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The nation under threat: secularist, racial and populist nativism in the Netherlands

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ABSTRACT   Right-wing discourses and issues of belonging and collective identity in Europe's political and public spheres are often analysed in terms of Islamophobia, racism and populism. While acknowledging the value of these concepts, Kešić and Duyvendak argue that these discourses can be better understood through the logic of nativism. Their article opens with a conceptual clarification of nativism, which they define as an intense opposition to an internal minority that is seen as a threat to the nation due to its 'foreignness'. This is followed by the analysis of nativism's three subtypes: secularist nativism, problematizing particularly Islam and Muslims; racial nativism, problematizing black minorities; and populist nativism, problematizing 'native' elites. The authors show that the logic of nativism offers the advantages of both analytical precision and scope. The article focuses on the Dutch case as a specific illustration of a broader European trend.

KEYWORDS   Islamophobia, minorities, nationalism, nativism, Netherlands, populism, racism

> *Politicians from almost all establishment [parties] today are facilitating Islamization. They are cheering for every new Islamic school, Islamic bank, Islamic court. They regard Islam as being equal to our own culture. Islam or freedom? It doesn't really matter to them. But it does matter to us. The entire establishment elite—universities, churches, trade unions, the media, politicians—are putting our hard-earned liberties at risk.*[1]

This quote from Geert Wilders, leader of the Dutch radical-right Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV, Party for Freedom), conveys a message that, over the last two decades, has been echoed across Europe. We have heard it from Wilders's compatriots Thierry Baudet, party leader of the Forum voor

1   Geert Wilders, 'Speech Geert Wilders Berlijn', 2 October 2010 available on the *Partij voor de Vrijheid* website at https://pvv.nl/index.php/component/content/article/36-geert-wilders/3588-speech-geert-wilders-in-berlijn.html; Dutch and English translations from the original German by E. J. Bron are available from the same webpage (viewed 1 October 2019).

Democratie (FvD, Forum for Democracy) and the late Pim Fortuyn. But we have also heard it from Marine Le Pen in France; the Vlaams Belang and Nieuwe Vlaamse Alliantie in Belgium; the Lega Nord in Italy; and the Freiheit-liche Partei in Austria. In public opinion and scholarship alike, the growing success of such right-wing parties has been understood in terms of 'popu-lism',[2] the 'populist radical right',[3] 'xenophobia',[4] 'Islamophobia',[5] and 'racism'.[6] We find these concepts valid but not sufficiently precise. This article reintroduces the concept of 'nativism', as originally developed by John Higham, to better understand recent right-wing discourses in Europe. We argue that various forms of exclusion and inclusion, with respect to belonging to the nation, share a common core: the nativist logic.

We apply the concept of nativism to the Dutch right-wing discourses that have swirled around over the last decade.[7] The main concerns in these dis-courses—a perceived decay of national and European culture, criticism of multiculturalism, and the alleged adverse, if not dangerous, effects of immi-gration (especially from Islamic countries)—are central in many other Euro-pean countries as well. Therefore, the Netherlands can be seen as a specific example of a broader European pattern. At the same time we should acknow-ledge that the Netherlands has its own idiosyncrasies. More so than in other

2   Guno Jones, 'What is new about Dutch populism? Dutch colonialism, hierarchical citi-zenship and contemporary populist debates and policies in the Netherlands', *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, vol. 37, no. 6, 2016, 605–20; Koen Vossen, 'Populism in the Nether-lands after Fortuyn: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders compared', *Perspectives on Euro-pean Politics and Society*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2010, 22–38; Koen Vossen, *The Power of Populism: Geert Wilders and the Party for Freedom in the Netherlands* (London and New York: Routledge 2017).
3   Cas Mudde, 'Who's afraid of the European radical right?', *Dissent*, vol. 58, no. 4, 2011, 7–11.
4   Jolle Demmers and Sameer S. Mehendale, 'Neoliberal xenophobia: the Dutch case', *Alternatives*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2010, 53–70.
5   Chris Allen, *Islamophobia* (London and New York: Routledge 2016); Koen Vossen, 'Clas-sifying Wilders: the ideological development of Geert Wilders and his Party for Freedom', *Politics*, vol. 31, no. 3, 2011, 179–89; Saskia E. Wieringa, 'Portrait of a women's marriage: navigating between lesbophobia and Islamophobia', *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*, vol. 36, no. 4, 2011, 785–93.
6   Murat Aydemir, quoted in Markus Balkenhol, Paul Mepschen and Jan Willem Duyven-dak, 'The nativist triangle: sexuality, race and religion in the Netherlands', in Jan Willem Duyvendak, Peter Geschiere and Evelien Tonkens (eds), *The Culturalization of Citizenship: Belonging and Polarization in a Globalizing World* (London: Palgrave Macmil-lan 2016), 97–112 (105).
7   Although in this article we analyse right-wing discourses using the logic of nativism, nativism is not an exclusively right-wing phenomenon. To illustrate the wide occur-rence of nativism across the political spectrum in the Netherlands, we can refer to the only televised national debate including the largest political parties during the 2017 elections. One of the initial debating points stated: 'The Netherlands has insuffi-ciently protected its own culture.' In the discussion, every party referred to minorities in the Netherlands as a threat to Dutch culture, from intolerant 'native' groups to Islamic groups.

countries, liberal values concerning gender (notably, women's equality) and homosexuality are regarded as the essence of Dutch national identity across the entire political spectrum.[8] Given the reputation of the Netherlands as a progressive and tolerant country, the prevalence of nativism here may seem surprising. Therefore, the Dutch case adds gravitas to the claim that nativism is rampant across Europe.

The concept of nativism

Many definitions of nativism include a differentiation between two groups: natives and immigrants. This distinction is based particularly on their respective temporal relation to the national space.[9] Peter Hervik, for example, defines nativism as the 'favoring of established inhabitants over newcomers that eventually leads to the marginalization of the latter'.[10] Similarly, Hans-Georg Betz's definition includes this temporal hierarchy between groups: 'Nativism represents primarily a political doctrine that holds that the interests and the will of the native-born and inhabitants of long standing should reign supreme over those of new arrivers … '[11]

To this temporal differentiation between groups constituting natives and immigrants, some conceptions of nativism explicitly add the element of a cultural threat by the latter. For Betz, nativists regard the nation as 'grounded in a particular historically evolved culture and system of values that must be preserved and defended'.[12] Combining temporality and cultural antagonisms, Betz's understanding of nativism revolves around the 'fear of a loss of identity as a result of being "overrun" by *culturally alien foreigners*'.[13] Furthermore, he states that 'the logic of nativism rests on the demarcation (inherent in any form

8   Rogers Brubaker, 'Between nationalism and civilizationism: the European populist moment in comparative perspective', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, vol. 40, no. 8, 2017, 1191–226; Menno Hurenkamp, Evelien Tonkens and Jan Willem Duyvendak, *Crafting Citizenship: Negotiating Tensions in Modern Society* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan 2012); Duyvendak, Geschiere and Tonkens (eds), *The Culturalization of Citizenship*.

9   The concept of nativism has been applied to a variety of social settings and phenomena, from competition regarding economic resources to political concerns (such as citizenship rights). However, we limit ourselves to nativism that is primarily concerned with problems regarding cultural difference. For US nativism that largely revolves around resource competition, see Brian N. Fry, *Nativism and Immigration Regulating the American Dream* (New York: LFB Scholarly Publishing 2007).

10 Peter Hervik, 'Xenophobia and nativism', in James D. Wright (ed.), *International Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 2nd edn (Amsterdam: Elsevier 2015), 796–801 (796).

11 Hans-Georg Betz, 'Nativism and the success of populist mobilization', *Revista Internacional de Pensamiento Político*, vol. 12, no. 2, 2017, 169–88 (171).

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid., 177, emphasis added. For Betz, 'nativism' revolves around political interests; his 'symbolic nativism' resembles our definition of nativism as it refers to *cultural* anxieties.

of nationalism) between those on the *inside* and those on the *outside*, between *foreigners* and *the native-born*, hailed as bearers of a culturally superior civilization'.[14] Aitana Guia's definition also associates immigrant groups with the notion of threat. In her view, one can speak of nativism when

> an immigrant group or ethnic minority is constructed as a fundamental threat to the 'nation' and thus immigration restriction of this particular group/s becomes a primary political (survival) goal. … in order to maintain some deemed essential characteristics of a given political unit. The essential characteristics … [are] the cultural, racial, religious, or political status quo … [15]

In order to sharpen the concept of nativism, it is useful to look more precisely at how conceptualizations of nativism conflate the *problem* (the nation is under threat) with the problematized *groups* held responsible for this threat (immigrant minorities). This conflation is questionable because the problem and the allegedly responsible groups are not predicated on the same differentiations. The main (not the only one) differentiation at work in the nativist problem is *culture*, juxtaposing what counts as authentically national with what is perceived as culturally alien (not belonging to the nation) to such a degree that it comes to be seen as a problem and even a threat. In contrast, the differentiation between groups (natives *v.* immigrants) is primarily informed by a *temporal* scale (automatically implying geographic distance and ethnic difference). Conflating the problem and groups is not only analytically confusing, it also reduces the nativist problem to immigrant minorities. It makes more sense to disentangle the actors from the problem, the who from the what/why, in other words, foreigners from *foreignness*.

This has two advantages. On the one hand, it makes it possible to acknowledge that, even in nativist contexts, some immigrant groups are either not perceived as a problem or a threat at all. Immigrants even have the potential in the long run of becoming natives in the eyes of the host nation or, indeed, 'colonizers and immigrants can come to define themselves as "natives"'.[16] On the other hand, disentangling foreignness and foreigners helps us understand when and why some 'natives' are actually considered foreign, culturally alien. In nativist discourses, foreignness is not only imputed to foreigners. The imputation of foreignness to (temporal and/or ethnic) natives is generally either ignored in literature on nativism or only mentioned in passing.[17]

14 Ibid., 182, emphasis added.
15 Aitana Guia, *The Concept of Nativism and Anti-immigrant Sentiments in Europe*, Max Weber Programme Working Paper 2016/20 (Fiesole: European University Institute 2016), 11.
16 Fry, *Nativism and Immigration*, 28.
17 For example, De Genova argues that nativists not only exclude 'foreigners' but 'also … minoritized fellow citizens who may be recast as virtual or de facto "foreigners"—indeed, "enemies"—within the space of the nation-state': Nicholas De Genova, 'The "native's point of view" in the anthropology of migration', *Anthropologial Theory*, vol. 16, no. 2–3, 2016, 227–40 (228).

However, even those who at first reduce nativism to immigration have to acknowledge that 'native' groups—such as elites—also can be and often are associated with the nativist problem. Guia, for example, addresses the potential problematization of natives (in such instances in quotation marks) when pointing out: '. . . according to a nativist logic, being born in a territory per se does not guarantee a claim to "nativeness," rather one has to be part of the "native" stock … or the "native" culture … in order to make a claim to the soil, to the territory.'[18] Where the potential distrust of natives remains relatively implicit in such theoretical remarks, it becomes explicit when Guia pictures a historical manifestation of nativism, namely the 'post-1989 European multiculturalism backlash': 'Nativists embody the real nation and thus "Natives" who embrace cultural diversity, cosmopolitanism or multiculturalism are traitors'; and 'Natives who defend a civic nation with limited levels of mandatory acculturation are *also endangering the nation*'.[19] Not reducing nativism to immigration allows us to acknowledge that nativism's problematization of foreignness is not limited to foreigners, just as native-ness cannot be equated with natives.

For a working definition that accounts for this complexity, we turn to John Higham's seminal *Strangers in the Land*.[20] Inspired by Higham, who defined nativism as an 'intense opposition to an internal minority on the ground of its foreign (i.e. "un-American") connections',[21] our working definition of nativism is 'an intense opposition to an internal minority that is seen as a threat to the nation on the ground of its foreignness'. 'Foreignness', replacing Higham's 'foreign', not only avoids the above-mentioned conflation (of problem and group), but also encompasses both 'native' and non-native minorities. The notion of foreignness allows us to observe that rather different groups can be the target of the same nativist (that is, *primarily cultural*) logic while, at the same time, taking into account that each problematized group can also be included or excluded on the basis of *other* dimensions of belonging, such as temporality, geography and ethnicity/race. Moreover, to Higham's definition, we add the element of 'threat' because it explains the motivation underlying the negative attitude (that is, 'opposition').

Similar to Higham's analysis of the United States,[22] we also distinguish three subtypes of nativism, all revolving around the perceived threat to the nation

18 Guia, *The Concept of Nativism and Anti-immigrant Sentiments in Europe*, 11. That nativism revolves more around the problem of cultural threat than groups is also reflected in Guia's text when she writes: 'For nativists, culture is static and operates in a zero-sum logic, so that the more other cultures take hold of a territory, the less chance the "native" culture has of surviving unscathed' (11).

19 Ibid., 12, emphasis added.

20 John Higham, *Strangers in the Land: Patterns of American Nativism, 1860–1925* [1955] (New Brunswick, NJ and London: Rutgers University Press 2011).

21 Ibid., 4.

22 Higham's historical analysis shows the complex and dynamic coexistence of three nativist subtypes in the United States, all targeting minorities of European and/or Asian extraction. Anti-Catholic nativism reared its head when European Catholic

by different groups: 1) secularist nativism that problematizes Islam and Muslims; 2) racial nativism that problematizes, among other things, black anti-racism; and 3) populist nativism that problematizes 'native' elites.

Secularist nativism

> *If immigration continues, Islamic culture in the Netherlands will keep growing—which I do not want—and we will end up living in a country that has not one million but many, many more Muslims adhering to an ideology that directly opposes ours. Then Dutch identity will be lost … I want to safeguard our identity, and this is why I want to put a stop to immigration.*[23]

Such statements, exemplary of the anti-Muslim developments in the Netherlands and in Europe in general, have often been analysed in terms of 'secularism'[24] and 'Islamophobia'.[25] We prefer to interpret them rather in terms of 'secularist nativism'. Secularism and Islamophobia are absolutely core to this secularist nativism, but they are, as terms, too broad to identify the specificities of contemporary right-wing discourse. Such nativist contestations do not so much revolve around religion in general or Islam per se; indeed, they tell us as much about the so-called 'natives' as about Muslims as a threat.

Characteristic of secularist nativism is the equating of immigration and Islamization, the framing of immigration as a problem of cultural difference, the reducing of such difference to an Islam-versus-national-culture dichotomy and the viewing of Islam as a threat to the national culture. Wilders is

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minorities came to be seen as a threat to US religious and political life. Political nativism came sweeping in during the Red Scare that saw leftist ideas and practices (e.g. strikes) that were inspired by Europe as a threat to US liberalism. Last, racial nativism was predicated on the hierarchical distinction between, on the one hand, 'true Americanness'—a conflation of white supremacy, 'Englishness' and 'Americanness'—and, on the other, minorities perceived as inferior yet threatening, such as Blacks, Asians, and Southern and Eastern Europeans. Although published in 1955 and dealing with the United States of more than a century ago, Higham's book offers a highly useful classification for understanding contemporary Europe.

23 Geert Wilders, 'Tweede Kamerdebat, over de verklaring van de minister-president, de minister van Algemene Zaken, over de internetfilm Fitna', 1 April 2008, 4896, available online at https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/h-tk-20072008-4880-4921.pdf (viewed 1 October 2019). Translations from the Dutch, unless otherwise stated, are by the authors.

24 Cora Schuh, Marian Burchardt and Monika Wohlrab-Sahr, 'Contested secularities: religious minorities and secular progressivism in the Netherlands', *Journal of Religion in Europe*, vol. 5, no. 3, 2012, 349–83; Kim Knott, Elizabeth Poole and Teemu Taira, *Media Portrayals of Religion and the Secular Sacred: Representation and Change* (London and New York: Routledge 2016).

25 Allen, *Islamophobia*; Esther Romeyn, 'Anti-Semitism and Islamophobia: spectropolitics and immigration', *Theory, Culture & Society*, vol. 31, no. 6, 2014, 77–101; Vossen, 'Classifying Wilders'; Wieringa, 'Portrait of a women's marriage'.

secularist nativism's most recognizable voice nationwide, if not internationally. However, his narrative, with slight variations, has been repeated by many other Dutch politicians since the early 1990s, including the aforementioned Pim Fortuyn, Hans Janmaat, Frits Bolkestein, Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Rita Verdonk. Public opinion-makers and intellectuals have also helped to reproduce this nativist twist on 'the clash of civilizations narrative', including the late Theo van Gogh, Afshin Ellian and Paul Cliteur, to name just the most prominent among the Dutch.

Respect for individual freedom, separation of church and state, and free speech have been the central themes through which Dutch culture and Islam are presented not only as different, but also as antagonistically incompatible. The most recent embodiment of this nativist narrative is Thierry Baudet. His party, the FvD, was founded in 2016, and became the biggest party in the Senate in 2019. Savvy at attracting media attention, the party is growing its membership, especially among younger generations. In the FvD's imagining, Dutch identity is marked by superiority and simultaneous vulnerability. As Baudet said in a 2017 election campaign speech: 'Our free, tolerant, progressive, curious, good-humoured, cheerful and democratic society is in a critical condition, even lethally wounded.'[26]

Among the variety of themes and issues through which Dutchness and Islam are discursively opposed, none is more salient than the concerns over gender and sexuality. More specifically, central to the debates are differences with regard to the position of women. In countless discussions on the Qu'ran, honour killings, female circumcisions, genital mutilation, forced marriages and domestic violence, Islam is (dis)qualified by its oppression of (non-emancipated) women, and juxtaposed to the gender equality that is considered quintessentially Dutch. A recent example of how the FvD constructs Muslims as a threat to the nation's cultural identity is the party's proposed Wet Bescherming Nederlandse Waarden, a bill intended, as its translation demonstrates, to 'protect Dutch values', all revolving around freedom (instead of oppression and excessive regulation) with regard to gendered marital arrangements and sexual practices. While the position of women is central in debates about Islam in many European contexts, nowhere is the role of homosexuality more prevalent as a self-image in nativist imageries ('homonationalism'[27]) than in the Netherlands.[28] It was especially the

26 Thierry Baudet, 'Westen lijdt aan een auto-immuunziekte' (speech at party conference), 15 January 2017, available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/toespraak-thierry-baudet-alv-fvd-2017 (viewed 2 October 2019).

27 Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2018); Jasbir Puar, 'Rethinking homonationalism', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, vol. 45, no. 2, 2013, 336–9; Jasbir K. Puar, 'Homonationalism as assemblage: viral travels, affective sexualities', *Revista Lusófona de Estudos Culturais*, vol. 3, no. 1, 2015, 319–37.

28 Paul Mepschen, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Evelien H. Tonkens, 'Sexual politics, Orientalism and multicultural citizenship in the Netherlands', *Sociology*, vol. 44, no. 5,

openly gay, anti-Islam populist Pim Fortuyn who contributed to the reputation of the Dutch as being 'pro-gay' in the early 2000s,[29] not only by flamboyantly embodying homosexuality himself, but also by discursively juxtaposing it to homophobia presented as endemic to Islam.[30]

In secularist nativism, gender and sexuality function according to the logic of the 'typicality effect',[31] whereby a salient element is presented as essentially characteristic for a whole group or culture, then juxtaposed to another culture, which is also reduced to its own salient, 'typical' feature: the effect renders the differences between cultures more important than the differences within each or the similarities between them. In this polarizing discourse, there is a remarkable absence of groups and attitudes that do not fit the stereotypical characterizations. Not only does the development of secularist nativism suggest there is no such a thing as a moderate Islam, it also glosses over the past century's long, hard struggle for gender and sexual equality (a struggle unrelated to any Muslim presence or absence), as well as the sexism and homophobia that persists in present-day Netherlands.

The other essential feature of secularist nativism, next to liberal sexuality and gender relations, is what we call *cultural Christianity*. The adjective refers to the fact that, in secularist nativism, Christianity is invoked 'as a cultural and civilizational identity, characterized by putatively shared values that have little or nothing to do with religious belief or practice'.[32] This de-substantialization means that 'references to a shared theological unity or to confessional identity remain largely absent', as are those to 'personal faith, or religious experiences'.[33] The FvD is the most recent voice propagating this Europe-wide trope of 'cultural Christianity'. In a 2017 pre-election speech, for example, its leader, Thierry Baudet, said: 'One does not have to subscribe

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2010, 962–79; Éric Fassin, 'National identities and transnational intimacies: sexual democracy and the politics of immigration in Europe', *Public Culture*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2010, 507–29; Maja Hertoghs and Willem Schinkel, 'The state's sexual desires: the performance of sexuality in the Dutch asylum procedure', *Theory and Society*, vol. 47, no. 6, 2018, 691–716.

29 Fortuyn founded the political party Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF, List Pim Fortuyn), which obtained 17 per cent of the vote in its first elections for the Chamber of Representatives in 2002. It won the highest number of seats ever recorded for a new party. Several days before the elections, Fortuyn was murdered by an environmental and animal rights activist.

30 These depictions of Dutchness and Islam are just a recent manifestation of an older, broader opposition between liberal modernity and backward-looking traditions; see Joan Wallach Scott, *The Politics of the Veil* (Princeton, NJ and Woodstock, Oxon.: Princeton University Press 2009).

31 Joep Leerssen, 'L'effet de typique', in Alain Montandon (ed.), *Moeurs et Images: Études d'imagologie européenne* (Clermont-Ferrand: Université Blaise Pascal 1997), 129–34.

32 Brubaker, 'Between nationalism and civilizationism', 1199.

33 Ernst van den Hemel, '(Pro)claiming tradition: the "Judeo-Christian" roots of Dutch society and the rise of conservative nationalism', in Rosi Braidotti, Bolette Blaagaard, Tobijn de Graauw and Eva Midden (eds), *Transformations of Religion and the Public Sphere: Postsecular Publics* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2014), 53–76 (57).

to Christianity's metaphysical assumptions to still appreciate the idea of the resurrection as the guiding motif of our civilization.'[34] A telling example is FvD's online petition to 'save' Christmas:

> Christmas belongs in the Netherlands. But the NPO [Dutch public broadcaster] wants to banish the term and various schools have announced that, in the name of diversity and inclusion, they will not celebrate Christmas. Our culture is under attack and our oikophobic, self-hating elites are enthusiastically participating in its degradation and erosion. Forum for Democracy maintains that Christmas is something that must be saved. This degradation of our traditions and our way of life must stop. Our elites' self-hatred—the oikophobia—must stop.[35]

A variation of the de-substantialization of Christianity (that is, cultural Christianity) is its discursive association with other religions (Judaism) and secular categories (humanism and the Enlightenment). Geert Wilders, for example, warns that the alleged European Union (EU) policies to host Muslim migrants will 'undermine the Judaeo-Christian and humanistic identity of our nations' that are essentially 'free and civilized'.[36] The fact that even those who foreground religious Christianity embrace cultural Christianity illustrates even the latter's hegemonic status. For example, the established centrist Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA, Christian Democratic Appeal) emphasizes that 'we are grounded in a tradition of Judaeo-Christian

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34 Thierry Baudet, 'Thierry Baudet: FVD is het vlaggeschip van de renaissancevloot', 15 January 2017, available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/toespraak-thierry-baudet-fvd-alv-2017 (viewed 2 October 2019).

35 The petition 'Stop de zelfhaat! Behoud het Kerstfeest!' (Stop the self-hatred! Save Christmas!), 16 December 2016, is available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/kerstmis (viewed 16 October 2019). The concept of 'oikophobia'—renunciation of one's home—is directly taken from a book that Baudet wrote before becoming a politician: *Oikofobie, de angst voor het eigene* (2013). The way in which Baudet formulated his nativist views regarding cultural Christianity can also be demonstrated by his performance on a Christian television programme, 'De tafel van Tijs' (broadcast 14 February 2017). There, Baudet claimed there was an 'identity crisis of the West … Many problems we face today have to do with our inability to formulate our identity *vis-à-vis* this great adversary that arrived here, the fact that we do not know who we are.' To solve the problem of 'uprootedness', he proposed to 'reinvent ourselves' by re-embracing Christianity, which not only embodied typical 'western values' (such as freedom of speech), but could also fulfil the fundamental need 'of the Dutch people' for cohesion and meaning. More concretely, he advocated that Christianity should be taught at all primary and secondary schools in the Netherlands. Asked whether he himself was Christian, Baudet replied that he was an 'agnostic cultural Christian': a video of 'De tafel van Tijs' is available on the *Evangesliche Omroep* website at https://portal.eo.nl/programmas/tv/de-tafel-van-tijs/gemist/2017/02/14-de-tafel-van-tijs (viewed 2 October 2019).

36 Geert Wilders, 'Speech Geert Wilders in Praag (16-12-07 MENF-congres)', available on the *PVV* website at www.pvv.nl/36-fj-related/geert-wilders/9674-speech-geert-wilders-in-praag-16-12-2017-menf-congres.html (viewed 2 October 2019).

values': '. . . whether we believe [in God] or not, whether we attend church or not: The Netherlands is still in its philosophical foundation a Christian country.'[37] Such references to cultural Christianity rest on a triple conflation. First, they conflate religious categories that have historically often had an antagonistic relationship (such as Judaism and Christianity). Second, they conflate Christianity with predominantly secular movements (humanism and the Enlightenment) and with 'values traditionally associated with secularism, such as the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, gay rights … feminism' and individualism.[38] Third, they conflate national identity with broader, transnational categories of 'the West' and 'Europe'.[39] The nativist discourse constructing Muslims and Islam as a threat to national culture relies heavily on a variety of emplotments of the nation's historical trajectories, ranging from a nostalgic lament about the decline of national culture to warnings of imminent apocalypse.[40] While there is some variation among the nativist depictions of national history, the roles assigned to the specific groups remain constant: Muslims are perpetrators, the leftist elites are accomplices (see the section on 'populist nativism'), the Dutch nation (and its cultural identity) are victims, and nativist political parties are saviours.

The position of the Muslim minority is, however, rather ambiguous: *despite* being a minority, Muslims are seen as a (potential) threat capable of annihilating Dutch culture. At the same time, *because* they are a minority, one of the solutions for the problem of cultural antagonism often proposed by nativists is assimilation: the imperative to 'become Dutch'. Despite being born in the Netherlands and possessing Dutch citizenship, Dutch Muslims are treated as not fully 'Dutch', not only by right-wing politicians but also by mainstream

37 Sybrand Buma, *Verwarde tijden!* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Weekblad Boeken 2017). Similarly, in one of the key 2017 pre-election debates, Buma (then party leader) even claimed that equality, including gender equality, had been intrinsic to Christianity for 'thousands of years'.

38 Hemel, '(Pro)claiming tradition', 59.

39 It should be noted that the two main themes through which secularist nativism constructs cultural incompatibility between Dutchness and Islam are often intertwined and entangled. When Wilders was put under pressure in a debate in the Dutch parliament to explain exactly what he meant by 'Judaeo-Christian-humanist culture', he replied by contrasting it to what he viewed as typical for Islam: 'It is a culture that does *not* kill homosexuals' and infidels, that 'allows apostasy, and treats men and women equally, and respects the separation of church and state': Geert Wilders, quoted in 'Debat over kabinetsstandpunt t.a.v. het WRR-rapport "Dynamiek in islamitisch activisme"', 6 September 2007, available on the *Rijksbegroting* website at www.rijksbegroting.nl/2007/kamerstukken,2007/9/6/han8168a06.html (viewed 2 October 2019).

40 For a more elaborate analysis of the various nativist narratives of national history with its glory, decline and resurrection, see our article: Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'Secularist nativism: national identity and the religious Other in the Netherlands', in Ernst van den Hemel, lrene Stengs and Markus Balkenhol (eds), *The Secular Sacred* (forthcoming).

institutions and organizations that measure their a priori assumed lack of assimilation. Government and social-scientific surveys often use variables such as levels of secularism, interethnic contacts and choice of spouse to measure migrants' assimilation into the Dutch national community, just as the acceptance of gender equality and homosexuality is regarded as proof of successful assimilation.[41] However, where nativism demands assimilation and promises acceptance into the symbolic national community, it simultaneously defers the successful fulfilment of its solution. No matter how well Muslims (or secularists from Muslim-majority countries) integrate—from accepting homosexuality to openly claiming and embracing Dutch national identity—their assimilation is never considered complete.[42] As the prominent sociologist Willem Schinkel observes: 'The problem of "passing," …applies only to "non-natives" in the nonliteral sense. This…means that to "pass" as "Dutch" or as "European" is only up for continuous testing to those a priori considered as "different".'[43] Nativists often assume that beneath surface-level signs of assimilation, Muslims remain more deeply attached to their own culture, beliefs and loyalties. This recalls the suspicion Protestants in the Netherlands once showed towards Roman Catholics who were assumed to be secretly more loyal to the Pope than to the Dutch nation.

The consequence of this disbelief in the attainability of the successful assimilation of Muslims is an idea that has been promoted by right-wing nativists: that is, territorial displacement to the lands of 'origin'. Territorial displacement as a geographic solution to a cultural problem is often suggested in discussions about various (local) events (street intimidation or petty crime, frequently framed in terms of clashes between civilizations or religions) or visible religious symbols (headscarves or mosques). Dutch citizens who are framed as Muslims are urged to 'go back' to where 'they' 'belong' or 'came from'. Although it has not reached the status of official government policy, the idea of territorial displacement has indeed become more acceptable and normalized, evinced by the fact that it is invoked by the liberal-conservative prime minister Mark Rutte of the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy). Commenting on a political demonstration during which Dutch citizens of Turkish descent waved Turkish flags, Rutte said that demonstrators should *pleur op!* (piss off!). The

41 Murat Aydemir, 'Introduction: indiscretions at the sex/culture divide', in Murat Aydemir (ed.), *Indiscretions: At the Intersection of Queer and Postcolonial Theory* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2011), 9–30.
42 See, for example, Dutch (former) politicians of Turkish descent Zinhi Özdil, Selçuk Öztuk and Tunahan Kuzu; and Josip Kešić and Tymen Peverelli, 'Hoe nationalisitisch zijn de nieuwe partijen?', 15 March 2017, available on the *Waterstof* website at www.waterstof-ezine.nl/hoe-nationalistisch-zijn-de-nieuwe-politieke-partijen (viewed 3 October 2019).
43 Willem Schinkel, *Imagined Societies: A Critique of Immigrant Integration in Western Europe* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2017), 104–5.

FvD took it a step further, promoting physical exclusion as a way to deal with cultural Otherness. The party's official website stated:

> Our immigration policy should be oriented towards those we need here and those whom we can receive (on the basis of cultural background included). When integration fails, remigration is the best solution … there must be a mandate for remigration as an alternative penalty. … the Netherlands wants to decide for itself whom to absorb. Immigrants with extreme political ideas that are not in line with our western civilization should immediately be deported to their country of origin. … [We] encourage remigration when integration (*assimilation*) fails.[44]

Both the problems and the solutions referred to by secularist nativism show that criticism of Islam is not just a form of religious opinion. What is primarily at stake is the predicament of Dutch cultural identity. Who belongs to the nation and who does not?[45]

Racial nativism

> *The purpose of this bill is to preserve Black Pete for the Netherlands. The magnificent Saint Nicholas tradition, in which Black Pete plays a prominent, indispensable role, is under threat of being destroyed. The Dutch tradition of Saint Nicholas is a part of national identity, and attacking Black Pete means much more than making some minor adjustment to a tradition; it is an attack on Dutch identity …* [46]

This quote summarizes the attitude of the PVV's most prominent ideologue, Martin Bosma, to the fiercely debated figure of *Zwarte Piet* (Black Pete), the servile assistant to *Sinterklaas* (Saint Nicholas), 'the Netherlands' most popular cultural tradition' and regarded by many as typically Dutch.[47] Since 2011, activists have led an anti-Black Pete movement in the Netherlands. The movement has resulted in heated public debates, demonstrations and violent arrests of its activists (among whom Quinsy Gario and Jerry King Luther Afriyie are the most prominent). The activists' main argument is that

44   FvD, 'Immigratie en remigratie' (position paper), emphasis added, available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/standpunten/immigratie-remigratie (viewed 3 October 2019).

45   Although Islam is used as the example here, the religious nativist logic is not a logic exclusively directed at Islam. Christians who oppose the dominant national self-image (liberal gender relations and [gay] sexuality), can and will become targets of national criticism and sentiment, as we have seen during discussions about the evangelical Christian Nashville Statement of 2017.

46   Martin Bosma, quoted in Wierd Duk and Tobias den Hartog, 'Zogenaamde antiracisten vernachelen onze cultuur', *Het Algemeen Dagblad*, 15 February 2017.

47   Jeroen Rodenberg and Pieter Wagenaar, 'Essentializing "Black Pete": competing narratives surrounding the Sinterklaas tradition in the Netherlands', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 22, no. 9, 2016, 716–28 (716).

Black Pete, portrayed by people wearing blackface and a dark curly wig, displaying infantile behaviour and adopting a subservient role, re-enacts colonial stereotypes and perpetuates institutional racism in general. More than any other social or political issue, criticism of Black Pete as racist has triggered not only extreme racism towards the anti-racists, but also explicit nativism predicated on racialized notions of Self and Other.

Although racism is an important dimension in these debates as well as in the Dutch context more generally, we propose to understand these debates in terms of 'racial nativism' rather than racism. As a narrower concept than racism, racial nativism is more precise in capturing a particular entanglement between cultural and racial dimensions. Where the nativist problem revolves primarily around the idea that the national culture is under threat, the racial dimension lies in the construction of an internal minority as black. The main concern for nativist supporters of Black Pete is their combination: the national culture is under threat due to an internal enemy racialized as black. It is crucial to emphasize that, by analysing such discourses in terms of racial nativism, we by no means intend to propagate what has become a pervasive attitude in Dutch academia and society at large: the denial of racism.[48] Instead, racial nativism is an analytical tool not to avoid, but to specify how racism functions in a context of a culturally oriented yet implicitly racialized nativism. It is important to emphasize that racial nativism in general is not limited to the far right. The position taken by prominent politicians from the Dutch CDA is telling. Raymond Knops, the Netherlands' current State Secretary of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, also regards anti-racist probing into national history as a denial of 'where we come from' and a threat to national unity. In the politicians' view, anti-racists should be held accountable not only for undermining the national culture, but also for challenging the nation's moral compass by associating it with racism. That the voice of nativism is not limited to the far right becomes clear in the views of the conservative-liberal VVD, one of the country's largest parties in recent decades. Racial nativism is clearly exemplified in this excerpt from a letter published as part of Prime Minister Rutte's 2017 election campaign:

> We're feeling a growing unease as people abuse our freedom in a way that lets them be destructive here, when in fact they came to our country for that very freedom. [Those are] people who do not want to conform, denigrate our customs and reject our values. Those who assault gays, who harass women

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48 Schinkel, *Imagined Societies*, 113–16; Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Coloni-alism and Race* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press 2016); Dienke Hondius, 'Black Dutch voices: reports from a country that leaves racism unchallenged', in Isabel Hoving and Philomena Essed (eds), *Dutch Racism* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi 2014), 273–94; Dienke Hondius, 'Race and the Dutch: on the uneasiness surrounding racial issues in the Netherlands', in Sharam Alghasi, Thomas Hylland Eriksen and Halleh Gorashi (ed.), *Paradoxes of Cultural Recognition: Perspectives from Northern Europe* (London and New York: Routledge 2009), 39–58.

wearing short skirts or who *call ordinary Dutch citizens racists*. I understand very
well the thinking that if someone rejects our country's fundamental values, the
preference is for them to *leave*. This is what I feel too. Conform (*doe normaal*) or
get lost.[49]

If Rutte's letter implies that people accused of racism are just 'ordinary Dutch
citizens', so what does that make the anti-racist activists? The VVD's message
is about much more than championing social conformism. Racial nativism
interprets anti-racism's allegations of historical and, in particular, present-
day racism (embodied by the Black Pete figure seen as a racist caricature) as
evidence of the accusers' insufficient 'Dutchness'. The idea is that only outsid-
ers can mistakenly claim that the Dutch have a racist tradition when 'we all
know' that the Dutch are not racist, thus implying that those who make such a
claim cannot be Dutch themselves. From the nativists' perspective, being
unable to grasp the essence of this typical Dutch family tradition, by criticizing
and therefore misinterpreting it, the black anti-Black Pete activists enact their
own lack of 'Dutchness'. Ironically, anti-racists are then often accused of
racism because they bring up the question of race and racism, which runs
counter to the image of Dutch society as being 'post-racial'.[50] Accusations of
racism are also perceived as an affront to a major pillar of the Netherlands'
positive self-image: tolerance.[51] Since being tolerant is considered non-racist
by default, criticizing Black Pete as racist is seen as a threat to 'Dutchness'
itself. So not only is their 'Dutchness' questioned, but the anti-Black Pete activ-
ists are perceived as a threat to the nation's cultural identity.

   The anti-Black Pete activists are not only seen as a minority that enacts its
own lack of Dutchness by misinterpreting and therefore threatening the
'typical' national culture. They are also constructed as a foreign group.
Exemplary of the way black activists are rendered foreign is how the PVV
ideologue Martin Bosma formulates it: 'A small group of so-called anti-
racists are waging a campaign to dismantle our culture. … While we, the
Dutch, need to make our own culture accommodating, there is no reciprocal
expectation of the groups who come here.'[52] Rather than regarding them as
Dutch citizens with a different opinion, the anti-racists are framed as non-
Dutch *because* they have a different opinion and because they are perceived
as coming from *elsewhere*. In other words, where in racial nativism the main
concern is to protect national culture, the group held responsible for the
threat is racialized by references to geographic origins and racialization of
the substance of the arguments in the debate. In other words, nativists tend

49 Mark Rutte, 'Aan alle Nederlanders', 22 January 2017, emphasis added, published in
    several national newspapers and on the *VVD* website at https://www.vvd.nl/nieuws/
    lees-hier-de-brief-van-mark (viewed 3 October 2019).
50 Wekker, *White Innocence*.
51 See ibid.
52 Martin Bosma, quoted in Duk and Hartog, 'Zogenaamde antiracisten vernachelen onze
    cultuur'.

to conflate the ideological positions in the Black Pete debate—for and against the Black Pete figure—with the racialized opposition of white ('ordinary', 'Dutch') versus black, granting the latter less right to speak about the predicament of Dutch culture. Due both to their views on the Black Pete figure as well as to their discursive position (geographic-racial foreignness), black anti-racism activists are not considered to be among the fully fledged 'Dutch'.

To understand how racial nativism functions in a context that sees itself as tolerant and 'post-racial', it is crucial to take into account *where* and *how* it is enacted. How racial nativism and racism appear in public and political debate is relatively less explicit than how they appear in other social contexts such as the Internet.[53] Their online manifestations not only illustrate how the explicitness of racialization is context-dependent; they also help to increase our understanding of the public debate on Black Pete. The most blatant and vulgar forms of racial nativism (and racism) can be found on the Internet rather than within daily public or political spheres. Online, anti-Black Pete and anti-racism activists, such as Quinsy Gario, Jerry King Luther Afriyie and Sylvana Simons, who founded the new anti-racist political party Bij1, have received thousands of death threats and plenty of verbal abuse: the racist and racial-nativist assaults have ranged from being called a 'monkey' and a 'slave' to assertions that these individuals should 'be hanged', 'be sold', 'go back' or 'leave'. That an accumulation of aspects of foreignness (including the implicit and explicit racialization) is operative here, rather than just a difference in cultural opinions, is demonstrated by the fact that nativist responses to 'white' anti-racists are clearly more benevolent and do not invoke territorial displacement as a desired consequence.

More recently, with the electoral success and the public presence more generally of Forum voor Democratie, a shift can be observed in the relationship between the cultural and the racial in racial nativism. The racial aspect, so far remaining relatively implicit, has become more explicit. In a 2015 radio debate, Baudet stated: 'I don't want Europe to become Africanized … I'm not demonizing [Africans]; I'm just saying what I see as desirable and undesirable. What I find undesirable is that more and more, we are looking like other parts of the world … I want Europe to remain dominant, white and culturally as it is.'[54] Similarly, he argued in a 2017 election campaign speech that

53 For various forms of institutional and everyday racism, see Philomena Essed, *Understanding Everyday Racism: An Interdisciplinary Theory* (Newbury Park, CA, London and New Delhi: Sage 1991); Wekker, *White Innocence*; Sinan Çankaya, *Buiten veiliger dan binnen: in- en uitsluiting van etnische minderheden binnen de politieorganisatie* (Delft: Uitgeverij Eburon 2011); Essed and Hoving, *Dutch Racism*; Amade M'charek, 'Beyond fact or fiction: on the materiality of race in practice', *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 28, no. 3, 2013, 420–42; and Amade M'charek, Katharina Schramm and David Skinner, 'Technologies of belonging: the absent presence of race in Europe', *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 39, no. 4, 2014, 459–67.

54 Thierry Baudet, transcript of interview on radio show *De Vluchtweek*, 17 September 2015; 'Thierry Baudet in de Vluchtweek', an audio recording of the programme is

elites' self-hatred has helped 'the homeopathic dilution of the Dutch population, mixing with people from all over the world, to the point that the Dutchman will cease to exist'.[55] Other examples of Baudet's racism range from employment of the term 'boreal Europe'[56]—a dog whistle for white Europeans used by the French extreme right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen —to his regular meetings with white supremacists such as the American Jared Taylor.[57] The FvD's racist reputation has been bolstered by public statements by other party members, from claims about the biological causes of some groups' 'inferior intelligence' to coining the term *dobberneger* (drifting Negro), popular among right-wing media when provocatively referring to African migrants who have died while attempting to cross the Mediterranean.[58] The fact that even these politicians distance themselves from overt racism by emphasizing *cultural* differences actually shows the intimate entanglement between the explicitly cultural and the implicitly racial dimensions.

Populist nativism

> Now we are under attack by an enemy we have never before faced. An atypical enemy. An enemy who wears our own uniform. We are being attacked by those who should be protecting us. Those who should be safeguarding our integrity, our culture and our traditions. Those who bear responsibility for the survival of the community; these people, precisely these people have—from within—turned against us.[59]

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available on the *AmsterdamFM* website at www.amsterdamfm.nl/thierry-baudet-in-de-vluchtweek (viewed 3 October 2019).

55   Thierry Baudet, transcript and video of speech at election campaign meeting in Maastricht, 7 March 2017, available on the FvD's *Facebook* page at www.facebook.com/forumvoordemocratie/videos/1123707407754969 (viewed 3 October 2019).

56   Paradoxically, in the first part of the same sentence in which he invokes 'our boreal Europe', Baudet says: 'Xenophobia is alien to us—no single culture on earth has ever been as open and pluralist as ours has always been': Baudet, 'FvD is het vlaggenschip van de renaissancevloot'.

57   Marijn Kruk, 'Hoe Thierry Baudet aan de lippen hing van Jean-Marie Le Pen', *De Correspondent*, 19 February 2018; Dimitri Tokmetzis, Dennis L'Ami and Mick van Biezen, 'Thierry Baudet ontmoette in het geheim een Amerikaanse racist van alt-right', *De Correspondent*, 20 December 2017.

58   In their pre-political phases, new right-wing movements show transnational developments in the sense that they all a) occur in many national contexts; b) draw inspiration from the American alt-right; and c) use the Internet as their main vehicle for knowledge diffusion and community-building, especially via memes that convey radical meanings through irony. For *GeenStijl*, a right-wing website in the Netherlands, see Merijn Oudenampsen, 'Over GeenStijl en de dubbele bodem van de rechtse ironie', *De Groene Amsterdammer*, 15 July 2013. For a radical-right student association in Belgium, see Ico Maly, 'Waarom Schild en Vrienden geen marginaal fenomeen is', 10 September 2018, available on the *Diggit Magazine* website at www.diggitmagazine.com/articles/schild-vrienden (viewed 3 October 2019).

59   Baudet, 'FvD is het vlaggenschip van de renaissancevloot'.

This excerpt from another of Baudet's 2017 election campaign speeches exemplifies a discourse often understood in terms of 'populism',[60] or the 'populist radical right'.[61] Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Kaltwasser, for example, define populism as a 'thin-centered ideology that considers society to be ultimately separated into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups, "the pure people" versus "the corrupt elite,"',[62] in which the former can be equated with 'the nation' ('defined either in civic or in ethnic terms'[63]). This definition does not take into account that elites—fellow citizens of the same ethnicity—can also be considered as not belonging to the people/nation in *cultural* terms. Rogers Brubaker's perspective is more open when he argues that 'European national populism bring[s] the vertical and horizontal registers together by characterizing "the elite"—political, cultural, or economic—as "outside" as well as "on top"'.[64]

While populism revolves around the vertical distinction (elites–people), nativism is rather concerned with the horizontal distinction between who belongs to the nation and who does not. So populism and nativism can go hand-in-hand. That the elite is the problematized *group* is populist, yet the *logic* by which this group is problematized (on the ground of its threatening foreignness) is nativist. When the elites are the target of a culturally oriented nativism, we call it 'populist nativism'.[65]

From the beginning of the 1990s, the role of the elites has been conceived and criticized in varying ways in the discourse of populist nativism. One variant is formulated by influential right-wing conservatives such as Frits Bolkestein and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who point the finger of blame at elites' political culture. Focused on consensus, harmony and the depoliticizing accommodation of difference, this political culture has inhibited critical political and public discussion on immigration and integration issues.[66] Gradually, politicians of the centre,[67] as well as on the far right, have been successfully

60 Jones, 'What is new about Dutch populism?'; Vossen, 'Populism in the Netherlands after Fortuyn'; Vossen, *The Power of Populism*.
61 Mudde, 'Who's afraid of the European radical right?'.
62 Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press 2017), 6.
63 Ibid., 11.
64 Brubaker, 'Between nationalism and civilizationism', 1192; Rogers Brubaker, 'Populism and nationalism', *Nations and Nationalism*, pub. online 29 April 2019, doi.org/10.1111/nana.
65 Nativism is often seen as one of the main characteristics of 'populism' and the 'populist radical right' because of anti-immigrant ideas: Cas Mudde, *Populist Radical Right Parties in Europe* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press 2007). However, from the perspective of nativism, we can regard populism as one possible way in which the nativist logic can be enacted, not only against immigrants but also, vertically, against 'native' elites.
66 Justus Uitermark, Paul Mepschen and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'Populism, sexual politics, and the exclusion of Muslims in the Netherlands', in John R. Bowen, Christophe Bertossi, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Mona Lena Krook (eds), *European States and Their Muslim Citizens: The Impact of Institutions on Perceptions and Boundaries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2013), 235–55.
67 Sybrand Buma's *Verwarde tijden!* exemplifies how populist nativism is not limited to the far right (PVV, FvD), as it is also embraced by more centrist parties such as his CDA. For

conflating 'elites', 'the left' and 'multiculturalism', claiming that elites are not really 'native' since they are not only culturally alienated themselves, but also support the interests of migrants ('multiculturalism'). While some scholars uncritically subscribe to the nativist premise of alleged 'Dutch multicultural-ism', others, such as Willem Schinkel, more accurately distinguish between political rhetoric and historical evidence:

> In current debates in Western Europe, 'multiculturalism' is not primarily a type of policy, and neither is it a political philosophy. Most of all, it is a rhetorical trope of recent invention. Denouncing a multiculturalism that in most cases never existed, often even in the form of a confession ('yes, we were naïve multi-culturalists, but now we have become realists'), proves a particularly potent means of instituting hegemonic constructions of national society versus non-belonging cultural aliens.[68]

Many scholars in the social sciences have adopted this historically inaccurate political narrative. However, it is important to remember that the left has rarely had much political power; Dutch policies have never been truly multi-cultural;[69] and nativist self-images (gender equality, sexual progressiveness and freedom) are, ironically, more left-wing than right-wing in both origin and substance. Despite the fact that the narrative blaming alleged multicultur-alism and the leftist elite distorts recent history, it has nevertheless been increasingly accepted, internalized and perpetuated in the public debate by the left itself.

One of the main aspects of this alleged 'multiculturalist' attitude on the part of elites is their lack of appreciation of national culture and the diminishing presence of 'Dutchness' in the public sphere and state institutions.[70] A

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a critical analysis of Buma's essay, see Jan Willem Duyvendak and Tamar de Waal, 'Het eenmalig veroordelen van Buma's Schoo-lezing is niet genoeg', 23 September 2017, available on the *De Groene Amsterdammer* website at www.groene.nl/artikel/het-eenmalig-veroordelen-van-buma-s-schoo-lezing-is-niet-genoeg (viewed 3 October 2019).

68 Schinkel, *Imagined Societies*, 5–6.

69 Jan Willem Duyvendak and Peter Scholten, 'Beyond the Dutch "multicultural model": the coproduction of integration policy frames in the Netherlands', *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, vol. 12. no. 3, 2011, 331–48; Jan Willem Duyvendak and Peter Scholten, 'Deconstructing the Dutch multicultural model: a frame perspective on Dutch immigrant integration policymaking', *Comparative European Politics*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2012, 266–82; Rogier van Reekum, Jan Willem Duyvendak and Cristophe Bertossi, 'National models of integration and the crisis of multiculturalism: a critical comparative perspective', *Patterns of Prejudice*, vol. 46. no. 5, 2012, 417–26; Jan Willem Duyvendak, Rogier van Reekum, Fatiha El-Hajjari and Cristophe Bertossi, 'Mysterious multiculturalism: the risks of using model-based indices for making meaningful comparisons', *Comparative European Politics*, vol. 11, no. 5, 2013, 599–620; Schinkel, *Imagined Societies*, 1–34, 122–55, 156–91, 218–35.

70 The characterization of the elite as lacking national awareness and pride is a populist twist (as it focuses on the elite specifically) on a much broader and longstanding self-image applied to the Dutch as a whole, both as a negative and positive trait. See

recurring solution for this 'problem' has been formulated in terms of policy recommendations for cultural and educational policies. Telling are the PVV's ambitions that 'every public building' must have a Dutch flag, 'a lot of national history' should be taught at schools, the Dutch language should be 'defended' (including the 'marginalized' Afrikaans spoken in South Africa), and the state radio must broadcast more 'Dutch music'.[71] Also referring to the elites, FvD's Baudet argues: 'One does not believe in the Netherlands anymore … not in our language … in our arts, in our past … our holidays, heroes and traditional architecture.'[72] Such ideas are more than nation-building: they are deeply nativist as they thematize the protection of national culture against a perceived threat from an internal enemy deemed to be alienated from the national culture that it is expected to cherish, embody and protect.

A recent variation of this disqualification of the elites takes cues from the conservative American William Lind who, as early as a decade ago, used the term 'cultural Marxism'. In the Dutch context, this notion has been elaborated by conservative intellectuals such as Paul Cliteur, who has recently become the chair of FvD's 'scientific' think tank. In a co-edited book entitled *Cultural Marxism*, Cliteur employs the term to describe the elites' project of destroying western culture by spreading and imposing Marxist and postmodern theories that boil down to self-destruction.[73] The nativism argument here is that elites, inspired by postmodern theories about gender construction and power relations, direct their 'cultural self-hatred' also to 'Western masculinity' (seen by those who propagate the notion of cultural Marxism as one of the pillars of western heritage and identity). The Dutch right-wing author Sid Lukkassen, influenced by the conservative Jordan Peterson, is a case in point. Lukkassen's book *Avondland en identiteit* (The West and Identity) evokes German philosopher Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendland*

Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'Nationalism without nationalism? Dutch self-images among the progressive left', in Duyvendak, Geschiere and Tonkens (eds), *The Culturalization of Citizenship*, 49–71; and Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak, 'Anti-nationalist nationalism: the paradox of Dutch national identity', *Nations and Nationalism*, vol. 22, no. 3, 2016, 581–97.

71 PVV, *Hún Brussel, Ons Nederland: Verkiezingsprogramma 2012–2017* (2012), 43, 45, available on the *Publicaties Nederlandse Politieke Partijen* website at http://pubnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/verkiezingsprogramma/TK/pvv2012/PVVTK2012.pdf (viewed 5 October 2019).

72 Thierry Baudet, speech after Senate elections, 21 March 2019, available (video) on the FvD's *YouTube* channel at www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ABtS0Hd12s (viewed 14 October 2019). With respect to cultural policy, the FvD's website states that, because the elites have tried to 'alienate the Dutch man from his history and culture', there should be 'investment in Dutch film and art', and the state media should broadcast more of 'Dutch culture': 'Cultuurbeleid', available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/standpunten/cultuurbeleid (viewed 3 October 2019).

73 Paul Cliteur, Jesper Jansen and Perry Pierik (eds), *Cultuurmarxisme: er waart een spook door Europa* (Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt 2018).

(The Decline of the West). By 'waging war' against masculinity, feminism and feminized elites are seen as undermining western culture and identity.[74] While women do not contribute sufficiently to the demographic battle against Muslims, western (feminized) men do not protect their historically masculine (patriarchal and colonial) culture. In that sense, in populist nativism, gender equality functions in two rather contradictory ways: on the one hand, it is seen as the defining essence of Dutchness to be promoted and protected against patriarchal and masculine Islam. At the same time, this very essence (and its excesses) is regarded as a problem because it undermines European civilization. In other words, in order to define and defend Dutchness against Islam, some nativists promote both liberal and conservative views on gender equality.[75]

Populist nativism also assaults the native elites' pro-European attitudes and the European Union at large. Telling in this regard is the fact that PVV claims it fights for the 'survival' of the Dutch identity 'that is about to abandon its ancient roots and replace it by multiculturalism, cultural relativism and a European super state, all of this under the guidance of a smug elite that lost its way a long time ago'.[76] Similarly, FvD has advocated an increase of national sovereignty within the context of the European Union, as it believes that the 'policy of the European Union is a threat to European civilization … maintaining safety and our countries' own identity, requires we have ourselves the power to control our borders and decide ourselves about granting or depriving residents of citizenship.'[77] The main argument—the European Union is the enemy of the nation—relies on the distinction nativists make between Europe as a political project and Europe as a culture or civilization. They reject and attack the former because (pro-)EU policies (most notably with respect to immigration) either passively allow or actively undermine the nation's culture and identity.

As the above discussion shows, populist nativism attributes differing degrees of agency and responsibility (from passive neglect to active complicity) and intentionality (from unintended consequences to deliberate policies) to the elite's role in undermining the nation. Where in populist nativism the

74 Sid Lukkassen, *Avondland en identiteit* (Soesterberg: Uitgeverij Aspekt 2015).

75 A case in point is the recent essay by Baudet containing the following: 'We are now at the point where we must begin to think about what comes after—and this will necessarily be some form of traditionalism. Because individualism makes our societies so weak (resulting … in an unwillingness to defend our civilization, to resist mass immigration, and even to reproduce, among other things), our society shall either regress and regenerate, or it will be replaced.': Thierry Baudet, 'Houellebecq's unfinished critique of liberal modernity', *American Affairs*, vol. 3, no. 2, 2019, 213–24.

76 Geert Wilders, 'Onafhankelijkheidsverklaring', 13 March 2005, available on the *PVV* website at www.pvv.nl/index.php/component/content/article/30-publicaties/684-onafhankelijkheidsverklaring (viewed 3 October 2019).

77 FvD, 'Europees realism: Verklaring over de toekomst van Europa', 28 February 2019, available on the *FvD* website at https://forumvoordemocratie.nl/actueel/fvd-bouwt-eurosceptische-alliantie-om-timmermans-en-verhofstadt-te-stoppen (viewed 3 October 2019).

elite operates as a *direct* threat, in secularist and racial nativism it functions more as an *indirect* threat, in that populist nativism enables (passively or actively) the other enemies (Muslims, Blacks) to enact their destructive power.

The return of the native

This article dissected recent right-wing discourses in the Netherlands into categories that we have called secularist, racial and populist nativism, each of the three constructing a different minority in the same way: as an enemy of the nation due to its allegedly threatening foreignness. Secularist nativism distinguishes between the quasi-secular Dutch nation and an incompatible and backward Muslim minority. Racial nativism differentiates between a white nation and a black minority, problematizing the latter as a threat on both cultural and racial grounds. Finally, populist nativism characterizes native elites as culturally alienated and whose 'self-hatred' is seen as a threat.

The three manifestations of nativist logic can also be described with the following maxims. Secularist nativism's maxim would be: 'the enemy of my enemy is my friend' (gays and lesbians, allegedly hated by Muslims, become the ultimate symbol of Dutchness). In racial nativism, the maxim would be: 'the enemy of my friend is my enemy' (black anti-racists are questioned because they attack traditional, popular Dutch culture and 'ordinary people'). Populist nativism's maxim is: 'the friend of my enemy is my enemy' (alienated Dutch elites do not belong because they support migrants and betray 'the Dutch culture'). These maxims have one thing in common: they share the same dichotomous logic that divides the world into friends and enemies, natives and non-natives.

It is of critical importance to emphasize that, although we try to understand right-wing discourses as (forms of) nativism, we by no means diminish the importance of related concepts such as Islamophobia, racism and populism. On the contrary, we have shown that these concepts are not only empirically pertinent, but they share a common core as well: a nativist *logic*. It is the *combination* of Islamophobia and nativism, of racism and nativism, and of populism and nativism, that may help to explain the divisive and exclusionary character of today's political and public debates, which are all, ultimately, concerned with the predicament of the nation's cultural identity. Other scholars have hinted at this nativist core as well, but not in terms of a combination. Cas Mudde has recently suggested: 'Within the core ideology of the populist radical right, populism comes secondary to nativism, and within contemporary European and US politics, populism functions at best as a fuzzy blanket to camouflage the nastier nativism.'[78] While Mudde is right that nativism is of the utmost importance, the idea that nativism is hiding under populism (or

78 Cas Mudde, 'Why nativism, not populism, should be declared word of the year', *Guardian* (online *Comment Is Free* section), 7 December 2017, available at www.theguardian.

under racism or under secularism) is not very helpful. It is not the replacement of racism, populism or secularism by nativism, but the *combination* of nativism and all three forms of exclusion that colours the debates of our time.

If nativism is all about the nation, why not use 'nationalism' as the cross-cutting category instead? Nationalism is a much broader phenomenon. Nativism is always nationalist but not all forms of nationalism are nativist. Where nationalism revolves primarily around the not necessarily antagonistic differentiation *between* nations, nativism is concerned with the problematization of *internal* minorities that are seen as threatening enemies. Nativism is by definition not only antagonistic, but also directed towards its internal antagonists. When nationalism is confronted with internal threatening foreignness, it transforms into nativism or, to use Michael Billig's terminology, when 'cool', seemingly banal forms of national identity turn into 'hot', highly politicized issues.[79] Therefore, given the antagonistic notion of threat and its inward orientation, nativism is a specific form of the much broader nationalism.

We claim that the Dutch case is an illustration of a European pattern of the rise of nativism with its own country-specific idiosyncrasies, for example, with respect to ideological substance. In the Netherlands, liberal values are more than elsewhere at the heart of what is considered to be native, resulting in the paradoxical situation that liberal values are not only embraced by the progressive left but also by nativists in their conservative, exclusionary discourses. Finally, the rise of nativist logic is certainly not limited to Europe. While some scholars might argue that nativism flourishes less in immigration countries such as the United States,[80] other scholars emphasize that nativism can be at least as present in traditional immigration countries.[81] The nativism of President Trump (and his supporters) is a case in point, whether it concerns his questioning Obama's citizenship (birtherism) or the attacks on members of the House in terms of foreigners and foreignness, even up to the point of normalizing geographical expulsion ('Send her back!'). In that sense, it was not a coincidence that we could develop our analytical frame for developments in present-day Europe based on the work of a American scholar: everywhere we see the return of the native.

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com/commentisfree/2017/dec/07/cambridge-dictionary-nativism-populism-word-year (viewed 4 October 2019).

79 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London: Sage 1995), 135.

80 Richard Alba and Nancy Foner, 'Immigration and the geography of polarization', *City & Community*, vol. 16, no. 3, 2017, 239–43.

81 Guia, *The Concept of Nativism and Anti-immigrant Sentiments in Europe*.

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