



## The complexity of coexistence: Dutch perspectives on multiculturalism and Muslim integration

Tahir Abbas<sup>1</sup>

Received: 18 August 2024 / Accepted: 31 January 2026  
© The Author(s) 2026

### Abstract

This paper interrogates the coexistence of broad multicultural ideals with persistent anti-Muslim sentiment in the Netherlands; a nation historically celebrated for tolerance but increasingly marked by tensions over integration. Drawing on original analysis of a 2023 EC-funded H2020 project survey ( $N=1963$ ), we reveal a sharp divide: while Dutch respondents express moderate support for multiculturalism as a principle ( $M=4.60$ ), attitudes toward Muslim communities remain starkly negative ( $M=3.22$ ). A significant minority (12%) exhibits what we identify as forbearance tolerance, a conflicted state of endorsing diversity in the abstract while perceiving Muslims as incongruent with national values. We argue this orientation is a unsurprising result of attitudinal ambivalence, a psychological state produced by the confluence of the Netherlands' secular heritage, its colonial legacy, and contemporary populist politics. The Netherlands' post-pillarisation secular heritage established a model of tolerance-through-separation, while its postcolonial legacy and the populist securitisation of Islam have fostered a 'progressive nativism' that frames Muslim integration as a threat to liberal norms. Educated urban elites, though theoretically tolerant, exhibit heightened cultural anxieties, reflecting how ambivalence is most pronounced among those exposed to competing egalitarian and threat-based narratives. Urban centres such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam amplify these tensions, where systemic inequities in housing, labour markets, and surveillance reinforce exclusion. Our findings challenge assimilationist policy narratives, highlighting how structural Islamophobia, entrenched in colonial othering and modern identity politics, perpetuates a fragile and damaging form of coexistence. The Dutch case illuminates broader European struggles with integration, urging a shift from symbolic tolerance to policies that address the roots of ambivalence and institutional discrimination.

**Keywords** Muslim integration · Netherlands · Dutch Islamophobia · Integration policy · Forbearance tolerance · Attitudinal ambivalence

---

Extended author information available on the last page of the article

Published online: 25 February 2026



## Introduction

The Netherlands presents a sharp contradiction between its historical reputation for tolerance and the persistent social disapproval faced by its Muslim communities (Kaya 2021; Strabac and Listhaug 2008; Zick et al. 2008). Long defined by a unique history of managing difference, the Dutch context reveals the fragility of tolerance when confronted with deep value conflicts. This paper investigates the prevalence and predictors of a specific, limited form of tolerance, what Maykel Verkuyten terms ‘forbearance tolerance’ (Adelman et al. 2021a, b, 2023). This orientation is characterized by a begrudging coexistence, a state in which abstract principles of diversity are upheld while specific minority groups, particularly Muslims, face significant social disapproval and systemic exclusion (ibid.). The central puzzle is not why contradiction exists, but why this particular form of conflicted tolerance has become a dominant mode of intergroup relations in the Netherlands.

This study argues that the prevalence of forbearance tolerance in the Netherlands is the logical outcome of two historical trajectories that have converged in the modern era. First, the legacy of pillarisation established a path-dependent model of tolerance-through-separation, ill-equipped for integrative dialogue (Schrover 2010). Second, the nation’s colonial legacy, colliding with a post-war ‘ethical revolution’ and the subsequent rise of a militant secularism, produced a ‘progressive nativism’ that uniquely targets Muslims as a threat to Dutch identity (Essed and Hoving 2014; Ghorashi 2023; Lucassen and Lucassen 2015). We contend that at the individual level, these powerful societal pressures manifest as ‘attitudinal ambivalence’, a state of genuine cognitive and affective conflict, making forbearance tolerance a common psychological and behavioural resolution for citizens caught between competing norms of egalitarianism and perceived cultural threat (Jonas et al. 2000). This paper empirically investigates the nature of this dynamic by examining the relationship between general multicultural attitudes and specific attitudes towards Muslims among Dutch residents. We hypothesise that (1) education increases theoretical support for multiculturalism but also heightens the cognitive conflict that leads to forbearance (Bot and Verkuyten 2018; Jackman and Muha 1984), and (2) perceived threats amplify anti-Muslim attitudes (Blalock 1967; Lajevardi et al. 2024), explaining the prevalence of this conflicted stance.

We seek to answer three key research questions: (1) To what extent do general multicultural attitudes diverge from attitudes towards Muslims in the Netherlands? (2) What proportion of Dutch residents exhibits forbearance tolerance, simultaneously endorsing multiculturalism and expressing concerns about Muslims? And (3) What factors predict this conflicted orientation? In addressing these questions, we contribute to both theoretical debates about the nature of tolerance and practical discussions about integration policies. Our findings have significant implications for the design and implementation of integration policies in the Netherlands and other diverse societies in Western Europe with sizeable Muslim minority populations today.



## Theoretical development

Multiculturalism, as both a demographic reality and a normative ideal, has been the subject of extensive academic and political debate (Colombo 2015; Kymlicka 1995, 2010; Long and Çakmak 2024; Modood 2013; Waters et al. 2020). At its core, multiculturalism advocates for the recognition and accommodation of cultural diversity within a unified political community (Parekh 2006; Sealy et al. 2024). However, critics argue that it can lead to social fragmentation and undermine national cohesion (Duyvendak and Kesic 2022; Goodhart 2004; Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007). Here, simply put, integration is a two-way street, while assimilation is a cul-de-sac (Boski 2008). To move beyond this impasse, this paper adopts a more precise theoretical framework centred on the concepts of forbearance tolerance and attitudinal ambivalence.

The central dynamic observed in our data is best understood not as a contradiction, but as forbearance tolerance. This concept describes the conscious decision to not interfere with the beliefs or practices of others, despite holding a negative judgment or disapproval of them (Sleijpen et al. 2020; Verkuyten et al. 2023). It is an intermediate and inherently conflicted position, situated “between wholehearted acceptance and unrestrained opposition” (Adelman et al. 2023). Tolerance as forbearance thus combines a negative underlying attitude (objection) with a positive or neutral behavioural stance (permitting the disapproved-of action). This distinguishes it from both prejudice (negative attitude leading to negative action) and genuine acceptance (positive attitude leading to positive action). Crucially, being the object of forbearance is not a neutral experience. It is often perceived as “patronizing and condescending” because it reinforces a power imbalance where the majority feels virtuous for “putting up with” something it deems objectionable (Cvetkovska et al. 2020). This places the tolerated group in a precarious position, dependent on the “continuing goodwill and the mercy of the dominant group,” which can diminish their sense of belonging and efficacy (Verkuyten et al. 2020).

While forbearance tolerance describes the sociopolitical orientation, attitudinal ambivalence provides the social-psychological mechanism explaining how individuals arrive at this state (Jonas et al. 2000; Katz and Hass 1988). Attitudinal ambivalence theory posits that individuals can simultaneously hold strong positive and negative evaluations toward the same group. This cognitive and affective conflict often arises from the clash between cherished egalitarian values (e.g., “diversity is good”) and ingrained negative stereotypes or perceived threats (e.g., “Islam is incompatible with secularism”) (Conner et al. 2021). This internal conflict is an aversive state that individuals are motivated to resolve. Forbearance tolerance can be understood as a primary behavioural resolution to this psychological discomfort. An individual holds two conflicting cognitions: “I am a tolerant person who believes in equality” and “I am concerned that certain Islamic practices threaten liberal values.” When asked about multiculturalism in the abstract, the positive, egalitarian component is activated. When asked about Muslims specifically, the negative, threat-oriented component is primed. The behavioural compromise is forbearance: granting rights in principle while maintaining private disapproval. This framework allows us to re-contextualize related concepts. Aversive racism (Dovidio et al. 2018) can be seen as



a form of ambivalence where the negative component is often unconscious, a product of automatically activated stereotypes that even low-prejudice individuals must consciously inhibit (Devine 1989). Abstract liberalism (Bonilla-Silva 2015), adapted to the European context, becomes the rhetorical strategy used by ambivalent individuals to articulate their forbearance, using liberal language to justify exclusionary stances toward specific groups (Bader 2007; Phillips 2009).

This theoretical model is particularly potent in the Dutch context due to two historical path dependencies. First, the legacy of *pillarisation* (*verzuiling*) created a societal model of tolerance-as-separation (Bracke 2013). This system of institutionalized segregation fostered group autonomy and mutual non-interference rather than intergroup dialogue, a model that was later applied in an essentialist manner to new migrant groups, framing them as homogenous cultural blocs (Abbas 2017). Second, this history collided with the Netherlands' *postcolonial legacy* and the rise of a militant secularism. Contemporary Dutch Islamophobia is not simply a remnant of colonialism but a unique product of the *intersection* of a long-suppressed colonial conscience and a post-pillarisation secular identity (Valk 2012). The Netherlands' colonial history, particularly in Muslim-majority Indonesia, created a template for the "othering" of Muslims, a legacy intertwined with the nation's role in the Atlantic slave trade (see the various chapters in Bosma 2012; Emmer 2006; Jones 2012; Yamaguchi 2024;). However, this past remained largely unexamined until post-colonial migration forced a confrontation with it (Oostindie 2009, 2012). As Leo Lucassen and Lucassen (2015) argue, this created fertile ground for a "progressive nativism," where the defense of hard-won secular and progressive values (gender equality, free speech) is weaponized against a perceived "illiberal" Islam, an ideology that allows for the expression of exclusionary attitudes under a progressive guise. This dynamic explains how an individual can be simultaneously pro-multiculturalism (adhering to anti-racist norms) and anti-Muslim (engaging in a "progressive-nativist" defence of secularism), leading directly to the conflicted stance of forbearance tolerance.

The Netherlands has a long history of attempting to manage diversity, dating back to the pillarisation system of the early twentieth century, which institutionalised the segregation of Dutch society along religious and ideological lines (Jennissen et al. 2023; Lijphart 2022). Under this system, different groups had their own separate institutions while coexisting within a shared national framework. This historical experience of managing diversity through institutionalised segregation has been seen as a precursor to the Dutch approach to multiculturalism in the late twentieth century (Entzinger 2006; Breugelmans and van de Vijver 2004). In the 1960s and 1970s, the Netherlands experienced significant waves of immigration, particularly from its former colonies and from Muslim-majority countries such as Turkey and Morocco. Initially, these immigrants were seen as temporary residents, and their acculturation was viewed through a lens of eventual return (Berry 1997; Beek and Fleischmann 2020; Kreienkamp et al. 2024; Scholten 2011). However, by the 1980s, Dutch policy shifted towards a more proactive approach. The Minorities Policy of 1983 explicitly recognised the Netherlands as a multicultural society, aiming to promote the emancipation of ethnic minorities while preserving their cultural identities (Entzinger 2006). This policy, however, applied the logic of pillarisation in an essentialist way, treating



migrant groups as static, homogenous blocs and effectively “freezing” their cultural identities.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Dutch multiculturalism was characterised by a range of policies aimed at supporting ethnic minority communities (Vasta 2007). However, by the late 1990s, this approach came under increasing criticism for hindering integration and creating “parallel societies,” a critique amplified by globalization’s transformation of the national political space (Koopmans 2010; Kriesi et al. 2006). The Integration Policy New Style, introduced in 2002, marked a significant departure, placing greater emphasis on the responsibilities of immigrants to integrate (Gebhardt 2016). The rapid rise of anti-Islam populist parties like the PVV under Geert Wilders since 2006 (Table 1) amplified public susceptibility to Islamophobia, unique in its intensity compared to neighbouring countries (Vossen 2010; Buruma 2014). This shift reflects a broader tension. While there remains a persistent rhetorical commitment to multicultural ideals, this coexists with profound anxieties regarding Muslim integration (Helbling 2012, 2014). This is not a simple rejection of diversity, but a specific objection rooted in the historical collision of a suppressed colonial past and an assertive secular identity. The Netherlands’ colonial history, especially in Indonesia, shaped an enduring “othering” of Muslims (see Bosma 2012). Unlike in Britain or France, this colonial past remained largely unexamined for decades. The post-war “ethical revolution,” driven by guilt over the Holocaust, created a taboo against open criticism of immigrants, suppressing honest debate. When Muslim immigrants began to assert a public religious identity, it triggered both the repressed colonial-era anxiety and a new secular anxiety about a perceived threat to “enlightened” Dutch values (Mouritsen 2008). This created the conditions for the “progressive nativism” described by Lucassen and Lucassen (2015), which allows for the defence of liberal values to be framed as a progressive act while functioning as an exclusionary force directed at Muslims.

Recent events, such as the 2023 revelation of secret government investigations into mosques, have intensified debates on Islamophobia, further eroding trust and impacting the civic engagement of Dutch Muslims (Boender 2019). These developments highlight the ongoing relevance of understanding the Dutch situation as a dynamic of forbearance, where commitments to diversity coexist with persistent challenges in integrating Muslim communities. Table 1 provides an overview of the key phases of engagement with the Muslim minority question in the Dutch context. The Dutch context thus presents a dynamic picture, characterised by a shifting policy landscape and ongoing debates about the place of Islam in Dutch society. Understanding this context is crucial for interpreting our empirical findings on Dutch attitudes towards multiculturalism and Muslim integration, and for situating the Dutch case within broader European debates about diversity and social cohesion.

## Methods

Our study draws on data from the H2020 Drive study survey, which was conducted in Spring 2023 across four Northwestern European countries. For the purposes of our analysis, we focus specifically on the Dutch sample ( $N=1963$ ), which was designed



**Table 1** Timeline of key events and policy changes in Dutch multiculturalism

Year	Event/policy change	Description	Impact on multiculturalism
1983	Minorities Policy	Official recognition of the Netherlands as a multicultural society	Promoted cultural maintenance for minority groups
1994	Integration Policy	Shift towards more emphasis on socio-economic integration	Began move away from group-based approach
2000	“The Multicultural Drama”	Publication of influential essay by Paul Scheffer	Sparked national debate on failures of multiculturalism
2002	Rise of Pim Fortuyn	Anti-immigration politician gains popularity	Shifted political discourse on immigration and integration
2004	Murder of Theo van Gogh	Filmmaker killed by Islamist extremist	Intensified debates about Islam in Dutch society
2006	Integration Policy “New Style”	Introduction of civic integration courses and tests	Marked shift towards assimilationist approach
2010	Support for Geert Wilders’ PVV	Anti-Islam party gains significant votes in election	Further polarisation of debates on multiculturalism
2011	“Integration, Binding, Citizenship”	Government policy paper emphasising Dutch norms and values	Continued move away from multiculturalism
2013	End of targeted ethnic minority policies	Shift to mainstream approach for all citizens	Formal end of multicultural policy framework
2017	Debates on dual citizenship	Proposal to limit dual citizenship	Reflects ongoing tensions around national identity
2021	Child benefits scandal	Ethnic profiling in welfare fraud investigations exposed	Renewed debates on institutional racism and integration
2023	Revelation of secret government investigations into Muslim communities	Disclosed that multiple ministries, including Social Affairs, conducted unauthorised surveillance of mosques and Muslim individuals	Further eroded trust between Muslim communities and the government, intensifying debates on Islamophobia and integration



Table 1 (continued)

Year	Event/policy change	Description	Impact on multiculturalism
2024	Formation of the right-wing Schoof Cabinet; "Hope, Courage and Pride" coalition agreement.	Following the PVV's 2023 election victory, a four-party coalition (PVV, VVD, NSC, BBB) is formed. The coalition agreement outlines the "strictest asylum policy ever," proposing to declare an "asylum crisis," extend naturalization to 10 years, and severely limit family reunification.	Marks a definitive political rupture, moving state policy from "forbearance tolerance" to active exclusion. The agenda institutionalizes "progressive nativism" by framing exclusionary measures as necessary to protect the Dutch welfare state, aiming to systematically dismantle pathways to integration.
2025	Collapse of the Schoof Cabinet and call for new elections.	The government collapses in June after 11 months when Geert Wilders' PVV withdraws, citing frustration over the slow implementation of its asylum agenda and the refusal of partners to back a more extreme "10-point plan." New elections are called for October.	Demonstrates the inherent instability of a government built on radical promises. It inaugurates a cycle of political crisis and paralysis centred on immigration, making long-term integration policy impossible and replacing Dutch ambivalence with a Dutch cycle of populist rupture.

This table chronologically maps 1983–2025 policies, scandals, and social changes that shaped Dutch multiculturalism and Muslim integration. Each entry describes the impact of the event, such as how the 1983 Minorities Policy institutionalised cultural pluralism or how the 2023 mosque surveillance scandal worsened trust deficits. The timeline shows how policy reversals and crises, such as the murder of Theo van Gogh and the rise of the PVV, fuelled national identity and Islamophobia debates. Institutionalised discrimination, such as ethnic profiling in the 2021 child benefit scandal, reinforces the Dutch ambivalence. In 2024, a right-wing coalition under the banner of 'Hope, Courage and Pride' proposed the nation's strictest asylum laws, solidifying this restrictive turn. However, this government's rapid collapse in 2025 due to intractable asylum policy disagreements shows the Netherlands' ongoing political instability in immigration and integration



to be representative of the Dutch population in terms of age, gender, education level, and geographic region. Table 2 provides an overview of the key demographic characteristics of our sample.

The H2020 project survey aimed to capture a wide range of attitudes and perceptions related to diversity, social cohesion, and integration in multicultural societies. The survey included questions on general multicultural attitudes, attitudes towards specific minority groups (including Muslims), perceptions of social problems and ethnic threat, and experiences of discrimination and social exclusion.

Our analysis focuses on two key outcome variables: general multicultural attitudes and specific attitudes towards Muslims. The multicultural attitudes variable is a composite measure based on three survey items (“I see multicultural society as a good

**Table 2** Demographic characteristics of the Dutch sample ( $N=1,963$ )

Characteristic	<i>n</i>	%
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	962	49.00
Female	981	49.90
Other	20	1.10
<i>Age</i>		
18–29	412	21.00
30–44	523	26.60
45–59	534	27.20
60+	494	25.20
<i>Education Level</i>		
Primary or less	37	1.90
Secondary	478	24.40
Post-Secondary	535	27.30
Tertiary (Bachelor’s)	598	30.50
Post-graduate	248	12.60
Missing	67	3.30
<i>Employment status</i>		
Employed full-time	982	50.00
Employed part-time	412	21.00
Unemployed	98	5.00
Student	176	9.00
Retired	295	15.00
<i>Ethnicity</i>		
Dutch	1570	80.00
Moroccan Dutch	78	4.00
Turkish Dutch	78	4.00
Surinamese Dutch	59	3.00
Other	178	9.00

This table summarizes respondent demographics, including gender (49% female, 49% male), age distribution (21% aged 18–29, 25.2% over 60), education levels (80.9% post-secondary or higher), employment status (50% full-time), and ethnicity (80% Dutch, 4% Moroccan/Turkish Dutch). The sample reflects urban-rural diversity, with 54.3% in smaller cities/rural areas. These variables contextualize attitudinal patterns, such as higher education correlating with inconsistent views (Table 5) and urban respondents reporting greater social problems (Table 9), aligning with the study’s focus on structural inequities and identity conflicts



thing,” “More cultural diversity would be good where I live,” and “Ethnic minority groups should have the same rights as others”), with responses recorded on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree). The composite score was calculated as the mean of these three items (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=0.81$ ), with higher scores indicating more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism. The attitudes towards Muslims variable is also a composite measure based on three survey items (“Muslims are a problem in my area,” “Muslims live in parallel societies in my local area,” and “Muslims and Christians cannot co-exist”), with responses recorded on a 7-point Likert scale. These items were reverse-coded so that higher scores indicate more positive attitudes towards Muslims, and the composite score was calculated as the mean of the three items (Cronbach’s  $\alpha=0.76$ ). These items capture perceptions of social and cultural integration, reflecting Dutch concerns about Muslims’ perceived separatism rather than economic assimilation.

In addition to these outcome variables, our analysis includes several predictor variables that have been identified in the literature as potentially important drivers of multicultural attitudes and attitudes towards Muslims (see Table 3). These include:

- Education level (1 = primary or less, 5 = post-graduate).
- Feeling valued in society (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).
- Ethnic identity (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).
- Perceived social problems (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).
- Perceived powerlessness (1 = strongly disagree, 7 = strongly agree).

We also created a binary variable to identify respondents with inconsistent views, defined as those who scored above the midpoint (4) on both the multicultural attitudes scale and the Muslim problem perception scale (the reverse-coded version of the attitudes towards Muslims scale). This variable allows us to identify individuals who express positive attitudes towards multiculturalism in general but hold negative perceptions of Muslims in particular.

## Results

Our paired-samples t-test revealed a significant difference between general multicultural attitudes ( $M=4.60$ ,  $SD=1.28$ ) and specific attitudes towards Muslims ( $M=3.22$ ,  $SD=1.47$ ), with  $t(1902)=28.475$ ,  $p<.001$  (see Table 4). This finding suggests that Dutch respondents hold significantly more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism in general than towards Muslims in particular, with a large effect size (Cohen’s  $d=0.65$ ).

The Pearson correlation analysis showed a weak negative correlation between multicultural attitudes and attitudes towards Muslims ( $r=-.175$ ,  $p<.001$ ), indicating that as general multicultural attitudes become more positive, attitudes towards Muslims become slightly more negative, although the relationship is not strong.

Our cross-tabulation analysis revealed that 12.0% of respondents ( $n=228$ ) held inconsistent views, defined as scoring high (above the midpoint) on both the multicultural attitudes scale and the Muslim problem perception scale (see Table 5). Over-



**Table 3** Correlation matrix for key variables

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Multicultural Attitudes	1						
2. Attitudes Towards Muslims	-0.18**	1					
3. Education Level	0.19**	0.02	1				
4. Feeling Valued in Society	0.24**	-0.06*	0.16**	1			
5. Ethnic Identity	0.08**	0.10**	0.08**	0.34**	1		
6. Perceived Social Problems	0.04	-0.37**	0.04	-0.08**	0.10**	1	
7. Perceived Powerlessness	-0.14**	-0.32**	-0.18**	-0.19**	0	0.33**	1

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$

1. Multicultural Attitudes: A composite measure of general support for multiculturalism, calculated as the mean of three items: “I see multicultural society as a good thing,” “More cultural diversity would be good where I live,” and “Ethnic minority groups should have the same rights as others.” Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes towards multiculturalism

2. Attitudes Towards Muslims: A composite measure of attitudes specifically towards Muslims, calculated as the mean of three items: “Muslims are a problem in my area” (reverse-coded), “Muslims live in parallel societies in my local area” (reverse-coded), and “Muslims and Christians cannot co-exist” (reverse-coded). Higher scores indicate more positive attitudes towards Muslims

3. Education Level: An ordinal variable representing the highest level of education achieved by the respondent, ranging from 1 (Primary or less) to 5 (Post-graduate)

4. Feeling Valued in Society: A single-item measure asking respondents to rate their agreement with the statement “I am treated as a valued member of society” on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate feeling more valued

5. Ethnic Identity: A single-item measure of the importance of ethnicity to one’s identity, based on agreement with the statement “I feel that my ethnicity is a big part of my identity” on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate stronger ethnic identification

6. Perceived Social Problems: A single-item measure of perceived social issues in the respondent’s area, based on agreement with the statement “The area where I live has a lot of social problems” on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate perception of more social problems

7. Perceived Powerlessness: A single-item measure of perceived lack of power in society, based on agreement with the statement “People like me have no power in society” on a 7-point scale. Higher scores indicate feeling more powerless

This matrix quantifies relationships between variables: multicultural attitudes ( $\alpha=0.81$ ), Muslim attitudes ( $\alpha=0.76$ ), education, feeling valued, ethnic identity, perceived social problems, and powerlessness. Notable correlations include a weak negative link between multicultural and Muslim attitudes ( $r = -.175, p < .001$ ), suggesting symbolic tolerance coexists with anti-Muslim sentiment. Stronger ethnic identity correlates with higher Muslim problem perceptions ( $r = .10, p < .001$ ), while education weakly associates with multicultural support ( $r = .19, p < .001$ ). Powerlessness strongly predicts social problems ( $r = .33, p < .001$ )

**Table 4** Paired-samples t-test results comparing multicultural attitudes and attitudes towards Muslims

Measure	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	p	Cohen’s d
Multicultural attitudes	4.6	1.28	0.029	28.475	1902	<.001	0.65
Attitudes towards muslims	3.22	1.47	0.034				
Difference	1.38	2.11	0.048				

This test reveals a significant gap ( $t=28.475, p < .001$ ) between support for multiculturalism ( $M=4.60$ ) and negative Muslim attitudes ( $M=3.22$ ), with a large effect size ( $d=0.65$ ). Respondents endorse diversity in theory but reject Muslim integration in practice. The 95% CI (1.28–1.47) confirms the robustness of this dissonance, highlighting systemic Islamophobia masked by liberal rhetoric



**Table 5** Cross-tabulation of multicultural attitudes and Muslim problem perceptions

Multicultural attitudes	Muslim problem perceptions		Total
	Low ( $\leq 4$ )	High ( $> 4$ )	
Low ( $\leq 4$ )	474 (24.9%)	202 (10.6%)	676 (35.5%)
High ( $> 4$ )	999 (52.5%)	228 (12.0%)	1227 (64.5%)
Total	1473 (77.4%)	430 (22.6%)	1903 (100%)

This table shows 12% of respondents hold inconsistent views (high multicultural support + high Muslim problem perceptions). Chi-square results ( $\chi^2 = 31.820, p < .001$ ) reject randomness, while phi ( $\phi = -0.129$ ) indicates a weak association. Urban, educated respondents dominate this group (34.8% in major cities), reflecting “enlightened racism”. The data aligns with group threat theory, where diversity exposure heightens cultural anxieties

**Table 6** Logistic regression results predicting inconsistent views

Predictor	B	SE	Wald	df	<i>p</i>	Odds ratio	95% CI for OR
Education level	0.421	0.084	24.887	1	<0.001	1.524	[1.291, 1.798]
Feeling valued in society	0.115	0.063	3.364	1	0.067	1.122	[0.992, 1.269]
Ethnic identity	0.147	0.056	6.789	1	0.009	1.159	[1.037, 1.294]
Perceived social problems	0.624	0.052	141.925	1	<0.001	1.866	[1.684, 2.068]
Perceived powerlessness	0.408	0.061	45.178	1	<0.001	1.504	[1.335, 1.693]
Constant	-9.145	0.578	249.926	1	<0.001	0	

Education (OR=1.524), ethnic identity (OR=1.159), perceived social problems (OR=1.866), and powerlessness (OR=1.504) significantly predict inconsistent views. Nagelkerke  $R^2 = 0.377$  indicates moderate model fit. Feeling valued ( $p = .067$ ) is non-significant, suggesting structural factors (e.g., institutional Islamophobia) outweigh personal inclusion. The PVV’s anti-Islam rhetoric and urban-rural divides (Tables 7, 8 and 9) contextualize these predictors, emphasizing education’s role in sophisticated prejudice

all, 64.5% of respondents ( $n = 1227$ ) scored high on multicultural attitudes, while 22.6% ( $n = 430$ ) scored high on Muslim problem perceptions.

The chi-square test of independence indicated a significant relationship between multicultural attitudes and Muslim problem perceptions, with  $\chi^2(1, N = 1903) = 31.820, p < .001$ . This finding suggests that the distribution of these attitudes is not random and that there is a significant association between general multicultural views and perceptions of Muslim-related issues in the Netherlands.

Crosstabulation analyses reveal that those with inconsistent views are more likely to be highly educated (48.1% with tertiary or post-graduate education vs. 42.8% among consistent respondents), employed full-time (81.5% vs. 68.6%), and living in major cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam (34.8% vs. 23.7%) (Kraus and Daenekindt 2021). They are also more likely to identify as religious (55.8% vs. 34.3%), particularly Christian (54.1% vs. 45.3%). These findings paint a profile of the “paradoxical” Dutch individual: a younger, educated, urban professional who combines a strong sense of personal empowerment with wariness towards Muslim integration. Their religious identity, often Christian, may shape their views on the perceived (in) compatibility of Islamic and Dutch values. The higher prevalence of inconsistent views in major cities suggests that urban environments may sharpen both multicultural ideals and integration anxieties.

Our logistic regression analysis identified several significant predictors of inconsistent views (see Table 6):



- Education level: Higher levels of education were associated with increased odds of holding inconsistent views (OR = 1.524,  $p < .001$ ).
- Ethnic identity: Stronger ethnic identity was associated with higher likelihood of inconsistent views (OR = 1.159,  $p = .009$ ).
- Perceived social problems: Greater perception of social problems in one's area was strongly associated with increased odds of inconsistent views (OR = 1.866,  $p < .001$ ).
- Perceived powerlessness: Feeling less powerful in society was associated with higher likelihood of inconsistent views (OR = 1.504,  $p < .001$ ).

The finding that higher education is associated with inconsistent views (OR = 1.524,  $p < .001$ ) aligns with research on aversive racism, where individuals endorse egalitarian values but harbour unconscious biases that can be traced to early childhood (Bruijn et al. 2020; Choi et al. 2022; Curinier et al. 2024; Dovidio et al. 2018). In the Dutch context, highly educated individuals may express support for multiculturalism as a social norm while still holding prejudices, possibly reflecting a form of “enlightened racism” (van Dijk 1993). This suggests that education alone may not dismantle systemic Islamophobia, as it might lead to more sophisticated expressions of prejudice, such as framing concerns about Muslim integration in terms of cultural incompatibility rather than overt discrimination (De Koning 2020).

Feeling valued in society was not a significant predictor of inconsistent views ( $p = .067$ ), suggesting that individuals' subjective sense of social inclusion does not directly mediate the coexistence of multicultural ideals and anti-Muslim attitudes. This finding implies that structural and institutional factors such as systemic Islamophobia or policy-driven exclusion may play a more critical role in shaping these inconsistencies than personal perceptions of belonging. The logistic regression model explained 37.7% (Nagelkerke R<sup>2</sup>) of the variance in inconsistent views and correctly classified 91.6% of cases, indicating a good fit to the data. While the model captures key psychological and social predictors, the remaining unexplained variance highlights the complexity of Dutch ambivalence, pointing to deeper historical, political, or contextual influences such as colonial legacies or securitisation discourses.

Our analysis of urban-rural differences in social integration and perceived social problems revealed several important findings (see Tables 7, 8 and 9).

**Table 7** Distribution of respondents by City

City	Number of respondents	Percentage
Amsterdam	386	19.70
Rotterdam	240	12.20
The Hague	182	9.30
Utrecht	90	4.60
Other	1065	54.30
Total	1963	100

Amsterdam (19.7%) and Rotterdam (12.2%) dominate the urban sample, while 54.3% reside in smaller cities/rural areas. Urban centers exhibit higher multicultural support ( $M = 4.76$ ) and social problems ( $M = 3.59$ ) versus rural areas ( $M = 4.34$ ,  $M = 2.88$ ). This aligns with ANOVA results ( $F = 34.307$ ,  $p < .001$ ), where cities like Amsterdam amplify perceptions of fragmentation due to systemic inequities (e.g., ethnic profiling), while rural complacency masks latent conservatism



**Table 8** Cluster distribution by urban density in the Netherlands

Urban density	Cluster 1 (high problems)	Cluster 2 (low problems)	Cluster 3 (moderate)
Small city/rural	26.50%	35.70%	37.90%
Medium city	29.10%	31.90%	39.00%
Large city	36.70%	20.40%	42.90%
Major city	38.30%	33.40%	28.20%

Three clusters emerge: Cluster 1 (high problems/powerlessness), Cluster 2 (low problems/high education), and Cluster 3 (moderate). Major cities (38.3% in Cluster 1) exhibit higher social fragmentation, while rural areas (35.7% in Cluster 2) report stability. The urban-rural divide reflects group threat theory: proximity to diversity heightens anxieties, whereas insulation fosters scepticism. Cluster 1's dominance in Amsterdam/Rotterdam links to mosque surveillance scandals (Table 1) and labour market discrimination

**Table 9** Key variables comparison—urban vs. rural in the Netherlands

Variable	Urban (major/large cities)	Rural (medium/small cities)	t-value	p-value
Education level	3.6	3.12	15.234	<0.001
Ethnic identity	4.76	4.33	8.762	<0.001
Multicultural attitudes	4.76	4.34	11.543	<0.001
Perceived social problems	3.59	2.88	18.976	<0.001
Feeling powerless	4.38	4.14	5.321	<0.001

Urban respondents show higher education ( $M=3.6$  vs.  $3.12$ ), ethnic identity ( $M=4.76$  vs.  $4.33$ ), and powerlessness ( $M=4.38$  vs.  $4.14$ ) than rural counterparts. Perceived social problems are significantly higher in cities ( $t=18.976, p<.001$ ), correlating with institutional exclusion (e.g., housing discrimination). The moderation of education's effect by social inclusion ( $B=0.069, p=.001$ ) underlines urban diversity's dual role: fostering multicultural ideals while exposing systemic inequities that fuel the Dutch probpematix

First, an ANOVA test indicated significant differences in perceived social problems across different Dutch cities, with  $F(4,1958)=34.307, p<.001$ . Amsterdam and Rotterdam had the highest levels of perceived social problems, while smaller cities and rural areas had lower levels. This urban-rural divide reflects the spatial concentration of systemic inequities: cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, despite their progressive multicultural rhetoric, grapple with stark socioeconomic disparities, institutional discrimination (e.g., ethnic profiling in housing and policing), and racialised security policies such as mosque surveillance (Valentine 2008). These structural factors amplify perceptions of social fragmentation, particularly among urban residents who witness the contradictions between diversity ideals and exclusionary practices. In contrast, rural areas less exposed to visible diversity and its attendant tensions-report fewer perceived problems, aligning with their lower exposure to both multicultural ideals and the realities of integration challenges. The findings highlight how geographic context shapes attitudes, with urban centres acting as microcosms of broader national contradictions, where proximity to diversity heightens awareness of unresolved inequities. This aligns with group threat theory (Lajevardi et al. 2024), as urban residents' proximity to cultural and economic competition may exacerbate anxieties, while rural populations' relative insulation fosters complacency (Pettigrew and Tropp 2006).

Second, a cluster analysis identified three distinct profiles of respondents based on their social attitudes and perceptions:



1. High social problems, high ethnic identity, high feeling powerless ( $n=584$ ).
2. Low social problems, high education, high feeling valued ( $n=616$ ).
3. Moderate on most variables ( $n=696$ ).

The clustering pattern highlights how geographic context shapes attitudes, with urban centres embodying the tension between multicultural ideals and exclusionary realities (Crul and Schneider 2010). For instance, Amsterdam's progressive rhetoric clashes with marginalised Muslim communities facing labour market discrimination (Andriessen et al. 2012), while rural complacency masks latent cultural conservatism. This aligns with group threat theory (Lajevardi et al. 2024), as urban proximity to diversity heightens anxieties about resource competition and cultural change, whereas rural insulation fosters scepticism toward multiculturalism's challenges.

Third, our multiple regression analysis identified feeling powerless as the strongest predictor of perceived social problems ( $\beta=0.401$ ,  $p<.001$ ), followed by ethnic identity ( $\beta=0.178$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The relationship between education and social problems was moderated by both feeling valued in society ( $B=0.069$ ,  $p=.001$ ) and ethnic identity ( $B=0.053$ ,  $p=.004$ ) suggesting that the effect of education on perceptions of social problems varies depending on one's sense of social inclusion and ethnic identification. For individuals who feel valued in society, higher education may amplify awareness of systemic inequities, fostering critical engagement with social issues, whereas those lacking this sense of inclusion might interpret education as a tool that exacerbates frustration over unresolved inequalities. Similarly, ethnic identity acts as a lens: among those with stronger ethnic identification, education could heighten sensitivity to structural barriers faced by minority groups, intensifying perceptions of social problems, while weaker ethnic ties might mute this effect, allowing education to correlate more directly with optimism about societal progress.

The Dutch conundrum, where multicultural ideals coexist with anti-Muslim sentiment finds its sharpest expression in urban-rural divides, systemic inequities, and the interplay of identity and education. Urban centres like Amsterdam and Rotterdam, despite their diversity, amplify perceptions of social fragmentation due to institutionalised discrimination in housing, labour markets, and racialised security policies (e.g., mosque surveillance), which clash with progressive rhetoric. These structural realities, rooted in colonial legacies and secular identity politics, foster ambivalence: highly educated urban residents, while endorsing multiculturalism, exhibit heightened cultural anxieties, reflecting "enlightened racism" that frames Muslim integration as incompatible with Dutch norms. Conversely, rural areas, insulated from visible diversity, report fewer social problems but harbour latent cultural conservatism. The moderation of education's impact by social inclusion and ethnic identity stresses that urban diversity alone cannot dismantle systemic Islamophobia without policies addressing institutional exclusion. Cluster analyses and regression results further reveal how powerlessness and ethnic identification shape perceptions, with urban clusters disproportionately expressing heightened social concerns.



## Discussion

The significant difference between general multicultural attitudes ( $M=4.60$ ) and attitudes towards Muslims ( $M=3.22$ ) provides clear empirical evidence of *forbearance tolerance* in Dutch society. This gap between endorsing an abstract principle and disapproving of a specific group is the defining characteristic of this limited form of tolerance. This divergence is a coherent, if conflicted, stance. The central dynamic observed in our data is best explained by the concept of forbearance tolerance. It reflects the behavioural compromise that resolves the psychological discomfort of *attitudinal ambivalence*, where egalitarian norms clash with negative group-specific perceptions. The weak negative correlation ( $r=-0.175$ ) further underpins this dynamic; as commitment to the abstract ideal of multiculturalism increases, so too does the need to manage the conflicting negative attitude toward the specific group, which can manifest as heightened disapproval. This reveals the fragility of liberal ideals when confronted with cultural specificity and shows how systemic Islamophobia operates beneath a veneer of tolerance.

Our analysis identified a significant “*forbearance tolerance cohort*” (12.0% of respondents) who empirically embody this conflicted state. The logistic regression analysis reveals that the predictors of belonging to this group are factors that heighten attitudinal ambivalence. Firstly, higher education ( $OR=1.524$ ) increases the odds of holding this view. This does not mean education fails to instil tolerance; rather, it intensifies the internal conflict by simultaneously exposing individuals to strong egalitarian norms *and* sophisticated liberal critiques of perceived illiberalism, thereby fuelling the ambivalence that forbearance seeks to manage. This phenomenon, sometimes termed the “integration paradox,” suggests that higher education can also lead to a greater awareness of discrimination and societal shortcomings, fostering a more critical, and sometimes more distant, stance toward the host society (Geurts et al. 2022). This challenges the assumption that education is a simple panacea for prejudice and points to the need for a more nuanced understanding of its role.

Secondly, stronger ethnic identity ( $OR=1.159$ ) predicts membership in this cohort. This aligns with social identity theory, where a robust Dutch national identity, rooted in post-pillarisation secular liberalism and colonial-era narratives, may amplify boundaries between “native” and “other.” This reflects a defensive orientation where individuals who strongly identify with Dutch heritage may view Muslim integration as a threat to cultural continuity, particularly amid populist rhetoric framing Islam as incompatible with progressive values (Missier 2022; Mudde 2019). The process is reciprocal, as majority rejection can also impact how minorities negotiate their bicultural identities (Fleischmann and Weegh 2021).

Thirdly, greater perception of social problems ( $OR=1.866$ ) and perceived powerlessness ( $OR=1.504$ ) are strong predictors. This aligns with group threat theory (Lajevardi et al. 2024), where localized grievances and feelings of marginalization strengthen the negative, threat-based component of an ambivalent attitude, contributing to social polarization (Albada et al. 2021). In the Netherlands, perceptions of social problems are often racialised and politicised, with issues like crime or housing shortages being disproportionately attributed to Muslim communities, driven by structural inequities and media narratives that construct Muslims as a deviant “other”



(Saeed 2007; Hagendoorn 2017). These inequities are not merely perceptual; they are reflected in official reports on discrimination in housing and employment and in the disproportionate impact of economic crises on minority communities. Powerlessness, reflecting both material and symbolic disenfranchisement, channels frustrations into exclusionary attitudes, particularly in urban centres where proximity to diversity amplifies awareness of systemic barriers and anxieties about cultural erosion. This is further compounded by securitization policies that target Muslim communities, fostering a climate of suspicion that can alienate even those engaged in countering radicalism (Güner and Abbas 2025; Welten and Abbas 2021, 2022).

The urban-rural divide further illuminates these dynamics. The higher prevalence of the forbearance cohort in major cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam (34.8% vs. 23.7%) emphasises the dual realities of urban diversity. Cities are hubs of multicultural ideals but also magnify systemic inequalities and institutional exclusion, fostering the ambivalence that leads to forbearance. Urban environments thus amplify both progressive rhetoric and the visibility of exclusionary practices, necessitating interventions that address institutional discrimination rather than merely promoting symbolic endorsements of diversity.

## Conclusion

The conflicted Dutch stance on multiculturalism, simultaneously championing diversity while resisting Muslim integration, is a predictable outcome of the nation's unique historical trajectory. The legacy of pillarisation, a system of segregated coexistence, fostered tolerance through separation rather than integration. Its collapse left a vacuum filled by a secular nationalism that reframed Islam as incompatible with Dutch identity. This was compounded by the Netherlands' colonial history, particularly in Muslim-majority Indonesia, which entrenched narratives of Muslim "otherness" (Bosma 2012; Valk 2012). Unlike in Britain, this colonial past was not integrated into a reparative multiculturalism but instead informed a secularised exclusion of Muslims as perpetual outsiders. These historical currents created a society uniquely torn between its self-image as a bastion of tolerance and a reality of systemic exclusion, exemplified by the 2023 mosque surveillance scandal.

Empirically, this tension manifests as forbearance tolerance, a state of grudgingly permitting what is disapproved of. Our data shows that 12% of Dutch respondents exhibit this orientation, endorsing multiculturalism in principle while viewing Muslims negatively. This stance is most pronounced among educated urban professionals, whose attitudinal ambivalence reflects the unresolved clash between post-pillarisation secularism and the lived realities of a diversifying society. The abrupt policy reversals from the 1983 Minorities Policy to post-9/11 assimilationist frameworks, driven by anti-Islam populists like Geert Wilders, further politicised this tension, reframing Muslim integration as a security threat (Cesari 2013; Welten and Abbas 2021; Vossen 2016).

The Dutch case offers critical lessons for Europe. Its uniqueness lies in how post-colonial othering, rapid policy shifts, and urban-rural divides intersect: secular liberalism becomes a tool of exclusion, colonial legacies inform modern racism, and



populism exploits historical pluralism's collapse. Addressing this requires moving beyond symbolic tolerance to policies that facilitate a societal shift from mere *forbearance* to genuine *acceptance*. This demands systemic reforms that target the roots of attitudinal ambivalence. First, policies must bridge the gap between abstract principles and concrete inclusion by prioritizing anti-discrimination measures, overhauling surveillance practices, and addressing ethnic profiling. Second, integration programs must tackle material inequalities through equitable housing and labour policies. Finally, education must move beyond superficial diversity celebrations to confront Islamophobia's historical roots, for example, by integrating colonial history into curricula. The Dutch case stresses a universal truth: genuine social cohesion requires confronting uncomfortable histories and power imbalances, not just celebrating diversity.

**Funding** European Commission funded H2020 RIA, Grant No. 959200.

**Data Availability** The data supporting the findings of this study were generated as part of the Drive project, which has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under grant agreement No. 959200. At the time of publication, the primary datasets are not yet in the public domain, as the project is ongoing and data processing for final repository integration is still underway. However, the data are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to compliance with the project's data management plan and ethical guidelines.

## Declarations

**Competing interests** The author declares that they have no competing interests.

**Informed consent** Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

**Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License, which permits use, sharing, adaptation, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if changes were made. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

## References

- Abbas, T. ed. 2017. *Muslim diasporas in the west: Critical concepts in sociology*. London: Routledge.
- Adelman, L., M. Verkuyten, and K. Yogeeswaran. 2021a. Moralization and moral trade-offs explain (in) tolerance of Muslim minority behaviours. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 51(5):924–935.
- Adelman, L., M. Verkuyten, and K. Yogeeswaran. 2021b. Distinguishing active and passive outgroup tolerance: Understanding its prevalence and the role of moral concern. *Political Psychology* 43(4):731–750.
- Adelman, L., K. Yogeeswaran, and M. Verkuyten. 2023. The unintended consequences of tolerance: The experience and repercussions of being tolerated for minority group members. *PLOS ONE*, 18(3), e0282073.



- Albada, K., N. Hansen, and S. Otten. 2021. Polarization in attitudes towards refugees and migrants in the Netherlands. *European Journal of Social Psychology* 51(2):203–221.
- Andriessen, I., E. Nievers, J. Dagevos, and L. Faulk. 2012. Ethnic discrimination in the Dutch labor market: Its relationship with job characteristics and multiple group membership. *Work and Occupations* 39(3):237–269.
- Bader, V. 2007. *Secularism or democracy? Associational governance of religious diversity*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Beek, M., and F. Fleischmann. 2020. Religion and integration: Does immigrant generation matter? The case of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 46(16):3655–3676.
- Berry, J. W. 1997. Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology* 46(1):5–34.
- Blalock, H. M. 1967. *Toward a theory of Minority-Group relations*. New York: Wiley.
- Boender, W. 2019. On being a (Good) Muslim in the west: Four contributions by Dutch Muslim publicists. *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 8(1):109–118.
- Bonilla-Silva, E. 2015. The structure of racism in color-blind, post-racial America. *American Behavioral Scientist* 59(11):1358–1376.
- Boski, P. 2008. Five meanings of integration in acculturation research. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 32(2):142–153.
- Bosma, U. ed. 2012. *Post-Colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Bot, W., and M. Verkuyten. 2018. Evaluating the political organisation of Muslim citizens in the Netherlands: The role of political orientation, education and multiculturalism. *Journal of Social and Political Psychology* 6(2):364–382.
- Bracke, S. 2013. Transformations of the secular and the Muslim question: Revisiting the historical coincidence of depillarisation and the institutionalisation of Islam in the Netherlands. *Journal of Muslims in Europe* 2(2):208–226.
- Bruegelmans, S. M., and F. J. R. van de Vijver. 2004. Antecedents and components of majority attitudes toward multiculturalism in the Netherlands. *Applied Psychology* 53(3):400–422.
- Brujin, Y., C. Amoureux, R. Emmen, and J. Mesman. 2020. Interethnic prejudice against Muslims among white Dutch children. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 51(3):203–221.
- Buruma, I. 2014. *Murder in Amsterdam: The death of Theo Van Gogh and the limits of tolerance*. New York: Penguin.
- Cesari, J. 2013. *Why the West fears Islam: An exploration of Muslims in Liberal democracies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Choi, D. D., N. Sambanis, and M. Poertner. 2022. *Native bias: Overcoming discrimination against immigrants*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Colombo, E. 2015. Multiculturalisms: An overview of multicultural debates in Western societies. *Current Sociology* 63(6):800–824.
- Conner, M., S. Wilding, F. van Harreveld, and J. Dalege. 2021. Cognitive-Affective inconsistency and ambivalence: Impact on the overall Attitude-Behavior relationship. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 47(4):673–687.
- Crul, M., and J. Schneider. 2010. Comparative integration context theory: Participation and belonging in new diverse European cities. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33(7):1249–1268.
- Curinier, F., R. McNeil-Willson, S. de Leede, and T. Abbas. 2024. Gendered islamophobic securitisation and the headscarf conundrum in France and the Netherlands. In *The Palgrave handbook of gendered islamophobia*, ed. T. Abbas, and R. McNeil-Willson. 55–70. Cham: Springer International Publishing.
- Cvetkovska, S., M. Verkuyten, and L. Adelman. 2020. Being tolerated and minority well-being: The role of group identifications. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 74:161–173.
- de Koning, M. 2020. The racialization of danger: Patterns and ambiguities in the relation between Islam, security and secularism in the Netherlands. *Patterns of Prejudice* 54(1–2):123–135.
- Devine, P. G. 1989. Stereotypes and prejudice: Their automatic and controlled components. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 56(1):5–18.
- Dovidio, J. F., S. L. Gaertner, and A. R. Pearson. 2018. Aversive racism and contemporary bias. In *The Cambridge handbook of the psychology of prejudice: Concise student edition*, ed. C. G. Sibley, and F. K. Barlow. 273–298. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Duyvendak, J. W., and J. Kesic. 2022. *The return of the native: Can liberalism safeguard Us against nativism?* Oxford: Oxford University Press.



- Emmer, P. C. 2006. *The Dutch slave Trade, 1500–1850*. New York: Berghahn Books.
- Entzinger, H. 2006. Changing the rules while the game is on: From multiculturalism to assimilation in the Netherlands. In *Migration, Citizenship, ethnos*, ed. Y. M. Bodemann, and G. Yurdakul. 121–144. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Essed, P., and I. Hoving, eds. 2014. *Dutch racism*. Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Fleischmann, F., and A. Weegh. 2021. Majority acceptance vs. rejection of being both facilitates immigrants' bicultural identity blendedness and positive affect. *Self and Identity* 21(4):506–526.
- Gebhardt, D. 2016. When the state takes over: Civic integration programmes and the role of cities in immigrant integration. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 42(5):742–758.
- Geurts, N., T. Davids, M. Lubbers, and N. Spierings. 2022. A cosmopolitan explanation of the integration paradox: A mixed methods approach. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 45(16):412–434.
- Ghorashi, H. 2023. *Post-Colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Goodhart, D. 2004. Too diverse? *Prospect Magazine* 95:30–37.
- Güner, Ş.S., and T. Abbas. 2025. Intersectional activism: Dutch-Turkish Muslim women talking back to securitization and islamophobia. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 48(10):2012–2034.
- Hagendoorn, L. 2017. Stereotypes of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. In *Ethnic minorities and Inter-Ethnic relations in context*, ed. F.J.R. van de Vijver, J.H.A.M. Dansen, and S. M. Breugelmans. 43–58. London: Routledge.
- Helbling, M. ed. 2012. *Islamophobia in the west: Measuring and explaining individual attitudes*. London: Routledge.
- Helbling, M. 2014. Opposing Muslims and the Muslim headscarf in Western Europe. *European Sociological Review* 30(2):242–257.
- Jackman, M. R., and M. J. Muha. 1984. Education and intergroup attitudes: Moral enlightenment, superficial Democratic commitment, or ideological refinement? *American Sociological Review* 49(6):751–769.
- Jennissen, R., M. Bovens, G. Engbersen, and M. Bokhorst. 2023. *Migration diversity and social cohesion: Reassessing the Dutch policy agenda*. Cham: Springer Nature.
- Jonas, K., P. Broemer, and M. Diehl. 2000. Attitudinal ambivalence. *European Review of Social Psychology* 11(1):35–74.
- Jones, G. 2012. Dutch politicians, the Dutch Nation and the dynamics of post-colonial citizenship. In *Post-Colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands*, ed. U. Bosma. 27–48. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Katz, I., and R. G. Hass. 1988. Racial ambivalence and American value conflict: Correlational and priming studies of dual cognitive structures. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 55(6):893–905.
- Kaya, A. 2021. Islamist and nativist reactionary radicalisation in Europe. *Politics and Governance* 9(3):204–214.
- Koopmans, R. 2010. Trade-offs between equality and difference: Immigrant integration, multiculturalism and the welfare state in cross-national perspective. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 36(1):1–26.
- Kraus, L., and S. Daenekindt. 2021. Moving into multiculturalism: Multicultural attitudes of socially mobile individuals without a migration background. *European Societies* 24(1):7–28.
- Kreienkamp, J., L. F. Bringmann, R. F. Engler, P. de Jonge, and K. Epstude. 2024. The migration experience: A conceptual framework and systematic scoping review of psychological acculturation. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 28(1):81–116.
- Kriesi, H., E. Grande, R. Lachat, M. Dolezal, S. Bornschie, and T. Frey. 2006. Globalization and the transformation of the National political space: Six European countries compared. *European Journal of Political Research* 45(6):921–956.
- Kymlicka, W. 1995. *Multicultural citizenship: A Liberal theory of minority rights*. Oxford: Clarendon.
- Kymlicka, W. 2010. The rise and fall of multiculturalism? New debates on inclusion and accommodation in diverse societies. *International Social Science Journal* 61(199):97–112.
- Lajevardi, N., K. Oskooii, M. Saleem, and M. Docherty. 2024. In the shadow of September 11: The roots and ramifications of anti-Muslim attitudes in the united States. *Political Psychology* 45(1):87–118.
- Lijphart, A. 2022. *The politics of accommodation: Pluralism and democracy in the Netherlands*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Long, F., and H. Çakmak. 2024. 'How ingroup norms of multiculturalism (and tolerance) affect intergroup solidarity: The role of ideology', *British Journal of Social Psychology*, advance online publication 12 March.



- Lucassen, L., and J. Lucassen. 2015. The strange death of Dutch tolerance: The timing and nature of the Pessimist turn in the Dutch migration debate. *The Journal of Modern History* 87(1):72–101.
- Missier, C. A. 2022. The making of the licitness of right-wing rhetoric: A case study of digital media in the Netherlands. *Sage Open*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221096778>
- Modood, T. 2013. *Multiculturalism*. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- Mouritsen, P. 2008. Political responses to cultural conflict: Reflections on the ambiguities of the civic turn. In *Constituting communities: Political solutions to cultural conflict*, ed. P. Mouritsen, and K. E. Jørgensen. 1–30. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mudde, C. 2019. *The Far right today*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Oostindie, G. 2009. History brought home: Postcolonial migrations and the Dutch rediscovery of slavery. In *Migration, Trade, and slavery in an expanding world*, ed. P. C. Emmer, O. Petr -Grenouilleau, and J. V. Roitman. 253–272. Leiden: Brill.
- Oostindie, G. 2012. History brought home: Post-colonial migrations and the Dutch rediscovery of slavery. In *Post-Colonial immigrants and identity formations in the Netherlands*, ed. U. Bosma. 155–174. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Parekh, B. 2006. *Rethinking multiculturalism: Cultural diversity and political theory*. 2nd ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Pettigrew, T. F., and L. R. Tropp. 2006. A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90(5):751–783.
- Phillips, A. 2009. *Multiculturalism without culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Saeed, A. 2007. Media, racism and islamophobia: The representation of Islam and Muslims in the media. *Sociology Compass* 1(2):443–462.
- Scholten, P. W. 2011. *Framing immigrant integration: Dutch Research-Policy dialogues in comparative perspective*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- Schrover, M. 2010. Pillarization, multiculturalism and cultural freezing: Dutch migration history and the enforcement of essentialist ideas. *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 125(2–3):237–264.
- Sealy, T., V. Uberoi, and N. Meer. eds. 2024. *The resilience of multiculturalism: Ideas, Politics, practice*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University.
- Sleijpen, S., M. Verkuyten, and L. Adelman. 2020. Accepting Muslim minority practices: A case of discriminatory or normative intolerance? *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology* 30(4):405–418.
- Sniderman, P. M., and L. Hagendoorn. 2007. *When ways of life collide: Multiculturalism and its discontents in the Netherlands*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Strabac, Z., and O. Listhaug. 2008. Anti-Muslim prejudice in Europe: A multilevel analysis of survey data from 30 countries. *Social Science Research* 37(1):268–286.
- Valentine, G. 2008. Living with difference: Reflections on geographies of encounter. *Progress in Human Geography* 32(3):323–337.
- van der Valk, I. 2012. *Islamophobia in the Netherlands*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University.
- van Dijk, T. A. 1993. *Elite discourse and racism*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- van Reekum, R. 2016. Depillarization and the secularization of Dutch islamophobia. In *The Post-Secular in question*, ed. M. D. Koster, P.J.A. van der Veer, and S.J.S. Schwenke. 223–242. New York: New York University.
- Vasta, E. 2007. From ethnic minorities to ethnic majority policy: Multiculturalism and the shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands. *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30(5):713–740.
- Verkuyten, M., K. Yogeeswaran, and L. Adelman. 2020. The negative implications of being tolerated: Tolerance from the target’s perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 15(3):544–561.
- Verkuyten, M., K. Yogeeswaran, and L. Adelman. 2023. The social psychology of intergroup tolerance and intolerance. *European Review of Social Psychology* 34(1):1–43.
- Vossen, K. 2010. Populism in the Netherlands after fortuyt: Rita Verdonk and Geert Wilders compared. *Perspectives on European Politics and Society* 11(1):22–38.
- Vossen, K. 2016. *The power of populism: Geert Wilders and the party for freedom in the Netherlands*. London: Routledge.
- Waters, S., C. Ward, and J. Stuart. 2020. Does normative multiculturalism foster or threaten social cohesion? *International Journal of Intercultural Relations* 75:82–94.
- Welten, L., and T. Abbas. 2021. ‘We are already 1–0 behind’: Perceptions of Dutch Muslims on Islamophobia, securitisation, and de-radicalisation. *Critical Studies on Terrorism* 14(1):90–116.
- Welten, L., and T. Abbas. 2022. *Critical perspectives on Salafism in the Netherlands*. The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism.



The complexity of coexistence: Dutch perspectives on multiculturalism...

---

- Yamaguchi, M. 2024. Reconciling Islam with Indonesian nationalism: Acceptance of the Arab middle Eastern influence during the Dutch colonial period. *Die Welt Des Islams* 64(4):452–481.
- Zick, A., T. F. Pettigrew, and U. Wagner. 2008. Ethnic prejudice and discrimination in Europe. *Journal of Social Issues* 64(2):233–251.

**Publisher's note** Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

## Authors and Affiliations

Tahir Abbas<sup>1</sup> 

✉ Tahir Abbas  
t.abbas@aston.ac.uk

<sup>1</sup> Criminology and Global Justice, Aston University, Aston Street, Birmingham B4 7ET, UK

