Integration through the eyes of the migrant

To what extent do Muslim migrants identify with the Dutch notion of citizenship?

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Bachelor thesis

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Word Count: 6512

June 11, 2021

Abstract

Integration and immigration is an ongoing debate in the Netherlands, especially that of Muslim migrants. Often times the cultural differences of this minority are mentioned, and instead of looking at accomplishments, their crime rate, wage-gap and percentage of school drop-outs compared to non-Muslims is highlighted. This difference in socio-economic factors compared to ethnic Dutch is then explained as a consequence of their lower level of integration. This lower level of integration of Muslim migrants, compared to non-Muslim migrants, is believed to be a result of their strong affiliation with their religion, which is said to be a hindrance towards their integration into Dutch society, and for them to become a true Dutch citizen. A theory that touches upon this identification with a religion, more than with a civic framework, is the ethnic nationalism versus civic nationalism debate. This theory is often mentioned as an explanation for the structural integration issues that migrants from the East are said to face in the West. This research aims to give a voice to these migrants themselves, to tell their side of the story regarding integration and citizenship. Not only will they touch upon their view on Dutch integration policies, they will also provide this research with an answer to this ethnic versus civic debate. As it turns out, Muslim migrants' views on citizenship differ from that of the Dutch, and could perhaps stem from their views on nationalism and preferred integration policy. As their views on nationalism essentially differ, they see the integration and form of citizenship that the Dutch have in mind to be an impossible goal in the first place. Perhaps the Dutch government could learn a thing or two from these experiences and take them into account when a new integration policy is being constructed.

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1. Introduction

At a time in which polarization and populist parties are taking the upper hand, it is time that the Dutch debate regarding integration and immigration experiences a revival. This research intends to provide this conversation with experiences from a different perspective, namely those of the migrants themselves. As Muslim migrants, and the Islamic community in general, have been a victim of stereotyping and selective media coverage for quite some time now, it is about time to enrich this field of research and policy with a new voice. And who could do this better than the people who experience and have experienced this integration process by themselves? A lot has been written regarding the Dutch history of integration policies and, more in general, the current and historic playing field of the integration framework and process in the Netherlands. Rarely though, is there any attention paid to the opinion of these migrants themselves. An inquiry that is often accompanying this topic, is the notion of citizenship. As multiple authors have argued, the notion of citizenship, and its different interpretations, is almost instantly referred to when the integration debate is articulated (Van Houdt et al, 2011). On the basis of a theory concerning different attitudes regarding nationalism, namely the ethnic nationalism versus civic nationalism debate, the difference in how citizenship is perceived by ''Western'' and ''non-Western'' individuals will be explained. This line of reasoning will then be presented to 11 interviewees, who will share their experience and thoughts on the Dutch integration policy regarding citizenship, and the extent to which they can relate to this explanation offered by the civic versus ethnic question. Furthermore, the way in which the literature presents a shift in integration policies from a multiculturalist to an assimilationist approach will be described, on which the interviewees will also comment as to what extent they agree with this presented shift in the literature. The interviewees will share their views on nationalism, citizenship, integration policies and to what extent they can identify with the Dutch idea of citizenship.

1.2 Research problem
The leading question of this research is formulated as follows:

To what extent do Muslim migrants identify with the Dutch notion of citizenship?

To further explore the extent to which the Muslim migrants can identify with the Dutch notion of citizenship, this research aims to first get an insight into which policy the Netherlands use (and have used) in order to integrate foreigners. Therefore, the following sub question has been drawn up:

Which integration policies have the Netherlands experienced since the arrival of Muslim migrants, and to what extent do these migrants acknowledge these?

As the perception of nationalism also plays a role in how citizenship is constructed, the next sub question revolves around the ethnic versus civic nationalism debate, and sounds as the following:

To what extent do Muslim migrants relate to an ethnic and/or civic nationalism?

The third sub question develops from this:

How does the ethnic versus civic nationalism debate influence their notion of citizenship and how does this relate to the Dutch notion of citizenship?

With these questions, I hope to create more insight into how Muslim migrants perceive the Dutch integration policy. Besides, the outcomes of these questions might serve us with an explanation as to how there might exist a different interpretation of citizenship.

1.3 Structure of the thesis

Now that the introduction and research problem have been touched upon, this research paper will now shortly summarize the (historical) background of the integration debate in the Netherlands. This is done to make sure that the reader is aware of the context and the Dutch situation regarding past and present immigration trajectories and integration policies. After that, the theoretical framework and accompanying conceptual model will be introduced. Afterwards, the methodology will be explained. Following that, the results will be shared. Wrapping up, the paper will end with a discussion, which includes policy and research recommendations.

1.4 Background of the study

The first big influx of Muslim immigrants into the Netherlands dates back to the 60's of the previous century. These guestworkers, as they were called, were attracted to the Netherlands to fulfil the unskilled labour which the native Dutch were no longer willing to do. Unaware of the lasting influences these labour migrants would bring along, as the Dutch perceived their residence as temporary, very little attention was paid to their presence. This negligence lasted until the late 70's, when it became apparent that family reunification became more prevalent among the immigrant families. The first policy for minorities aimed to reduce their socio-economic backlog and stimulate their acceptance in society. During the 80's, the awareness of Islam was growing. Besides, whereas these migrants were first referred to by their nationality; Turks, Moroccans, or Tunisians, it became now more usual to use their religion as a label for their identification; Muslims. As freedom of religion was a basic right for all people in the Netherlands, mosques and Islamic organisations such as schools were able to receive subsidies and could therefore be constructed. As very little was known about these migrants, many social studies developed an interest in these ''allochtones'' (foreigners). Up until now, the political climate was aimed at serving a multicultural nation. Nevertheless, in a society that was for already some time secularized, the stereotyping of a group of migrants that was labelled on the basis of a religion that most of them, but not all, adhered to, quite quickly became resulted in terming Islam, and thus Muslims, as fanatical or even extremist. During the 90's, as international conflicts such as the Iranian revolution and the fight against the Taliban passed and the role of the media grew, so did the stigmatization of radical Islam. Right wing, populistic parties arose and with the murder of Pim Fortuyn and Theo van Gogh, both critics of the growing Islamic influences in the Netherlands, a new era of integration policy seemed to have entered in the Netherlands. The ''us'' versus ''them'' structure, characteristic for othering, was often visible in the integration debates and more emphasis was often put on the incompatibility of the values of Muslim communities with those of Western nations. Consequently, immigration and integration policies were tightened, not only in the Netherlands but in many European countries, leading many scholars to refer to this change in policy by terming it assimilation integration policies.

2. Theoretical framework

In the theoretical framework, three concepts, on which the sub-questions of this research are based as well, will be introduced. The theories of civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism, multiculturalist integration policy versus assimilationist integration policy, and the concept of citizenship will guide this study. Firstly, they way in which these theories or concepts have been explained in previous literature will be illustrated. Consequently, these explanations will then be tested by introducing the Muslim interviewees to these concepts. They will then share their thoughts on these concepts, and explain to what extent they can identify with the way in which these theories have been constructed.

2.1 Civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism

The ethnic nationalism versus civic nationalism debate has been one of the most foundational theories in ethnic and migration studies (Alter, 1994).

Ethnic nationalism relies on rather objectified phenomena, a shared descent, language or religion for example. These criteria determine whether one is experienced as one of us, or as the other. In that sense, it could thus be stated that individuals are included or excluded as a member already at birth. In nations where the majority of its inhabitants support ethnic nationalism, an organic, self-regulating system arises. On the other hand, civic nationalism is based on unconscious rules, laws, and shared ideas. It is not substantiated by cultural traits like ethic nationalism, but attached more worth to a common set of freedoms and legal regulations (Smith, 1991). Often times, this form of nationalism is deemed to be more accessible, as the sole requirement in order to gain membership is based on a set of ideological commitments that together form a political and legal framework. When Kohn first mentioned this dichotomy, back in 1944, he also tried to explain with this theory the distinction between developed and less developed countries (Kohn, 1944). Developed or modern societies had, according to Kohn, moved past the stage whereby ethnicity played a major role, and had entered a phase in which everybody that adhered to certain political ideologies could belong and become a citizen. Meanwhile, less developed or traditional societies were still found to be stuck in a situation whereby members of the society could not look past differences in religion or descent. This led Kohn to argue that the type of nationalism that a country retains, influences their socio-economic and intellectual capacities. Countries with a more ethnic approach to nationalism were characterised as pre-industrial, inefficient or even corrupt, whereas countries who supported mostly civic oriented nationalism were nations where Western values such as democracy, liberalism and secularism were present.

Consequently, this led to a very black and white, or right versus wrong, depiction of Western and Eastern countries (Geertz, 1963). Even though in more recent times this line of reasoning has received much criticism, pointing at the short-sightedness of the model, the basic principles of ethnic and civic nationalism are still widely used as an analytical tool (Breton, 1988). The explanatory method Kohn used to divide countries in good and bad on the basis of the most prevalently present form of nationalism has generally been termed as outdated, but the core criteria on which ethnic and civic nationalism are based, and which differ from each other, remain (Brubaker, 1998).

2.2 Multiculturalist integration policy versus assimilationist integration policy

Many scholars agree upon the idea that Dutch integration policy has seen a shift from a multiculturalist perspective to a more assimilationist approach (Duyvendak and Rijkschroeff, 2006; Entzinger, 2006; Prins, 2004). In the 70's and 80's integration policies were mainly aiming at bridging the gap between socio-economic differences and combatting discrimination and racism towards the minority migrants, aided for the largest part by the government and its authorities. The Netherlands has become known for its pluralistic society, in which equality and the preservation of own cultures of minorities became a symbol of their multiculturalism (Vasta, 2007). Through new acts and regulations though, a gradual change in political ideology and thus integration policy was put forward. Whereas earlier the government played a big role during integration processes, the focus now came to lie upon immigrants their own responsibility to properly integrate on an individual level. Initially, this shift was explained as a necessary change in policy, since the multiculturalist approach did not prove to be successful enough in minimizing the differences in socio-economic discrepancies between the autochtonous and allochtonous citizens. Participation rates in society were deemed too low, emancipation of female immigrants was lacking, and the difference in completed years of schooling and crime rates of youngsters were too big between children of native Dutch and those of immigrants parents (D'Haenens and Bink, 2006). Multiculturalism seemed to have failed, a sentiment that was growing among the Dutch population. Some politicians argued that a new class amongst the lower levels of the population was emerging; one that did not identify enough with Dutch norms and values, and were unwilling to integrate. Far-right, populist parties emerged and spread the concerns that a growing number of people seemed to

feel, but up until now did not express yet. These parties warned against a future in which immigration would be constantly present, integration would worsen, segregation increase, and the Muslim population would continue to grow and impose their norms and views on the Dutch population.

The way in which Muslims were often stereotyped and negatively portrayed in the media by both the national and international outlets, did not positively contribute to the Islamic image either (Brants et al. 1998; D'Haenens and Bink, 2006; Shadid and Van Koningsveld, 1994; Vliegenthart and Roggeband, 2007; Ter Wal, 2002).

During this time of increasing awareness and nervosity around the immigration debate, and in general the integration of Muslims, events such as the attacks on 9/11, and the killings of Fortuyn and Van Gogh made the issue even more sensitive (Wansink 2004, Uitermark 2010). The coalition that followed after these incidents had happened, was characterized by a much tighter integration policy. Generally, this coalition was looked upon as anti-immigration, as it installed new rules for immigrants to receive citizenship, such as minimum income and minimum age conditions and the need to fulfil language and integration tests before departure to the Netherlands. Integration policy had received a much more assimilationist outlook, as society now mostly put the blame on the immigrants themselves for integrating slowly, and therefore reasoned that it was their own responsibility to ''become Dutch" (Scholten, 2011). By now, enrolling in integration courses became mandatory, and passing compulsory, even for the immigrants who had been living in the Netherlands for decades already. If one would fail the integration process, a fine was given and enduring settlement was denied. This new era of integration policy felt for many as if their cultural identity was being taken away, and that one had to choose; either Dutch or Muslim. A paradoxical shift had been enacted; the migrants who immigrated back in the days of multiculturalism, and were then encouraged to conserve and celebrate their own identity, were now accused of not making an effort to sufficiently identify with the Dutch culture (Entzinger, 2006). Citizenship was no longer to be provided for immigrants, it now had to be earned.

2.3 Citizenship

Accompanying the debates about integration and immigration, the conversation about what the Dutch identity is and what characterizes Dutch citizenship has been revived over and over again. What gets mentioned almost every time, is that Dutch citizenship implies the appliance and appreciation of the distinctively Dutch, progressive values such as being anti-collectivistic, tolerant and open (Verkaaik, 2010). Nevertheless, it is also often times exactly this appraisal that aids the Dutch in discerning and separating them from foreign others, and especially Muslim others. In this way, Dutch citizenship becomes a milestone of a specific (national) identification which, even though naturalisation processes have been completed, still excludes the foreign other, as this level of loyalty to these values will never be equally reached by others. Thus, Schinkel and Van Houdt argue, the Dutch process of receiving citizenship becomes a framework which differs between us and them, and restricts rather than unbolts society (Schinkel and van Houdt, 2010).

The Dutch government emphasises upon the need for active (working) citizens, who independently participate in society. With this objective, the government mainly tries to make a claim towards the new generation of citizens, that being the youth and newly arrived migrants. Above all, their need for being independent and responsible for themselves is being stressed, in order to successfully integrate into the civic values of Dutch society and construct their citizenship (Joppke, 2007).

Just before the turn of the century, having double nationality became a problematic concern in politics. By then, it was claimed that declining to drop one's primary nationality meant a shortcoming in engagement towards the Dutch society, and thus obstructing integration (Vermeulen, 2007). Even though in the multiculturalist integration policy it was applauded for immigrants to keep in touch with their initial citizenship, as it helped them in developing a morally grounded citizenship here, it was now turned around. Currently, immigrants first have to prove themselves by, for example, disbursing and attending civic integration courses and tests to, only after successfully completing these, receive a formal status. After having showed

good citizenship, by having obtained a decent level of Dutch language proficiency, and knowledge regarding Dutch societal values, one has demonstrated enough commitment to Dutch society and only then earned and deserved Dutch citizenship (Schinkel, 2007; Spijkerboer, 2007; Vermeulen, 2007).

2.4 Conceptual model

To visually represent the concepts of the theoretical framework, the following conceptual model has been designed (figure 1). First of all, the two types of nationalism that have been presented are displayed on the top of the model. Then, at the bottom, the two types of integration policies that the Netherlands have experienced since the 70's have been presented. Then, a connection has been made between civic nationalism and an assimilationist integration policy, which has been denoted as Dutch citizenship. With this notion, I do not mean to generalise all Dutch people in the sense that they all prefer this ideology. This conceptual model is purely meant to illustrate and visually present the shift that has taken place on a political level in Dutch society. On the left side, a connection has been made between ethnic nationalism and a multiculturalist integration policy, which has been coined as Muslim citizenship. Again, I by no means intend to say that this is what is in accordance with Islamic ideology, or preferences of all Muslims, or that this policy is carried out in (predominantly) Islamic nations. This connection is purely based on my expectations, on which I will elaborate more thoroughly in the next section. This conceptual model will be used in order to place the statements of the interviewees and the data which will be generated from these interviews in accordance with or contrary to the literature that has been reviewed in the theoretical framework.
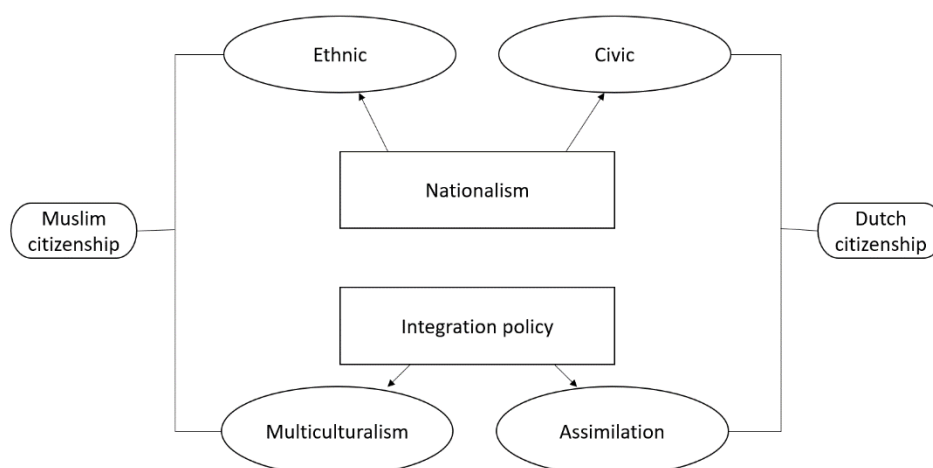

Figure 1 - Conceptual model

2.5 Expectations

As mentioned above, the conceptual model that has been sketched out for this research mainly responds to the expectations I have derived from writing the theoretical framework and the existing literature that has been consulted in order to write a background story for this research. I expect that, first of all, the interviewees will express a more favourable attitude towards the multiculturalist integration policy than towards the assimilationist integration policy. Besides, I expect that the interviewees will communicate that they can identify more deeply with an ethnic nationalism ideal than with a civic nationalism ideal, or that at least they are brought up with a more present familiarity towards ethnic nationalism. These assumptions will hopefully be substantiated or debunked by the interviewees that will be given a voice in the next part of this research.

3. Methodology

As this paper tries to look more deeply into to what extent Muslim immigrants can relate to the theorized changes in Dutch integration policies and how they conceptualize nationalism and citizenship, data is gathered from this specific group of immigrants. In order to give voice to the experiences of Muslim immigrants regarding integration in the Netherlands, it makes most sense to derive information through these immigrants themselves. By analysing their viewpoint and experiences, a conceptualisation of integration through the eyes of immigrants themselves can be mapped out. Therefore, the most important data collection instrument for this research paper is one which collects primary data. This instrument takes the form of semi-structured, in-depth interviews. The sampling method used for this research is snowball sampling. Through an acquaintance of mine who is a Muslim immigrant herself, other Muslim migrants have been contacted, resulting in 11 interviewees who have participated in this research. Due to the current situation in which we face a pandemic, these interviews have been performed online. Besides this form of data gathering, I have consulted a considerable amount of literature from the manifold of existing research concerning integration, and specifically that of Muslims, in order to delve deeper into this topic. Through this secondary data and the theoretical framework that has developed from this existing body of research, the conceptual model, as illustrated earlier in this paper, has been constructed. This visual representation has then been compared and tested against the statements and findings that have been derived from the primary data instrument. The methodology for this research paper can therefore be described as a qualitative approach, as it employs both primary and secondary data in a descriptive, understanding nature. With the concepts that appeared in the theoretical framework in mind, an interview guide has been drawn up (appendix A). Most of the interviews have been conducted in Dutch, as most interviewees preferred this to speaking English. Three interviews were conducted in English, or a mixture of Dutch and English, as these participants were not completely comfortable yet with the Dutch language. The interviews were semi-structured, so that I managed to get an answer to the essential questions which were meant to reflect upon the findings from previous research, as illustrated in the theoretical framework. Nonetheless, when the opportunity arose, I made sure to follow up with non-scripted questions, when a relevant outing occurred. The quotes and answers that were noted down during the interviews have afterwards been translated by myself. As there were no recordings available, there was no transcribing to be done. The answers that the participants had given were written down during the interviews, and as for coding afterwards, I added descriptions, sidenotes and other relevant information from what I remembered from the interview itself. It could thus be stated that the interviews afterwards were coded in a descriptive way, but there was no coding tree or scheme used for this analysis. A table which sketches the characteristics of the individual interviewees has been added as an appendix, in order to make the results section more readable and interpretive (Appendix B).

Even though it is not possible to make any statements regarding the shape of this research had there been no pandemic around, it goes without saying that this situation and these circumstances have had an influence on this research process. To begin with, the interviews would then most likely have been carried out face-to-face. Consequently, this could then have had a (positive) impact on the comfortability the respondents felt during the interview, leading them to give different or even more personal answers. The limitations part in the conclusion will further elaborate on this and other restrictions faced in this research.

3.1 Ethical considerations

Before the interviews commenced, I sent an informed consent to the participants by mail, of which the format has been adjoined as an appendix (appendix C). Consequently, I already knew that the interviewees did not feel comfortable with a highly personal, in-depth, online conversation as this one being recorded. Thus, I prepared the interviews in such a way that I could write down their comments and statements during the interviews themselves, an approach that the interviewees did agree upon. Besides, I made a promise to inform each

individual interviewee about which statements of them I would be using prior to uploading and sharing the contents of the paper with others. In this paper, every statement that is quoted is accompanied by a description of the interviewee who said it, but it is anonymized in such a way that it is impossible to trace it back to an individual. Age, ethnicity, and number of years residing in the Netherlands are the variables that adjoin these statements, and these variables have all been approved of mentioning by the interviewees. Another ethical inquiry that should be addressed, is that of the positionality of myself, the author of this research. As a matter of clarification, I would like to mention that it might be that my positionality, as a non-Muslim, Western, white female, has influenced the interpretation of statements given by the interviewees. And, as these statements play a big role in the analysis of this paper, might thus have influenced the outcome of this research. Nevertheless, keeping all this in mind, this research still adds to the existing body of research regarding integration and citizenship, and could therefore be regarded as valuable.

4. Results

4.1 Results according to theoretical framework
Amongst the interviewees, 6 identified as male and 5 as female. Their age category ranged from 28 years old up to 58 years old, with a median age of 39 years old. 9 respondents had received the Dutch nationality, 1 had the Turkish nationality and 1 the Moroccan nationality. The amount of years that the participants had been residing in the Netherlands ranged from 2 years up to 51 years. To the question with which nationality they identified the most, 6 of the 9 interviewees who officially had the Dutch nationality, responded with a mixed nationality (e.g. Turkish-Dutch), one stated to still identify as the nationality they received at birth (Moroccan), and the other 2 said that they identified with the Dutch nationality. This hybrid identity is also mentioned by Kortmann (2015), who in his research mentioned that many Muslim migrants have a hard time choosing between nationalities, and often wish to keep both their original and their new nationality, instead of having to choose between them. The 2 interviewees with a non-Dutch nationality identified with their official nationality. During the interviews, the following ethnicities were mentioned: Turkish (5), Moroccan (4) and Indonesian (2). As countries in which the interviewees had lived before moving to the Netherlands, the following were mentioned: Turkey (5), Morocco (4), France (2), Germany (2), Indonesia (2) and the United Kingdom (1).

Multiculturalist integration policy versus assimilationist integration policy
One of the things that multiple interviewees mentioned about the Dutch integration policy, is how it felt as a standard procedure, instead of a personal approach to make sure that they would be participating members of society.

"It felt as if I was just another number that had to be worked through the process." – 31 years old, Moroccan, 7 years in the Netherlands.

"It did help me in learning the language, but after the integration process had been finished, I felt like, so this is it? There was no real guidance after that." – 35 years old, Turkish, 6 years in the Netherlands.

These statements are in line with the findings of Suvarierol and Kirk (2015), who mention that in the Dutch integration policy and process quantifiable targets and cost benefits have prevailed and overshadow the qualitative output.
When I asked the older interviewees about the difference in integration policies between now and the time in which they arrived in the Netherlands, they pointed at how other cultures back in the day were celebrated and welcomed, and now are shunned by some people.

''I remember people asking us about our countries, culture and food. Neighbours would come over. The people in my street nowadays barely greet." – 58 years old, Turkish, 38 years in the Netherlands.

"In general, I feel like there was not so much a pressure on fitting in and assimilating to the Dutch. There were language courses, but no tests and no pressure as today to earn your Dutchness." – 52 years old, Turkish, 31 years in the Netherlands.

This shift from multiculturalist to assimilationist, as highlighted in the theoretical framework, is in accordance with what has been written about the different political ideologies relating to integration policies. In the literature it is also mentioned that the immigration policies used to be more welcoming and accepting towards cultural differences, whereas now the integration process feels more restricted and forced upon immigrants (Joppke, 2007; Schinkel, 2007; Vermeulen, 2007).

Civic nationalism versus ethnic nationalism
When asked about how important integration was for the interviewees, what it meant to them, and how they would rate their own willingness to integration, some seemed a bit dispirited.

''Well, to be honest, I like the idea of everybody fitting in, but actually I feel like it does not really work that way." – 34 years old, Turkish, 9 years in the Netherlands.

''I think, we are not used to this aim of everybody fitting in. Back in Morocco, I remember that people kept to their own communities, in which it was without question that you belonged. You just did. But the whole country belonging to the same group, that is just impossible I think." – 39 years old, Moroccan, 12 years in the Netherlands.

We could argue now, that these thoughts are in line with ethnic nationalism, in the sense that you belong to a group of people with whom you share a same descent. As you have no influence on where and from which parents you were born, you either belong or you do not. This reasoning was also very clearly illustrated by the following statement:

" I feel like where we are from, there is no national aim for everybody to fit in like it is here in the Netherlands. They find it so important. But to us, we do not think about identity like that. In Turkey, you belong to a demographic group, whether you like it or not. You do not try to integrate with another group, because as you don't have the same descent, you just can't. Of course this does not mean we do not like each other, but we do not identify with each other. That is how it feels for me too here, it is a bit of a paradox. They want us to be the same, while we feel like that is not even possible, you know?" – 52 years old, Turkey, 20 years in the Netherlands.

When the interviewees were asked whether they would describe the Netherlands, and possibly other countries in which they lived apart from their country of origin, as more civic or ethnic, they all mentioned the Netherlands as predominantly civic.

"Definitely civic. Certain matters as freedom of speech and democracy are very important here, which I think is good. The same goes for France and the UK actually." – 39 years old, Moroccan, 5 years in the Netherlands.

"I would say more civic, just as Germany. But as secularized countries, that also makes sense I think." – 41 years old, Moroccan, 9 years in the Netherlands.

This link to civic nationalistic countries and the fact that they often happen to be secularized is also made in the existing literature, for example by Scholten and Entzinger (2011; 2006).

Citizenship
When asked whether the interviewees felt like their citizenship was equal to that of the native Dutch, and if their religion possibly played a part in that, most of them reported a relation between those two.

"I do think that my religion has played a role in my integration. I think it could impossibly have not influenced it, especially in a country as the Netherlands that is so far removed from any religion." - 35 years old, Turkish, 6 years in the Netherlands.

''I see my citizenship as equal, I did not move to the Netherlands because I do not appreciate things as democracy and equal rights. For me, those values and the Islam can go together. But whether all Dutch people see it as equal I am not entirely sure." – 44 years old, Indonesian, 20 years in the Netherlands.

To the question which concerned what citizenship meant to them, and to what extent that matched with the Dutch idea of citizenship, many emphasized the wish to remain true to themselves and their culture, while simultaneously participating in society.

"In that sense, I appreciate the Dutch way in that it stimulates me to engage in society. Nevertheless, I do feel like they think that the Islam is hindering that engagement. I think, as long as nobody else suffers from it, religion does not have to get in the way of participating". – 39 years old, Moroccan, 5 years in the Netherlands.

"for me, my religion and political ideology are two different things. I do value liberalistic norms, just like the Dutch do. But I also value my lifestyle based on the Islam. I think those to can go together, but I feel like some Dutch people think that is impossible". – 41 years old, Moroccan, 9 years in the Netherlands.

This reinforces the claims that Kortmann (2015) makes, stating that, in contrast to what is often said about the Islam in politics, Muslims themselves can distinguish between their individual lifestyle and their political ideologies.

The answers that were given to the question on how important it was for the interviewees to keep their original citizenship, and whether they felt like they had to choose between being Dutch and being Muslim, are very much in accordance with each other. As was illustrated above, almost all interviewees mentioned that they would like to keep their original citizenship besides their Dutch citizenship, as their original citizenship symbolized their culture, and their Dutch citizenship their political values.

When asked about what they would like to see different in the Dutch integration policy, the older interviewees, who had experienced the different integration policies, mentioned that they would like to see a more multiculturalist approach again. The younger interviewees mostly mentioned that they would like to see a more inclusive integration approach, that was less focussed on choosing between nationalities and thus identities, and more focussed on individualistic differences and the idea that religion and liberal politics can go together.

Islam and stereotypes
To conclude, I ended the interviews with a conversation about the stereotyping that takes place regarding Muslims. When I asked them about the demographics that indicate that Muslim immigrants integrate less compared non-Muslim migrants, for example indicated by a lower female emancipation rate, less average years of schooling and an average lower income, they did not deny these, but rather explained them.

"Well, what can I say? I think the numbers don't lie. But, we should not forget that Turkey and Morocco are not the same as the Netherlands. No country is the same. And yes, with respect to some statistics, I do think that our religion plays a part in holding us back, but eventually we will arrive there, too". - 39 years old, Moroccan, 12 years in the Netherlands.

"I think what we should not forget is that, especially back in the days when most migrants were labour migrants, the people who came were not representative for the Turkish population as a whole. The Netherlands needed low-skilled labour, right? Well, of course these people have less years of schooling and lower income. And some of these effects last for the kids they will have as well. It may take some time but in the end I don't think we will differ that much from the ethnic Dutch". - 58 years old, Turkish, 38 years in the Netherlands.

This line of reasoning, and keeping these demographics of the migrants who came here in mind, is also mentioned by Shadid and Van Koningsveld (1994).
More generally about the stereotyping that takes place in the media, the interviewees mentioned that they did feel like this was happening, not only in the Netherlands but in general on an international scale.

"What bothers me most, is in general the stereotypes have of Muslims. They're radical, they're aggressive, they are not open for debate and all that … besides, as an Indonesian I also feel like much of these stereotypes are aimed at Muslims from the Middle East. So positive stereotyping really is a thing as well." – 28 years old, Indonesian, 6 years in the Netherlands.

"I feel like even the Muslims who otherwise would never do any harm are also influenced by this stereotyping. If I speak for myself, after all the negativity from the past years that has been aimed at Muslims, I do not know whether I would have made an attempt to integrate as thoroughly as I did back then." - 58 years old, Turkish, 38 years in the Netherlands.

These statements can be backed up by what Elsayed and De Grip (2017) have written about the effect that negative stereotyping has had on the willingness and effort made by Muslim migrants to integrate in the Netherlands.

4.2 Results compared to the conceptual model and expectations
Looking back on the conceptual model and expectations, they are quite in accordance with was has been stated by the interviewees. At least for the interviewees of this research inquiry, it is indeed the case that they prefer multiculturalist integration policies, instead of assimilationist integration policies. Besides that, they do seem to identify more with ethnic nationalism than with civic nationalism, and they did provide answers that were in accordance with the statement that suggested that this would influence their notion of citizenship. All in all, the expectations, and thus the conceptual model which was based on these, could be confirmed, at least on the basis of the findings of this research. The discussion will elaborate further on these.

5. Discussion

This research has tried to give more insights into the extent to which Muslim migrants can identify with the Dutch perspective on citizenship. This has been done by looking at how they conceptualize citizenship themselves, where they place citizenship on the spectrum of nationalism, and how they perceive the Dutch integration policies of the past and present. The interviewees mentioned that their view on citizenship, and thus integration, is structurally and fundamentally different from the Dutch. Whereas the Dutch integration system puts an emphasis on civic nationalism, the Muslim migrants reiterate the importance of an ethnic nationalism. In their view, when there is no shared descent or ethnicity, the occurrence of a perfect integration, in which everyone is and thinks alike, is inherently impossible. As this is something they will never be able to have in common with the native Dutch, their perspective on citizenship and integration is perceived as incompatible due to its difference in foundational principles. Verkaaik (2009), Smith (1991), Shadid and Van Koningsveld (1994), and Alter (1994) also stress these differences regarding the interpretation of citizenship and integration. Consequently, this different view on integration is also underscored by their experiences with the Dutch integration policies of the last 50 years. The interviewees mentioned to favour a more multiculturalist integration policy, a policy which was in place during the last decennia of the previous age, instead of an assimilationist policy; the approach that the Netherlands has retained since the beginning of the 21st century. This shift in integration and immigration

policies is in line with previously written works of Entzinger (2006), Wansink (2004), Schinkel and Van Houdt (2010), and Vermeulen (2007).

The interviewees that have participated in this research did notice this shift and commented on the current and previous policies with regards to their experiences with them. The older participants mentioned to have experienced a more welcoming, pluralistic integration when they arrived in the Netherlands, whereas the integration policy in current times feels much more of a standardized process, which emphasises mostly the need to develop and appreciate Dutch norms and values. Altogether, it could thus be stated that the interpretation of citizenship of Muslim migrants significantly differs from what the Dutch integration policy seems to aim at.

5.1 Strengths and limitations

The strength of this research lies in the fact that it has enriched the integration policy debate with experiences and perceptions of the leading players in this phenomenon. This point of perspective is often left untouched in similar debates. The limitations of this research are concerning the humble number of people involved in it. It would be of much more significance if (much) more participants would have been able to add their experiences. The limited time and scope of this research are therefore its biggest constraints. Besides, the Covid-19 pandemic, a matter that can not be left unmentioned, has also proven to be a real difficulty. Not being able to interview your respondents face-to-face regarding a subject that is this confidential and personal, most likely has influenced their level of comfort during the participating in these interviews.

5.2 Policy and research recommendations

Future research might look into to what extent these experiences are also valid for other religious groups, and if they identify in similar, or perhaps completely different, ways in terms of citizenship. As for policy recommendations, it might be useful to further look into how migrants perceive integration policies and processes. Not only the Dutch government but any government should be critical towards their own integration policy and how it develops and relates to the people who have to go through it. As immigrants partly shape the future of a nation, an open and transparent conversation regarding naturalisation and citizenship can only benefit a country and its inhabitants.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Interview guide

Interview guide

I.   Identity
- As what do you identify? Male, female, rather not say …
- What is your age (category)?
- What is your nationality?
- As which nationality would you identify yourself? (with which nationality do you identify most?)
- What is your ethnicity/descent?
- How long have you lived in the Netherlands?
- Where did you live before moving to the Netherlands?

II.   Integration policies
- Have you lived in other countries besides your country of origin and the Netherlands?
- What is the main difference between that country and your country of origin?
- What is the main difference between that country and the Netherlands?
- How did you experience the integration policy there?
- What where the similarities with the integration policy of the Netherlands?
- What were the differences?
- Would you describe it as multiculturalist or more as assimilationist?
- How would you describe the integration policy of the Netherlands?
- What do you prefer? Why? (what are the respective benefits and negativities?)
- How important is integration for you?
- What does integration mean to you?
- How would you rate your own willingness/ contribution to your own integration process?
- Do you feel like you got all the means to integrate to the extent you wished for?

III.   Nationalism
     [Before starting this section, explain the theory regarding ethnic and civic nationalism]
- Would you describe the political climate regarding immigration and integration in the Netherlands as ethnic or as civic? Why?
- Would you describe the societal climate regarding immigration and integration in the Netherlands as ethnic or civic? Why?
- How does this theory relate to the countries in which you lived previously?
- How does this theory relate to your country of origin? Is it more ethnic nationalist or more civic nationalist? Why?
- Do you think this maybe influences your integration?

IV.   Citizenship
- Do you feel that your citizenship is equal to that of the native Dutch?
- Why (not)?
- Do you feel like your religion plays a part in this?
- Do you feel like integration policies should take the presence of different cultures into account?
- Do you feel like the Dutch integration policy does so?

- What does citizenship mean to you?
- Do you think that differs from what Dutch people think of as citizenship?
- Do you think that differs from what the Dutch government thinks of as citizenship?
- How important is it for you to keep your original citizenship?
- Does it feel like you have to choose between being Dutch and being Muslim?
- Is there anything you would like to see different in the Dutch integration policy?

V.   Islam and stereotypes
- What do you think of the way in which the media portray the integration of immigrants?
- Do you think there is a difference between the portrayal of immigrants on the basis of their culture, religion or ethnicity?
- Do you think these are valid?
- What do you think about the claims that there is a difference in level of integration between Muslim migrants and non-Muslim migrants?
- Do you feel like these have a sense of truth?
- Do you think this difference exists because of a different religion or culture?
- Do you feel like something should be done about that?
- Who's responsibility do you think that is? Of the government or of the immigrants themselves?
- What do you think or hope about the future of the Netherlands and their relationship with immigrants?
- Do you have any concluding remarks or things you would like to say?

Appendix B – Outline of the characteristics of the interviewees

	Age	Official nationality	Nationality with which they identify most	Country of origin	Number of years residing in the Netherlands
1.	28	Dutch	Dutch	Indonesia	6
2.	31	Dutch	Moroccan-Dutch	Morocco	7
3.	34	Dutch	Dutch	Turkey	9
4.	35	Turkish	Turkish	Turkey	6
5.	39	Moroccan	Moroccan	Morocco	5
6.	39	Dutch	Moroccan-Dutch	Morocco	12
7.	41	Dutch	Moroccan	Morocco	9
8.	44	Dutch	Indonesian-Dutch	Indonesia	20
9.	52	Dutch	Turkish-Dutch	Turkey	31
10.	52	Dutch	Turkish-Dutch	Turkey	20
11.	58	Dutch	Turkish-Dutch	Turkey	38

Appendix C – Informed consent

Informed consent
(Geïnformeerde toestemming)

I.   Doel van het onderzoek

Integratie, en dan met name die van Islamitische migranten, is een blijvend en terugkerend onderwerp in de Nederlandse samenleving. De onderwerpen migratie en ''de Islam" worden vaak in een adem genoemd, en gaan vaak gepaard met enige stereotyperingen en vooroordelen. In dit onderzoek probeer ik, Irene Vriezema, studente aan de Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, een andere kant van deze discussie te belichten. Namelijk, die van de Islamitische migranten zelf. Kunnen zij zich vinden in dat wat er over hen wordt geschreven naar aanleiding van hun integratiepatronen? Zijn zij het eens met de verklaringen die worden gegeven voor het verschil in integratie tussen Islamitische immigranten en niet-Islamitische migranten? Met de beoogde interviews en uw medewerking hoop ik een stap dichterbij deze antwoorden te komen.

II.   Bevestiging van bepaalde verzoeken omtrent het afnemen en verwerken van het interview

Zoals eerder toegelicht zal het interview online plaatsvinden. Voor het verwerken van het interview zou ik graag willen weten of u wel of niet akkoord gaat met het volgende:

- Ik begrijp het doel van dit onderzoek..Ja/Nee
- Ik begrijp wat er van mij wordt gevraagd met betrekking tot deelname aan dit onderzoek...Ja/Nee
- Ik begrijp dat bij deelname aan dit onderzoek er voor mij geen directe beloning tegenover staat...Ja/Nee
- Ik heb voor het plaatsvinden van het interview de mogelijkheid gehad om al mijn vragen te stellen en laten beantwoorden...Ja/Nee
- Ik ben op de hoogte van het feit dat ik mij en mijn gegeven antwoorden op elk moment kan terugtrekken van deelname..Ja/Nee
- Ik ben op de hoogte van het feit dat al mijn persoonlijke gegevens op leeftijd, afkomst, en eerdere verblijfplaatsen na niet worden gedeeld in dit onderzoek...Ja/Nee
- Ik ben op de hoogte van het feit dat mijn gegeven antwoorden op dusdanige wijze worden geanonimiseerd zodat deze niet meer terug zijn te herleiden naar een enkele persoon...Ja/Nee
- Ik ga akkoord met het delen van mijn leeftijd, afkomst, en het aantal jaren dat ik in Nederland woon...Ja/Nee
- Ik ga akkoord met het noteren van persoonlijke uitspraken en het in het Engels publiceren ervan in dit onderzoek..Ja/Nee
- Ik ga akkoord met het opnemen van het interview..................................Ja/Nee

Handtekening deelnemer: Datum: