

Politicisation of immigration in The Netherlands, 1995-2009

Joost Berkhout

Laura Sudulich

Wouter van der Brug

University of Amsterdam

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Introduction: A brief history of migration in the Netherlands

Before moving to the data on the politicization of immigration, we first provide a very brief account of the history of migration to the Netherlands, the migration policies, and the main political debates about those policies. In the final part of this section we describe a number of figures and events that marked the cultural and political perception of immigrants in the country.

Right after World War II, more people migrated from the Netherlands to countries such as Australia and Canada, then people entering the country, mainly from Indonesia, the former Dutch East Indies, which gained independence in the late 1940s.¹ Due to rapid economic growth and full employment in the 1960s, there was a shortage of manual workers, so that companies started to bring in 'guest workers' first from Spain, Italy and Portugal and from the early 1970s onward from Turkey and Morocco. In addition, many immigrants from the Dutch colony Surinam came to the Netherlands especially in the last years before it gained independence in 1975. The entry of 'guest workers' ended in the late 1970s, but immigration continued due to 'chain migration' in the form of family reunion and formation, and in the 1990s and 2000s due to an increasing number of people seeking asylum in the Netherlands. Moreover, the 'natural' growth of the descendants of 'guest workers' is higher than for the rest of the population because 'non-Western' families have a higher fertility rate than the rest of the population (SCP 2009b, 58). So, the number of immigrants as a proportion of the population steadily increased, so that by 2009 roughly 20 per cent of the Dutch population is from immigrant descent.² The composition of this group has remained quite similar over the years. Roughly half of this group consists of migrants of so-called non-Western origin,

¹ Indonesia declared independence in 1945. The Netherlands recognized its independence only in 1949.

² Immigrant is defined as someone with at least one parent who was born outside the Netherlands. As an administrative category non-Western persons are defined as: "people originating from Turkish, African, Latin-American and Asian immigration, except for people of Japanese and Indonesian origin".

mostly Turkish, Moroccan and Surinamese. The non-Western group represents 11 per cent of the entire population in 2009. Interestingly, the Netherlands had negative migration rates for this 'non-Western' group between 2004 and 2007 (SCP 2009b, 47, 54).

On average, Non-Western immigrants in the Netherlands are in a socio-economically disadvantaged position, especially Turkish and Moroccans. Their level of employment is low, they have a low educational level, and high welfare dependency rates (CBS, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004; SCP, 2003, 2005, 2007, 2009). To obtain Dutch citizenship, there are several options, depending on the generation one belongs to. The first generation has to reside legally in the Netherlands for a minimum period of five years to apply for a Dutch passport. The second generation - first born in the Netherlands – can opt for Dutch citizenship between the age of 18 and 25. The third generation automatically acquires the Dutch nationality. This law concerning the second and third generation was introduced in 1985 (Dekker, 2010). In the period between 1992 and 1997 dual citizenship was permitted. This meant that migrants who wanted to acquire Dutch nationality were not obliged to give up the old passport. This gave rise to an immense increase in the number of applications. The parliament consequently pushed for the discontinuation of this policy. Currently, there are few exceptions to this regulation, as a consequence a dual nationality is still often granted: if one obtains the nationality of a country which prohibits to give up the original nationality; if inheritance law is valid in the country of origin; if it is impossible to contact one's country of origin, for example in the case of refugees (Dekker, 2010).

Before the 1980s, the Netherlands lacked any kind of integration policy for migrants, because migrant workers were generally expected to return to their home countries after some years. The focus was predominantly on retention of identity and participation in the economic sphere. This served a twofold goal. First, the pool of workers had to be preserved. Second, political actors prevented the topic from being politicized, in fear of encouraging anti-immigrant parties to arise. However, when the approach directed at the return of migrants to their home countries proved unrealistic, the purpose of immigrant policies shifted from facilitating the successful return of migrants, to achieving participation and socio-cultural emancipation of immigrants. This approach became embodied in the ethnic minority policy, which was introduced in the 1980s. The preservation of immigrant cultures was its main focus. Immigrant identities were being preserved through the institutionalization of cultural pluralism. In the 1990s integration policies shifted to providing equal opportunities and chances for migrants within society, embracing a more liberal egalitarian approach. In 1998 a law on the civic integration of immigrant was introduced, the *Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers*. This law focused on language proficiency and on helping immigrants to become self-supporting. Key to integration policies became the promotion of good and active citizenship, with immigrants being economically self-sufficient. From the 1980s, the practice of incorporation of migrant communities in the pillarized, neo-corporatist structures provided a channel of mobilization of migrant interests. Second, throughout the 1980s and 1990s, mainstream parties operated a successful strategy of ostracization of anti-immigrant parties (CP86, CD), with the only notable dissenter being the VVD leader Bolkestein. Third, mainstream parties successfully depoliticized migration and integration by restricting

discursive opportunities and by delegating the policy implementation to a ‘multicultural’ policy network of asylum organizations and integration policy organizations. The Dutch history of pillarization – *verzuiling* – is highlighted by various scholars as facilitating the maintenance of the migrant’s cultural and social traditions and practices, commonly referred to as the Dutch model of multiculturalism (Odmalm and Lees, 2006). This path dependent argument that has a very strong resonance in the academic literature (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007, 13; Joppke, 2007, 249). Most strongly and prominently, Koopmans (2006, 4) argues that

‘The Netherlands is still an extreme representative of a ‘multicultural’ vision of integration. The country allows immigrants easy access to formal social and political rights while at the same time facilitating expressions of foreigners’ own cultural identity with the help of the state. (...) the relation between Dutch society and its immigrants is still firmly rooted in its tradition of pillarization – a live and let live system delineated by ethnicity and religion which is supported by the government’

The perspective of path dependency is challenged by Scholten and Duyvendak (2011) who argue that in the 1970s, the process of depillarization had already set in. Moreover, they highlight the minor extent of pillarization amongst minorities, since they were never strongly (institutionally) organized. Rather, Scholten and Duyvendak explain the Dutch approach as a pragmatic and instrumental policy logic, taking place at the local level. In order to reach the target groups, local governments focused on specific migrant organizations. In terms of political opportunities, this debate suggests that migrants, at least until the mid-1990s faced a relatively favourable political opportunity structure (POS) for collective action in civil society organizations, especially at the local level.

While the POS was rather favourable for migrant organisations, it was highly unfavourable for openly anti-immigration parties. The first anti-immigration party to gain parliamentary representation was the Centrum Partij (CP), which gained one seat in the 1982 elections. The political establishment, including the press, treated them as ‘controversial political outsiders’ (Schafraad, 2009).³ The judiciary closely monitored the CD/CP leader Janmaat, who was found guilty of racial discrimination in 1995. Fennema argues that the anti-racism policy of which this judgment was part, effectively functioned as a political and legal ‘cordon sanitair’ (Elbers and Fennema, 1993; Fennema 2003). The anti-immigrant voices in established parties faced a similarly unfavourable POS. When Frits Bolkestein, the then leader of the conservative-liberal party VVD, openly questioned the reconcilability of Western and Islamic values in 1991, he was also accused of inciting racism. After the appointment of the moderate and more centrist Hans Dijkstal as new VVD leader in 1998, the VVD downplayed those issues on which it traditionally had issue ownership, such as crime and security, but also

³ In discursive terms, the CP was put down by the political elite and in society more broadly as ‘*fout na de oorlog*’ (van Donselaar, 1991). The literal translation is being ‘on the wrong side after the war’. People who collaborated with the Nazi’s during the German occupation are referred to as those who were ‘on the wrong side during the war’. To say that someone is ‘on the wrong side after the war’, thus implies that he/she is called a neo-Nazi.

immigration. This lasted until 2001, when the eccentric political outsider Pim Fortuyn brought new and stronger visibility to anti-immigrants positions in the wake of 9/11.

The List Pim Fortuyn triggered the reformulation by most established parties of their position on immigration and integration as indicated by their manifestos (van der Brug et al 2009, 209). Most parties adopted a stricter vision on immigration and integration. After the 9/11 terrorist attacks anti-Muslim sentiments in the Netherlands (as elsewhere in the Western world) rose. The LPF and its charismatic leader voiced those concerns (van Holsteyn et al, 2003) and in the 2002 elections, about a third of the electorate voted differently than in the previous elections (van Praag, 2003) producing the second largest electoral shift in Europe post-1950 (Mair, 2008). Pim Fortuyn was assassinated a few days before the 2002 elections by an animal rights and environmental activist. Nevertheless, the LPF won 26 seats (17%), the most dramatic rise in history of a new party in the Netherlands (Koopmans and Muis, 2009; Fennema and van der Brug, 2006). The anti-immigrant attitude of LPF was directed mainly at Muslims. Contrary to most other anti-immigrant parties, the LPF based its arguments on progressive and liberal ideas.

The death of Fortuyn, and the consequent failure of his party, did not end the wave of anti-immigrant positions. Two former VVD-members, Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders, influenced the debate on immigration and integration, both by establishing their own party. The PVV of Geert Wilders (founded in 2005), ToN of Rita Verdonk (created in 2008) shared the LPF's populist approach to politics in general and to immigration in particular. Hereby, reference is made among other things to anti-elite sentiments of those parties, the perception of the people as a homogeneous entity, and a popular style (Vossen, 2010; Mudde, 2006). As Immigration minister between 2003 and 2006, Rita Verdonk intensified the debate on immigration and integration in the Netherlands, with her tough position on immigration. She expressed negative attitudes towards immigrants – predominantly Muslim, while focusing on government policies to educate/integrate citizens with an immigration history. As minister, she introduced a new 'cultural integration exam' in 2005, the *Inburgeringsexamen*, directed at the assimilation of immigrants. In the build-up to the 2006 elections, 'Iron Rita' threatened her party colleague VVD MP Hirsi Ali with deportation, because of irregularities in her request for asylum back in the mid-1990s. Following the 2006 elections she received a larger number of individual votes than the VVD party leader Rutte, who was at that time considered to represent the centrist-liberal wing of the party. Consequently, in an internal VVD election she unsuccessfully challenged his leadership of the party (with Rutte receiving 51 per cent of the members' votes) (van Holsteyn, 2007). This opened up internal tensions within VVD, so that Verdonk ultimately left the party, and founded her own movement: *Trots op Nederland* (ToN, which, contrary to a political party, did not have members) (Vossen, 2010). However, only a year after its launch, ToN faced decline. Eventually, due to internal clashes and disappointing electoral results, ToN disappeared from the political stage in 2010 (Aarts and van der Kolk, 2011: 578).

Last but not least, Geert Wilders, as a Parliamentary assistant to Frits Bolkestein in the early nineties and a Member of Parliament for VVD (1997-2004), presented himself, from 2001 onwards, as the whistle-blower on the danger of Islam and terrorism (see for an unauthorised

biography: Fennema, 2010). He left the VVD after a conflict about the party's position on the possible EU-membership of Turkey. He continued his political activities as an independent member of Parliament, which provided him with a parliamentary platform and enabled him to reinvent himself as a (populist) outsider of established party politics. In 2005, Geert Wilders established a new party, *Partij voor de Vrijheid* (PVV), with himself being the only official member. This makes his party ineligible for public subsidies for political parties, but obviously provides Wilders with a strong, stabilising control on internal party decisions (De Lange and Art, 2011). In 2006, he won 8 seats in Parliament. From then onwards, his popularity rose and he won 24 seats in the 2010 elections. Although he pays the bulk of his attention to Muslim immigrants, he is increasingly focusing on other types of immigrants as well. The success of the PVV obviously threatened the status quo, and deepened the debate on immigration and integration (van der Brug et al., 2009). Wilders finds his allies in other Islamophobic parties and movements in Europe but does not engage in formal cooperation with them in the European Parliament. When comparing the PVV to other radical right-wing populist parties in Europe, the PVV stands out for its libertarian positions on issues such as gay rights, women emancipation and the monarchy.

In sum, there are several historical aspects, which help understanding the debates on the issue of immigration and integration in the Netherlands and the specific patterns of politicization. The successful containment of the migration and integration issue before the mid-1990s (and later) by the mainstream parties is characteristic of the Dutch approach to the issue. While the voices of anti-immigration parties were for a long time excluded from the political debate, migration policies did become more strict. This technocratic approach to immigrants may have prevented Janmaat and Bolkestein from politicizing the issue. Gradually, the governmental approach, initiated by the Social-Democrat PvdA ministers Kosto and Cohen, shifted from immigrants having certain rights within Dutch society to an emphasis on their duties (Vink, 2007). In addition, assimilation policies were embraced by the government, and socio-cultural differences became increasingly considered a hindrance to integration (Scholten and Duyvendak, 2011). The only exception to the de-politicization of the issue of the integration has been Bolkestein, who briefly managed to place the issue of integration on the political agenda. The de-politicization of migration is reflected in the institutionalization of cultural pluralism, by establishing a plural policy network of asylum organizations, integration policy organizations, and interest groups. This is often referred to as the 'multiculturalist' model. Owing to the institutionalization of cultural groups within Dutch society, it is often argued that the integration of migrants was approached through pillarized means. This created separate channels for the mobilization of migrant interests.

Description and outline of findings

Having briefly described the historical context, we move to presenting our original findings. The issues of immigration and integration are discussed here in terms of salience and polarization. We also consider the actors responsible of politicizing and depoliticizing the issues and the tone of the debate.

The degree of politicisation

We begin by looking at salience in the period under analysis, which is depicted in figure 1 below. The graph presents the political salience of the issues of migration and integration in terms of number of claims made by relevant actors in national newspapers. The line represents moving averages, based on 60 observations preceding any point in the graph. Considering the size of our sample these 60 observation roughly correspond to a yearly average. As such, the point at the start of the line represents the salience of the issue in the preceding year, 1995. Moving averages are particularly suitable for describing long-term trends and provide a straightforward description of how the attention to the issue developed over time.

Figure 1. Salience of migration and integration in the Netherlands, 1995-2009, moving average of number of political claims per 60 sampled days.

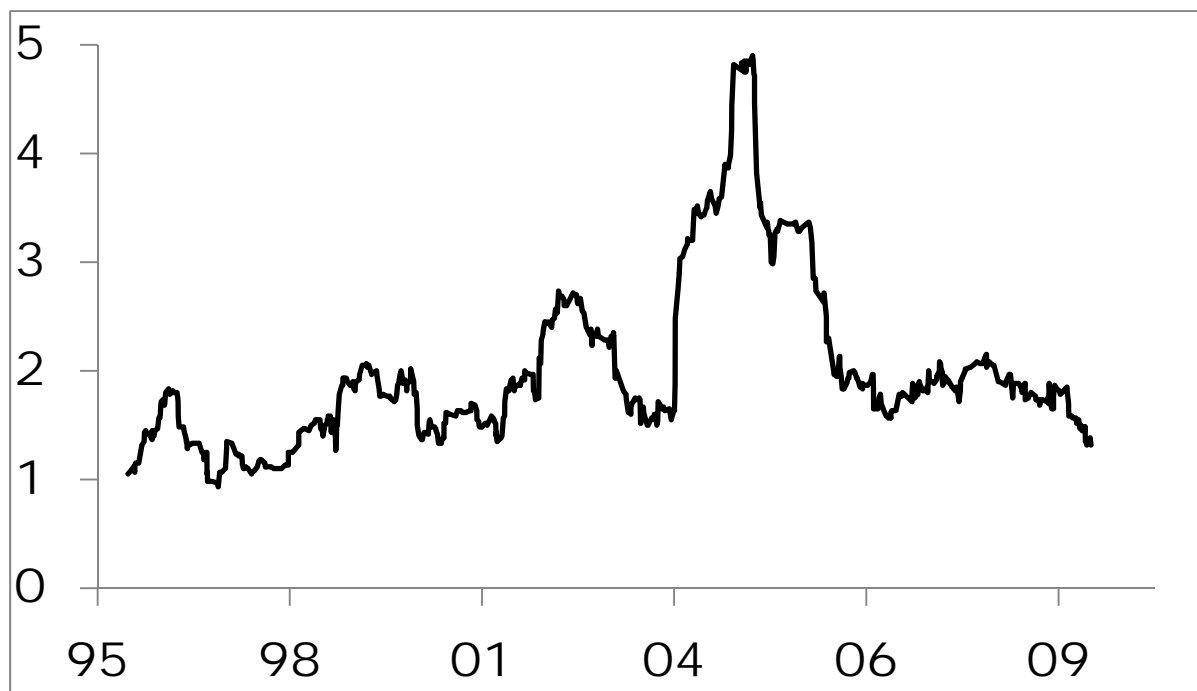
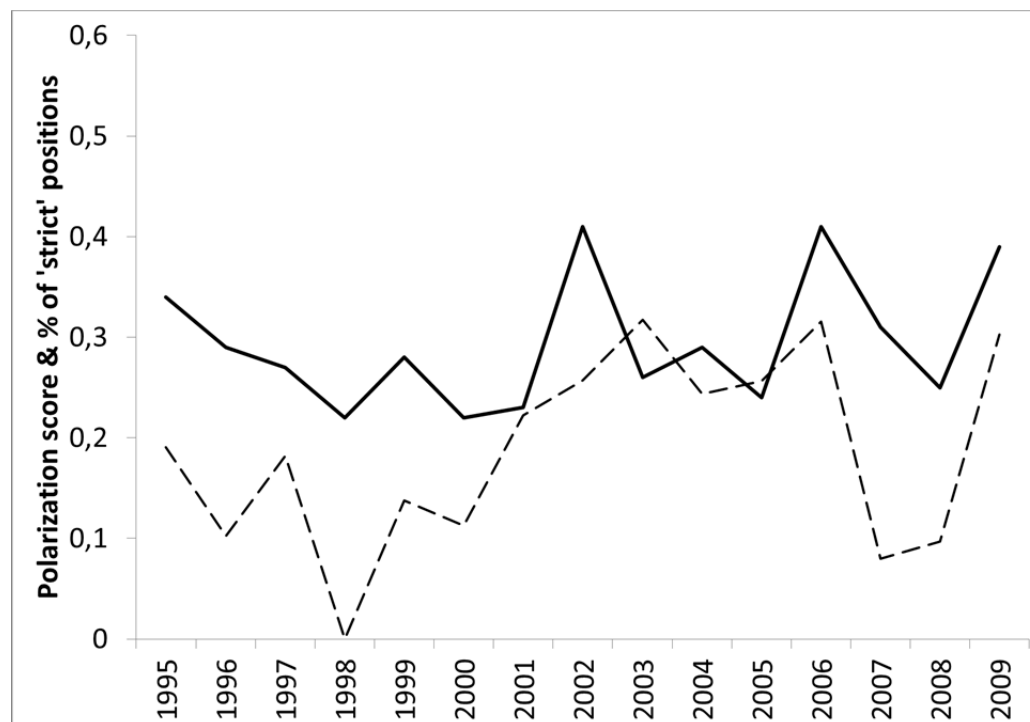


Figure 1 shows two peaks in political attention dedicated to immigration and integration, around 2002 and 2004. The peaks are registered in years marked by dramatic events. The one registered by the end of 2002 covers the 9/11 terrorist attacks, followed by the rise of Pim Fortuyn, his assassination and the electoral victory of his party. Even though there was an increase in the salience of the issue of immigration and integration in this year, it would be an

exaggeration to say that Fortuyn ‘was the first to put the issue on the agenda’, as the 9/11 events proved an important agenda-setting trigger as well.

The issue did become highly salient in 2004 and 2005, particularly after the murder of film-director Theo van Gogh. This certainly appears to have had an impact on the debate on immigration. Figure 1 does not show an overtime increase, nor a decrease, in the salience of the issues. It rather suggests that at certain points of time the issue received higher political attention. While the events of 9/11 did not affect Dutch politics directly, they may have triggered reactions by Dutch political actors. The murder of van Gogh, on the other hand, deeply and directly impacted the country, provoking outrage throughout the Netherlands. A Muslim extremist killed Van Gogh on the 2nd of November 2004 only a few months after the release of his controversial documentary *Submission*, the script of which had been written by Ayaan Hirsi Ali. As such, we believe that these two events impacted the debate on immigration and integration, by making them more salient in the political news and agenda.

Figure 2: Developments in polarization and ‘tone’, 1995-2009



*: The solid line represent the degree of polarization. The dashed line represents the proportion of claims calling for more ‘strict’ migration policies

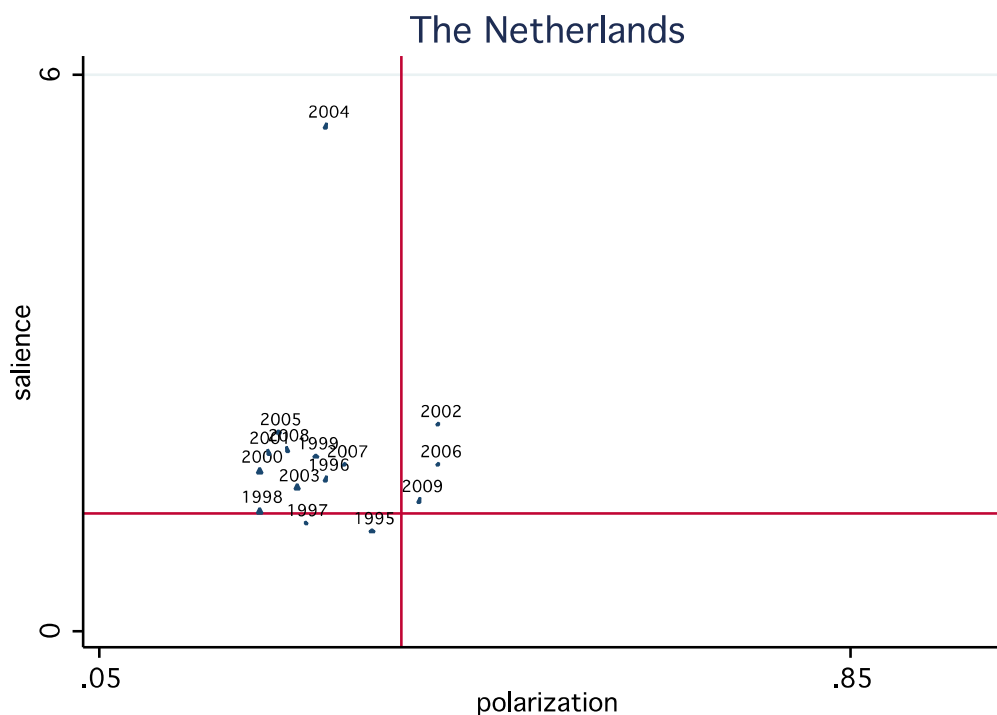
As discussed in the introductory chapter, we distinguish between two elements of politicization, salience and polarization. Having described salience, we now move to the description of over-time trends in terms of polarization. The solid line in Figure 2 presents the development of polarization. In addition, the dashed line presents the tone towards immigrants. Do the claim makers call for more restrictive or for more lenient migration policies? A high score means that the issue is more polarized (the solid line) or that there are relatively many claim calling for more restrictive policies.

The solid line in the figure shows that polarization remains relatively constant at around 0.3 over the time period. There are noticeable peaks of polarization in 2002, 2006 and 2009, however their absolute values remain rather moderate, being all of them below 0.5. The dashed line in the figure shows a substantial increase in the proportion of relatively strict positions. Up to 2001 the proportion of strict positions was below twenty per cent, between 2002 and 2006 strict positions were expressed in about thirty per cent of the claims.

The 2002 peak, also observed in the salience figure 1, is likely to be associated with the election campaign and the electoral triumph of Pim Fortuyn and the consequent government participation of its successors. The 2006 peak in polarization suggests that the 2002 events continued to shape political alliances and oppositions that provide relatively favourable political opportunities for the politicisation of migration and integration. In 2006, following irregularities regarding the citizenship status of VVD MP Ayaan Hirsi Ali, the VVD government minister Verdonk, responsible for citizenship issues, started a denaturalisation procedure (van Holsteyn, 2007, 1140). This produced conflict between government-coalition parties D66, VVD and CDA, and a subsequent fall of the government. The breakup highlighted the continuing sensitive nature of the division between the anti-immigrant populist neo-nationalism of VVD minister Verdonk on the one hand, and the cosmopolitan, liberal, human rights position of junior government coalition party D66 (supported by opposition parties such as Groenlinks) on the other hand. The division also marked the subsequent 2006 elections, in which anti-immigration politician Wilders first gained seats with its newly established PVV. Such a division, after the 'LPF crisis' in 2002 / 2003, became a relevant structuring force in Dutch party politics, potentially explaining the peak in polarization in 2006(e.g. Otjes, 2011, Aarts and Thomassen, 2008). The peak in 2009 is not linked to any specific event.

An issue would be strongly politicized if it receives much political attention, while the issue is at the same time highly contested. Figure 3 presents the combination of salience and polarization in each year. The horizontal and vertical bars in the graph denote the average values of these two variables across 15 years and 9 systems (N=135). Our data indicate that a combination of relatively high salience and relatively high disagreement has occurred in the Netherlands in only three years, and in those years the values are only just above the average. So, this shows that politicized politics on migration and integration, in terms of consistently high polarization and salience scores, is very rare. However, it is also interesting to note that the salience of the issue of immigration has been consistently quite high in the Netherlands. Yet, most of the years, politics on the issue of immigration and integration can be classified as valence politics (relatively much attention, but little contestation. Surprisingly, this is even the case in 2004, when salience peaked to an average of more than 5 claims on average per sampled newspaper (more than any in these years in the countries included in this study). When polarization went up in 2006, there was much less attention to the migration and integration issues.

Figure 3: Combination of average number of claims (salience) and polarization score per year, the Netherlands, 1995-2009



Who politicises?

Having discussed the degree of politicisation, we now take a look at the actors. In order to get a clearer picture of which forces played a role in the debate on migration related issues, we look in some details into those political and social actors that voiced a position on the theme. Table 1 shows which actors have made claims on migration and integration in the Netherlands from 1995 to 2009. We grouped actors according to the three branches of powers; executive (government), legislative and judiciary. In addition, we added as a special category representatives of anti-immigration movements, representatives of organizations of minorities and migrants, and finally a category labelled ‘others’. This category includes journalists, representatives of trade unions, and civil society organizations. The types of actors give a good indication on where politicization occurs.

Looking first at the bottom row of Table 1, we see that more than half (54%) of the claims on the issue of immigration and integration are made by party actors (government and parliament). Government actors have more access to the media than the opposition: roughly twice as many claims of the government make it into the newspapers than of parliamentary actors. The judiciary avoid the political debate, but this is probably a logical consequence of their role as ‘independent referees’. Anti-immigrant movements are also quite invisible in the debate on immigration and integration, which is also not surprising because these groups tend to be small and peripheral. Members of minority organisations have been more successful in getting their claims into the media. Finally, almost a third of the claims are made by people in the ‘other’ category, which include journalists and civil society organizations. So, roughly

speaking, about half (54%) of the claims on the issues of immigration and integration are made by representatives of the government and parliament (political party actors) and most of the other half (43%) of the claims are made by non-party actors (journalist, civil society actors, including representatives of migrant organisations).

When looking at the development over time in Table 1, the most striking thing is that over time party actors have become more dominant in the debate on migration and integration, at the expense of non-party actors. In the 1990s there were several years in which non-party actors were just as visible in the debate as party actors (in 2000 the former were even slightly more visible), but between 2003 and 2009, the share of claims by party actors has always been well above 50% and in 2009 it was even above 70%. While the proportion of claims by party actors increased in the 2000s, the proportion of claims made by immigrant organizations and minority groups decreased notably. In the 1990s, on average, 18% of the claims were made by migrant organisations. In the 2000s, this dropped to 10%.

Table 1: Claim makers as a percentage of total claims.

Years	Government	Legislative & parties	judiciary	Others	Anti-immigrant	Minority groups	N	% total
1995	35.4	16.7	2.1	18.8	0.0	27.1	48	100
1996	28.4	18.2	3.4	38.6	0.0	11.4	88	100
1997	36.1	11.1	0.0	27.8	2.8	22.2	36	100
1998	47.7	6.8	0.0	31.8	0.0	13.6	44	100
1999	29.6	21.4	2.0	32.7	0.0	14.3	98	100
2000	36.7	11.1	1.1	41.1	1.1	8.9	90	100
2001	40.0	10.6	5.9	32.9	0.0	10.6	85	100
2002	21.5	24.8	1.7	34.7	0.0	17.4	121	100
2003	38.8	16.3	1.3	33.8	0.0	10.0	80	100
2004	34.1	24.7	2.4	26.5	2.4	10.0	170	100
2005	37.1	16.9	1.1	34.8	2.3	7.9	89	100
2006	37.1	23.6	2.3	31.5	0.0	5.6	89	100
2007	39.6	13.5	0.0	36.5	0.0	10.4	96	100
2008	35.8	17.3	3.7	27.2	0.0	16.1	81	100
2009	44.9	32.1	2.6	15.4	0.0	5.1	78	100
Total	35.2	18.9	2.1	31.4	0.6	11.8	1,293	100

It seems reasonable to expect the dominance of party actors and especially of the government to be related to levels of politicization. When the issue is not very contested and not so polarized, most of the claims will be made by ministers (government actors), and their claims would be relatively uncontested. Other actors would be more prominent in the news when they contest government policies and then salience and polarization would also be higher. The election years of 1998 and 2002 could be a case in point. Polarization and salience on the issue of immigration and integration were low in 1998 (see Figure 3) and government representatives made about half of the political claims. This is in contrast to critical election

year of 2002, when the issue was more contested and more salient and government actors make exceptionally few claims relative to other actors and compared to other years. However, there are too many exceptions to the rule that politicization coincides with low government visibility. In 2006 and 2009, there was relatively high politicization, while large proportions of the claims were made by government actors and in 2004 when the issue became highly salient, government actors remained visible in the debate.

Table 2: Which parties are claim makers?

	GL	SP	PvdA	D66	VVD	CDA	CU	LN	LPF	PVV	Eén NL	N	% total
1995	5.9	0	58.8	5.9	11.9	17.6	0	0	0	0	0	17	100
1996	17.2	0	37.9	10.3	20.7	13.8	0	0	0	0	0	29	100
1997	0	0	40.0	30.0	30.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	10	100
1998	0	0	69.2	7.7	23.1	0	0	0	0	0	0	13	100
1999	5.3	0	50.0	7.9	15.8	21.1	0	0	0	0	0	38	100
2000	21.0	0	57.9	5.3	10.5	5.3	0	0	0	0	0	19	100
2001	3.0	0	57.6	12.1	24.2	3.0	0	0	0	0	0	33	100
2002	5.4	0	21.6	8.1	8.1	13.5	0	29.7	13.5	0	0	37	100
2003	3.3	10.0	20.0	6.7	36.7	16.7	0	0	6.7	0	0	30	100
2004	2.5	2.5	18.5	9.9	40.7	19.8	0	0	2.5	3.7	0	81	100
2005	2.6	13.2	13.2	13.2	44.7	13.2	0	0	0	0	0	38	100
2006	0	0	22.9	5.7	37.1	22.9	2.9	0	0	5.7	2.9	35	100
2007	0	2.7	62.2	0	10.8	13.5	2.7	0	0	8.1	0	37	100
2008	0	0	50.0	0	0	43.3	0	0	0	6.7	0	30	100
2009	1.9	3.8	28.3	18.9	24.5	15.1	0	0	1.9	5.7	0	53	100
Total	4.0	2.6	35.6	9.2	24.8	16.4	0.4	2.2	2.0	2.6	0.2	500	100

- Government parties are depicted in bold

We have seen that roughly half the claims are made by party actors. So, which parties were driving the migration debate in the Netherlands? Table 2 presents the percentages claims on integration or immigration made by the different parties. Perhaps the most striking finding is that the debate is almost entirely waged by the big three (PvdA, VVD and CDA). Across the time period covered by this study, the three largest parties were responsible for more than 75% of the claims. In terms of saliency, anti-immigration parties, on the other hand, played a very marginal role in the debate. During their existence the relative proportion of claims by LPF and PVV ranges between 13 and 3 percent. The only real exceptions is LN, the party originally lead by Pim Fortuyn in 2002. In the first months of 2002 Fortuyn managed to get many of his claims on immigration into the news, which ultimately lead to his impeachment as the party's leader. After that, he founded his own party and then was assassinated. Politicians of his party were not very successful in getting their claims on immigration in the newspapers. Surprisingly, the same is true of Wilders. This may be associated with his provocative political strategy that does not depend on the number of own political statements

by strongly relies on the resonance of his claims among other political actors, most notably the established 'big three'.

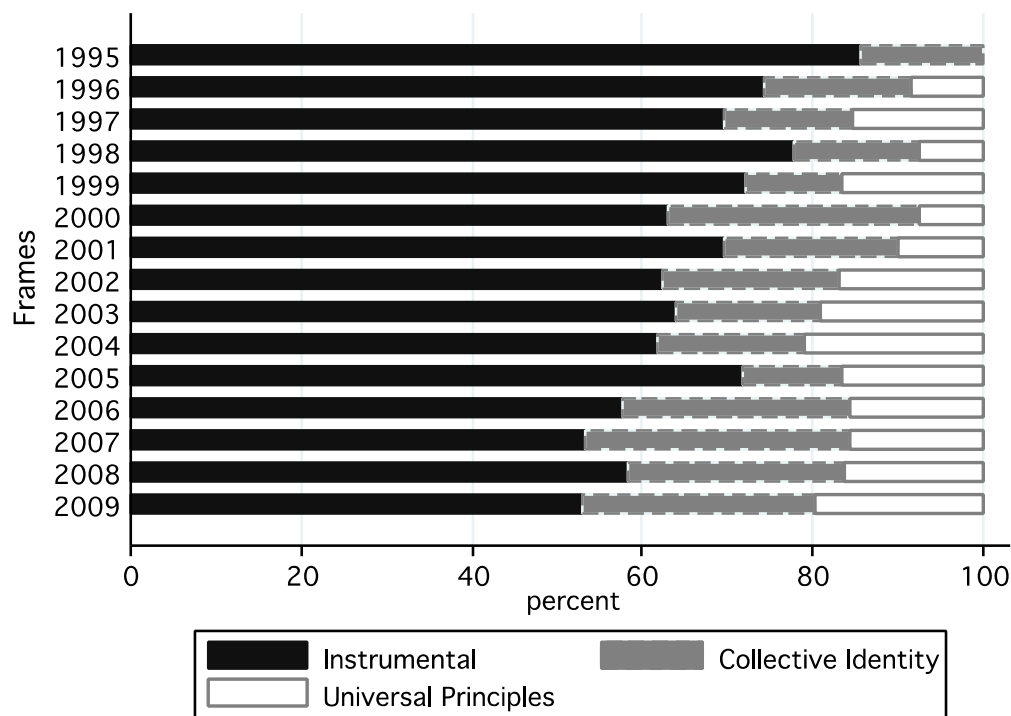
The most obvious finding emerging from Table 2 is that the PvdA is the dominant claim-maker. From the mid-1990s until 2001 50% of the claims made by party actors came from politicians from the PvdA. Such predominance is once again noticeable from 2007 onwards. All together, the four left-leaning parties (GL, SP, PvdA and D66) are responsible for more than half of the claims. Left leaning parties tend to take a relatively favourable position to migrants and their integration in society. So, given the prominent role of left-wing parties in the debate, the rather positive attitude to migrants shown in figure 2 does not come as a surprise. Interestingly, between 2002 and 2007, the proportion of claims made by the PvdA decreased, possibly because of anti-immigrant parties vigorously entering the public debate and the PvdA being in opposition. The earthquake election of 2002 produced a very fragmented public debate on the issue of immigration and integration, with 7 parties involved in the debate, including the LPF. Despite being the party that brought about new instances on the anti-immigrants side of Dutch politics, the LPF made only a mere 15% of claims on the subject. A similar anomaly is observed in relation the PVV, which despite having been the anti-immigrant party *par excellence* in the latest part of the years 2000s occupies a limited amount of space in the public debate in national newspapers. Much larger space was actually taken by the VVD over the years, with peaks in the period 2003-2006.

How is the issue framed?

Having discussed polarization and salience, as well as what actors contributed to the politicization of immigration and integration, we now focus on the way the issue was framed. We do so by graphically showing the distribution of frames attached to political claims; frames give us information on how issues are politicized. Figure 4 below, provides an annual breakdown of the most common frames attached to the debate on immigration.

Figure 4 clearly show that Dutch participants in the debate on immigration are most likely to use *instrumental* arguments to defend their positions. While the 'instrumental frame' remains the dominant frame over the years. Its relative prevalence has diminished somewhat over time. In 1995 almost 80% of the claims were defended by instrumental arguments and this decreased to just 50% in 2009. The decrease of instrumental arguments coincide with an increase in the use of the *collective identity* argument. *Collective identity* frames include arguments on cultural and religious traditions and norms, as well as national and political values. The use of *collective identity* frames ranges from 10% to about 30%, depending on the year, and its use seems to be more common in the late 2000s than it was in the 1990s. Moreover, the use of a *universal principles* frame has also increased in the 2000s. Overall, these types of arguments are used the least.

Figure 4. Frames attached to claims on immigration and integration



Explanations

The previous section described patterns of politicizations and de-politicization, the actors involved in these processes and the ways in which the issue became politicized. In this section we turn to explanations for our observations. Explanations for the politicization of an issue in general, and the migration and integration in particular can be thought in terms of two dimensions (similar organizations of the literature are used in studies explaining the emergence of radical right parties: Eatwell, 2003, Mudde, 2006). First, politicization can be conceived as a process that essentially originates within the political system, in a top down fashion. Alternatively it can be thought as a bottom up process that originates when society ‘demands’ politics on the part of politicians. Secondly, we might differentiate between explanations that are based on the agency of actors, such as political leaders or social movement organizations and those that emphasize structural developments and conditions.

Table 1: Summary of explanations for politicization of issues

	Structure	Agency
Initially top down	Political Opportunity Structure	Policies implemented
Initially bottom up	Societal developments	Actions by specific groups

We discuss each of these by focusing firstly on the plausibility of structural top-down explanation and then moving to bottom up ones. Before exploring each and one of them, it is worth emphasizing that the combination of high salience and high polarization is rather rare in the Netherlands. The issue did become more salient in the 2000s than it was in the 1990s, but there is not a very clear trend. Rather, Figure 1 shows ups and downs in terms of salience, with two real peaks in 2002 and 2004. Figure 2 indicates that overall levels of polarization have been relatively low, with exception of the peaks in 2002, 2006 and 2009. Figure 3, combining these findings shows that the combination of relatively high salience and polarization occurred in 2002, 2006 and 2009. Our explorations of possible explanations should therefore focus just as much on the lack of strong politicization as on the factors driving the peaks in salience and polarization.

Societal developments (structural, bottom up)

To the extent that real world developments affect the politicization of immigration, we would expect three factors to play a role in particular. In the first place, we expect politicization to be more likely when there are more immigrants (H1) and if they are culturally more different from the native population (H2). Economic crises could lead to politicization if people blame the immigrants (H3a). Yet, we also have to be aware of the fact that issues compete with each other for attention from the media, politicians and the public. This leads to the opposite hypothesis that when there are other issues on the political agenda, immigration is less likely to become politicized (H3b). A third real world development to look at are specific events such as 9/11.

As outlined in the historical background session, there has been an increase in the number of immigrant and particularly non-western immigrants in relation to the native Dutch population. The presence of immigrants seems an obvious precondition for any kind of politicization of the issue. After all, without immigrants there is no migration issue. While this seems obvious, no clear relationship has been observed between the numbers of immigrants in a country and xenophobia, nor between the number of immigrants and the electoral success of anti-immigration parties (e.g., Van der Brug et al., 2005). When exploring the Dutch case in some more details, such a relation is indeed far from obvious.

The migration waves to the Netherlands were largest in the 1970s, when it seems that the issue was hardly politicized. Politicization was the strongest in the 2000s, when immigration rules had already become much stricter and few immigrants were entering the country, except for asylum seekers. Between 2004 and 2007, the Netherlands even experienced negative migration rates for the 'non-Western' group (SCP 2009b, 47, 54), but this did not lead to de-politicization. The slow increase in the growth of this group is due to higher birth rates and family formation (international marriages), and not caused by new waves of migrants. This 'natural growth' of 'non-Western' communities implies that the group of non-Western migrants consists increasingly of 'second generation' migrants (43% in 2009) (SCP 2009b,

40). As such, non-Westerners are decreasingly ‘culturally different’ because ‘second generation’ citizens have grown up in the Netherlands. Moreover, average levels of education of ethnic minorities have gone up dramatically, so that the educational gap is now much smaller than two decades ago. A major change over the past decade has been represented by immigration flows from new EU-member states from East Central Europe. The Netherlands did not have major restrictions on migrations from those countries belonging to the ‘first wave’ of EU enlargement, but the Netherlands maintained some sector-specific restriction on labour migration from Romania and Bulgaria. Immigrants from Eastern Europe mainly come to the Netherlands in search of a job, with the notable exception of a sizable number of people from Poland migrating for family reasons (SCP 2009b, 52-53). While the presence of new groups of immigrants from East Central Europe certainly causes social tensions, there is no obvious link between the migration patterns and the moments when the issue became politicized. So, there appears to be little support for H1 and H2.

Economic downturns and growing level of unemployment do not explain the politicization of the issue of immigration either. The appearance of the LPF in the political scene actually coincides with years of high economic growth and the lowest levels of unemployment in the country, 2.1% in 2001 and 2.6% in 2002. Unemployment rates went up to above 4% in 2004-2005, to then decrease from 2006 onwards. The peaks in salience happened in 2002 and 2004, when unemployment rates were respectively particularly low and relatively high. The low points in terms of salience were around 1997, 2000 and 2006 when unemployment rates were respectively 5.5%, 2.7%, and 3.9%. Since no clear patterns emerge, H3a and H3b both seem implausible.

The highest peaks in salience of the issue can be observed in 2002 and 2004. As discussed earlier, these peaks follow two dramatic events: the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 and the murder of the Dutch film director Theo van Gogh. It seems obvious that these two events provided the conditions under which the issue of immigration could be politicised.

Actions of specific groups (agency, bottom up)

In this section we focus on the rather voluntaristic perspectives that explain politicization as a process driven mainly by the actions of specific groups or individuals. Three hypotheses guide the discussion. The first is that a process of politicization of the issue will start by immigrant organisations making political claims (H4), which, secondly, will be followed by counter-claims by anti-immigration parties and movements (H5). The third hypothesis is that the process of politicisation will be driven mainly by new leaders who do not (yet) have vested interests and are therefore less constrained in putting the issue on the agenda (H6).

Tables 1 and 2 above described who the claim makers were. These tables showed that while the greatest part of the claims were made by government actors, organisations representing minorities and immigrants featured prominently in the debate. Over the years, these groups were able to get a large number of their claims covered in the media, indicating that the Dutch public sphere offers opportunities for them to voice their opinions. We certainly

observed that the proportion of claims made by immigrants and minorities are highly variable over the fifteen years (from a maximum of 27% to a minimum of 5%). However, it appears as if their role in the public debate on immigration has slowly waned. In the 1990s they were more visible than in more recent years. When the issue was hardly politicized in the 1990s, immigrant organisations were able to get their message across with relatively little contestation. When more restrictive policies were called for in 2001 and 2002 (see Figure 2), immigrant organisations did still manage to reach the media with their claims (see Table 1). However, after that they lost their prominent position in the media. So, there certainly appears to be support for H4.

Nationalist and anti-immigration movements have never played an important role in the Netherlands, but when Pim Fortuyn entered the political stage as leader of LN, his claims (calling for more restrictive migration politics) did enter the media in 2002 (see Table 2). This suggests some support for H5. Yet, Table 2 also demonstrates that anti-immigration parties do not participate prominently in the public debate. The low amount of claims made by anti-immigration parties is remarkable, because research has shown that these parties were highly visible in the media (Brants and Van Praag, 2005; Bos et al., 2010). While being highly visible, they apparently did not use this visibility very often to make claims regarding the migration issue. So, there is only weak support for H5. Closer analysis may focus on the strategic considerations on the part of politicians such as Wilders.

When making a list of the most prominent claim makers in these 15 years, the three persons who managed to get the largest number of claims in the media were Rita Verdonk (VVD, 38 claims), Job Cohen (PvdA, 30 claims) and Geert Wilders (PVV, 16 claims). Almost all of these claims were made in the latter half of the period under study. Verdonk was a new and inexperienced but ‘missionary’ politician when she entered national politics in 2003 as a hardline minister responsible for migration. Geert Wilders managed to present himself as a ‘new’ and outsider politician. Job Cohen is not an outsider but is a product of a long-term tradition within the Labour party that relatively favourable to migrants. He served as Secretary of State in the 1998-2002 coalition and mayor of ‘multicultural’ Amsterdam (and PvdA party leader 2010-2012, outside the period studied). So, when we consider Wilders and Verdonk as ‘new’ leaders, there appears to be support for H6 in the Dutch case.

Policies (agency, initially top down)

It seems plausible that politicization might take place as a reaction to specific policies that are implemented, particularly if such policies are unpopular among specific groups (H7). Therefore, we provide here an overview of developments in policies and legislation on immigration and integration during the fifteen years we study.

In so doing we rely on the six categories formulated by MIPEX (Migrant Integration Policy Index Project) as our policy reference: Labour market access, family reunion, long term residence, political participation, access to nationality and antidiscrimination. Overall, policies and legislation on these areas remained more or less constant over the past decade.

The absence of substantial changes in the legal and policy situation is surprising considering that immigration and integration has been a subject of increasing political debate throughout the period under review. However, we observe some changes in specific time periods for specific aspects of migration law, mainly after 2000 and even more so between 2004 and 2007.

In this period stricter integration regulations were introduced, along with a raise in the costs of residence permits. Laws on family reunion, long term residence and nationality also became more restrictive between 1995 and 2007. Since 2007, migrants are required to pass an increasingly difficult integration exam, attend a Naturalisation Day ceremony and may lose Dutch nationality again on procedural grounds (fraud). In addition to measures in the fields described above, there are several (procedural) rules, such as those on entrance clearance visa and income requirements that make the legal situation less favourable to migrants. While a tendency towards less favourable conditions in the abovementioned categories is observed, it is important to note that within the MIPEX indicators Dutch migration policies are still categorized either as “favourable” or “neither favourable nor unfavourable”⁴. In other terms, the legislation gradually became stricter than in the past, but in absolute terms it remained fairly favourable towards migrants. Furthermore, policies in the fields of anti-discrimination, political participation and labour market access hardly changed.

The most restrictive policies were introduced in the years between 2004 and 2006 and the most prominent claim maker in the Netherlands in the years that we studied was the minister responsible for these policies, Rita Verdonk. It seems plausible therefore that the strong rise in salience of the issue in 2004 would to some extent be due to policies she proposed and the response to the introduction of these policies. So, H7 also appears plausible in the Dutch case.⁵

The Political Opportunity Structure (structural, top down)

The success of any kind of collective actor (parties, NGO's, pressure- and interest groups, social movements) to put new issues on the agenda will depend upon the opportunities. Whether such opportunities arise, or whether there are opportunities for other actors to depoliticize an issue, depend to a large extent on (structurally determined) conditions. This is what we refer to by the term political opportunity structure (POS). In this chapter we look at two components of the political opportunity structure: 1) formal political institutions and 2) the conflict dimensions within the party system (Kriesi et al, 1992; Kriesi 2004; Kitchelt, 1986). We explore both components in relation to our findings.

Formal political institutions

⁴ Specifically, from 2000 on “access to nationality” drops from ‘slightly’ favourable to “neither favourable nor unfavourable” and from 2004 legislation in “long term residence” and “family reunion” drop from “slightly favourable” to “neither favourable nor unfavourable”.

⁵ The top ten Dutch claim makers includes only two persons who never served as government minister (pro-migrant rights D66 MP Boris Dittrich and anti-migrant MP Geert Wilders).

First, the rules on formal political institutions largely determine which part of the political system is likely to be open or closed to certain issues. This approach builds on the earlier observation of Schattschneider (1957, 936) that “the function of institutions is to channel conflict but they do not treat all forms of conflict equally, just as football rules discriminate between legitimate and illegitimate forms of violence”. This means that in some countries certain channels and their actors are more likely to be engaged in politicization than in other countries. For instance, the UK media system, with its strong tabloid press, seems more open to popular, anti-immigrant voices than the German media system that is more strongly affiliated with established party positions (Hallin and Mancini, 2004; Akkerman, 2011). Another obvious example is the existence of electoral thresholds; in countries with high thresholds (Germany, United Kingdom) it is more difficult to politicize issues via the establishment of new political parties. Existing parties and other political channels, such as social movements, are thus more likely to be relatively common venues for politicization. We provide here a snapshot of the POS in the country keeping in mind that there has not been a substantial change in rules and formal political institutions over the time period studied.

The Dutch system may be characterized as somewhat open: on the one hand, there is an electoral threshold of 0.6 per cent (single constituency, 150 seat national parliament), on the other hand, at least up to the end of the Nineties, party political coalition and competition around somewhat outdated cleavages seems to favour incumbents. The system of proportional representation, and the absence of a constituency voting system give space to small new parties, and contribute consequently to a plurality of parties. When parties win seats in Parliament, they qualify for governmental party funding (Lucardie, Voerman and Zonneveld, 2010). The effective number of parties in the national Parliament has fluctuated between 4.7 and 5.5. When it comes to non-party mobilization, the traditional elite-controlled corporatist state strategy of ‘informal inclusion’ of challengers neither closes nor really opens up the system (Kriesi, 1995, 37).

Lijphart classifies democracies along two power-sharing dimensions: the executive-parties and the federal-unitary dimension. Strongly ‘executive’ and very unitary countries could be considered relatively ‘closed’, whereas party-oriented and federal states may be understood to be more open (e.g. Kriesi, 1990). The Netherlands has comparatively low scores on the executive dimension, indicating strong parties and weak executives. The federal-unitary scores are close to zero, reflecting neither federal nor unitary state structures (Lijphart, 1999: 248, 312). This suggests that, in general, political parties provide access points to politics and, to a lesser extent, some semi-federal aspects (especially *local* and not regional level authority) of the Dutch political process provide opportunities for politicization. Systemic characteristics have remained stable over time and no major institutional change happened in the fifteen years under study. As such, the open and stable institutional set up has actually provided a favourable environment for politicisation of political issues in general, and cannot easily explain variation in or the absence of ‘politicized politics’ on integration and immigration. The second component of the POS, the party system, has been less steady over time, and it may provide a sensible explanation for the short-term politicization of migration and integration issues.

Conflict dimensions within the party system

Political conflicts manifest themselves in the structure of party systems - producing conflict dimensions, such as left-right. These dimensions matter for the incorporation of new issues. In other words, parties avoid addressing issues that could produce internal disagreement, or destabilise existing coalitions (Schattschneider, 1960; Green-Pedersen, 2007). Established parties usually do not want new conflict dimensions to become politicized, particularly when their own constituents are divided on these issues, or if these new conflicts redefine the balance of power in a way that is potentially unfavourable to them. The emergence of new political issues in the system (i.e. politicisation) depends partially on whether it can be incorporated in existing conflict dimensions or not (H8).

As regards the plausibility of this explanation in the case under study, a minor, but potentially relevant change in party political opportunities, occurred towards the end of the nineties. At the local level so-called 'Liveable' parties gained electoral support, partially undermining the position of established, mainstream parties. This is likely to have increased the expectations of success for such parties at the national level. Furthermore, the 'grand' purple coalition (in power between 1994 and 2002) required parties to de-politicize a broad range of issues, both in the sphere of socio-economic policies, but also notably on the issues of migration and integration, in order to maintain the coalition in place (van der Brug et al, 2009). In these years, governing parties, even the mainstream right-wing VVD, provided a relatively unfavourable channel for politicisation of migration and integration. This is in contrast to the post-2002 period, when right-wing parties initially formed a government coalition, and consequently the government-opposition dynamics changed in such a way that migration and integration issues to a large extent united the coalition vis-à-vis the opposition. This, and the right-wing competition on the mainstream right, also provided opportunities for politicisation within the mainstream right party (VVD) as part of the process of 'contagion' of anti-immigrant positions beyond the radical right. This is also exhibited in fact that here are several members of Parliament who declare themselves openly against immigration and the 'multicultural' model of integration. Currently, Wilders is the most prominent anti-immigration figure within the Dutch political system. While the formal components of the political opportunities have not changed, the opportunities in the party system and the discursive opportunities are currently far more favourable to radical right positions than in the mid-Nineties and earlier.

Conclusions

We have observed only short-time 'politicized politics' in the Netherlands; by and large, over the fifteen years analysed here there has been no clear indication that immigration and integration have become highly salient and polarizing issues. Overall, the level of salience has been quite low and these two issues have not produced intense polarization among political actors. The favourable economic state of the country, together with the lack of shocks in number of incoming migrants (notably, the number of immigrants went down, and for groups that may be of particular concern, especially Moroccan and Turkish, we observe an outgoing migration pattern in the early 2000s) seem to have provided the condition to low politicization. Moreover, policies and regulation on the status of immigrants have not

registered any sudden deep countertendency; overall legislation has remained relatively open to needs and rights of migrants. The somewhat controversial Vreemdelingenwet in 2000 has been contained within the policy community and parliamentary committees, and the minor dissensus on this issue predated the actual implementation (e.g. De Lange, 2007). Finally the systemic institutional elements have remained stable over time. As such, those elements that could trigger reactions, polarization and disagreement (economic crises, strong legislative restriction to migrants rights and opportunities, new waves of migrants) have been substantially absent from the Dutch political scenario. However, non-structural, relatively contingent events in society seem to have triggered the politicization of an issue. There has been relatively little previous theoretical work we note how certain 'events' such as 9-11 or the van Gogh's murder could catalyse or trigger the effect of any of the causes discussed here. We have noticed that particular events and moments have allowed politicians such as radical right politician Pim Fortuyn or mainstream left Job Cohen, to play a major role in downplay and politicize migration and integration.

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