

A PLACE FOR BELONGING IN THE NETHERLANDS

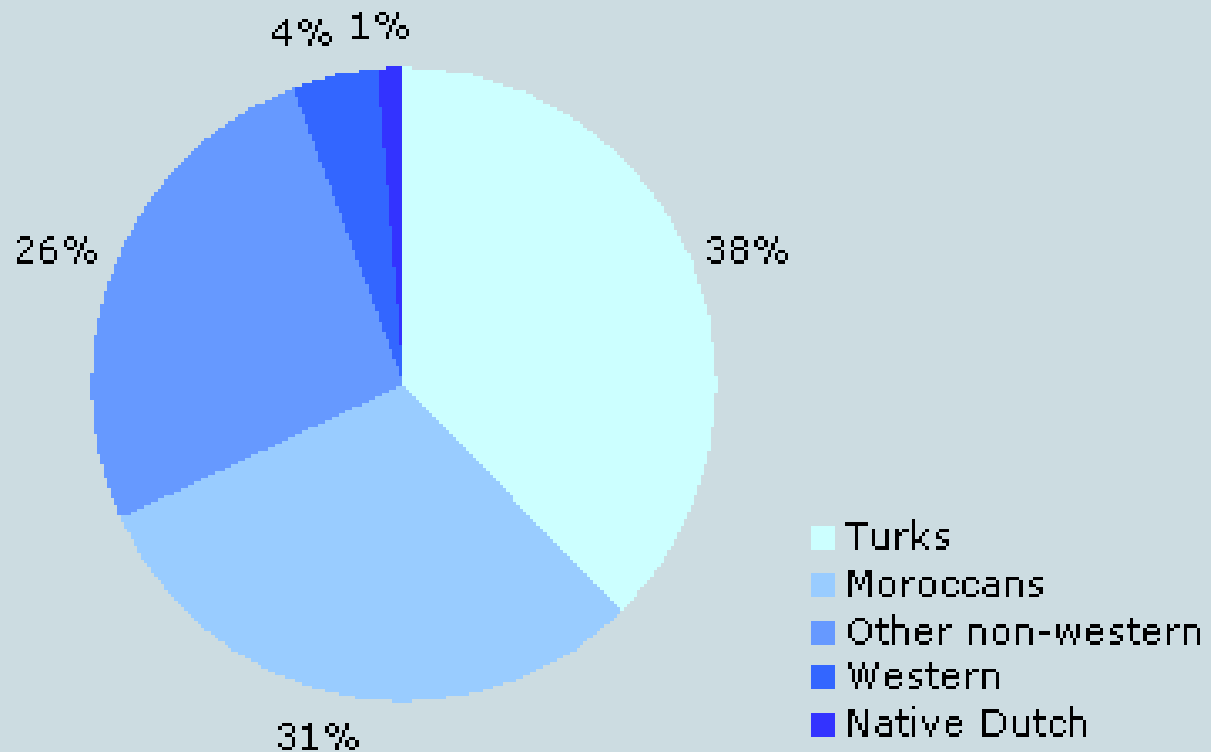
Jennifer Long, PhD Candidate
University of Western Ontario





Islam in the Netherlands

□ Distribution of Muslims by ethnic background (2006)



Source: CBS

Tension in the Netherlands

- Relationship between Muslim immigrants and Dutch natives strained after the murder of film director Theo van Gogh by a Muslim extremist of Dutch Moroccan heritage
- The topic of immigration and the role of Muslims in Dutch society dominates political and social agendas
- Media coverage of Islam and non-western immigrant communities foster Islamophobic sentiments among the population

AIVD-onderzoek: Jihad-les op basisschool

Jihad-lessons in elementary school

HOSTELION
Live Leak

Drietal verdacht van plan aanslag

Threesome suspected
planning attack



Imams don't like gays

Hamas bijeen in Rotterdam

Hamas gathers in Rotterdam

HOSTELION
Live Leak

'Wij zijn het niet eens met de vrijheid van
meningsuiting, want we verwerpen de democratie'
„Ons alternatief is de islam.”

We do not agree with freedom of speech,
because we denounce democracy

HOSTELION
Live Leak

Bijna helft jonge Marokkanen anti-westers

De ogen heilige waarden wordt
gevoel als de basis van alle kennis
en de eigen religieuze waarden op
het moment van nu...
De islamitische waarden die
driften van radicalisering, Mo-
slim jongeren...
De democratische waarden heb-
ben vaak verband met een
ring te hebben, terwijl de islamisten
de volgende jongeren juist
keuzen geven. Zij propageren funda-
mentalistische opvattingen. In-
stead of freedom, de radicalen
zijn geen perspectief.

Almost half of young Moroccans anti-western

Moskeeën in ban van
radicale moslimgroep

Al-Qaeda's ban on radical mosques

Research Questions

- My research examines how larger social and political discourses influence the ways in which individuals get along in everyday life.
- In order to examine this, I examined the uses of, and ideas about, public spaces

Research Questions

- My study involved not only the use of spaces and interaction between residents but an understanding of how public spaces were conceived of and created.
- In this way, I was able to uncover ideas about who and what were allowed in public spaces and in doing so, who and what were acceptable in the Netherlands.

Field site: Rotterdam, Netherlands



Why Rotterdam?

- Historically a very conservative right-wing government
- Has a Dutch Moroccan Mayor
- Questionable policies toward immigrants
e.g. Rotterdam's Citizenship Code (2007)
- Regulation of Mosque architecture





Preliminary Findings...

- Social and Political discourses have affected daily life
- It is not just the first generation of laborers but also their wives, their children and their children's children. In this way, generations of individuals born and raised in the Netherlands are seen as 'outsiders' to their own nation.

Preliminary Findings...

- Those 'who do not belong' according to social and political rhetoric, do not have the same access to public spaces. They also do not have the same capability to affect change in these spaces.
- This has an impact on one's perceived belonging to the Netherlands and therefore their acceptance within the larger community

Preliminary Findings...

- Culturalization of Citizenship – immigrants are not only judged by their integration into political and economic realms anymore. Instead, they are also judged by social and cultural factors as well.
- Essentially, immigrants have to socially and culturally assimilate (to varying degrees) in order to be accepted.
- But what about in space?

Preliminary Findings...

- Spatial capital (Ryan Centner 2009): the ability of certain individuals to shape and take advantage of public places according to their own uses and ideas
- Spatial capital could work to make public places more accessible and inclusive of immigrants wants, needs, and visions of their neighborhood public places
- Their presence in public spaces in a more permanent sense could foster ideas of their long-term presence and loyalty to the Netherlands thus positively influencing their social and cultural capital

THANK YOU!

Special thanks to Secil, Vicki and the MER program