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Delicate Debates on Islam. Policymakers and Academics Speaking with Each Other: an Introduction

Jan Michiel Otto and Hannah Mason

■ Politics, Polarisation, Populism

Since the late 1990s, Islam has moved up the political agenda to become one of the most controversial issues in Dutch society. Whereas Islam used to be considered as a world religion with its own norms and values in the same way as any other religion, several politicians and public figures have started resorting to Islam as a way of explaining the major problems in society. Ayaan Hirsi Ali¹ and Pim Fortuyn² called the religion 'backward'; Theo van Gogh³ wrote repeatedly about Moroccan immigrant Muslims as 'the goatfuckers' or the 'fifth column'. Fortuyn was shot by a radical animal rights activist in 2002, just before his right-wing party was about to gain significant support in the upcoming elections. Van Gogh was brutally murdered by a Moroccan fundamentalist in 2004, and Hirsi Ali moved to the United States in 2006, where she joined a neoconservative think tank. The heated atmosphere in the Netherlands during the years after 9/11 has been captured well by Ian Buruma in his book *Murder in Amsterdam*.⁴ More recently, the anti-Islam debate has gained momentum again through the one-liners of the parliamentarian Geert Wilders, leader of the populist 'Party of Freedom' (PVV). The plain language employed by the PVV has urged people to speak out for or against Islam, which has aggravated the polarisation of society. In the 2010 elections, Wilders' party secured 24 seats in parliament, which enabled him to join a centre-right minority government without having to take political responsibility and allowing him to veto any policy he does not like.⁵ Combined with large-scale migration and financial instability, the political climate in the Netherlands has changed from one of tolerance and stability to suspicion, dissatisfaction and unrest.

The Netherlands does not seem to be the only European country where strong anti-Islam voices are being heard. In October 2010, the

German Chancellor Angela Merkel announced publicly that she believed that the concept of a multicultural society had died its death.⁶ This was preceded by the departure of one of the board members of the Central Bank of Germany, Thilo Sarrazin, in September 2010 after an extremely discriminatory statement about the Muslim population in Germany.⁷ More recently,⁸ the UK's prime minister David Cameron spoke about the failure of 'state multiculturalism', calling it a cause for radicalisation of young Muslims. In France, an opinion poll carried out by the Harris Institute in March 2011 for *Le Parisien* newspaper revealed that the right-wing and anti-Islam politician Marine Le Pen would win 23% of the votes (thereby surpassing the current President Nicolas Sarkozy).⁹

This growing amount of attention on Islam has been picked up by the European media, which tends to extract the most sensational aspects of developments around the world. Certainly, some quality newspapers try to present a balanced picture, but generally speaking there seems to be an uneven interest in and focus on problems in the Muslim world or in the West which can be ascribed to Muslims or Islam. In this sense mass media plays into the ideas of populist thinkers such as Wilders and Le Pen. Moreover, following Kapuscinski, 'even if we assume that they lie, [mass media] still have an enormous effect on us, because they establish the list of our topics, thus limiting our field of thinking to information and opinions that decision makers themselves have chosen and defined.'¹⁰

■ Academics in Search of an Audience?

In this highly polarised climate and among the many one-sided views presented by influential politicians and media, policymakers are pressed for answers on serious questions about Islam and Muslims. Therefore the need for unbiased research-based information seems more pertinent than ever. This book will explore ways in which academics can contribute to or are already influencing the debate and assist policymakers in answering questions and making decisions.

There is nothing new in the idea that scholars and policymakers need to better inform one another. Nor in the challenge for academics to step down from their ivory tower and make their work more accessible to the public. As John Esposito states in this book: 'Academics and academic centres have a critical role to play in the formulation of government policies and international relations.' More interesting is the question of *how* academics can get more involved in the public debate on Islam and Muslims. This question derives mainly from the common accusation that academics, including those who study Islam and Muslims, write in too abstract terms, with an excessive eye for detail, or

even incomprehensibly. Who would want to read a book about the incorporation of sharia, when the first paragraph states that the concept of sharia itself has four different meanings?¹¹ Pressed for time, politicians, government officials and journalists seem to prefer summaries, abstracts, or fact sheets over elaborate books and reports. There are many who argue that this is one of the main reasons why academic knowledge does not filter through to public opinion.

In the present context writings on Islam and Muslims that academics may offer to the public also deserve scrutiny, as academia reflects a polarisation of opinions similar to what we see in politics and society. In the body of international academic knowledge on Islam and Muslims we can distinguish two competing perspectives. Whilst the first view, known as essentialism, considers the Islamic religious sources as representing the essence of 'the Islamic civilisation', 'the Islamic culture' and 'the Islamic legal system', the second perspective, which has been labelled pluralism or multiplism, takes the variety of countries and social contexts in which such norms are actually formulated, interpreted and applied in real life as its point of departure.¹² Whereas the majority of scholars, including the authors of this book, are not impressed by the academic qualities of most essentialist writings, populist politicians seem to find this point of view highly attractive.

The orientation and outcomes of scholarly work on Islam and Muslims may also be determined, or at least restricted, by its academic discipline. To illustrate the point, one could take the example of the controversial punishment of stoning. If you are a theologian, an islamologist, or an expert in interpreting traditions (*hadith*) as a major textual source of Islamic norms, you may come to the conclusion that stoning as a sentence for adultery is prescribed. However, if you are a legal scholar, looking at national legislation and case law in Islamic countries, you may conclude that most Muslim countries have not incorporated such Islamic norms in their national laws. A socio-legal scholar may note that in countries which prescribe stoning as a punishment, even if in exceptional cases the judges pronounce such sentence, in most Muslim countries it is just not carried out. An anthropologist may observe that local communities sometimes try to legitimise their customary 'mob justice' with references to sharia and a so-called Islamic court. As a political scientist one may see that the sanction of stoning is being used by politicians as a tool to install fear among opponents, or to fight social evils such as prostitution, drinking and drug addiction. The sociologist may observe that opinions about this sanction amongst the people are widely diverse. In sum, it appears that the type of questions asked and the types of sources used can have a significant impact on the conclusions drawn.

This potentially leads to a situation, in which politicians will seek advice from those experts whose opinions fit their political convictions. For example, there is one professor of Islamic studies in the Netherlands whose scholarship is usually invoked to support statements criticising Islam and Muslims. Dr Johannes (Hans) Jansen, a retired professor at Utrecht University, who often appears in the media, used to be cited by Ayaan Hirsi Ali and has given testimony during the court case against Geert Wilders for inciting hatred against Muslims in 2010. He verified statements, which Wilders made about Islam by reference to verses of the Qur'an. However, prominent professors in Qur'anic studies and Islamic law, Dr Fred Leemhuis of Groningen University and Dr Rudolph Peters of Amsterdam University respectively, on the basis of their studies and interpretations have come to conclusions diametrically opposed to Jansen's views.

■ Policymakers in Search of Relevant Knowledge

It is therefore not surprising that policymakers have trouble finding their way in the complex web of contrasting academic ideas about Islam and Muslims. This book starts with some of the questions that policymakers are faced with and to which an academic response is sought. Job Cohen introduces some of the most fundamental questions, derived from experiences gained during his nine-year term as Mayor of Amsterdam (2001-2010). In the first chapter, he asks 'the academics' to what extent the following assumptions are correct: whether Islam is a violent religion, whether the Netherlands on the whole is 'islamising', whether the number of followers of the more extreme variants of Islam is increasing, and whether Islam is a stagnant and backwards religion. Moreover, he is interested in the compatibility between Islam and democracy. He asks the researchers of Islam and Muslim societies to provide him and other policymakers with useful insights into relevant developments in the countries of origin of Muslim immigrants and into their needs and problems in the Netherlands, which would help making more effective policy in the Netherlands.

Whilst Cohen draws attention to national policy problems, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer considers, in the second chapter of this book, a few of the dilemma's he was confronted with during his term as Secretary General of NATO. It appears that NATO has found itself increasingly in conflict areas in the Muslim world, notably in Afghanistan, Iraq and more recently in Libya. He touches on the benefits and problems of a foreign policy which connects issues of defence, diplomacy and development. He also raises issues of universal norms and values and wonders whether it is possible for any country to be, what he calls, 'normative neutral' by referring to the universal declaration of human rights.

De Hoop Scheffer, too, asks 'the academics' whether they can shed some light on what in the Muslim world can be ascribed to culture and what to religion. He feels that there is a need for greater knowledge about Islam in the West and appeals to LUCIS to engage in this question.

Nikolaos van Dam, who served the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs as ambassador in Baghdad, Cairo, Ankara and Jakarta, considers the contributions that academics may be able to provide to policymakers. Drawing on a number of cases he encountered during his career, Van Dam, a scholar of Arabic, Islam and Muslim societies himself, gives an inside view of how this works out in the actual operations of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. His chapter recognises the potential value of academic research, but also signals the difficulties in making scholarly work relevant in the day-to-day activities of the foreign office. He points to deficiencies within the ministry, where specialist knowledge is neither encouraged nor used as it could be and, in his view, should be done. He regards the relationship between researcher and policymaker as an inherently complex one. By focusing on the opportunities and constraints of both diplomats and other government officials, as well as researchers, he concludes with some suggestions.

Since 1972, the Scientific Council for Government Policy (*Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid*, WRR), a prominent Dutch public think tank, has played an important role in the dynamic interplay between policy, academic research, public opinion and politics in the Netherlands. The Dutch government is legally obliged to respond officially and formulate its own opinions on matters raised by WRR reports. From 2003-2006, the WRR conducted a major study on whether Islamic activism could offer reference points for democracy and human rights.¹³ The WRR's report, published in April 2006, did indeed note a number of important positive reference points, and understandably the report and its underlying studies were hotly debated in the media. Only in July 2007, was the official cabinet response published, after an unusually long period of political and interdepartmental deliberations. As the official response is in fact the only document representing the view of the Dutch government on Islam and its role in the government's policy, the editors have chosen to include some excerpts of an edited translation in this book.¹⁴ The WRR's director Wendy Asbeek Brusse, who was involved in this Islam study as a senior researcher, considers in her contribution some of the necessary conditions for the successful use of academic knowledge by policymakers. She emphasises the need for academics, as well as policymakers, to be aware of the 'logic' of media and politics. Timing, repetition and accessibility are crucial factors.

The Leiden Propositions on Islam and the Themes of this Book

The four contributions by policymakers and policy advisors mentioned above, raise a wealth of issues and questions that the following articles by academic authors try to address. In order to respond to the accusation that academics are, generally speaking, incapable of offering concise information, the academic authors were also asked to present a small number of short statements or propositions around the theme of Islam and Muslim communities. These can be found as the Leiden Propositions on Islam and Society Studies at the end of this introductory chapter.

An important theme, shared by several of the authors of this book, is the idea that in the Netherlands, as well as in many other Western countries, the public debate hinges too much on Islam. Islam is blamed and regarded as the cause for societal problems too often and unjustifiably so. Asbeek Brusse therefore states that ‘academics should contribute towards de-religionising public and political discussions on integration of migrants in the Netherlands’. Maurits Berger presents a similar statement: ‘In the process of trying to understand particular Muslim customs or behaviour, people often resort to theological explanations. This approach is one-dimensional and merely contributes towards creating a thwarted image of Muslims.’

A related issue which has been receiving growing attention over the last decade is the connection of religion with terrorism and violence. The idea that certain interpretations of Islam lead to violence is nothing new; evidence can be found throughout history. For centuries radical forms of religion have posed a dilemma to governments, who do their ultimate best to fight terrorism. In the process they have resorted to extreme repression and torture. In turn, such measures are often criticised by the West. This leads to a complex situation in which all pious Muslims become distrusted in the West, whilst they are also desperately needed as advisors and informants for governments.

Not only the public debate, but also academic research needs to be separated from the realm of belief. An important point, which Petra Sijpesteijn makes in her contribution to this book, is that ‘the origin and development of Islam can be studied in historical and academic research without calling Islamic beliefs into question.’ She hereby emphasises the objectivity and independence of academic research.

A related question that this book is concerned with is ‘What is Islam?’. The most important point in relation to this question is the joined emphasis on the diversity of and within Islam. Léon Buskens states in his contribution that ‘terms such as “the Islam” and “the Muslim” are merely devout ideals, which are not suitable as analytical

concepts. In other words, these terms do not clarify anything. An essence of Islam cannot be determined empirically. In reality Muslims differ in their interpretations of Islam, depending on place, time and personal conditions and convictions. This notion of diversity needs to be the starting point for the undertaking of empirical research and/or policymaking.’ Moreover, for policymakers, it is important to realise that ‘opinions of the traditional Islamic legal scholars about “The Will of God” according to which Muslims should live, are structured by a number of fundamental inequalities, such as the oppositions between men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims, free men and slaves. Current debates amongst Muslims concern the meaning of these norms in contemporary society and display a wide variety of interpretations, ranging from extremely radical to quite liberal.’ Thus, what many people in the West perceive as one ideology with one normative system, in fact consists of a wide range of interpretations and ideas. This is important for policymakers because it means that any Islam-related policy will need to consider the heterogeneity of Muslim communities within a given context.

Related to the argument of recognising diversity, Sijpesteijn gives the historical perspective of this same idea. As a professor of the Arabic language right from the origins of its existence, she looks at the developments of Islam through the centuries and recognises that ‘there is no pure early Islam, but rather a multitude of opinions and interpretations about how the first Islamic religious community was organised; the puritan understanding is merely one out of many.’ To address the assumption that Islam is stagnant and therefore backwards, as many seem to believe, she states, ‘the Western world can benefit from understanding that within Islam there has always been a widely discussed and published diversity, and from the notion that Muslim communities have never been monolithic.’

With Dalia Mogahed and John Esposito present, attention was given to the importance of listening to the voices of mainstream Muslims. Their book *Who Speaks for Islam?*, based on the result of a worldwide Gallup poll had already been brought up by Cohen as a useful resource for policymakers. Esposito notes that it is important to remember that ‘Muslims and non-Muslims share common values, concerns and interests.’¹⁵ This is once again confirmed by Mogahed: ‘When respondents [of the Gallup poll] were asked to describe their dream for the future, we did not hear about waging jihad, but instead we heard about getting a better job, better economic well-being and prosperity and offering a better future to their children.’ Berger makes a similar observation: ‘The fact that Muslims wish to incorporate their Islamic lifestyle into Western society is not necessarily incompatible with integration’, pointing at the idea that the ideals of the average Muslim in the West does

not need to diverge from the local normative system.¹⁶ Jan Michiel Otto points to modernist and liberal Islamic thought by saying that ‘the sharia, as interpreted by pious and moderate Muslim scholars such as Khaled Abu el Fadl, Abdullahi An-Naim and the late Nurcholis Madjid, forms a useful source of inspiration for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law.’ Politics and public opinion could certainly benefit from an extension and intensification of the communication between such moderate Muslims and Western academics and policymakers.

To follow trends within the Muslim world itself is regarded as an essential task for academics and foreign policy officials alike. Otto, referring to research done into the legal systems of a cross-sample of twelve Muslim countries concludes that ‘while the legal systems of most Muslim countries are fairly moderate when it comes to Islam and sharia, their constitutions are actually built on a dual foundation: the rule of law and the tenets of Islam. This ambiguity legitimises the state, the law and the regime as well as the clergy, and it contributes to their peaceful coexistence. However, sometimes this ambiguity leaves the rule of law in a vulnerable position, failing to channel religious-political tensions.’ ‘The research seems to show that on the whole these countries in terms of women’s rights, corporal punishment and democratisation have become more liberal over the last twenty years, and not, as many may have expected, more Islamic in a puritan sense.’ Buskens confirms this point: ‘Research into the development of the Moroccan legal system shows that the substance of Islamic law has been marginalised over the last century, whilst references to the sharia in the political debate have increased over the last forty years.’ Over the last decade references to human rights and democracy have also increased in political debates throughout the Muslim world.

It seems that such longitudinal trends are not often followed or discussed by mass media in the West. The press rather pays attention to the manifestation of anti-Muslim rhetoric, for example in the Netherlands when Wilders launched the idea that all Muslims would be practising *takiyya*, which suggests that Muslims are supposed to hide their true intentions. Berger demonstrates in his contribution how an academic may effectively counter such an accusation by disseminating research-based information amongst the public.

Managing perceptions and expectations about Muslims can be an important task for policymakers. Populists like Wilders and academics like Jansen have succeeded in contributing to feelings of fear and suspicion among the wider public in the Netherlands that ‘the sharia’ may be introduced as the overarching system. In his contribution Buskens also draws attention to this sentiment of fear, which has resulted from a certain level of ignorance about Islam and Muslims, as well as about law.

Berger states that ‘the liberties of the Netherlands allow Muslims to live according to the “sharia”, as long as they do so within the framework of national law.’ As the official response of the cabinet to the 2006 WRR report notes: ‘The cabinet [in the Netherlands] cannot support legal pluralism, meaning the equal co-existence of heterogeneous legal systems. This is evident in the case of administrative and criminal law, as these deal with the relation between state and citizen, and the state does not discriminate between types of citizens. In the case of civil law, and particular the law of obligation, personal status and family law, there is no reason for such legal pluralism. The Dutch state maintains the principle that everyone who resides in the Netherlands should have as much opportunity as possible to organise his/her own life in the way he/she wishes. [...] The cabinet, therefore, aims to offer spaces in its law and policy for traditions which, though they do not belong to the national heritage, are in themselves, not in conflict with basic principles.’

Tensions and trends in European countries such as the Netherlands are of course narrowly linked with developments in the international arena. Esposito remarks that ‘the Bush-Blair legacy has made the world less safe, less free.’ His contribution exposes the weaknesses of recent foreign policies, both in the West as in the Muslim world. Reflecting on the political decisions of the Western allies is as important as reviewing those of Muslim governments. Esposito also draws on the importance of perceptions. Whilst the Bush administration depicted certain Middle Eastern countries as the axis of evil, the Muslim world has witnessed the double standards it was applying, for example through the events in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, but also the critical approach to Hamas after its democratic victory in the 2006 elections in Palestine. Fareed Zakaria refers to the problem in *The Future of Freedom* as ‘the Islamic exception’.¹⁷ Esposito calls for a joint effort and a process of constructive engagement, in which both Muslim and non-Muslim countries will need to be prepared to listen to each other.

Having shown some of the various academic responses to discussions around Islam and Muslims, we return to the question of how scholars can be better drawn into the public debate. In the case of the Netherlands, the 2006 WRR report on Islamic activism and the following public debate suggest that not all efforts of scholars to influence policy are fruitless. The official response of the cabinet in 2007 to the report presents a rather balanced and nuanced picture. Some key sections of this document are included in this collection of essays. The excerpts illustrate that the 2007 cabinet recognised the diversity within Islam and did not believe that Islam and democracy or human rights are incompatible. Whilst it supported freedom of religion, it drew the line at

violence. And whilst it rejected legal parallelism, it made clear that the Dutch legal system left ample room for people to lead their lives as they wish. However, as Asbeek Brusse notes, ‘the times that academic research automatically earned authority in society are over. If academics and policymakers wish to have influence, they will have to understand the dynamics behind media and politics.’ The official cabinet response itself received hardly any media attention after Wilders had succeeded to divert the agenda of the parliamentary session in which the response was supposed to be discussed. This illustrates the importance of one of the tasks of academics in this field, i.e. addressing the media and politicians directly and thereby presenting a more truthful and research-based picture of Islam and Muslims.

As this introduction shows, it may be more appropriate to speak of debates rather than one single debate about Islam. The debates take place in a variety of spaces: within and between the West and the Muslim world, within and between countries, amongst and between politicians and other policymakers, academics and journalists, within ministries, universities and media outlets. The debates have become delicate because they deal with issues of national identity, heritage and tradition. The editors of this book believe that this debate deserves in the first place to be based on a balanced account of facts and figures. They also think that these delicate debates should be held in a civilised manner and avoid unnecessary insult or offence.

LEIDEN PROPOSITIONS ON THE STUDY OF ISLAM AND MUSLIM SOCIETIES (elaborated in this book)

1. Academics and academic centres have a critical role to play in the formulation of government policies and international relations. (JE)
2. The times that academic research automatically earned authority in society are over. If academics and policymakers wish to have influence on the debates [on Islam], they will have to understand the dynamics behind media and politics. (WAB)
3. Research-based knowledge about ‘the Islam’ continues to be of utmost importance for public debate, policymaking and politics. (WAB)
4. Academics should contribute towards de-religionising public and political discussions on integration of migrants in the Netherlands. (WAB)

5. There is no pure early Islam, but rather a multitude of opinions and interpretations about how the first Islamic religious community had to be organised; the puritan understanding is merely one out of many. (PS)
6. The origin and development of Islam can be studied in historical and academic research without calling Islamic beliefs into question. (PS)
7. The Western world can benefit from understanding that within Islam there has always been a widely discussed and published diversity, and from the notion that Muslim communities have never been monolithic. (PS)
8. Terms such as 'the Islam' and 'the Muslim' are merely devout ideals, which are not suitable as analytical concepts. In other words, these terms do not clarify anything. The essence of Islam cannot be determined empirically. In reality Muslims differ in their interpretations of the word Islam, depending on place and time. This notion of diversity needs to be the starting point for the undertaking of empirical research and/or policymaking. (LB)
9. Opinions of the traditional Islamic legal scholars about 'The Will of God' according to which Muslims should live, are structured by a number of fundamental inequalities, such as the oppositions between men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims, free men and slaves. Current debates amongst Muslims concern the meaning of these norms in contemporary society and display a wide variety of interpretations, ranging from extremely radical to quite liberal. (LB)
10. Research into the legal systems of a cross-sample of twelve Muslim countries shows that on the whole these countries in terms of women's rights, corporal punishment and democratisation have become more liberal over the last twenty years, and not, as many may have expected, more Islamic in a puritan sense. (JMO)
11. While the legal systems of most Muslim countries are fairly moderate when it comes to Islam and sharia, their constitutions are actually built on a dual foundation: the rule of law and the Islam. This ambiguity legitimises the state, the law and the regime as well as the clergy, and it contributes to their peaceful coexistence. However, sometimes this ambiguity leaves the rule of law in a

- vulnerable position, failing to channel religious-political tensions. (JMO)
12. The sharia, as interpreted by pious and moderate Muslim scholars such as Khaled Abu el Fadl, Abdullahi An-Naim and the late Nurcholis Madjid, forms a useful source of inspiration for the promotion of human rights and the rule of law. (JMO)
 13. Research into the development of the Moroccan legal system shows that the substance of Islamic law has been marginalised over the last century, whilst references to the sharia in the political debate have increased over the last forty years. This trend seems to occur in other Muslim countries too. These observations go against the commonly accepted idea that the sharia is experiencing a global expansion. (LB)
 14. Muslims and non-Muslims share common values, concerns and interests. (JE)
 15. Both religious and secular fundamentalists need to redefine their notions of the relationship of religion and the state and the nature and scope of pluralism and tolerance. (JE)
 16. The fact that Muslims wish to incorporate their Islamic lifestyle into Western society is not necessarily incompatible with integration. (MB)
 17. In the process of trying to understand particular Muslim customs or behaviour, people often resort to theological explanations. This approach is one-dimensional and merely contributes towards creating a thwarted image of Muslims. (MB)
 18. The liberties of the Netherlands allow Muslims to live according to the sharia, as long as they do so within the framework of national law. (MB)
 19. The Bush-Blair legacy has made the world less safe, less free. (JE)

Notes

- 1 Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a Dutch feminist activist, politician and founder of the women's rights organisation AGA Foundation. Anno 2011, she is resident in the United States and works as a fellow at the American Enterprise Institute.

- 2 Pim Fortuyn was a Dutch politician, sociologist, author and columnist (1948-2002).
- 3 Theo van Gogh was a Dutch film director, script writer and columnist (1957-2004).
- 4 Ian Buruma, *Murder in Amsterdam. The Death of Theo van Gogh and the Limits of Tolerance* (London: Atlantic Books; 2006).
- 5 After the 2010 elections, the coalition of the centre party Christian Democrats (CDA) and right-wing Liberals (VVD) needed a third party to secure the majority in the cabinet. They found their partner in Geert Wilders' Freedom Party (PVV), with whom they agreed on most provisions apart from the approach to Islam. The former two parties consider it a religion, whilst the latter calls it a political ideology. The result is a minority coalition under the leadership of Prime Minister Mark Rutte (VVD) with the VVD and the CDA supported on budget and confidence motions by the PVV.
- 6 'WeltOnline 18/10/2010: www.welt.de/print/welt_kompakt/print_politik/article1-0366134/Merkel-Multikulti-ist-gescheitert.html (accessed 14 December 2010).
- 7 He is quoted as saying that Muslims in Germany were sapping the country's intellectual and economic strength and that 'all Jews share the same gene'. www.guardian.co.uk, 02 September 2010: www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/sep/02/germany-central-bank-decide-sack-thilo-sarrazin (accessed 14 December 2010).
- 8 BBC Online 05 February 2011: www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-12371994 (accessed 27 April 2011).
- 9 Le Parisien.fr 05 March 2011: www.leparisien.fr/election-presidentielle-2012/sondage-presidentielle-marine-le-pen-en-tete-au-premier-tour-05-03-2011-1344656.php (accessed 27 April 2011).
- 10 'Mass media, even if we don't believe them, if we assume that they lie, still have an enormous effect on us because they establish the list of our topics, thus limiting our field of thinking to information and opinions that decision makers themselves have chosen and defined. After some time, without even being aware of it, we are thinking about the issues that the decision makers want us to think about (usually trivial points exaggerated on purpose, or misrepresented problems). That's why he, who believes he thinks independently, because he is critical of the content served to him by mass media – is mistaken.' From Ryszard Kapuscinski *Lapidarium I: A Selection* (translated by Andrzej Duszenko; 1990, 45-46), <http://duszenko.northern.edu/lapidarium/index.html> (accessed 15 June 2011).
- 11 Jan Michiel Otto (ed.), *Sharia incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present* (Leiden: Leiden University Press; 2010).
- 12 See also Jan Michiel Otto's article 'The compatibility of sharia with the rule of law. Fundamental conflict: between civilisations? Within civilisations? Or between scholars?', in In A. 't Groen et al., *Knowledge in Ferment: Dilemmas in Science, Scholarship and Society* (Leiden: Leiden University Press; 2007).
- 13 Wetenschappelijke Raad for het Regeringsbeleid, *Dynamiek in islamitisch activisme: aanknopingspunten voor democratisering and mensenrechten* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; 2006). The report was also published in English: WRR (Scientific Council for Government Policy), *Dynamism in Islamic Activism. Reference Points for Democratization and Human Rights* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press; 2006).
- 14 The 2007 response was presented during the fourth cabinet under Prime Minister Jan Peter Balkenende (2007-2010), which consisted of a coalition of the Christian Democratic Party (CDA), the Labour Party (PvdA) and a moderate Protestant Party (CU). This cabinet was succeeded by a minority government in 2010 (see note 4).
- 15 John Esposito & Dalia Mogahed's *Who Speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really think, Based on Gallup's World Poll – the largest study of its kind* (New York: Gallup Press; 2007) and specifically the methodology of distinguishing between radical and moderate Muslims used by Gallup in their survey amongst Muslims all over the world, was heavily criticised by the Dutch journalist Amanda Kluvel in the

national newspaper *De Volkskrant* of 16 October 2009 (http://opinie.volkskrant.nl/artikel/show/id/4353/Job_Cohen_moet_van_de_islam_afblijven, accessed 01 December 2010). She responded to Job Cohen's appeal to draw on the world of academia for our knowledge about Islam and Muslims by listening to the moderate Muslim voice. Ms Kluveld raises the question as to how the moderate voice can be defined.

- 16 The Pew Research Centre for the People & the Press confirms similar opinions in relation to Muslims living in the United States. A 2007 report states that 'the first-ever, nationwide, random sample survey of Muslim Americans finds them to be largely assimilated, happy with their lives, and moderate with respect to many of the issues that have divided Muslims and Westerners around the world.' (<http://people-press.org/report/329/muslim-americans-middle-class-and-mostly-mainstream>: accessed 01 December 2010)
- 17 Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company; 2003).