

University of Groningen

More than Two Decades of Changing Ethnic Attitudes in the Netherlands

Coenders, Marcel; Lubbers, Marcel; Scheepers, Peer; Verkuyten, Maykel

Published in:
Journal of Social Issues

DOI:
[10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00561.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00561.x)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2008

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Coenders, M., Lubbers, M., Scheepers, P., & Verkuyten, M. (2008). More than Two Decades of Changing Ethnic Attitudes in the Netherlands. *Journal of Social Issues*, 64(2), 269. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4560.2008.00561.x>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

More than Two Decades of Changing Ethnic Attitudes in the Netherlands

Marcel Coenders and Marcel Lubbers

Utrecht University

Peer Scheepers

Radboud University Nijmegen

Maykel Verkuyten*

Utrecht University

This article uses data from three studies to examine changing reactions toward ethnic minority groups in the Netherlands (1979–2002). Using realistic conflict theory, Study 1 focuses on support for discrimination of immigrant groups in general. The findings indicate that this support is more widespread in times of high levels of immigration, when the unemployment level has recently risen strongly, and among cohorts that grew to maturity in times of large immigration waves or high unemployment rates. Studies 2 and 3 focus on changing feelings toward different ethnic out-groups in an ideological context (2001–2004) marked by a shift from multiculturalism toward assimilation. Study 2 showed that the shift toward assimilation negatively affected Dutch participants' feelings toward Islamic out-groups, but not to other minority groups. Study 3 used an experimental design, and the results showed that ethnic attitudes are more negative in an assimilation compared to a multicultural context. It is concluded that the structural and ideological social context is important for understanding people's changing reactions.

In the early 1960s, Dutch industry started recruiting migrant labor on a large scale. Most of these migrant workers were Turkish and Moroccan men who were either single or had left their families behind in their home country. At first, all parties concerned imagined that these migrants would remain in the Netherlands

*Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Maykel Verkuyten, Faculty of Social Sciences, Utrecht University, Heidelberglaan 2, 3584 CS Utrecht, The Netherlands [e-mail: M.Verkuyten@fss.uu.nl].

for only a limited period of time. Events proved otherwise, however, and in the mid-1970s, a process of family reunification began, as first the Turks and later the Moroccans were joined by their wives and children. At the same time, large numbers of Dutch nationals from the former colony of Suriname settled in the Netherlands.

In the 1990s many refugees and asylum seekers who had fled former East European countries but also countries such as Iraq, Iran, Sudan, Ghana, Somalia, and Ethiopia sought refuge in the Netherlands. In 2000, around 130,000 people came with the intention of settling in the Netherlands. In 2004, there were approximately 1.7 million non-Western immigrants resident in the Netherlands: 10% of total population, of which the Turks formed the largest single group (358,000), followed by the Surinamese (328,000), the Moroccans (315,000), and the Antilleans (135,000). More than half of these ethnic minorities live in the four largest cities, and in many neighborhoods in these cities the majority of the population are members of ethnic minorities (Wittebrood, Latten, & Nicolaas, 2005).

In terms of housing, schooling, and the labor market, the position of most ethnic minority groups is worse than that of the ethnic Dutch. Studies indicate that ethnic minority group students consistently perform less well in school and have the poorest academic results, irrespective of how academic performance is defined (Zorlu & Traag, 2005). Ethnic minorities also have higher unemployment rates (Dagevos & Bierings, 2005). The Turks and Moroccans, for example, have the highest unemployment rates and are around 3 to 4 times as likely to be unemployed as the Dutch. They perform more often (un-) skilled manual work, whereas there has been a strong increase in the number of immigrants starting up small enterprises as self-employed people (Dagevos & Bierings, 2005).

The ethnic minorities policy adopted in the early 1980s in response to the increased influx of foreigners has gradually been replaced by a policy of civic integration (Entzinger, 2003). In public debates in recent years, multiculturalism has been described as a "drama" and a "failure," and assimilation has been proposed as the only viable option (e.g., Schnabel, 2000). Although the retreat of multiculturalism is going on for quite some years (Joppke, 2004), it became more prominent and accepted with the rise of right-wing parties and politicians, in particular the populist Pim Fortuyn who was murdered a few days before the general elections of May 2002. In only a few years' time, the political and social climate changed considerably from a more multicultural perspective to one that emphasizes Dutch national identity and the need for assimilation of minority groups. This change is most evident among political parties on the right of the political spectrum but also involves left-wing parties such as the social democrats. As a result, in the so-called tolerant Dutch society, ethnic relations seem to have developed in a more negative direction.

In debates, two main explanations are being put forward for increasing antagonism toward immigrant groups: concerns over material and economic interests,

and conflicting identities and values. These explanations correspond with realistic group conflict theories (e.g., Blalock, 1967; Sherif & Sherif, 1969) and social identity theory (Tajfel & Turner, 1979), respectively. In this article we will use the former theory for examining longitudinal changes in support for discrimination regarding ethnic outgroups in general (period 1979–2002; Study 1). The latter theory will be used for investigating changes in specific ethnic out-group feelings across time (period 2001–2004; Study 2) as well as experimentally (Study 3). Both theories emphasize the impact of social context characteristics on changing reactions toward ethnic minorities. In agreement with these theories, our findings suggest that the structural and ideological context is crucial for understanding people's changing reactions toward ethnic minorities.

Concerns over Realistic Conflicts

Realistic conflict theories argue that conflicts over material and economic group interests can result in negative out-group reactions. The core proposition is that (perceived) competition over scarce resources, such as houses and jobs, induces the desire to protect in-group interests, which is considered an underlying motivation for (the endorsement of) discriminatory behavior (cf. Coenders & Scheepers, 1998). In a situation where group interests are seen as incompatible, support for ethnic discrimination is more likely. However, material and economic concerns differ in salience depending on the social conditions people find themselves in. Realistic conflict theories lead to specific hypotheses on societal circumstances, which induce changes in the support for ethnic discrimination (i.e., historical societal conditions), as well as to hypotheses on cohort effects (i.e., societal conditions during individual's formative years).

First, the level of support for ethnic discrimination depends on contemporary competitive circumstances. There are at least two factors that may increase ethnic competition. One is immigration, which creates a situation in which there are more people who have to share a limited amount of resources (houses and jobs). The second factor is the level of unemployment, which creates a situation in which an equal number of people have to share diminished resources. Hence, these period factors may contribute to the explanation of the longitudinal changes in support for ethnic discrimination. We hypothesize therefore that the higher the level of ethnic immigration, and the higher the level of unemployment, the more widespread the support for ethnic discrimination is. Furthermore, the actual presence of non-Western minorities in the country might be a source contributing to the actual competition. Hence, we hypothesize that the larger the proportion of non-Western minorities in the country, the more widespread the support for ethnic discrimination is.

Apart from the effects of contemporary societal circumstances, we also anticipate that recent changes in these circumstances may have an additional influence

on the perceptions of ethnic competition. A rapid rise of ethnic immigration will increase the perceived ethnic competition more strongly than a steady inflow of ethnic immigrants as shown, for example, by Olzak (1989) in the United States. Hence, we hypothesize that the larger the recent increase of ethnic immigration and the larger the recent increase of unemployment, the more widespread the support for ethnic discrimination will be.

Second, we propose that, similar to the proposition of period effects, cohort effects may also be operative. Karl Mannheim (1928/1964) argued that individuals within a birth cohort experience similar societal circumstances during their formative years. They may be marked by these circumstances in such a way that the attitudes acquired in these years remain relatively stable throughout the rest of their lives. This notion has been adopted, among others, by Inglehart (1990) in his work on the diffusion of postmaterialism. In his socialization hypothesis, Inglehart (1990, p. 68) stated that "to a large extent, one's basic values reflect the conditions that prevailed during one's preadult years." A similar argument has been put forward by Sears (1993) in his symbolic politics theory.

Combining the notion of formative years with realistic conflict theory leads to the hypothesis that the more ethnic competition a cohort has experienced during the formative years, the more widespread they will support ethnic discrimination. Using the aforementioned indicators of ethnic competition it can be predicted that the higher the level of ethnic immigration and the higher the level of unemployment during a cohort's formative years, the more widespread the support for ethnic discrimination is among these cohort members. This list of hypotheses will be tested in Study 1.

Group Identity Concerns

Ethnic relations involve competition not only over scarce resources but also concerns about group identities. These concerns depend on the perceived differences between ethnic groups and the threats that these groups pose to a positive and distinctive in-group identity. Identity issues have been found to underlie many ethnic conflicts around the world (Horowitz, 2000). Studying 17 European countries, McLaren (2003), for example, found that perceived threat to the national and cultural identity was related to anti-immigrant attitudes among majority groups.

In a recent study on exclusionary reactions to ethnic minorities in a representative sample of ethnically Dutch people, Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior (2004) found that considerations of national identity overshadowed those of economic concerns. In the Netherlands, economic conditions are relatively good, whereas in the last 5 to 6 years cultural and religious differences and conflicts have become core issues in public and political debates. One aspect of this debate is the increased focus on Islamic groups, particularly Turks and Moroccans. Other minority groups are considered less problematic and a lesser threat to Dutch identity.

Hence, it seems important to examine evaluative reactions toward different ethnic outgroups.

Social identity accounts (Tajfel & Turner, 1979) argue that people are motivated to develop and maintain a positive and distinctive sense of their social self. Establishing favorable evaluative distinctiveness of one's group vis-à-vis other groups helps to achieve a positive and clear group identity. This can be done by evaluating the in-group positively, out-groups negatively or a combination of the two. In-group favoritism, however, is by no means an automatic product of group distinctions. The theory posits that the operation of cognitive and motivational processes depends on cultural and structural features of the social world: As Reicher (2004) stated "the social identity tradition forces us to turn toward the social world. It forces us to address the ideological and structural features of the world" (p. 921). The cognitive process of social categorization and the need for positive group identity that motivate intergroup strategies can explain why people show, for example, out-group negativity but do not explain when people show such negativity or rather adopt strategies of increased in-group orientation (Rubin & Hewstone, 2004). The implication is that the social identity processes should be examined in their political and ideological context.

In Study 2 and Study 3, we focused on the Dutch retreat of multiculturalism in favor of an increased emphasis on assimilation. Study 2 is concerned with 4-year changes (2001–2004) in ethnic out-group feelings, and Study 3 examines the experimental effects of multiculturalism and assimilation ideologies on these feelings.

In Study 2, we focused on the period 2001–2004 that was marked by dramatic political changes involving the political arrival of the charismatic Pim Fortuyn and his murder just 9 days before the general elections of 15 May 2002 (Van Praag, 2003). Despite his murder, the LPF (List Pim Fortuyn) gained 26 of the 150 seats in the May 2002 general election making it the second largest party of the 10 different parties in the newly elected Parliament. In the general elections of January 2003, the LPF lost heavily, retaining only eight seats. The party did not become part of the new coalition government and lost much of its attraction and popularity. However, the new right-wing government has adopted many of the anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim messages and policies of the LPF. Anti-Muslim sentiments have continued and have been fuelled further by the murder of the Dutch filmmaker, Theo van Gogh, in 2004, and by global tensions and divergences between the Islamic and the Western world.

Fortuyn's ideology combined various things, but above all he spoke against multiculturalism and attacked, what he called, the yoke of political correctness and the problems this had caused with ethnic minority groups. He explicitly rejected the idea of multiculturalism, pleading instead for assimilation and emphasizing national identity and pride. He argued that immigration and multiculturalism would eventually imply the abolishment of Dutch identity. This stance became very popular and attracted many votes (Van der Brug, 2003). Although not all political

parties agreed with this, almost all started to accept and moreover incorporate the idea that multiculturalism had failed and that it had actually caused interethnic tensions and problems of social cohesion.

For Fortuyn, the problems of a multicultural society had mainly to do with Islam. He had a fiercely negative position on Islam, which, he argued, was a backward religion that seriously threatened Dutch society and culture. He argued that “a cold war against Islam is unavoidable” and labeled Muslims as a “fifth column.” In the media, Islam became symbolic for problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration (Ter Wal, 2004). As a result, the public discussion almost completely focused on the Turks and Moroccans and the need to compel these two Islamic groups to assimilate. Other minority groups, such as ex-colonial ones, were hardly discussed and were not presented as a threat to Dutch values and identity. The political changes described led us to the prediction, tested in Study 2, which compared to 2001 in 2002–2004, the Dutch participants would be more negative about the Turks and Moroccans. In contrast, the evaluation of minority groups such as Surinamese and Antilleans was expected not to change much in this period. In Study 3, we expected that, compared to multiculturalism, an assimilation ideology is related to more negative ethnic out-group feelings, particularly toward Islamic outgroups (Turks and Moroccans).

Study 1

Sample and Measures

We used individual survey data on the support for ethnic discrimination and contextual data. The survey data were taken from 19 national samples collected by the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) in the period 1979–2002. The data were collected as part of the Cultural Changes project. We combined the cross-sectional samples into one pooled data set containing 34,532 respondents, aged 16 to 74 years at the time of the interview.

Support for discrimination was measured by items that were explicitly about group competition for scarce resources. The participants were presented with three fictional situations in which two persons or families, an ethnically Dutch and a non-Dutch, compete for a job, a job promotion, or a house. Participants were asked which of the two should get the scarce resource. In our analyses we combined these questions into an index of support for ethnic discrimination ($\alpha = .72$). We distinguished respondents who never supported ethnic discrimination from respondents who, in one or several cases, supported ethnic discrimination (for further details, see Coenders & Scheepers, 1998).

For the context indicators, we used national-level time-series data. The contemporary societal circumstances were operationalized by three indicators. First, we took the level of ethnic immigration. The country of origin was used as a

criterion to specify ethnic immigration, as the longest available time series in the Netherlands are based on this criterion (CBS, 2005). Traditionally, large numbers of immigrants came from Surinam, the Netherlands Antilles, Morocco, and Turkey. The total number of ethnic immigrants consists of the total number of immigrants minus immigrants from countries of the European Union as well as countries that in the Dutch context are characterized as emigration countries (i.e., Australia, New Zealand, Canada, United States of America, and South Africa). Our second period indicator, the level of unemployment, is measured as the relative unemployment figure: the number of registered unemployed as a percentage of the labor force (CBS, 2005).

The changes in the historical societal conditions, that is, changes in the level of ethnic immigration and unemployment, are operationalized as the alteration compared to 5 years earlier. We also considered the percentage of the non-Western population present in the country. Here we followed the Statistics Netherlands' definition of first- and second-generation non-Western immigrants: all people who either themselves or one of their parents were born in a non-Western country. These figures were derived from CBS online database (CBS, 2005).

The societal circumstances during the formative years of the respondent (cohort characteristics) were operationalized by two indicators. The first one is the level of ethnic immigration during the formative years. We applied the same definition of ethnic immigration as explicated above (CBS, 2005). It was operationalized as the mean ethnic immigration level in the period when the respondent was between 16 and 20 years of age, that is, the age at which many respondents might enter the labor market. The second cohort variable is the level of unemployment during the formative years, measured as the mean relative unemployment figure over the period when the respondent was between 16 and 20 years of age (CBS, 1994, 2005).

Results

Changing support for ethnic discrimination. Applying pooled data from the 19 national surveys of the Dutch Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP), Figure 1 displays the fluctuations in support for ethnic discrimination in the period from 1979 to 2002. The figure shows that nearly half (about 47%) of the Dutch respondents supported discrimination against ethnic minorities in 1979. Seven years later this percentage had dropped to about 25. However, from 1986 onward, the percentage of Dutch people in favor of ethnic discrimination has continually increased and ran up to about 40% in 1992. Thereafter, there was a slight drop in support until the year 1996, followed by a rather steep increase of support in the year 1998, particularly due to more support for discrimination in the housing market. In more recent years, the level of support appears to be stable at the (approximately same) level ascertained in the beginning of the nineties.

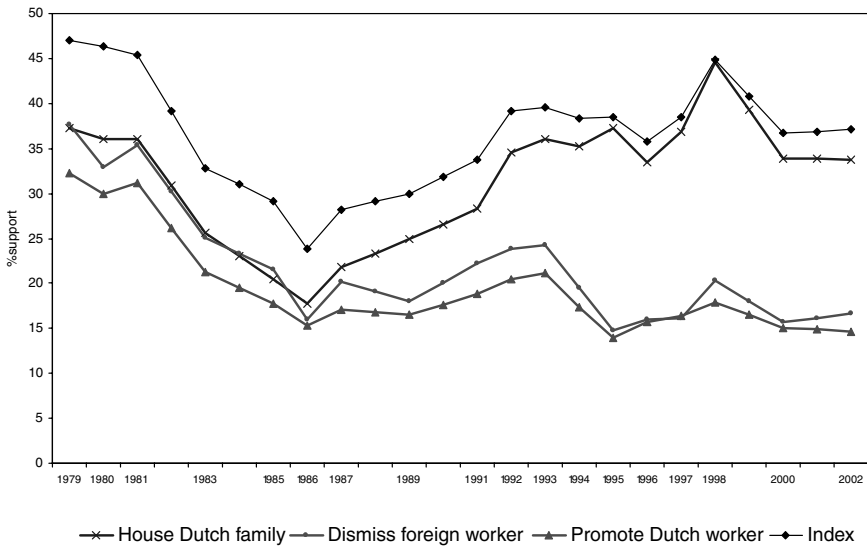


Fig. 1. Changes in support for ethnic discrimination in 1979–2002.

Table 1. Logistic Regression on Support for Ethnic Discrimination, 1979–2002

	<i>b</i>	Exp (<i>b</i>)
Intercept	−1.17***	0.31
Number ethnic immigrants (<i>s</i>)	0.06*	1.06
Unemployment rate (<i>s</i>)	−0.24***	0.78
% non-Western allochthonous people (<i>s</i>)	−0.10***	0.91
Changes in immigration (<i>s</i>)	−0.16***	0.86
Changes in unemployment rate (<i>s</i>)	0.10***	1.11
Cohort characteristics		
Unemployment rate (<i>s</i>)	0.11***	1.11
Number non-Western immigrants (<i>s</i>)	0.05*	1.05
<i>N</i>	34,532	
Model chi-square	2,322.48	
Degrees of freedom	35	
Nagelkerke <i>R</i> ²	0.089	

Note. (*s*) = standardized variable.

p* < .05; *p* < .01; ****p* < .001.

Societal conditions and support for ethnic discrimination. We used logistic regression models to predict for each individual the probability that he or she at least once supported ethnic discrimination. Table 1 shows the effects of period and cohort characteristics. Individual characteristics such as educational level, income, religiousness, and living conditions were included in the analysis as control variables but are not shown here.

The second column in Table 1 contains the parameter estimates, and the third column the exponents of these parameters, which can be interpreted as odds ratios. We will only describe the results for the context determinants of support for ethnic discrimination as referred to in the hypotheses.

We expected that support for ethnic discrimination is more widespread in times of relatively high levels of ethnic immigration or high levels of unemployment. As can be seen in Table 1, the effect of immigration was indeed positive. A higher level of ethnic immigration was related to more support for ethnic discrimination. However, the effect of the unemployment level was negative, which also holds for the presence of non-Western immigrants. Thus, in contrast to what was expected, support for ethnic discrimination was lower in times of relatively high unemployment and in times with higher percentages of non-Western immigrant residents.

Next, we proposed to test hypotheses on recent changes in ethnic competition that will have an effect on support for ethnic discrimination. The effect of changes in unemployment was in line with this expectation. A relatively large increase in unemployment in the previous 5 years turned out to be associated with more support for ethnic discrimination. However, in contrast to what we expected, a relatively strong increase in ethnic immigration was associated with less support for ethnic discrimination.

Cohorts and support for ethnic discrimination. We also stated hypotheses on support for ethnic discrimination that is considered to be more widespread among birth cohorts that perceived and experienced stronger ethnic competition in their formative years (16–20 years of age). Table 1 shows that there is indeed a positive effect of the number of immigrations during the formative period. The higher this number the more support there is for ethnic discrimination. Further, the level of national unemployment during the formative years also had a positive effect. Support for ethnic discrimination was stronger among birth cohorts that grew to maturity in times of high unemployment.

Discussion

For measuring ethnic discrimination, we used competitive situations concerning scarce resources (housing, jobs). The results show that contemporary and formative societal conditions affect Dutch people's support for ethnic discrimination. The support is more widespread in times of high levels of immigration, when the unemployment level has increased recently, and among cohorts that grew to maturity in times of relatively large immigration waves or high unemployment. These findings are consistent with the idea that realistic conflicts and ethnic competition lead to stronger support for ethnic discrimination. The other results, however, are not consistent with this interpretation. It turned out that higher unemployment,

stronger presence of non-Western immigrants, and increase in level of immigration were not positively related to support for ethnic discrimination.

Ethnic relations do not only involve competition over scarce resources and group discrimination, but also considerations about group identities and intergroup evaluations and feelings. In recent years, concerns about Dutch national identity and culture appear to have a stronger impact on ethnic attitudes and behaviors than economic concerns (Sniderman et al., 2004). National identity has emerged as the focus of immigration and diversity debates and Islam in particular is at the heart of what is perceived as a “crisis of multiculturalism” (Modood & Ahmad, 2007). Therefore, in Study 2 and Study 3, we examined the impact of the retreat of multiculturalism ideology in favor of assimilation on ethnic out-group feelings. Study 2 is concerned with changes in the years 2001–2004, and Study 3 adopts an experimental design to investigate the causal effects of these ideologies. In both studies, a stronger emphasis on assimilation (or a retreat of multiculturalism) was expected to lead to less positive out-group feelings toward ethnic minority groups, and Islamic outgroups (Turks and Moroccans) in particular.

Study 2

Samples and Measures

We used a cross-sectional design with four measure points (autumn of 2001, 2002, 2003, and 2004) assessing general affective group ratings among Dutch student participants ($N = 488$). The data were gathered at the same schools in all 4 years, and the samples were similar in crucial characteristics (see Verkuyten & Zaremba, 2005, for further details). In order to measure global ethnic group feelings, the participants were given the well-known feeling thermometer (scale 0 to 100 degrees) that has been successfully used in many studies, including in the Netherlands (e.g., Dijker, 1987). The participants were asked about their feelings toward four ethnic outgroups: Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans.

We first examined whether the participants themselves perceived a change in the interethnic relations in Dutch society. In the 2003 sample, questions were asked on perceptions of the quality of interethnic relations in the society during the period 2001–2003. Using three questions, we asked the participants to assess the extent to which these relations were characterized by (respectively) equality, mutual respect, and tensions. These three questions were asked three times: “before Pim Fortuyn became popular” (2001), “during and directly after his popularity” (2002), and “now” (2003). For each period, the three questions were highly correlated ($r > .62$). Thus, for each year we computed a sum score in which a higher score indicated the perception of more negative interethnic relations. The correlation between the perceptions of the intergroup situation in 2001 and 2002 was .17 ($p > .05$), between 2001 and 2003, it was .31 ($p < .01$), and between 2002 and 2003 the correlation was .49 ($p < .001$).

Table 2. Thermometer Affect Ratings by Year

	Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans
2001 (<i>N</i> = 104)	57.0	47.9	63.7	52.8
2002 (<i>N</i> = 104)	42.5	35.4	59.8	49.6
2003 (<i>N</i> = 104)	49.8	36.5	61.9	48.7
2004 (<i>N</i> = 139)	46.9	36.2	60.1	52.7

Results

We used paired-sample tests to examine the 2003 participants' perception of interethnic relations during the 3 years. The mean score for perceived interethnic relations was 4.68 ($SD = 1.20$) in 2001, 5.54 ($SD = 1.19$) in 2002, and 5.15 ($SD = 1.07$) in 2003. The differences between all 3 years were significant ($ps < .01$). Thus, as a reflection of the political changes, the interethnic relations were perceived to be most negative in 2002, followed by those in 2003. The least problematic relations were perceived as existing in 2001. The decrease of the standard deviation might be interpreted as a growing consensus among participants in this respect.

To examine differences in in-group evaluations, we conducted a repeated-measures MANOVA with the four group evaluations (Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans) as a repeated-measures factor. Year was the between-subjects factors. The analysis yielded a significant main effect for group evaluations, $F(4, 481) = 145.19, p < .001$. As shown in Table 2 and similar to previous studies on differential distances toward ethnic groups (Hagendoorn, 1995), the participants evaluated the Surinamese most positively, followed by Antilleans, the Turks, and the Moroccans. This main effect, however, was qualified by an interaction effect between group evaluation and year, $F(9, 481) = 6.03, p < .001$. Simple main-effect analyses indicated an effect for year for the Turks and Moroccans ($ps < .001$), but not for the Surinamese and the Antilleans ($ps > .05$). The pattern of results shown in the top three rows in Table 2 indicates a change in attitude toward the Turks and Moroccans between 2001 and the other 3 years. As expected, the feelings toward these two groups became more negative whereas the feelings toward the Surinamese and the Antilleans did not change over the 4 years.

Discussion

These results strongly suggest that a changing ideological context affects people's ethnic attitudes. However, we used cross-sectional data; and although the samples were very similar on background characteristics, it is always possible that other sample differences are partly responsible for the changes found. Hence, the methodology of this study leaves room for alternative explanations. Therefore, an additional study was conducted. This study has an experimental character in order

to investigate the causal effects of multiculturalism and assimilation ideologies. Ethnic diversity raises all kinds of questions and raises much ambiguity for many people. Pratto and Lemieux (2001) showed that the meaning of immigration and the presence of ethnic minority groups can be manipulated through political discourse. Also, Wolsko, Park, Judd, and Wittenbrink (2000) successfully exposed participants experimentally to either a multicultural or color-blind ideological prompt condition (see also Richeson & Nussbaum, 2004).

Study 3

Samples and Measures

In Study 3 we examined the ethnic group feelings (thermometer question) of Dutch participants ($N = 114$) using an experimental questionnaire design. Multicultural and assimilation ideology was made salient in separate conditions. There were two different versions of a questionnaire that were divided randomly among the participants. One version focused on multiculturalism and another on assimilationism. The experimental manipulations were induced in the questionnaire first by its title, which was printed on the first page of the questionnaire and repeated in italics and in bold at the top of every page of the booklet, as well as by a short introduction, and 10 attitude statements (see Verkuyten, 2005, for details).

Here, we analyze whether these conditions have different effects on feelings toward different ethnic outgroups: Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese, and Antilleans. The Dutch participants were expected to show more negative out-group feelings in the assimilation condition than in the multicultural condition, particularly toward Islamic outgroups.

Results

An analysis of variance (general linear model) was performed with experimental condition as a between-subjects factor. The four out-group affective ratings served as multiple dependent variables. The multivariate effect for experimental condition was significant, $F(4, 110) = 6.12, p < .001$. As shown in Table 3, univariate analyses indicate that all ethnic outgroups were evaluated more

Table 3. Thermometer Affect Ratings for Four Ethnic Outgroups by Experimental Condition

	Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans
Experimental condition				
Multiculturalism	61.0	50.7	66.9	54.1
Assimilation	43.8	38.2	57.3	43.0
Univariate F -value	24.41***	9.72**	8.67**	7.26**

Note. ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

negatively in the assimilation condition compared to the multicultural one. The greatest difference in mean scores between the two conditions was for the Turks as the target group, followed by the Moroccans, the Antilleans, and the Surinamese.

Discussion

The results of Study 3 clearly indicate that compared to a multicultural condition, in an assimilation condition, Dutch participants have more negative feelings toward ethnic out-groups, and particularly toward the two Islamic groups. This shows that ethnic attitudes, at least temporarily, are shaped by interethnic ideologies surrounding individuals as members of the society at large.

General Discussion

Ethnic attitudes are not static. Studies have shown, for example, positive historical changes in white Americans' racial stereotypes and prejudices (see Dovidio & Gaertner, 1986; Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, & Krysan, 1997). Despite considerable debate about whether these historical changes are more apparent than real (e.g., Crosby, Bromley, & Saxe, 1980; McConahay, Hardee, & Batts, 1981), it is often claimed that the sociostructural and ideological context influences (the expression of) group attitudes. Studies on historical changes, however, are not easy to interpret because of the many social, political, and economic differences between periods, as well as the differences in samples, methods, and measures (see Devine & Elliot, 1995).

In this article we have analyzed changing support for ethnic discrimination for the years 1979 to 2002 using national samples and the same measure, thereby avoiding some of the common pitfalls. In studying support for ethnic discrimination we focused on ethnic outgroups in general. In addition, we have examined changes in feelings toward specific and distinct ethnic outgroups using four measuring points (2001–2004). Theoretically, we have used realistic conflict theory and social identity theory for trying to understand these two changes, respectively.

The support for ethnic discrimination was measured with items presenting a competitive scenario involving the division of scarce goods (jobs and houses). For the years 1979–2002, a decrease in support for ethnic discrimination in the early 1980s was found, followed by an increase from the mid 1980s to higher levels at the end of the 1990s. Realistic conflict theory argues that competition over scarce resources between groups leads to more support for ethnic discrimination among the majority group. The implication is that more competitive contemporary structural circumstances (period effects) should lead to more support for ethnic discrimination. The results support this idea: support for ethnic discrimination was more widespread in times of high levels of ethnic immigration and when the unemployment level had recently risen strongly indicating an increase in ethnic

competition in the labor market. In addition, not only contemporary circumstances but also specific competitive circumstances during the formative years (cohort effects) may lead to more support for ethnic discrimination. Cohorts that grew to maturity in times of large immigration waves or high unemployment rates were indeed found to display more widespread support for ethnic discrimination.

A shortcoming of this study was the neglect of changes in the political landscape that may have affected identity concerns and, in turn, over time changes in support for ethnic discrimination. People are not only concerned about their material and economic interests but also about conflicting identities and values. Identity issues have been found to underlie many ethnic conflicts and anti-immigrant attitudes around the world (Horowitz, 2000; McLaren, 2003), and when economic conditions are relatively good, considerations of group identity can overshadow those of economic concerns (Sniderman et al., 2004).

According to social identity theory, negative out-group evaluation is one strategy for establishing or maintaining a positive in-group identity. This strategy is more likely when one's group identity is considered to be under threat. In the last 5 to 6 years concerns about national identity have increased strongly in the Netherlands. Particularly, Islam has been publicly discussed as undermining Dutch identity and culture. Islam has increasingly become a symbol of problems perceived to be related to ethnic minorities and cultural diversity. Multiculturalism has been defined as a "drama" and is replaced by a public and political approach more strongly emphasizing assimilation. Considering these ideological and political changes, we expected over the years that the Dutch participants would evaluate the Islamic outgroups (Turks and Moroccans) more negatively. In contrast, their evaluations of other ethnic minority groups (Surinamese and Antilleans) were not expected to differ much during this period. Using cross-sectional data from 2001–2004, the results supported these expectations. Hence, the recent public and political retreat of multiculturalism in favor of assimilation seems to have led to more negative feelings toward ethnic outgroups, and toward Islamic groups in particular. This interpretation in terms of assimilationist ideas is supported by other survey research (e.g., Zick, Wagner, van Dick, & Petzel, 2001), and by our experimental work. In Study 3, in an assimilation ideological context, Dutch participants were found to evaluate ethnic outgroups more negatively than in a multicultural ideological context. These effects were strongest for the Turkish and Moroccan outgroups, but were also found in relation to the Surinamese and Antilleans.

Our analyses and findings support the idea that realistic conflict and social identity approaches do not have to be contradictory or mutually exclusive. The key explanatory mechanisms proposed by both theories differ, and depending on the circumstances, economic competition or rather identity concerns can be more or less prominent. Furthermore, concerns about interests seem especially relevant in situations of actual competition and discrimination, whereas identity considerations are probably more relevant in evaluative assessments. Both theories

emphasize the critical role of social context for understanding ethnic attitudes and behaviors. In this article, we have focused on the level of society and in our analyses we have used national-level time-series data and descriptions of ideological changes. In addition, we examined the effects of different ideological experimental contexts. The results clearly indicate that social context characteristics are relevant for understanding people's changing reactions toward ethnic minority groups. Increased concerns over material and economic interests as well as conflicting identities and values can lead to more negative ethnic relations. Future studies should examine the independent and combined effects of both sets of determinants.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to predict what the future developments in the Netherlands will be. Ethnic group relations have moved into a negative direction and many people are worried about the increased "us–them" thinking. The importance of the social context implies, however, that relations can improve and that people can become more accepting or tolerant. Immigrants are also an economic asset and increasingly are making a contribution to public life and national culture, although these contributions are sometimes perceived as a threat, particularly by underprivileged social categories. In addition, developments in the Netherlands are not independent of what happens in other countries, at the level of the European Union and more globally. This makes it all the more difficult to make predictions about the future. It also makes it difficult to develop and implement policies that can lead to increased equality and harmonious social relations. Like most European countries, the Netherlands continues its struggle of finding productive ways for dealing with ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity.

References

- Blalock, H. M. (1967). *Toward a theory of minority group relations*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Crosby, F., Bromley, S., & Saxe, L. (1980). Recent unobtrusive studies of black and white discrimination and prejudice: A literature review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *87*, 546–563.
- CBS. (1994). *1899–1994: Vijfennegentig jaren statistiek in tijdreeksen (1899–1994)* [Ninety-five years of statistics in periods]. SDU: The Netherlands: The Hague.
- CBS. (2005). *CBS Statline. Online database of Statistics Netherlands (www.cbs.nl)*. Voorburg: Statistics Netherlands.
- Coenders, M., & Scheepers, P. (1998). Support for ethnic discrimination in the Netherlands 1979–1993, effects of period, cohort and individual characteristics. *European Sociological Review*, *14*, 405–422.
- Dagevos, J., & Bierings, H. (2005). Arbeid en inkomen [Work and income]. In *Jaarrapport Integratie 2005*. The Hague: SCP/WODC/CBS.
- Devine, P. G., & Elliot, A. J. (1995). Are racial stereotypes really fading? The Princeton trilogy revisited. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *21*, 1139–1150.
- Dovidio, J. F., & Gaertner, S. L. (1986). Prejudice, discrimination, and racism: Historical trends and contemporary approaches. In J. F. Dovidio & S. L. Gaertner (Eds.), *Prejudice, discrimination, and racism* (pp. 1–34). Orlando: Academic Press.
- Dijker, A. (1987). Emotional reactions to ethnic minorities. *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *17*, 305–325.

- Entzinger, H. (2003). The rise and fall of multiculturalism: The case of the Netherlands. In C. Joppke & E. Morawska (Eds.), *Toward assimilation and citizenship: Immigrants in liberal nation states* (pp. 59–86). London: Palgrave.
- Hagendoorn, L. (1995). Intergroup biases in multiple group systems: The perception of ethnic hierarchies. *European Review of Social Psychology*, *10*, 199–228.
- Horowitz, D. (2000). *Ethnic groups in conflict* (2nd ed). Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Inglehart, R. (1990). *Culture shift in advanced industrial society*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Joppke, C. (2004). The retreat of multiculturalism in the liberal state: Theory and policy. *British Journal of Sociology*, *55*, 237–257.
- Mannheim, K. (1964). Das Problem der Generationen [The problem of generations]. In K. Mannheim (Hrsg.), *Wissensoziologie*. Berlin: Hermann Luchterhand Verlag (Original work published 1928).
- McConahay, J. B., Hardee, B. B., & Batts, V. (1981). Has racism declined in America? It depends on who is asking and what is asked. *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, *25*, 563–579.
- McLaren, L. M. (2003). Anti-immigrant prejudice in Europe: Contact, threat perception, and preferences for the exclusion of migrants. *Social Forces*, *81*, 908–936.
- Modood, T., & Ahmad, F. (2007). British Muslim perspectives on multiculturalism. *Theory, Culture and Society*, *24*, 187–213.
- Olzak, S. (1989). Labor unrest, immigration and ethnic conflict in urban America, 1880–1914. *American Journal of Sociology*, *94*, 1303–1333.
- Pratto, F., & Lemieux, A. F. (2001). The psychological ambiguity of immigration and its implications for promoting immigration policy. *Journal of Social Issues*, *57*, 413–430.
- Reicher, S. (2004). The context of social identity: Domination, resistance, and change. *Political Psychology*, *25*, 921–945.
- Richeson, J. A., & Nussbaum, R. J. (2004). The impact of multiculturalism versus color-blindness on racial bias. *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, *40*, 417–423.
- Rubin, M., & Hewstone, M. (2004). Social identity, system justification, and social dominance: Commentary on Reicher, Jost et al., and Sidanius et al. *Political Psychology*, *25*, 823–844.
- Schnabel, P. (2000). *De multiculturele illisie: Een pleidooi voor aanpassing en assimilatie*. [The multicultural illusion: A plea for accommodation and assimilation]. Utrecht: Forum.
- Schuman, H., Steeh, C., Bobo, L., & Krysan, M. (1997). *Racial attitudes in America: Trends and interpretations*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Sears, D. O. (1993). Symbolic politics: A socio-psychological theory. In S. Iyengar & W. J. McGuire (Eds.), *Explorations in political psychology* (pp. 113–149). Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Sherif, M., & Sherif, C. W. (1969). *Social psychology*. New York: Harper & Row.
- Sniderman, P. M., Hagendoorn, L., & Prior, M. (2004). Predisposing factors and situational triggers: Exclusionary reactions to immigrant minorities. *American Political Science Review*, *98*, 35–49.
- Tajfel, H., & Turner, J. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup Conflict. In W. G. Austin & S. Worchel (Eds.), *The social psychology of intergroup relations* (pp. 33–47). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.
- Ter Wal, J. (2004). *Moslim in Nederland: Publieke discussie over de Islam in Nederland*. [Muslims in the Netherlands: Public discussion about the Islam in Netherlands]. The Hague: SCP.
- Van Der Brug, W. (2003). How the LPF fuelled discontent: Empirical tests of explanations of LPF support. *Acta Politica*, *38*, 89–106.
- Van Praag, P. (2003). The winners and losers in a turbulent political year. *Acta Politica*, *38*, 2–22.
- Verkuyten, M. (2005). Ethnic group identification and group evaluation among minority and majority groups: Testing the multiculturalism hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *88*, 121–138.
- Verkuyten, M., & Zaremba, K. (2005). Inter-ethnic relations in a changing political context. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, *68*, 375–386.
- Wittebrood, K., Latten, J., & Nicolaas, H. (2005). Wonen, leefbaarheid en veiligheid in concentratiewijken [Living, well-being and security in segregated neighborhoods]. In *Jaarrapport Integratie 2005*. The Hague: SCP/WODC/CBS.

- Wolsko, C., Park, B., Judd, C. M., & Wittenbrink, B. (2000). Framing interethnic ideology: Effects of multicultural and color-blind perspectives on judgements of groups and individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 78, 635–654.
- Zick, A., Wagner, U., van Dick, R., & Petzel, T. (2001). Acculturation and prejudice in Germany: Majority and minority perspectives. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57, 541–557.
- Zorlu, A., & Traag, T. (2005). Opleidingsniveau en taalvaardigheid [Educational level and language proficiency]. In *Jaarrapport Integratie 2005*. The Hague: SCP/WODC/CBS.

MARCEL COENDERS is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Utrecht University and a senior researcher of the ICS Graduate Research School. His research interests include comparative research on racism, discrimination, and ethnic relations.

MARCEL LUBBERS is an Associate Professor at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences at Utrecht University and a senior researcher of the ICS Graduate Research School. He is a recipient of the VENI grant (NWO) from 2003 to 2006 for the topic *Eurosepticism: its social determinants and political consequences*.

PEER SCHEEPERS was previously an Endowed Professor of Social Prejudice and currently is a Professor of Social Science Research Methodology in the Faculty of Social Sciences at University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands, Member of ICS, and Director of the Nijmegen Instituut voor Sociaal en Cultureel Onderzoek (NISCO). He is also the Dutch national coordinator (together with Rob Eisinga) for the European Social Survey and as such authorized representative for the Dutch Science Foundation (NWO). His research interests include the methodology of comparative social surveys as well as longitudinal and cross-national studies on political and religious attitudes and behavior, more in particular regarding ethnic exclusionism.

MAYKEL VERKUYTEN is a Professor at the Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences, Utrecht University and Academic Director of the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic relations (ERCOMER) at Utrecht University. He has research interests in racism, discrimination, and ethnic relations. His latest book is on *The Social Psychology of Ethnic Identity*, Hove: Psychology Press, 2005.