On being Dutch *and* Muslim

Descendants of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants speak out about identity and religion

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It's quite possible for descendants of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants (i.e. the Second Generation) to combine strong feelings of belonging to different social groups, such as feeling 'Amsterdammer', 'Rotterdammer', 'Dutch' *and* Muslim. A fair percentage of the Second Generation does not practise their religion by praying and are of the opinion that religion should play no role, or only a minor one, in today's society and in politics. Many find the use of religious symbols in schools acceptable, but only a minority say that Muslim women should wear a head scarf outside the home.

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IDENTITY

In the TIES (The Integration of the Second Generation in Europe) project, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they identified with various social groups in their immediate and wider environment. They were able to choose from six degrees of identification (none at all, very weak, weak, average, strong, very strong). Table 1 summarises the findings based on no more than three degrees – the category 'weak' includes respondents who felt no affinity whatsoever with a particular identity. In a similar way the response is summarised on questions pertaining to the data in tables 2 and 4. The data in the tables have not been broken down by sex as the differences between men and women were negligible.

This article addresses the degree to which 18 to 35 year old second-generation Turks and Moroccans, born in the Netherlands, identify with their parent's descent group, with other groups in the Dutch society, and with religion. Data come from a multi-country survey project on the integration of the Second Generation in Europe (TIES). In the period 2006-2008, 1,000 to 1,500 respondents were interviewed in two main cities in eight European countries.

In recent decades Europe has become ever more diverse in terms of language, socio-political history, culture, religious affiliation, norms and values as immigrants, in particular those from Turkey and Morocco, brought with them their socio-cultural heritage. And from this heritage, people derive their identity as members of a social group. In the case of Turks and Moroccans, Islam-based rules form part of their heritage. The growing share of Muslims in the populations of most European countries is a new phenomenon in the history of Europe. As a rule, contact between the native inhabitants of a country and newcomers tends to result, with time, in a rapprochement of the cultural orientations and values of both parties. This acculturation process does not mean that differences between groups in society disappear altogether. The contrary could even be said to be true, as shown in the classic work 'Beyond

the Melting Pot' by Glazer and Moynihan (1963). Differences in identity and orientations continue to exist, and the Netherlands is no exception. This may, however, be accompanied by occasional clashes and by a shift in socio-economic and political relations. Group formation is part and parcel of any society, but in the future, group membership may be determined less by ethnicity because of integration, assimilation and mixed marriages. Individuals make choices during the course of their lives, influenced by the context and groups in which they live. These choices could result in them crossing physical, social and psychological group boundaries and indentifying with other existing groups. They could, alternatively, give rise to 'new social groups' where people's Turkish or Moroccan roots play less of a role. In order to understand group processes and interactions (including the integration of immigrants), individual decision-making needs to be studied over the life course, including the reasons why and how changes take place. The philosophical perspective that propagates this life course view is known as 'Methodological Individualism' (Coleman).

Muslim *and* Dutchman?

The process of acculturation has not yet reached a stage where we can expect newspaper stories in the near future reporting that during a soccer match between Ajax (Amsterdam) and Feyenoord (Rotterdam), Ajax supporters of Turkish descent got into a scuffle with Feyenoord supporters of Turkish descent. We cannot rule out, however, that such a situation could arise in the future. A study carried out in Amsterdam and Rotterdam (TIES) has shown that many second-generation Turks and Moroccans have a strong affinity with other identities than their Moroccan or Turkish descent or their Muslim identity (see Box).

Table 1 shows that almost 80 percent of the second generation have a strong sense of identity with other Turks or Moroccans. Among second-generation Turks, 14 percent identify themselves with Kurds and 55 percent of respondents of Moroccan descent identify themselves with Berbers (data not shown). The latter reflect descent-group membership of their parents in the country of origin. About 20 percent of the Turkish population is Kurd and about 40 percent of the population of Morocco

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are Berbers. A similarly high percentage (80 percent) of Native Dutch people, the comparison group, says they have a strong sense of affiliation with the feeling of being a Dutch. This comparison group are persons in the same age range (18-35 years old) and comprise of descendants of Dutch ancestry as well as third-generation descendants of immigrants from various other countries, including former Dutch colonies.

More than two thirds of the Second Generation identify strongly with their home town – be it Amsterdam or Rotterdam. Much depends on how the figures are interpreted and where the emphasis is placed, because one in five respondents among second-generation Turks and Moroccans felt no, or only a weak sense of being Dutch. At the same time, almost half of the second-generation Moroccans say they also identify strongly with others based on their Dutch nationality. This is less so among second-generation Turks. It is commonly believed that the less familiar something is, the less involved people feel. Not surprisingly, a strong identification with feelings of being a 'European' occurs less often. About one third of the Second Generation strongly identifies with being 'European', somewhat less often than among the Native Dutch.

Second-generation Turks and Moroccans differ most from the Native Dutch in terms of their affiliation with religion. About 80 percent of the second generation identify strongly with Islam compared with no more than 21 percent of the Native Dutch who have a similar identification with Christianity. Overall, Table 1 shows that having 'multiple identities' is the rule rather than the exception.

The figures in Table 2, panel A, show that the majority of the Second Generation combines a strong sense of identification with Islam with a strong sense of identification with their home town. For instance, three in four second-generation Moroccans (77.8 percent) said they felt both a strong connection with Islam as well as a strong connection with their home town. The figures in panel B present a somewhat different picture. For instance, only about one third (44.8 percent) of the second-generation Moroccans combine a strong identification with Islam with strong feelings of being a Dutchman. Overall, Table 2 shows that a strong identification with Islam is frequently combined with a strong identification with the home town, but much less with (strong) feelings of being Dutch.

Religion: yes, but...

About 90 percent of the Second Generation in the Netherlands are Muslims; this percentage is somewhat lower among Turks. Table 3 shows that more than 80 percent of second-generation Turks and Moroccans felt a strong identification with Islam both during their childhood and at the time of the interview. The table also shows that their identification with Islam barely weakens during the life-course; among second-generation Turks this is no more than five percent. Among one of the groups, affiliation with Islam only developed somewhat later in life. As expected, the percentage distribution among Native Dutch is different. About 56 percent had no affiliation with religion, neither during their childhood nor at the time of the survey. And whereas more than a quarter (27.9 percent) had a religious upbringing, they no longer affiliated with their religion at the time of the survey.

But does this mean that there are comparable differences in terms of their religiosity and about the role of religion in society? Half of the second generation never or only rarely visit a mosque and about 40 percent of second-generation Turks and 25 percent of second-genera-

Table 1. Weak and strong sense of identity with various social groups, by study group, in percentages (n=1,505)

| | | Second Generation | | Native Dutch |
		Turks	Moroccans	
Being Turk/Moroccan	Weak	4.3	5.7	
	Average	18.3	12.2	
	Strong	77.4	82.0	
	Total	100.0	100.0	
Being Muslim/ Christian	Weak	8.2	6.0	65.3
	Average	12.0	9.5	13.3
	Strong	79.8	84.6	21.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Being 'Amsterdammer'/ 'Rotterdammer'	Weak	10.9	7.3	14.4
	Average	23.6	18.6	24.1
	Strong	65.5	74.1	61.5
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Being a Dutchman	Weak	23.4	19.8	4.5
	Average	37.6	35.0	15.5
	Strong	38.9	45.1	80.0
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Being a European	Weak	29.1	34.2	20.7
	Average	34.6	29.8	33.5
	Strong	36.3	36.0	45.8
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Table 2. Identification of second-generation Turks and Moroccans with Islam and with home town (Panel A), and identification with Islam and with the Dutch (Panel B), by study group, in percentages (n=1,505)

Panel A

| | | Identification with Islam | | | |
Identification with home town		Weak	Average	Strong	Total
Second-generation Turks	Weak	18.1	17.6	9.3	11.0
	Average	27.4	29.4	22.2	23.5
	Strong	54.5	52.9	68.5	65.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Percentage distribution study group	9.2	11.5	79.3	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	Weak	0.0	15.4	6.8	7.2
	Average	12.5	38.5	15.4	17.4
	Strong	87.5	46.2	77.8	75.4
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Percentage distribution study group	6.3	11.3	82.5	100.0

Panel B

| | | Identification with Islam | | | |
Being a Dutchman		Weak	Average	Strong	Total
Second-generation Turks	Weak	18.2	23.5	24.8	24.1
	Average	27.3	41.2	37.6	37.2
	Strong	54.5	35.3	37.6	38.7
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Percentage distribution study group	8.0	12.4	79.6	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	Weak	11.1	15.4	21.6	20.3
	Average	22.2	53.8	33.6	34.8
	Strong	66.7	30.8	44.8	44.9
	Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
	Percentage distribution study group	6.5	9.4	84.1	100.0

Table 3. Religious affiliation during childhood and at the time of the interview, by study group, in percentages (n=1,505)

| | | Second-generation | | Native Dutch |
Childhood	Currently	Turks	Moroccans	
no	no	7.3	6.3	55.7
yes	yes	83.3	86.7	15.7
yes	no	4.9	4.9	27.9
no	yes	4.6	2.1	0.7
Total		100.0	100.0	100.0

Photo: Wim de Jonge

generation Turks and Moroccans, and Native Dutch do not differ substantially. However, Native Dutch respondents were found to express more often marked opinions (e.g. totally agree, totally disagree). The table does not make a distinction between men and women as these differences were negligible. All three groups tend to see religion as a relationship between the individual and God. In view of the ongoing secularisation among Christians, it will not come as a surprise that most native Dutch respondents felt that religion should not be represented in politics and in public life; opinions on this matter among second-generation Turks and Moroccans were divided. Many found it difficult to take a stand or did not wish to make their views known. The respondents were more outspoken when asked to what extent religion should be a part of political decision making, with a majority in all groups saying religion should not play a part in politics. That said, about one third of second-generation Turks and Moroccans were unable to, or did not want to voice their opinions on this matter. Most respondents in all three groups agreed that there should be no ban on religious symbols at school. Among the Second Generation there was disagreement, however, about the prescription that Muslim women should wear head scarves outside the home. Second-generation Moroccans (30.1 percent) in particular subscribed to this opinion. A higher than expected percentage of Native Dutch respondents (17.7 percent), sampled and interviewed in the same neighbourhood as the Second Generation, shared the opinion that Muslim women should indeed wear a headscarf outside the home. Furthermore, almost one quarter (22.2 percent) of Native Dutch respondents are indifferent about whether Muslim women should wear or not wear a headscarf outside the home.

tion Moroccans – both men and women – say they never pray. These percentages are surprising as Muslims as a rule give socially desirable answers to questions about praying, which is one of the five pillars of Islam. And so it remains to be seen whether imams in the Netherlands will better succeed in the future in inspiring their followers than priests, vicars and rabbis.

Table 4 presents the views of the Second Generation about the role of religion in society. It shows that, overall, the views of second-

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Table 4. Opinions about the role of religion and use of religious symbols, by study group, in percentages (N=1,505)

a. Religion ought to be a private matter between an individual and God

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Second-generation Turks	79.5	13.2	7.3	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	75.4	15.1	9.5	100.0
Native Dutch	76.7	14.1	9.2	100.0

b. Religion should be represented in politics and society, along with other religious or political viewpoints

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Second-generation Turks	25.2	34.4	40.4	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	28.7	36.3	35.0	100.0
Native Dutch	16.6	23.0	60.4	100.0

c. Religion should be the only and ultimate political authority

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Second-generation Turks	12.5	31.1	56.4	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	11.6	30.1	58.3	100.0
Native Dutch	1.0	6.1	92.9	100.0

d. All religious symbols should be banned at schools

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Second-generation Turks	15.2	23.0	61.8	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	9.6	17.1	73.3	100.0
Native Dutch	12.1	18.5	69.4	100.0

e. Outside the home, Muslim women should wear head scarves or cover their heads

	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Total
Second-generation Turks	20.8	35.6	43.6	100.0
Second-generation Moroccans	30.1	36.3	33.6	100.0
Native Dutch	17.7	22.2	60.1	100.0