, political conservatives appear to have a more negative attitude towards Muslims.

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[49] A CATPCA analysis with option 'impute missing values with mode' resulted in 2 components with eigenvalues over 1. The scree plot and interpretation of the items indicated that 2 components could be extracted, which explained 59.63% of the total variance. (A CATPCA analysis with option 'exclude missing values' gave similar results.) The resulting transformed variables were saved and used to rotate the components in PCA with oblique rotation (direct oblimin) (see Chapter 2 for some technical background).

[50] Cronbach's Alpha for the four items in the scale describing tolerance of religious distinctiveness is .73; Cronbach's Alpha for the two items in the scale describing consideration for cultural distinctiveness is .69.

[51] This analysis included the variables age, gender, educational level, income, descent and political preference. In the CATREG procedure, the summated scales were specified as ordinal and discretized by ranking, as the scales were derived from ordinal items.

Not surprisingly, non-Western immigrants appear to be more tolerant of religious distinctiveness (β = .23, p < .001) and more considerate of cultural distinctiveness (β = .16, p < .001) than Western immigrants and native Dutch, in line with findings of Verkuyten and Martinovic (2006) and of Van de Vijver, Schalk-Soekar, Arends-Tóth and Breugelmans (2006: 113). Generally, the higher the respondents' level of education, the more tolerant (β = .38, p < .001) and considerate (β = .19, p < .001) they are of religious and cultural distinctiveness. The latter finding ties in with results discussed by Van de Vijver, Breugelmans and Schalk-Soekar (2008: 98) regarding Dutch natives and immigrant groups, and results presented by Ogan, Willnat, Pennington and Bashir (2014: 40) who analysed survey data from France, Germany, Spain and the United States.

These levels of tolerance and consideration appear to be relatively strongly and negatively related to the importance respondents attach to exclusive (ethnic) criteria for Dutch national belonging, such as having Dutch ancestors, a Western name and a Christian background discussed the in Chapter 3 (tolerance: β = -.50, p < .001; consideration: β = -.22, p < .001). This tolerance and consideration is clearly less strongly (but still negatively) related to the importance they attach to inclusive (civic) criteria for national belonging, such as feeling Dutch (tolerance: β = -.22, p < .001; consideration: β = -.20, p < .001). Similar relationships were found to the importance attached to territorial criteria for national belonging, such as having been born and living for most of one's life in the country (tolerance: β = -.19, p < .001; consideration: β = -.17, p < .001). Furthermore, these levels of tolerance and consideration are strongly negatively related to the prejudice that immigrants present a cultural and economic threat (discussed in Chapter 5) (tolerance: β = -.61, p < .001; consideration: β = -.43, p < .001) (cf. Stupar, Van de Vijver, Te Lindert & Fontaine 2014: 33). Unsurprisingly, these levels of tolerance and consideration are positively related to support for the principle of equal treatment (discussed in Chapter 5) (tolerance: β = .17, p < .001; consideration: β = .12, p < .01). Similar relationships were found with support for national anti-discrimination policies (also discussed in Chapter 5).

These findings are in line with social identity theory. The analysis in Chapter 3 indicates that the importance respondents attach to criteria of national belonging is positively related to their affective commitment to the Netherlands, and research in the tradition of social identity theory indicates that group members with a strong affective commitment to the group tend to defend their group distinctiveness by exaggerating the differences between their in-group and out-groups, a practice which can result in a high degree of self-stereotyping and discrimination (and hence intolerance) of out-group members (Ellemers, Spears & Doosje 2002). In this respect, those perceived by the majority group to deviate from the majority's

nominal group characteristics are not fully recognized as group members and can be marginalized to protect the in-group stereotype (see Sections 3.2 and 5.2.1; see also Bobo & Fox 2003; Theiss-Morse 2009: 74; Verkuyten 2005). On the strength of the analysis above, these marginalized group members appear to be Muslim immigrants.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, this study is synchronic and does not explore changes in public views over time, as the data were collected within a limited time frame (2012-2013). Therefore, it is not possible to assess whether the changes in the political debates and policies concerning immigrants and their descendants, as reviewed in this and the previous chapters, are reflected in changing public views on the dimensions of multicultural citizenship. However, Van de Vijver and his colleagues have carried out cross-sectional and longitudinal studies to examine possible changes in attitudes of Dutch citizens towards multiculturalism (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans and Schalk-Soekar 2008; Breugelmans, Van de Vijver & Schalk-Soekar 2009). Interestingly, they found that, despite the changes in the political debates since the year 2000, the public support for multiculturalism 'has remained remarkably stable' between 1999 and 2007 (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans and Schalk-Soekar 2008: 99). However, the scales these authors used to measure attitudes towards multiculturalism do not include specific items to do with aspects of the formal recognition of religious distinctiveness and consideration for cultural distinctiveness, as discussed in this chapter. Nevertheless, these authors included a wide range of items in their questionnaires, on cultural diversity in general, acculturation by minorities, support for minorities by Dutch natives,[52] and equality.[53]

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[52] In various studies, these authors use different terms to describe Dutch natives, including 'Dutch mainstreamers' (Van de Vijver, Breugelmans and Schalk-Soekar 2008), 'Dutch majority members' (Breugelmans, Van de Vijver & Schalk-Soekar 2009) and 'Dutch natives' (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver 2004).

[53] For an overview of these items, see Breugelmans, Van de Vijver & Schalk-Soekar (2009: 659).