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Stability of Majority Attitudes toward Multiculturalism in the Netherlands between 1999 and 2007

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The success of multiculturalism as an ideology to deal with cultural differences depends upon the level of support for multiculturalism by majority members. It has been argued that support for multiculturalism in the Netherlands has substantially changed in response to various national and international events, such as the terrorist attacks on New York (2001), Madrid (2004), and London (2005), and the assassinations of popular politician Fortuyn (2002) and controversial movie director Van Gogh (2004). We compared survey data on Dutch majority attitudes in 1999 ($n = 333$), 2001 ($n = 1,266$), 2004 ($n = 246$), 2005 ($n = 170$), 2006 ($n = 306$), and 2007 ($n = 464$). Contrary to popular belief, we found little evidence for enduring attitude changes over the nine-year period. Implications for studies of multiculturalism and for policy-makers are discussed.

Le succès du multiculturalisme en tant qu'idéologie pour appréhender les différences culturelles dépend du soutien dont il bénéficie de la part de la majorité de la population. On a dit que l'approbation du multiculturalisme s'était profondément altérée aux Pays-Bas à la suite de divers événements nationaux et internationaux, telles que les attaques terroristes sur New York (2001), Madrid (2004) et Londres (2005), et les assassinats du politicien populaire Fortuyn (2002) et du metteur en scène controversé Van Gogh (2004). On a comparé des données d'enquête sur les attitudes majoritaires chez les Néerlandais en 1999 ($n = 333$), 2001 ($n = 1,266$), 2004 ($n = 246$), 2005 ($n = 170$), 2006 ($n = 306$) et 2007 ($n = 464$). A l'encontre de la croyance populaire, un changement d'attitudes durable est loin d'être évident sur cette période de neuf ans. On discute des conséquences pour les études sur le multiculturalisme et les projets politiques.

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INTRODUCTION

Most of the world's societies today are ethnically diverse and it is likely that this diversity will only increase in the coming decades as a consequence of globalisation and increasing immigration. An important task for these societies is how to manage the possible tension between the need for coherence to function as a society and the need for diversity to accommodate the needs of both mainstream and minority groups. Policy-makers have to take into account the prevalent opinion in their country regarding multiculturalism. Policies that deviate too much from this opinion will not be supported. Legislation about multiculturalism and immigration has changed considerably in the last decade in various countries. The Netherlands is a good example. The liberal policies of the 1990s have been replaced by much more restrictive policies in recent years. It is not clear to what extent these policy changes were associated with changes in views of the general public. In the current paper, we present a comparison of Dutch majority attitudes toward multiculturalism between 1999 and 2007, a period in which various important events occurred that are widely believed to have negatively influenced the ideological climate in the Netherlands with regard to the multicultural society.

Majority members' attitudes toward multiculturalism are claimed to have deteriorated in response to both national and international incidents, such as the terrorist attacks in New York (2001), Madrid (2004), and London (2005), which have been linked to Islamic fundamentalism (Penninx, 2005). Two important national events were the assassinations of Pim Fortuyn, a popular politician, in the run-up to parliamentary elections of 2002, and of Theo van Gogh, a movie director, in 2004. Fortuyn was best known for his critical view on Dutch multicultural society. Theo van Gogh, who was murdered by a radical Islamic youngster, was well known for his controversial statements and movies about Islam. Although all incidents are related to fundamentalist branches of Islam, their impact has spread to discourse and policies with regard to multiculturalism in general, including immigrants and minorities with very different backgrounds. Already before 9/11, opinion leader Paul Scheffer (2000) wrote about "the multicultural drama", heralding a radical change in Dutch public debate with regard to immigrants. The mentioned incidents are assumed to have accelerated this process and there appears to be much acclaim for the view that these events have led to a "demise of Dutch multiculturalism" (Carle, 2006) and to a crisis in multicultural policies (e.g. Jacobs, 2004). Recently, the mood is assumed to have changed again. A Dutch survey company recently reported results suggesting that the crisis in Dutch views of migrants is back at the level of 1997 after a dip (Motivaction, 2007).

These developments are not peculiar to the Netherlands. Much literature published in recent years argues that multiculturalism in Western, liberal

countries is in an unhealthy state or even a crisis (e.g. Joppke & Morawska, 2003). However, there are at least two reasons to doubt that the swift change in multicultural policies has been accompanied by a similar change in Dutch majority views on multiculturalism. First, a recent overview of various studies carried out in the Netherlands suggests very little evidence for a lasting change in attitudes held by Dutch mainstreamers in response to national and international incidents (Van de Vijver, Schalk-Soekar, Arends-Tóth, & Breugelmans, 2006). Second, majority attitudes toward multiculturalism in the Netherlands have been found to be strong (Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, & Croon, 2008). Strong attitudes are unlikely to change following external events (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998).

Majority attitudes toward multiculturalism are important to study because of their consequences for the acculturation strategies that are available to immigrant groups (Bourhis, Moïse, Perreault, & Senécal, 1997). The influential acculturation model developed by Berry (1980, 1997) describes four types of acculturation orientations that minorities can adopt, namely integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalisation. These orientations are defined by two dimensions: maintenance of the culture and identity of one's own group, and maintenance of positive relationships with other groups in society. Research suggests that an integration orientation (i.e. maintenance of *both* the cultural characteristics of one's own group *and* of positive relations with other groups in society) is preferred by most immigrants and leads overall to the most positive acculturation outcomes, both in a psychological sense (e.g. well-being, psychological health) and in a sociocultural sense (e.g. daily skills, social mobility; for overviews see Berry, Poortinga, Segall, & Dasen, 2002; Sam & Berry, 2006; Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). However, to what extent an immigrant can pursue this preference depends upon the ideological climate of the overarching society. An integration strategy can only be fully realised when a society supports an ideology of multiculturalism (see Berry, 2001). In addition, the extent to which integration yields positive acculturation outcomes may depend on the degree to which it fits with majority members' preferences and state policies (Bourhis et al., 1997); hence, the extent to which mainstreamers support an ideology of multiculturalism has direct ramifications for minority acculturation.

Many Western countries have adopted policies that support an ideology of multiculturalism. In the 1970s, many countries had started to shift from assimilation and segregation policies to an ideology of multiculturalism. Although the specifics of policies varied, there were important commonalities in the aims of multicultural policies (Joppke, 1996; Van de Vijver et al., 2006). Generally, policies aimed to promote the participation of minorities in mainstream society, to improve the social and economic position of minorities, to ascertain equal rights for all groups, and to reduce or even

eliminate discrimination. In the Netherlands, multicultural policies were mainly formed in response to immigration from the former colonies and from Mediterranean immigrant workers (Van den Berg & Bleichrodt, 1996; Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000). In the 1970s, Dutch policies emphasised cultural maintenance, when it was still assumed that many immigrant workers would eventually return to their countries of origin. In the 1980s, policies shifted to an emphasis on active participation and integration because it became clear that most immigrant workers would stay permanently in the Netherlands. From the mid-1990s emphasis was put more on active citizenship, including both the rights and obligations of immigrants to put effort into achieving full participation in society (Schalk-Soekar, 2007; Tijdelijke Commissie Onderzoek Integratiebeleid, 2004).

Systematic studies of majority attitudes toward multiculturalism were first done in Canada by Berry and colleagues in the 1970s (Berry, 1984; Berry, Kalin, & Taylor, 1977; for an overview of the development of measures of multiculturalism see Van de Vijver, Breugelmans, & Schalk-Soekar, 2008). They introduced the concept of “multicultural ideology”, which entails that (i) cultural diversity is good for society (i.e. cultural maintenance is valued); (ii) there should be equitable participation of all groups in society; and (iii) all groups are willing to change their culture in order to accommodate the cultural orientations of others. They developed the Multicultural Ideology Scale, which consists of 10 Likert statements (five negatively keyed) to measure acculturation expectations by majority members. Statements were based on the four acculturation strategies defined by Berry (1974, 1980, 1997) and address different aspects of multiculturalism, such as whether diversity is good for society and whether minorities should assimilate. Initial analyses indicated that although not all items were equally endorsed, the items constituted a unidimensional construct. The scale showed a good reliability in a representative sample of Canadian citizens (Berry & Kalin, 1995). Applications of the Multicultural Ideology Scale in the Netherlands invariably yielded single-factor solutions and high reliability coefficients (e.g. Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Verkuyten, 2005). One of the major findings of these studies was that Canadians were on average positively inclined to support a government policy of multiculturalism, providing a solid basis for policy aims to be realised.

Studies in other Western countries have sketched a much less positive picture. In many countries, studies among majority members showed little support for multiculturalism. Studies among mainstreamers in Australia (Ho, 1990), Germany (Zick, Wagner, Van Dick, & Petzel, 2001), Spain (Medrano, 2005), the United Kingdom (Heath & Tilley, 2005), and the USA (Citrin, Sears, Muste, & Wong, 2001) showed neutral (indifferent) or slightly negative attitudes vis-à-vis multiculturalism. A recent analysis of data from 21 countries in the European Social Survey showed that differences

among countries on multiculturalism were, although significant, fairly small (Schalk-Soekar, Van de Vijver, Arends-Tóth, & Van Hemert, 2007). Studies in the Netherlands showed a similar picture (for an overview, see Van de Vijver et al., 2006). Dutch mainstreamers tend to have a neutral or indifferent attitude toward multiculturalism; they do not support unequal treatment or discrimination, but they do not tend to support cultural maintenance by immigrants either (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, *in press*). They mostly prefer immigrant groups to assimilate into the host society (Van Oudenhoven, Prins, & Buunk, 1998; Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002).

The Netherlands provides an interesting case for examining possible changes in multiculturalism attitudes in the last decade because the policies have changed substantially in this period and the public discourse on multiculturalism has been negatively influenced by a series of events, notably the terrorist attacks on New York (11 September 2001), Madrid (11 March 2004), and London (7 July 2005), and the assassinations of Fortuyn (6 May 2002) and Van Gogh (2 November 2004). We compared survey data on Dutch majority attitudes that cover this period; data were collected in 1999 ($n = 333$), 2001 ($n = 1,266$), 2004 ($n = 246$), 2005 ($n = 170$), 2006 ($n = 306$), and 2007 ($n = 464$).

METHOD

Instrument

All studies used questions from the Multicultural Attitude Scale (MAS; Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004). The scale was developed on the basis of the Multicultural Ideology Scale by Berry and Kalin (1995). The MAS (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar, Breugelmans, & Van de Vijver, *in press*) and adaptations of the MAS (Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, *in press*) have repeatedly shown excellent psychometric properties. Similar to applications of the Multicultural Ideology Scale in the Netherlands (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003), the scale is unidimensional and has a high internal consistency. Strong convergence has been reported between the multicultural attitudes measured by an adapted version of the MAS and free descriptions of multiculturalism by 1,285 majority Dutch (Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, *in press*), suggesting construct validity of the scale. The scores on the MAS also systematically relate to external measures, such as intercultural contacts (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar, 2007).

The MAS measures attitudes toward multiculturalism in four domains: (Dis)Approval of Cultural Diversity in the Netherlands (items 1 to 6), Acculturation by Minorities (items 7 and 8), Support for Minorities by

Majority Members (items 9 to 12), and Equal Rights and Social Participation for all groups in society (items 13 to 19). Items are formulated as statements (e.g. "I think that . . .") followed by a 7-point Likert scale ranging from *totally disagree* to *totally agree*. Although the four domains do not represent separate factors—they all pertain to the single construct of multiculturalism—mean endorsement rates differ across domains. People tend to be the most positive about multiculturalism in the domain of Equal Rights and Social Participation and least positive in the domain of Acculturation by Minorities (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar et al., in press).

The full MAS consists of 28 items, but the studies from which we took the data for the current paper did not always use the full scale. Unless stated otherwise, all analyses reported here are based on 19 items that were present in all datasets. These items and their median factor loadings across the datasets can be found in Table 1.

Samples and Procedure

Sample characteristics for each dataset can be found in Table 2. Convenience sampling from the general population was used in all studies. The data of September–October 1999 were derived from a study among majority Dutch in the city of Tilburg (southern part of the Netherlands) using the original MAS of 28 items (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004). The data of December 2001 (Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, in press) were collected among majority Dutch in the city of Tilburg, using an adapted version of the MAS (24 items, 7-point Likert scale). The data of October 2004 (Schalk-Soekar et al., in press) were derived from a study among majority Dutch in the city of Hengelo (eastern part of the Netherlands) using the original MAS. The data for 2005 were derived from two studies carried out between December 2004 and January 2005 in various cities in the province of Noord-Brabant (southern part of the Netherlands). The first study in 2005 was carried out among 68 majority Dutch and used the full MAS with a 5-point Likert scale. The second study in 2005 was carried out among 102 majority Dutch using a short version of the MAS (20 items; 7-point Likert scale). The data for March–April 2006 were gathered in various cities in the provinces of Zuid-Holland (western part of the Netherlands) and Noord-Brabant. The 2007 data were collected between December 2006 and February 2007 in two cities: Nijmegen (the eastern part of the Netherlands) and Venlo (south-eastern part).

Selection of Data. We re-analysed the data from five measurements of attitudes toward multiculturalism by Dutch majority members: data from studies carried out in 1999, 2001, 2004, and newly gathered data from 2005 (sampled in December 2004 and January 2005), 2006, and 2007.

TABLE 1
Scale Items with Median Factor Loading across Studies

<i>Subscale and items</i>	<i>Median loading</i>
<i>Diversity in the Netherlands</i>	
1 I think that it is good for the Netherlands to have different groups with a distinct cultural background living in this country.	.66
2 I do not like being on a bus or a train in which there are many non-natives. ^a	.65
3 I think that the unity of the Netherlands is weakened by non-natives. ^a	.71
4 I think that city districts with many non-natives are less safe. ^a	.62
5 I think that too many non-natives are living in my city. ^a	.76
6 I feel at ease when I am in a city district with many non-natives.	.69
<i>Acculturation by minorities</i>	
7 I think that non-natives in my city put sufficient effort into getting a job.	.53
8 I approve of non-native women wearing headscarves.	.60
<i>Support for minorities by majority members</i>	
9 I would rather live next to a Dutch family than next to a non-native family. ^a	.65
10 I think that Dutch schools should think more about the cultural background of their pupils.	.58
11 I think that the police should patrol more in city districts with many non-natives. ^a	.57
12 I think that the Dutch should support non-natives more in maintaining their culture and customs in the Netherlands.	.57
<i>Equal rights and social participation</i>	
13 I don't like being attended to in a shop by a non-native. ^a	.57
14 I think that non-natives and Dutch should seek more contact with one another.	.58
15 I think that Dutch children should have both non-native and Dutch teachers.	.59
16 I think that more non-natives should work in the police department.	.61
17 I think that Dutch children should play more with non-native children.	.57
18 I would not like having a non-native boss at work. ^a	.63
19 I think that non-natives and mainstreamers should have equal rights.	.54

Note: The Dutch term *allochtoon*, here translated as non-native, was used in the items. In the Netherlands this is the common term to refer to people seen as not belonging to the mainstream culture.

^a Items are reverse keyed.

Data Preparation

Two issues had to be addressed in order to make the data of all measurement periods comparable. First, the 2004 data did not have age measured as a continuous variable, but rather as a categorical variable with four age groups (18–29, 30–39, 40–54, and 55–75 years). We have taken the mean ages per category (i.e. 23.5, 34.5, 47.0, and 65.0 years) and assigned these to each person in the respective category. The second issue had to do with the response scale. The study in 2005 (see Table 2) used a 5-point response scale

TABLE 2
Sample and Scale Characteristics of the Six Measurements

Time	Sample size per sex		Not reported	Sample characteristics		Psychometric characteristics		
	Female	Male		Mean age (SD)	Level of education ^a	Variance explained	Tucker's phi ^b	Cronbach's α
1999	159	174	8	48.89 (15.17)	2.18	40%	—	.92
2001	678	588	12	43.39 (15.28)	2.18	42%	1.00	.92
2004	115	131	0	48.48 ^c (12.86)	2.39	35%	.99	.89
2005a	33	35	0	41.37 (13.78)	2.34	32%	.97	.86
2005b	83	19	0	37.52 (14.62)	2.34	26%	.96	.84
2006	183	123	1	40.25 (14.98)	2.17	37%	.99	.90
2007	280	182	2	43.37 (12.98)	2.03	42%	.99	.92

^a Ranging from 1 (low education) to 3 (high education).
^b Index that measures equivalence of factor loadings in that year with the 1999 factor loadings. Values larger than .95 indicate factorial equivalence.
^c Estimate of the mean age based on age categories used in the study (18–29 years, $N = 17$; 30–39 years, $N = 47$; 40–54 years, $N = 107$; 55–75 years, $N = 75$).

instead of the 7-point scale that was used in all other studies. For the analyses, participants' mean scores were converted from the 5-point scale to a 7-point scale using equipercentile scoring (Kolen & Brennan, 2004). This procedure allows for a transformation of scores based on an empirical comparison of scores on both types of response scales rather than on an a priori assumption of the relation between scores on these scales. For the calculation of equipercentiles we used data from the 2006 study. In this study participants filled out two versions the MAS: one with a 5-point scale and one with a 7-point scale (the order of both scales was counterbalanced across participants). For both scales, cut-off points for 20 percentile points were calculated (i.e. 5th percentile, 10th percentile, etc.). Then, the relative position of each of the scores in the 2005 dataset was determined within the percentiles of the 5-point scale in the 2006 data. The corresponding value on the 7-point scale (i.e. the value with the same relative position within the same percentile) was then assigned to these scores. The 5-point scale was used only for the recalibration of the 2005 data; all analyses of the 2006 data in this manuscript used the data on the 7-point scale.

RESULTS

Psychometric Results

Principal Components Analysis was used to extract unifactorial solutions for the 20 items in each dataset. The proportion of variance explained by a

single factor ranged from 26 per cent to 42 per cent (see Table 2 for an overview of scale characteristics). In order to examine the factorial similarity of the data across the various datasets, each principal component analysis solution was compared with the solution for the 1999 data (Van de Vijver & Leung, 1997). Each comparison yielded a value of Tucker's phi well above .95, which provides strong evidence for the factorial equivalence of the data. The reliability of the scales was also very good, with values of Cronbach's α above .83 for each dataset. These results suggest that the items in each dataset reliably measured the same, unidimensional multiculturalism construct that was described in the first analysis of the MAS by Breugelmans and Van de Vijver (2004). For all subsequent analyses, the two datasets that were collected in 2005 were combined into one dataset.

Background Variables

Mean attitude scores were calculated for each time sample. A pan-group regression of multiculturalism on age did not show a significant effect, $\beta = -.001$, $p = .48$. A pan-group ANOVA with Sex (2 levels) and Education (3 levels: low, middle, high) as between-subjects factors revealed a small but significant main effect for Sex, $F(1, 2756) = 15.00$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$, with females being slightly more positive about multiculturalism than males ($M = 4.21$, $SD = 1.06$ and $M = 4.10$, $SD = 1.06$, respectively), and a moderate effect for Education, $F(2, 2756) = 123.82$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .08$. Post-hoc comparisons (Tukey HSD) showed that all levels of education differed significantly from one another; participants who were better educated showed more support for multiculturalism. The interaction between Sex and Education was not significant, $F(2, 2756) = 0.16$, $p = .85$. Given these results, we decided to include Education as a covariate and Sex as a between-subjects factor in further analyses.

Multiculturalism across Time

An ANOVA on mean multiculturalism scores with Time (6 levels) and Sex as a between-subjects factors and Education as a covariate showed significant effects for Time, $F(5, 2749) = 56.18$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, and Sex, $F(1, 2749) = 19.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .007$, but no significant interaction, $F(5, 2749) = 0.20$, $p = .96$. Marginal means of multiculturalism at each time can be found in Table 3. Pairwise comparisons (LSD) showed that support for multiculturalism in 2005 was significantly lower ($M = 3.20$) than at any other time. Second lowest was 1999 with a score around the scale mid-point ($M = 3.98$), followed by 2004 ($M = 4.12$), 2001 ($M = 4.15$), and 2006 ($M = 4.21$) with slightly positive support. Table 3 also shows effect sizes (Cohen's d) for the differences between support for multiculturalism at each Time

TABLE 3
Marginal Means of Support for Multiculturalism for the Five Datasets in an ANOVA with Time (6) and Gender (2) as Between-Subjects Factors and Education as a Covariate, and Difference Scores (Cohen's *d*) of the Data at Each Time Compared with 1999

<i>Time</i>	<i>Mean support for multiculturalism</i>	<i>Difference with 1999 (Cohen's <i>d</i>)^c</i>
1999	3.97 ^a	—
2001	4.13 ^b	0.15
2004	4.11 ^{ab}	0.23
2005	3.19 ^c	-0.63
2006	4.19 ^b	0.22
2007	4.67 ^d	0.58

Note: Means in the same column with different superscripts differ significantly in pairwise comparisons (LSD).

^c Absolute values of effect sizes of 0.20 indicate a small difference, 0.50 a moderate difference, and 0.80 a large difference.

compared to the level of support in 1999. Differences tend to be small except for the differences between 2005 and 1999 and between 2007 and 1999 which are medium sized (see Cohen, 1988).

Comparison of Domains

Effects of time were also examined for each of the four domains covered by the MAS. For three domains (i.e. Diversity in the Netherlands, $n = 6$, median α across all datasets = .86; Support for Minorities by Majority Members, $n = 4$, median $\alpha = .68$; and Equal Rights and Social Participation for all groups in society, $n = 7$, median $\alpha = .82$) these data were taken from the 19 items of the MAS including all measurement times. For the domain of Acculturation by Minorities we included all data except those of 2001, because these contain only two items of this domain, which does not provide an adequate assessment. The scores for this domain were calculated on the basis of these two items plus three additional items of the MAS that were included in all other datasets (i.e. "I think that most non-natives are sufficiently familiar with Dutch culture and customs", median factor loading across datasets = .44; "I feel uneasy when non-natives talk to one another in a language I do not understand", median factor loading = .28; "I think that non-natives are living too much in the same city districts", median factor loading = .16). Median α of the scale ($n = 5$) across the four datasets was .50, which is lower than the reliability of the other subscales.

FIGURE 1. Support for multiculturalism in four domains in 1999, 2001, 2004, 2005, 2006 and 2007, with key national and international events plotted on the x-axis.

The positions of events within a year and the distance between events are not exact representations of the month in which they occurred.

ANOVAs were done with Time (4 levels in the Acculturation by Minorities domain and 5 levels in all other domains) and Sex as between-subjects factors, Education as a covariate, and Multiculturalism as the dependent variable. In none of the domains did the interaction between Time and Sex reach significance (all $F_s < 1.91$, $p_s > .13$). Marginal means for multiculturalism in each domain across the different measurements are presented in Figure 1. In the domain of Diversity in the Netherlands, there were significant effects of Time, $F(5, 2749) = 42.71$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$, and of Sex, $F(1, 2749) = 5.70$, $p < .05$, $\eta_p^2 = .002$. Pairwise comparisons (LSD) showed that support for multiculturalism in 2005 was significantly lower than in any other year, followed by 1999 which was significantly lower than 2001, 2004, and 2006, while 2007 was significantly higher than all other years. The same pattern of results was found for the other domains. Support for Minorities by Majority Members showed a significant effect of Time, $F(5, 2749) = 19.95$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, and of Sex, $F(1, 2749) = 20.15$, $p < .001$.

.001, $\eta_p^2 = .007$. Multiculturalism was significantly lower in 2005 than in any other year, followed by 1999 and 2001 which were significantly lower than 2006 and 2007, with 2007 again significantly higher than any other year. Equal Rights and Social Participation showed a significant effect of Time, $F(5, 2749) = 53.91$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .09$, and of Sex, $F(1, 2749) = 13.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .005$. Multiculturalism was significantly lower in 2005 than in any other year, followed by 1999 which was significantly lower than 2001, 2006, and 2007, and 2007 higher than in any other year. Finally, Acculturation by Minorities showed a significant effect of Time, $F(4, 1498) = 25.48$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .06$, but not of Sex, $F(1, 1498) = 0.65$, $p = .42$.

DISCUSSION

The political landscape of multiculturalism in the Netherlands has been turbulent in the past decade. Two murders in the Netherlands and various international incidents, such as the terrorist attacks on New York, Madrid, and London, have created an international climate that reinforces the view that multiculturalism is in a state of crisis (e.g. Carle, 2006; Jacobs, 2004; Joppke & Morawska, 2003; Penninx, 2003). It seems to be taken for granted that this change in political climate and public discourse has been matched by a similar change in majority Dutch attitudes toward multiculturalism (see Van de Vijver et al., 2006). We tested this assumption by comparing the data from seven survey studies into Dutch majority attitudes, spanning nine years in which all mentioned incidents have taken place. In contrast to the popular view that majority attitudes toward multiculturalism have changed, we found no evidence for profound and long-term shifts in attitudes. Some fluctuation in levels of support has been found, but by and large support for multiculturalism has remained remarkably stable. We believe that the most parsimonious and best supported explanation is that attitudes have actually remained rather stable throughout the nine years covered by our data. Consequently, our findings strongly suggest that the changes in Dutch immigration and multiculturalism policies are not a reflection of substantial differences in the general opinion with regard to multiculturalism.

There were few differences in level of support for multiculturalism across time, but we did find systematic differences across domains which tended to be stable across time (Figure 1; see also Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004; Schalk-Soekar, 2007). Attitudes toward multiculturalism represent a single construct; individuals who score high on the items of one domain tend to score high on the items of another domain while those scoring low in one domain will tend to score low in other domains as well. However, the level of endorsement of multiculturalism varies for most individuals between domains. Mainstreamers were somewhat negative about multiculturalism when it comes to adaptation and cultural maintenance by minority groups.

When the topic is cultural diversity as a characteristic of the Netherlands or majority support for minority culture then attitudes were generally neutral or indifferent. Majority members were even slightly positive toward equal rights and participation for all groups in society. Thus, general attitude measures may give us an indication about the overall ideological climate in a country, but the level of support varies across specific aspects of multicultural policies.

We found a notable decline in support for multiculturalism in the data that were gathered within the first two months after the murder of movie director Van Gogh in November 2004. Unfortunately, in terms of number of participants, variance explained, and reliability of the scales the 2005 sample is of a lesser quality than the other datasets, making it difficult to draw strong conclusions. However, if we take our 2005 data to reflect real changes in attitudes, then it seems that events like the murder of Van Gogh have a short-term effect on attitudes toward multiculturalism, but that attitudes return to their original values after some time has passed. This rebound effect is typical for strong attitudes (see Schalk-Soekar, 2007) and is very important to consider when interpreting survey results that are reported in the media. Societal interest for attitude measurements tends to be at its highest just after big events have happened. For example, at the time of our 2005 study, a renowned polling agency conducted a survey on Dutch fear of Muslims (TNS NIPO, 2005). It was found that fear of Muslims had substantially increased in comparison to a survey in the summer of 2004. This result was widely discussed in the media and taken as an indication that Dutch majority opinions were strongly affected by what happened. The results of our study suggest that general attitudes toward multiculturalism tend to return to their original values after a while, but follow-up measures tend to receive a lot less attention. This process could contribute to the idea that the Dutch have become much more negative with regard to multiculturalism, whereas there is little evidence for such a trend in our data.

It could be argued that our focus on the absence of changes in means in recent years could disguise another development: both the proponents and opponents of multiculturalism have become more extreme. This polarisation hypothesis would predict that the spread of multiculturalism scores increases over time. We examined the standard deviations in all years of the study and found the following values: 1.19 in 1999, 1.05 in 2001, 0.91 in 2004, 0.78 in 2005, 0.97 in 2006, and 1.02 in 2007. Clearly, these numbers do not support the polarisation hypothesis.

We believe that our data reflect a genuine stability of attitudes toward multiculturalism, but it is clear that the design of our study shows some limitations. The major limitation is that our factor Time could be confounded with other variables such as age, gender composition, level of education,

and region of origin of the participants, due to the cross-sectional design of our studies. Because the national and international incidents that may have influenced majority attitudes could not have been foreseen, we had to resort to using a cross-sectional design with convenience sampling of data from different surveys held in the Netherlands. A longitudinal design would have had different drawbacks, such as a confounding of time (and incidents) with ageing, but it is clear that such a design would have been stronger than our cross-sectional design if these confounds could have been dealt with (e.g. Costa & McCrae, 1982). In our cross-sectional data we have been able to deal statistically with most confounds, but we have not been able to control for region of sampling (which was somewhat confounded with year of administration).

Let us look at the alternative explanation according to which there is a change in attitudes that somehow was not detected by our sampling of regions. In order to support this view, one would have to make the unlikely assumption that attitudes change across regions at a different pace and that we happened to sample regions in different years at the same level of endorsement. The single region that was sampled more than once (Noord-Brabant) did not show a change in attitudes, which makes the above reasoning unlikely. In addition, our 2007 dataset contains 226 participants from Venlo, a city which in the national elections of 2006 scored very high (18% against a national average of 6%) for the PVV party, a conservative right-wing party which has restrictive measures against Muslims as its main issue. When we look only at the Venlo participants, average endorsement of multiculturalism is 4.40, which is still above the scale midpoint as well as higher than the data gathered at other times in different regions. We acknowledge the limitations of cross-sectional designs to identify trends and that our data cannot rule out the possibility that the observed stability of attitudes is actually caused by sample characteristics at the different measurements. However, in our view, the above-mentioned observations strongly suggest that an explanation in terms of location is less parsimonious than one in terms of stability of attitudes over time; after all, it is unlikely that genuine changes in overall attitudes across the period of the study would have been eliminated in our dataset by confounding sample characteristics. There is no good reason to expect that temporal changes would be completely nullified by sampling biases.

Furthermore, we have three additional reasons to believe that our results reflect genuine stability of attitudes. The first reason is that our results strongly resemble those of other studies of multiculturalism attitudes in the Netherlands that were carried out during the time period that we sampled, even though these studies employed different designs (e.g. longitudinal data, representative samples) and instruments. Various studies have been done using Dutch adaptations of the Multicultural Ideology Scale designed by

Berry and Kalin (1995), which uses the same 7-point scale as the MAS. For example, in a study among a representative group of 1,556 Dutch majority members, Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2003) found that "The mean score of the Dutch participants on the multiculturalism scale was 4.10 ($SD = 1.02$), which is close to the midpoint of the scale" (p. 259). Similar results were reported by Schalk-Soekar et al. (2006) in a longitudinal extension of this study in 2001 and 2004. Verkuyten (2005) reported very similar results with 50 Dutch college and university students ($M = 4.06$; Study 2). He also reported scores around the scale mid-point in an application of a different measure of multiculturalism (see Verkuyten & Masson, 1995) with 329 Dutch adolescents ($M = 3.19$ on a 5-point scale; Study 1). These results are nearly identical to our results for the MAS between 1999 and 2004 ($M = 3.97$, $M = 4.13$, and $M = 4.11$), suggesting that the region of sampling and the specific instrument that was used did not have a strong bearing on our results.

Second, the instrument that we used to measure attitudes (i.e. the MAS or adaptations of the MAS) has been tested on various occasions in the Netherlands and has invariably shown excellent psychometric properties (see Table 2). There is evidence for construct validity of the MAS (Schalk-Soekar, 2007); scores on the MAS are hardly affected by social desirability (Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004) and are systematically related to external variables such as intercultural contact and knowledge about ethnic groups (Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, in press).

Finally, there is evidence that multiculturalism has the properties of strong attitudes (Schalk-Soekar, 2007; Van de Vijver et al., 2008). Strong attitudes are temporally stable, extreme (i.e. not neutral), predictive of behavior, internally consistent, and they show a predictable pattern of associations with related attitudes (Eagly & Chaiken, 1998). Extremity is the only feature of strong attitudes that has not been found for multiculturalism. Strong attitudes are quite stable across time and resistant to change. So, finding few fluctuations in the level of endorsement of multiculturalism by Dutch majority members is in line with social-psychological theory.

Another limitation of our study involves its limited geographic spread; all data were collected in the Netherlands. As a consequence, data could only be valid for this country; yet, we believe that the implications of our findings are not limited to the Netherlands. There are some notable similarities in majority attitudes with respect to multiculturalism across a wide variety of Western countries. For example, the consistently neutral or indifferent attitude that we found in the Netherlands is very similar to the results found in many other national and international studies (e.g. Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2003; Citrin et al., 2001; Heath & Tilley, 2005; Ho, 1990; Medrano, 2005; Schalk-Soekar & Van de Vijver, in press; Zick et al., 2001). The results of our study suggest that Dutch attitudes are hardly affected by

changes in government policies following national and international incidents. Analysing European Social Survey data, Schalk-Soekar and colleagues (2007) also found that majority views are not influenced by government policies with regard to multiculturalism. Thus, although the specifics of multiculturalism can differ across countries, we feel that there are also important commonalities in level of support and external influences on this support. Our findings in the Netherlands may give an indication of what is happening in other countries that are currently struggling with their stance vis-à-vis cultural diversity.

The study of attitudes toward multiculturalism is potentially important for policy-makers. The stability of these attitudes means that they should be seen as a societal factor that is unlikely to change very rapidly. Policies that attempt to influence public opinion toward multiculturalism are not likely to yield substantial effects. It is more productive to start from an analysis of the support for multiculturalism. For example, in the Netherlands more policy support can be expected from majority members in domains such as equal justice and discrimination prevention than in other domains (see Breugelmans & Van de Vijver, 2004). Majority Dutch tend to be most skeptical with regard to multiculturalism when it comes to cultural maintenance by minorities, but they do not endorse unequal treatment. This suggests that, in terms of Berry's (2001) two acculturation dimensions, they differ mostly from multiculturalism when it comes to immigrants' maintenance of contacts with their own cultural background and not so much on their establishment of contacts with overall society. This finding is in line with Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2003) who found larger differences between Dutch and Turkish-Dutch on acculturation preferences in the private sphere (e.g. at home) than in the public sphere (e.g. at work). So, the incorporation of support for multiculturalism in acculturation models may lead to a much more fine-grained analysis of the societal dynamics underlying acculturation outcomes and to more effective policies (Bourhis et al., 1997).

To summarise, our analysis of data from nine years of multiculturalism studies contradicts the commonly held view that support for multiculturalism among majority Dutch has dwindled. In fact, attitudes have been remarkably stable over this period. It seems that the crisis in multiculturalism applies more to Dutch policies, which, when compared to the average support for multiculturalism among majority Dutch, were too positive about multiculturalism before 2001 and too negative about multiculturalism following the assassination of Fortuyn and Van Gogh. Majority Dutch have on average a neutral, indifferent attitude toward multiculturalism. A closer analysis shows that this neutral attitude comprises various domains, some of which are more supported and others less supported. Thus, Dutch citizens are unlikely to unconditionally support a full-blown multicultural ideology, but

they support a policy to reduce discrimination and exclusion of immigrants. In our view, the seemingly counterintuitive results from our study illustrate the need for regular surveys of majority attitudes for understanding the dynamics of culturally diverse societies.

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