

Unholy Union: The Convergence of Agendas Between the Gay Community
And The Political Right-Wing in the Netherlands

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Abstract:

The introduction of immigrants from traditionally Islamic countries has created a new dynamic within the Dutch social system. Seemingly clashing with the established facade of Dutch “tolerance”, this group of Muslim immigrants has logically found a natural enemy within right-wing political parties. However, on a more interesting level, we see that the political agenda of the gay movement has seemingly converged with the agenda of those right-wing groups. In a sense, this convergence of agendas seems odd considering the general association of the gay movement with leftist, more progressive political movements. This study intends to examine this convergence of agendas; working from a basic theoretical design rooted in group identity and postmodern perspectives on language. Through careful research into the realities of Dutch society, as contrasted with apparent realities in American society, this study set out to create a defensible argument for the assessment of this political alliance. The end-goal of this study initially was to frame the convergence of agendas either within the context of opportunism or within the context of genuine ideology. As the study progressed, it became readily evident that, with a greater concept of Dutch society, the question of opportunism seems to invoke its own relevance in the near future but not within the current socio-political discourse in the Netherlands.

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Introduction

In the current American context, politics and social movements can simultaneously be understood as formulating from two main camps or political parties: the right-wing as represented by the Republican Party, and the Left-wing, as represented by the Democratic Party. To a large extent, the discourse surrounding public policy is one framed within the context structured by the two members of this political dichotomy. Implicit within this dichotomous system is a convergence in the public subconscious of certain issues, stances, approaches, beliefs, etc. The example of LGBT social movements currently working within this system illuminates this reality. To any politically conscious American, it seems intuitive to associate a gay agenda with the Democratic Party: borne out of this two-party infrastructure, the progressive, left-wing, and socially-liberal policies of the Democratic Party seem to invoke inclusivity with the cause of gay emancipation. In essence, this bilinear political system has created a confluence of different individual concepts and beliefs and has effectively streamlined opinion to a conformist notion of discourse on many issues; as a result of this, it is a common notion, in the American context, to associate gay with the political left. Moving from this context to the arena of Dutch politics, it is seemingly counterintuitive to examine a political convergence of agendas between right-wing parties and gay advocacy groups in the Netherlands.

In the Dutch political arena, there is a coalition government which currently consists of some ten or more parties. Moving forward with this in mind, it is important to understand that there is a convergence of agendas between right-wing groups and the gay community's political representation. This truth is largely illuminated through the issue

of Islamic, migrant communities within the Netherlands. In brief, a common enemy has been realized by these right wing and gay factions in the realm of Dutch politics. For the very clear rationale that many Islamic men and women hold traditionally conservative sexual beliefs which are intrinsically anti-gay, it is easy to understand why the gay movement, whose emancipation is all-but-concluded, is able to polarize with these new migrants. In terms of the right-wing parties aligning behind a gay agenda, it is interesting to note that they are invoking the gay demographic as a crucial element of their dialogue; more specifically, the right-wing is utilizing the incongruence of homosexuality and Islam in order to label the immigrants as somehow “backwards” or “uncivilized” because of their stance towards the gay community. In general, this is a very original and unexpected line of argumentation for an American student to hear from any right-wing party: to invoke inclusiveness with the gay community in order to ostracize another minority demographic. Coming from the American context, the immediate urge in this instance is to label the right-wing parties involved in this move as insincere or manipulatively opportunistic, ultimately recognizing that instance as troublesome for the gay community; however, opportunism may be an unfairly foregone conclusion. The goal of this project is thus quite clear: to define this political convergence and analyze the motivations behind it. The end goal is to be able to make an educated and defensible argument for why this alliance, from the right-wing side, is one rooted in genuine ideology or mere political opportunism.

Concurrent with this study is the implicit explanation of the status quo regarding the gay community within the larger Dutch society. While realization of full and true emancipation is a foregone conclusion by many who see the procurement of the right to

marry as the final step in the gay rights movement, many still argue that gays in the Netherlands are still an ostracized community. As prominent gay activist and writer Gert Hekma puts it, “the legal struggle for gay and lesbian rights may have ended, but the much more difficult social battle for queer visibility has yet to begin (Hekma 2002, 240). A necessary and base assumption in terms of this project is that the social identity of the gay community is not yet concluded, there is still a good amount of debate as to whether emancipation has actually been realized within the Dutch social context. Through the definition and analysis of the aforementioned political convergence, it seems that a more lucid and explicit definition of what the status of gays in Dutch society will be realized. This newfound definition of Dutch society is going to be invoked when it comes time for these players to rationalize and justify their stances.

Concurrent with any political movement is the necessity to justify that movement. For example, in the USA, Mitt Romney will stand against a gay agenda and he will justify that stance through an appeal to his Christian faith. Conversely, Dennis Kucinich will appeal to a gay rights agenda and will justify that stance by citing a strong position of fighting for social equality. Inherent in both of the justifications for these two different stances is an implicit, if not explicit, definition of self. In both instances, both Romney and Kucinich are utilizing this issue not merely to further an opinion or a cause (in large part the success or failure of this movement is external to their lives) but in an effort to define themselves to the public. In all instances of political discourse and stance-taking there is an understood need to be heard, understood, and identified; this is a truth of any democratic system which holds regular elections. In essence, when a right-wing party or a gay advocacy group condemns the immigrants and calls them “backwards” they are in

turn making the claim that they themselves are “not backwards” and will further clarify the collective “they”.

That said it is imperative to understand the language and the stances taken by both sides, the Dutch gay and the Dutch Right-Wing. More so than just a mere presence of support or lack of support, it is imperative to recognize the justification and rationalization for the stances taken by either side. In terms of the immigration issue, through the stance articulated by some right-wing parties and the rationalization / explanation of that stance, there is an explicitly stated definition of what it means to be Dutch. As the language asserted by opponents to immigration labels the immigrants as “non-Dutch” or outsiders, there is a very candid sense of meticulous exclusivity involved with this political phenomenon. This report intends to examine this alliance by understanding the stated positions of the party and the stated explanations of the party or group for why that stance is held. Through this process it will be easier to gain a sense of how the gay community and the right-wing community regard each other. Moving past that, this study also intends to understand how these attitudes are manifested through public policy and ultimately affect situations in reality.

The first section of the study is intended to most clearly and lucidly define the seminal moments from the last century regarding progress for the gay emancipation movement in the Netherlands. Implicit to this entire study, and to Dutch culture, is a sense that the history of the gay movement wholly informs the current reality in day-to-day life for the Dutch gay community. Moving from this base of historical knowledge, this study will then apply that sense of history in an effort to describe and understand this current phenomenon of the right-wing championing the gay cause. While it is tempting

to relegate any and all politicians to the role of an opportunist, it is important to try and come to a researched conclusion about how candid a politician or party truly is. Another extremely important dimension when analyzing politics is to understand how social reality is separated from party stance; that is to say, a politician can say anything and that may have some material affect, but more importantly than what any political party may say, it is imperative to examine what they actually accomplish; for example, if you only study the rhetoric of General Idi Amin Dada, the brutal dictator of Uganda, your conclusions are going to be much less relevant than if you'd studied his actual achievements. In the Dutch context, it is important not only to understand how these parties define and understand themselves and the others involved with the phenomenon, but it is also imperative to make a calculated assessment of the political strategy involved and how it is manifested. What exactly is the social climate from which this political alignment emerges? What exactly is the conflict between "Islam" and "gay", who is defining it, and how is it defined? How fairly is this conflict presented to the Dutch electorate? In essence, it is a common fact that political parties exist for the sole purpose of perpetuating themselves and their agendas; however, the methods of doing so vary based upon a party's sense of honesty and strategy. The goal in this study is to gain a sense of whether or not the right-wing is making a calculated guess at how best to combat the immigration movement and is merely using the gay community as a political puppet, or if the right-wing is recognizing the gay community as part of the Dutch society and is coming together in a representation of newfound nationalism.

Before addressing any of these issues, this report first intends to describe briefly the relevant theoretical line of argumentation which informs the mindset involved with

this study. Largely rooted within the context of the conflict paradigm of sociology, this study will synthesize postmodern perspectives on language with modern theories of sociological deviance and will draw upon the theories of Lewis Coser and other theorists of group identity formation. Secondly, this study will briefly summarize the history of the gay community in the Netherlands. Next, this study intends to examine both the stances of right-wing parties and the sociopolitical context from which they arise. Building upon the groundwork established through a respective academic nod to group formation, group identity, and the historical development of the gay emancipation movement, this study will then analyze and formulate an educated and defensible statement as to the nature of the relationship between the gay community and the right-wing political community. In this study, the intention is to define the nature of this political convergence in order to illuminate realities about the social conditions in the Netherlands; through the careful observation of this political alliance it should be possible to make an educated assertion about how it specifically informs the current status of the gay community in the Netherlands

Theoretical Framework

In general, this report is very interested in the methods with which group identity is formed. In-groups and out-groups of society are imperative descriptions for understanding this political phenomenon within the Dutch context. At present, there are a number of arguments circulating the general social discourse in the Netherlands which pit certain groups as the “norm” and other as “not the norm”. Working within this framework, the crux of this report is to nail down these labels and understand both who is applying them and how these labels are manifested in determining reality as understood through the creation of public policy.

In a very broad sense, one of the best schools of thought with which to examine political phenomena is the sociological paradigm of conflict. Within this discipline, conflict is understood as “a relationship between two or more parties... who believe they have incompatible goals”; it is also important to understand that “the presence of ‘incompatible goals’ is a precondition for conflict, and that conflict results when there is a perceived opportunity for goal obstruction” (Beck 60). Rooted in a basic adherence to Marxist philosophy, this paradigm was initially utilized to understand how power relations worked between the ruling class and the working class (Turner 619). In understanding the ways in which the sociological paradigm defines conflict, it is an exigent point to realize that the goals involved in conflict theory are self-ascribed. That is to say, if goals assigned by the individual parties and the incongruity of these goals to each other represents a conflict, then conflict is to be understood as a conscious formulation between the two or more opposed parties. This crucial point of self-ascribing conflict is essential to the aims of this study, as the conflict being created between the gay

community and the migrant community is a newly developed conflict and very pertinent to an examination of semantics. In essence, this viewpoint is moving from the base concept that, despite how imminent a conflict between immigrants and these two sects of Dutch society maybe, this conflict is most assuredly being defined, shaped, and to a certain extent created by those two sects of Dutch society.

In examining the theories of Lewis A. Coser, we see an expounding upon basic conflict theory with a specific concentration towards the notion of functionability. Specifically, Coser examines the ways in which conflict is manifested into functionability through the assignment of deviance as a label. According Coser, the group doing the labeling assigns itself as the “normal” party and it assigns another group as the “deviant” party or the party that is not normal; this effort of labeling is understood as a catalyst to either weaken or strengthen the labeling party, generally the intention of labeling another group as ‘deviant’ is done so in order to strengthen the party that is doing the labeling (Coser 173). Also, this theory does assume the cognizance of the labeling party, that the party is fully aware that by labeling another group as “deviant” they stand to either weaken or strengthen themselves. While it may seem a bit intuitive, it is crucial to remember that the question of how the labeling group defines itself is just as important as how it labels and defines the deviant group. For example, if the gay community was to say, “Muslims are backwards and their philosophies run counter to the philosophies of the *Dutch gay community* which we adhere to”, that statement would be quintessentially different from the assertion that “Muslims are backwards and their philosophies run counter to the philosophies of the *native Dutch community* which we adhere to”. In both instances, the gay community is labeling the migrant population as deviant; however, in

the former instance, the gay community defines itself merely as a conglomeration of gay people in the Netherlands, whereas in the latter instance, the gay community defines itself as part of the collective “native Dutch” and is thus making a statement about what it considers “native Dutch” to be.

An unspoken and underlying assumption which informs the theoretical basis of this study is a basic adherence to the conclusions of postmodern theorists in terms of how they understand the functionality and power of semantics. In essence, while theorists like Barrett and Nicholson may have been making very intricate and complicated observations and claims, they created their theories with basic adherence to a cognizance towards the Althusserian paradigm which states that discourse creates the subject (Dasgupta). In terms of semantics, language is thus understood less in terms of meaning and more in terms of “doing” (Dasgupta). For this specific study, the reference to postmodern perspectives is to lend credence to the power of labeling and the creation of reality through language. This system of thought seeks to dispel any notion that the labeling party or the labeled party is in any way external to the implications of the label itself. In a sense, the act of labeling is understood as a contribution to a shift in discourse which fosters the incorporation or exclusion of the message of the label into the realm of social reality. To be clearer, if right-wing parties are to label the immigrant population as “deviant”, the act of labeling does more than just represent the opinions of these politicians; in a sense, the act of labeling fosters in a greater attitude in the general society which considers the possibility that the immigrant population could be “deviant”. For this report, the appeal to postmodernist thought is merely a way to clarify that act of

labeling is significant and powerful in the sense that a discourse is created which has real-world implications.

Moving from this theoretical base which seeks to understand the functionality and implications of in-group/ out-group relations, we can begin to discuss the dynamics involved with the convergence of the political agendas between the gay community and the right-wing political factions operating within the Dutch political system. However, moving forward with this theoretical framework would be incomplete without a cursory understanding of the history of the evolution of the gay emancipation movement in the Netherlands.

Defining the current landscape of the Gay Community

In order to fully understand the dimensions and implication of this extant political alliance, it is imperative to retain at least a cursory sense of history in terms the larger gay movement towards emancipation. With either side of this alliance, this study resolves to clearly identify and understand the methods in which and through which they define both themselves and others. While party positions are part of a larger social reality which is so complex that it is best described in its current state, the history of the gay community much more readily informs its own social status in the present. However, in terms of the gay community, it is currently difficult to pinpoint the current identity and role it assumes within Dutch society, as there is an ongoing dialogue which is still unable to resolve this question. Thus, an appeal to the major historical developments of the past century is crucial to grasping a better understanding of what it currently means to be a gay person in the Netherlands.

In terms of the Gay emancipation movement in the Netherlands, to be thorough it is important to examine this community's evolution from the beginning of the 20th century up until the present day. In the time preceding the 20th century, Dutch laws and public policy were largely the result of "liberal legislation under the influence of the French Napoleonic code" (Krouwel 161). With the movement into the 20th century, we see an emergence of powerful, Christian political parties in the Netherlands. Consisting of a conglomeration of Catholic and Orthodox protestant constituencies, these parties adopted a self-mandated agenda of "maintaining morality" and passed legal provision 248 in 1911; this provision effectively changed the age of sexual consent to 21 for

homosexuals while 16 remained the age of consent for heterosexuals (Out in the Netherlands 22). Dubbed the “confessional parties”, these religious factions retained a majority in the Dutch coalition-style government from 1909 up until 1967 (Krouwel 159).

More than just dominating the political arena, these confessional parties had an influence which pervaded everyday society and largely contributed to the creation of “verzuiling” or the Dutch system of pillarization. Academic Geert Mak describes how this system manifested itself in Dutch society in a lecture given at Harvard in 2006:

In the small provincial town I grew up in, I went to a Protestant school – the newspaper, the university where my brothers studied, the football club, the scouts, the baker and the milkman were Protestant too. Even the leaves on the trees were. I sometimes thought, ‘The world of my uncle, who was a socialist and taught at the local state school, looked the same, only he bought his bread at the socialist co-op, and the leaves on the trees looked slightly different to him too.’ Yet, there was no problem ruling the country. The elites at the top of the pillars made continual compromises with each other. Such was the tradition of what is called the Polder Model. The system as a whole functioned as a very effective pacification machine in this religiously divided country, and, at the same time, created a national community which seemed much more tolerant than it really was, because people simply looked away from each other.

In essence, the prevalence of religion, moreso than any other ideological presence, determined the social reality of the Netherlands in the early to mid-20th century by instigating a society in which the most mundane of activities were defined through a person’s religious and ideological background. It is a key point to conceptualize that the gay movement in the Netherlands up until the 1960s functioned within this context of a religiously-defined political and social climate.

In the years leading up to the second world war, the Dutch Gay emancipation movement was chiefly represented through the NWHK which was founded in 1911 after

the passing of provision 248 and was largely modeled after the WHK gay party in Germany (Out in the Netherlands 22). In the postwar years, the gay movement was represented by the Shakespeare Club which was started in late 1946 and quickly renamed the Cultural and Recreational Center (the COC) (Out in Netherlands 23). In general, the goals of the COC were initially very confined to the limits of the social reality borne out of the pillar system. Rather than vying for visibility, the COC worked somewhat behind-the-scenes and concentrated on lobbying important social and political figures (Krouwel 162). In the 1950s, Dutch society placed great value in the fields of social work and psychiatry, and working from a religious basis some of these intellectual clergymen and social workers were courted by the COC (Krouwel 163). It was in this process that the COC was successful in creating a dialogue, albeit very conforming, yet nonetheless a dialogue between the gay community and prominent members of Dutch society and movements. It is imperative to understand that the creation of this dialogue stipulated conformation to bourgeois standards of a religiously-defined context of Dutch society, and the efforts of the COC were not aimed at righting inherent “wrongs” in Dutch society but instead were aimed at integrating homosexuals into that society.

From the start of the 1960s onward, the larger Dutch society saw a movement in the progressive direction. In what is now understood as the “depillarization” of Dutch society, there was a vast conglomeration of interrelated social changes which took place. The most significant and basic indication of social change was the increasing lack of faith placed in religion. Between 1960 and 1986 Church attendance dropped from 90% to 26%, and from 1967 to 1989 religious affiliation among Dutch citizens dropped from 80% to 46% (Krouwel 160). It is even noted that the religious institutions in the

Netherlands at the time began to implement much more progressive policies and attitudes to adapt to this growing progressivism: in 1958 Catholic priests opened a help center for homosexuals and published a pamphlet which essentially encouraged the acceptance of homosexuals by straight people; in 1961, Protestant groups published a similar pamphlet themselves (Out in Netherlands 24). Also important during this time was the activation and establishment of influential student work groups who emphasized a much more radical, left-wing approach to gay emancipation. Working externally to the COC, these groups ushered in a new mentality which rejected the historical pattern of conformation and sought to identify the homosexual community as both different and positive for being different (Krouwel 163). Initially resistant to this new methodology of reaching emancipation the COC eventually adopted this more left-wing, progressive approach to conceptualizing the gay community within the larger Dutch context and it was legally recognized by left-wing Den Uyl administration in 1973 (Krouwel 164).

In the coming years, this new, left-wing, progressive movement garnered much success for their constituency which precipitated further legislative progress for the Dutch gay community. In 1971, provision 248 was abolished, in 1974, the ban on gays in the military was lifted, and in 1981 “persecution on the grounds of homosexuality was recognized as grounds for asylum” (Out in Netherlands 25). In 1979, taking a cue from the American system of holding pride parades, the Netherlands held Roze Zaterdag (“Pink Saturday”) which would become a tradition of garnering visibility that, while incorporating less and less political goals in the coming years, continued to create fervor for the visibility of the gay community in the Netherlands. Consequently, the increase in public visibility also brought forth the willingness to disclose an aversion to these

policies within the remaining opponents of the gay emancipation movement.

Culminating at a demonstration in Amersfoort, the gay demonstrators were attacked and pelted with stones by onlookers while the police did nothing to protect the demonstrators. While in itself a grizzly affair, the events at Amersfoort were significant in that they galvanized a political movement in favor of furthering gay equality through legislation. Culminating in the Equal Treatment Law in 1994, this seminal event also coincidentally marked the first year that traditional confessional parties, which existed as the key remaining opponents to gay emancipation, were not part of the coalition government. In April of 2001 the first gay marriages were performed, and gay couples were given the right to adopt children; in 2003 that law was elaborated upon to include adopting children from abroad (Out in the Netherlands 27).

As you can see from this brief history of the Dutch gay movement in the 20th century, there was a considerable shift from incorporating and conforming to a bourgeoisie society characterized by a fervent religious majority to a very leftist, progressive approach to demanding equality. While this approach did incur some pitfalls, for example the COC of 1947 would never have allowed the violence at Amersfoort to have taken place, in general it was seemingly the right political maneuver as gays in the Netherlands have been enjoying more legislative equality than nearly all other gay communities in countries elsewhere for many years now. In today's Holland, we now see right-wing parties aligning behind the cause of gay safety and gay rights in order to articulate an anti-migrant stance. In essence, it is now imperative to define the current sociopolitical arena and try to figure out why this political alignment is possible.

Methodology / Assumptions and Limitations:

Through intensive research the first half of this report was intended to give the reader a general grasp of the motives of the research and the general puzzle which is being solved here. Through an appeal to mainly scholarly literature, there was a quick nod to the relevant theories of deviance and labeling which inform the basis of my study. Next, it was imperative to define the gay movement historically and understand how even moreso than representing a successful emancipation, this movement largely illuminated an even bigger trend and pattern which manifested itself within Dutch society. Through depillarization and secularization, as illuminated through the tribulations of the gay emancipation, we see an emergence of a new kind of Dutch society to be examined and defined within the proceeding section of the study. The decision not to provide even a preliminary backdrop of history for the different political parties involved was intentional and the result of an effort to refrain from overcomplicating the data presented and adhere to conciseness; conversely, the importance of incorporating a historical perspective of the gay emancipation movement was important because it readily illuminates the historical incongruence between the gay community and the right-wing community.

In the second half of this paper, field research consisting mainly of personal interviews seeks to illuminate the current reality. In this section, it will first be imperative to note the current state of discourse in Dutch society. As described and illuminated through field interviews with accomplished academics closely tied to issues of politics and gay rights, this is an essential point to understand how the context of Dutch society wholly informs this specific phenomenon I am studying. In essence, what

is described is a notion that there exists a ‘moral majority of the left’, an intricate look into the validity of the right-wing rhetoric, and then some conclusions dealing with my initial goal of uncovering possible opportunism on the part of right-wing parties. Even beyond attempting to answer this question of opportunism, the analytical section of this paper intends to reexamine the relevance of the basic research question and see whether, with a complete understanding of the Dutch cultural system, it still applies.

While attempting to remain balanced I did want to get a varied perspective on this situation by interviewing people very close to the issue, so an effort was enacted to reach those removed enough from the political realities so that they could assess it intelligently. It is inherent to note that no matter who was interviewed, their own personal bias will penetrate their answers and pervade my conceptualization of information; this section of the report intends to inform the reader as to whom I spoke with and what their personal biases may be. The first person I spoke to was Gert Hekma, a professor of gay and lesbian studies at the University of Amsterdam. Largely intelligent, well-read, and extremely well-versed in the status of the gay community of the Netherlands, Gert does represent a very extreme, left-wing view of politics and the gay movement in general. Jan Willem Duyvendak, a professor of sociology at the University of Amsterdam seemed to represent a very centrist position and embody a general critique of the situation which seemed very removed from personal bias; he has written extensively on gay issues, and he has a firm grasp of how social movements are manifested. David Bos is a professor at the International School of the University of Amsterdam; similar to Jan Willem, Professor Bos also seemed to embody that mentality of a skeptical professor with an adherence to rationality rather than emotion. Joyce Hamilton is a member of the COC

executive board; however, she seemed to represent the most centrist, skeptical, and reality-based account of the situation. Mattias Duyves has been engulfed in gay politics for many years now, and on this project his views functioned as the most historically cognizant and researched opinions that were encountered. Also, as acting advisor and quoted interviewee, Andre Krouwel represented more of a challenging college professor than a man with opinions; nonetheless, Dr. Krouwel's knowledge is extensive and to a large extent guided me and consistently challenged my thought processes, helping me to craft the most honest and true study possible. In general, I was surprised to encounter such skepticism from my interviewees in terms of my question about the motivations of the political right-wing. In general, my sample demographic for interviews could be understood as representing a scholarly (and generally left-wing) conceptualization of Dutch society; however, at every point, there was a near-constant hesitance to make any generalizations or overarching conclusions, and there was a constant effort to challenge the conventional answer to any question posed.

In terms of this study it was imperative to clarify my own background and to illuminate this Dutch situation through the lens of my own historical context in the American realm in order to be completely candid about my own possible bias. Another limitation of course, which is referenced above, is the fact that this is not an extensively quantitative research paper and surely my discussions, analysis, and conclusions are framed in the context defined by my sample crowd that I spoke with. Especially in dealing with issues of sexuality and gender, it is very difficult to find educated people in these fields who are personally removed from the topic at hand; that is to say most people working in the field have some sort of personal connection to the study which invigorates

their passions on the matter. I do believe I was fortunate enough to come across individuals who were careful to be skeptical and were very honest about their personal connection to the subjects at hand, which did allow me to be as objective as possible in understanding my research; however, it is still naive to conclude that a personal bias did not engender my conceptualizations which followed.

Another limitation of this study was simply the scope of it all. At many times during the project it became readily apparent to me that this political situation could inform a myriad of different subjects and that it would be very easy to elaborate and use this situation as the catalyst for writing an entire book about Dutch society. Many of the conclusions were very encompassing and embodied so many key, cornerstone differences between Dutch society and American society. That said, at times it was extremely difficult to maintain a concise focus on what I looked to accomplish; I constantly attempted to re-evaluate what I was asking and what I was looking for. In the end, this led me to conclude that this study is best understood through the paradigm of the gay community's status and how this particular situation functions specifically in regards to that demographic group. In doing so, I was able to make some basic observations and realizations which inform the current status of Dutch society and specifically influence the relationship between the gay community and the right-wing community.

Analysis

Moral Majority of the Left

“If you want to understand the very peculiar, very particular situation in Holland, you have to understand that this is not a moral majority of the right as you have in the US, this is a moral majority of the left or not of the left but of progressive people or of people that are progressive regarding certain topics, and very much about sex and gender. So the right-wing political parties in fact have moved to the left and that makes it for people who have been voting for the left more easy to vote now for right-wing parties” – Jan Willem Duyvendak

The first basic conclusion of this ISP project which became readily apparent during the first interview and was reinforced through subsequent interviews is that in order make a calculated and defensible assessment of this particular political situation in the Netherlands, it is imperative to define the social context through which it arises. In a sense, this specific ISP question and puzzle is largely defined and influenced by a context which is foreign to the thought processes which emerge from a background in the American social and political discourse; the basic truth that a right-wing ideology simply would not support a gay agenda in the United States seems intuitive. This first section of the analytical portion of this report intends to synthesize the views expressed during the field interviews and contrast those testimonies with the realities of the American political and social system in a larger effort to expose the preeminent realities in Dutch society which can shed light upon this political convergence of agendas in the Netherlands.

In the United States, an unwritten social law which defines the concepts of political correctness, moral justification, and many aspects of public policy is deeply

rooted in a fundamental adherence to the topical definition of Judeo-Christian philosophy. Remember that while religion is a powerful motivating factor, it is but one of a number of factors which informs the decisions of the American electorate. However, in terms of representative salience, it is impossible to dispute the reality that religion is one of the most pervasive elements in affecting political decision-making within the American context. In terms of the American electorate, according to recent survey data, the United States ranks as one of those most religious industrialized nations in the world, where a large majority of its citizens identify as Christian (US Census Bureau). Conversely, the Netherlands is at the other end of the religiosity spectrum and historically has seen a vast decline in religious affiliation and church attendance over the past half century; the latest US Government statistics list the church membership of the Netherlands at 30%, whereas only half of those people regularly attend church (Netherlands Religious Freedom Report). These statistics seem to imply a very plausible possibility concerning what motivates American voting behavior. However, even more important than a direct link between religious affiliation/beliefs and voting behavior is the manner in which the religiosity in the USA affects the overall social discourse which then affects voting behavior. A side note, religion and religiosity, in the context of this study, are understood as representative invocations of justifications expressed strictly within a political realm; for example, this concept of religion encompasses influential characters like Jerry Falwell, but it does not encompass cult members or other religiosity which is largely irrelevant to the overall political discourse. Specifically in dealing with the gay emancipation movement in the states, it is very simple to understand how religion is able to enter, affect,

and ultimately determine the social dialogue concerning this topic and the affective realities as enacted through public policy.

In terms of the American debate on whether or not gays deserve equal rights in terms of the marriages that their heterosexual neighbors get to enjoy, the argument is presented as one between two sides: a ‘moral majority of the political right’, and a fringe group of gays, lesbians, and their friends who are organized in protest. Instead of a debate about human rights, which the gay emancipation issue seems to largely address, the ‘moral majority of the right’ reshapes the issue into a semantic pissing match about the meaning of the word “marriage”; this the line of argumentation asserts that, “if we let gays marry we are betraying the historically sacred definition of marriage”. First off, this argumentation is laughably ridiculous because marriage, in the American context, is not historically defined and is only sacred to the extent that less than half of marriages actually work in the States; also keep in mind that half a century ago this same line of argumentation was effectively used to prevent whites and blacks from marrying in many American states. However, even more important than the logical shortcomings of the American right-wing’s line of argumentation is the realization that this ‘moral majority of the right’, which is not unintelligent, must know that their arguments aren’t as compelling as their adversaries’; however, the arguments don’t have to be and they understand that. American religiosity is extremely well concentrated and well organized, even to the extent that it is not uncommon to hear an evangelical minister refer to his parish as his “troops” who are ready to “mobilize” at the whim of the leader. In this sense, a sizable portion of the American electorate is essentially controlled and acting under a mandate which, despite any disingenuous intentions (which a vast number of right-wing American

Christian leaders seem to have in large supply), derives from the higher concept of God, and specifically the malleable Judeo-Christian concept of God. To compare and contrast, we see a similar motivating factor which is even *more* pervasive and instilled within the minds of the Dutch electorate; however, it is most certainly not religion.

Sociologically it would be fair to characterize this religious phenomenon in the States as representative of a certain passion or a certain common point which invigorates and stimulates a wide sector of the public. This common point of stimulation, religiosity, seems absent within the Dutch social system, so a logical conclusion would be the assumed apathy of the Dutch electorate; however, this is an incomplete assessment. According to recent research on voter turnout in these two respective countries, the Netherlands boasts much higher numbers of voter turnout than does the United States (Voter Turnout Information). Now, assuming that voter turnout is a logical assessment of the strength of moral convictions of a given electorate, this incongruence of voter-turnout seems to assess that the Dutch are in fact more active and motivated by their convictions than the equivalent American electorate, but what is it that motivates the Dutch society to vote in such higher numbers? Also, more important than that, in terms of the gay emancipation issue, what ideology informs the 89% of the Dutch electorate to feel and vote the same way about the issue of homosexuality (Out in the Netherlands)?

To compare these described “moral majorities” (keep it mind that the term “majority” is not applied in relation to the general public necessarily), especially on the issue of gay emancipation, it is clearly evident that the Dutch moral majority is much more formidable and encompassing than the American ‘moral majority of the right’. In the states, it is true that the ‘religious right’ has been able to define the discourse on gay

marriage and many other social issues; however, they do not enjoy support from an overwhelming majority of society, and in large part their views are seen as extreme by most people who would identify themselves as Democrats, about half of the American voting electorate. Conversely, the Dutch majority, some 89% of the Dutch electorate, do support gay rights and vote accordingly (Out in Netherlands).

Within the Dutch context, this so-called ‘moral majority of the left’ seems to be more inclusive and less questioned, and their views on gay rights seem somehow cemented into the public discourse. This ‘moral majority of the left’, which seems to describe the overwhelming majority of natural-born Dutch citizens, at least in terms of the gay community, is mainly defined through an adherence to progressive, left-wing ideology of moving forward through change to tradition. One of the easiest and the most relevant ways for this study to substantiate that claim is through reference to the gay community in the Netherlands. The situation regarding the gay emancipation movement largely underscores an even bigger shift in the overall sense of position and subsequent policy within the Netherlands. As professor Jan Willem Duyvendak puts it:

Even the Christian Union, who is member of parliament, they are orthodox protestant people, they have an enormous debate in their own circles, I mean they’re like the TV right-wing people in the US, they are as [extreme] as the evangelicals; so they have in fact a lot of evangelicals in the political party and they are forced now because they are a member of this coalition cabinet to discuss about homosexuality, and now the leader said just last week that they are not a party that wants to discriminate anybody; so now even *that* political party seems to be in favor of equal rights of gays and lesbians

In a system where even the most radical right-wing party themselves can have a leader who comes out in strong support of a gay rights agenda, it would seem readily evident that a larger movement has somehow disrupted the Dutch social discourse from the very

different situation existing within its American counterpart, at least in terms of gay rights. Now before we conclude that native-Dutch society is an amnesty-prone, all-including group towards gay people, it is important to realize that there *is* a manifestation of anti-gay sentiment which does arise within this Dutch political context and seems external to the rhetoric on the incongruencies between Islam and homosexuality. As Professor Andre Krouwel puts it:

Here you have the Orthodox Protestants who are also anti-gay-emancipation. In fact, I was on television today discussing this; members of the Christian Union, one of the smaller parties in the coalition government, had actually a few people in their ranks that also now call upon all gay people being thrown out of public office. It's the kind of argument that 'you can't be an upstanding citizen and be gay'. It's funny because it is [the American] mainstream Republican view, and here it is an extremist, Orthodox-Protestant fringe within the Christian Union.

There are two important points to recognize here. First, it is important to understand that the Christian Union does not hold political clout anymore and does now function as a fringe party within the current coalition government. A second and much more crucial point is that, even beyond the fact that there is debate about gay rights within this Orthodox-Protestant community, this rhetoric does not enter the larger public discourse – on the surface, their political leader just proclaimed that gay equality was a necessity. As Gert Hekma puts it, “Despite the fact that 20% of the public is against gay marriage and 30% is against gay and lesbian adoption, the [anti-gay] rhetoric is not very vocal, the hate language, which still exists, has moved from the homosexuals to the pedophiles”. It is so imperative to understand the notion that even the idea of publicly representing anti-gay sentiment within the current Dutch society is a complete faux pas; even the most fringe, conservative party which you would expect to encompass anti-gay

rhetoric at its harshest has curbed its language and even seems to be internally torn on the issue. That said, in terms of examining the gay emancipation movement in the Netherlands, this sense of progressivism is extremely pervasive and does to an almost total extent define the nature of social dialogue on the subject. With respect to the American system which is influenced by religiosity, this Dutch moral majority seems have its views informed by a progressive and much more pervasive ideology which has truly taken root, especially with regards to gay emancipation.

Now, as a clarifying point, it is also extremely relevant to understand that this moral majority of the left, in terms of this report, is being evaluated based upon the surface-level attitudes, and this notion of 89% of the Dutch-native population is troublesome. The issue which arises with this statistic is that there is little differentiation between support and tolerance; when you ask that same 89% further questions about specific situations and gay rights, that number does drop a little. As described by Joyce Hamilton, a member of the COC party which solely represents a gay agenda:

In a way yes, there is a wide variety in how [all the] parties actively want to assert a [pro-gay] stance. Very clearly, for example, the Christian Democrats Party (CDA) is silently supportive, meaning that they won't open up the debate about civil marriage for gay people anymore, that's a given, that's a law, so they won't open up a discussion about that anymore. They won't question it any longer because that's the reality, but that doesn't mean that they actively set up their policies to increase safety or whatever for the LGBT people

As you can see, there is a sense by those within the political scene that perhaps their views aren't being truly supported but are being tolerated. However, this is a seminal point to emphasize: even if support is manifested in varying levels of conviction (the spectrum from full-fledged activism to passive agreement), the fact still remains that

opposition to gay rights from the native Dutch population is all but silenced within the modern public forum. Immediately, the concern from the perspective of gay emancipation is that somehow tolerance poses a threat to the gay community; in brief, it is certainly less assuring to a gay person that their way of life is tolerated rather than supported. To follow that point, this initial reality makes one weary of concluding progress for the gay community. However, in looking at the most recent changes in Dutch politics, Hamilton proceeds to illuminate how the current coalition government differs from the last:

The last government, it was a conservative government with the PVV and the CDA and D66 and somehow they just did not take LGBT rights or emancipation into account at all; there was a state secretary who was responsible for coordinating LGBT emancipation issues, and she literally didn't do anything at all. Within the current coalition, the bigger and smaller Christian parties such as the Christian Union, they have the very clear break with the past governments; there is a minister from the Labor party who is very aware of LGBT issues and has written an important policy document about that, and he's already said he will have a budget allocated to that, which is a significant step

In general, this shift of coalition governments represents another movement in the overall progressive, left-wing movement of the Dutch society. Regardless of any passivity and subsequent analysis of passivity in regards to right-wing parties, the movement, at least in terms of the gay emancipation, seems to still be moving forwards in the vein of a progressive moral ideology and has increasingly less obstacles blocking its way. It is exorbitantly important to clarify that anti-gay rhetoric has been continually abating and now is not necessarily seen as emerging from the native Dutch population within the current social dialogue.

In general, a synthesis of the historical evolution of the gay movement and this basic concept of the surface of the current political climate with specific attention to that same movement seems to fulfill the prerequisite base of knowledge from which to examine the convergence of political agendas. To move forward from this general base of preliminary analysis, it is thus important to understand how the right-wing is aligning behind the gay movement: what are these groups saying and how does that compare with the realities experienced by the gay community?

The Rhetoric of the Right-Wing and National Identity

Essentially, for reasons to be further elaborated on, a good portion of the Dutch population does feel threatened by the presence of a Muslim immigrant population, especially in Amsterdam. In large part the rhetoric used by those who are against the presence of these migrants is an applied effort to label these communities as “backwards” or “repressive”. Not surprisingly the situation with gay emancipation is used as a catalyst to illuminate this viewpoint. As the legal status of the gay community in the Netherlands exists as one of the most progressive sexual realities of any world state, and since this situation also seems to conflict with the generic notion of homosexuality coming from an Islamic context, the issue of gay emancipation serves as an extremely salient point to illuminate discrepancy of culture. As the status of the gay community is generally regarded as a proud social achievement for the Dutch (they are regarded as the “ultimate Dutch” according to Jan Willem Duyvendak), clearly the discrepancy to be drawn here is one carrying a negative connotation for the migrant communities.

In relative terms it is essential to understand the symbolic representations of both the Dutch gay community and the view of the migrant populations to the larger Dutch public. Whereas the gay community represents a movement associated with depillarization, secularization, and progressivism, the immigrant communities are continually labeled and associated with a stall to progress; they even invoke a sense of reversion to past experiences with religiosity that remain fondly unremembered by the native Dutch. Associated with a strong connection to religiosity, to many Dutch people the immigrant communities exist as “memories of the fifties of the past century” as Jan

Willem Duyvendak puts it. As prominent authority on gay issues Mattias Duyves explains it:

Here in the Netherlands we created, not by principle only, but by the course of history we created an advanced kind of national identity in which discrimination is an official taboo, which means it's a normative concept that binds us. We are different from the Americans with their religious stuff and we are different from the Muslims and we are different from the East Block because we are Dutch and that binds us together... this is why right-wing leaders like Gert Wilders and other leaders are afraid that other groups will bite it away, such as the migrants...

Whereas Duyves will confidently recognize the existence of a national Dutch identity that is very cognizant of its own social history, Jan Willem Duyvendak will frame the current situation a little differently. In attempting to portray the way that the Dutch society understands itself, Duyvendak represents the situation as an internal debate:

Nationalism, anyways, it is in relation to the integration debate and the multiculturalism debate which gets at the question, 'who are the 'real Dutch' nowadays? And that is exactly the polarization moment, so the 'real Dutch' now includes the gays, lesbians, and feminists as part of the 'real Dutch', and their status as the 'real Dutch' is being used to marginalize the Muslims. And that is also why, recently when you were already here there was so much upheaval about the report published on national identity and they said well national identity does not exist, there is not one identity in Holland, and then the Princess Maxima also made the same statement, and she was enormously attacked by the right because the right-wing political parties want to have one national identity, and that [identity] is that we are all equal and we all have equal rights as men, women, gays and lesbians, and once more that is so surprising because ten years ago that would not have been part of our national identity; but if you have a somewhat more positive reasoning you can say that anyways, well its good for the gays and lesbians and men and women that equal rights is "in".

In general, the right-wing rhetoric seems to be characterized by an adherence to the notion that native-Dutch culture is the best and they are playing up the notion that the migrant communities not only differ, but represent a threat to the existence of that native-Dutch population. In a large sense, the interviewed subjects and regular interaction with members of Dutch culture lend credence to the notion that there is a concept of obligation to fill a certain role as a Dutch citizen. As Joyce Hamilton explains, that concept can sometimes be more implicit and subconscious than readily true:

Tolerance of diversity, also having progressive policy on euthanasia, abortion, and LGBT politics is part of that idea of a national identity, but I don't think if you would ask the average Dutch person on the street that they would come up with that answer.

Whether the right-wing believes there is a formulated Dutch identity that is being challenged, or whether that same identity is still in the process of being incorporated, the sense of urgency and necessity to polarize using the gay community as the poster-child, or “real Dutch” as Duyvendak labels them, remains constant. So, we can conclude that, yes, indeed the right-wing is taking the gay community and utilizing their status to help prove another concept that they are trying to assert regarding the immigrant community. At this point, to attempt to understand if that move is opportunistic, it is important to make an assessment of how fairly the right-wing represents this aversion of the gay and migrant communities towards each other.

During the interviews, I posed the question of whether or not the threat to the gay community from migrants, in how the right-wing describes it, was “overblown”; the underlying assumption here was that if there was a good case to be made that the threat was understood as inflated, it would be easier to conclude a lack of a sincerity and an

indication of blatant opportunism on the part of those presenting the threat. According to Professor David Bos, the threat should be seen as opportunistic because it is specifically used as a way to tap into latent xenophobia regarding immigration. In a way, negative viewpoints had historically been suppressed about migrants, but now “people experience a sense of liberation that finally they are free to say what they really feel.” When the COC member Joyce Hamilton was posed this question, interestingly enough she responded:

If you look at the numbers, the statistics, only half the people doing the gay-bashing are from Migrant backgrounds and the other half are white, natural Dutch citizens... and you need to remember that these people from Migrant backgrounds are in worse socio-economic situations than the average Dutch natural citizens. This issue is being pushed too much into the corner of cultural or religious causes as motivations people would have for gay bashing... There's quite a large portion of the Migrant community which is being stereotyped in themselves, and that's where the tension grows.

In short, it was very surprising to hear a member of the COC articulate this kind of thought. Not only did she make the assertion that the situation was being misrepresented, but she also made a very important observation about how what she sees as the misrepresentation of facts was able to function into a perpetuation of the problem. Since, most of the people I interviewed were in fact gay, I was expecting that one of them would have had an unpleasant experience with discrimination which would shed light on this polarized situation and put a human face on gay-bashing for me, as Jan Willem Duyvendak bravely recalled:

The [gay-bashing] situation is a LITTLE overblown. I still worry a lot about the gay bashing and the violence against gays and lesbians. I have been bashed twice, but that's a long time ago and

both instances were by Moroccan guys, so I'm not naive, I know very well what it is to be bashed and to get beaten up, so I do at first take it very seriously; but the vast majority of the Muslims do not use violence against gay people, and there is quite a group that is open and is growing and is open to modernizing their opinions, and we should be strategic about it, we should think about how we are to invite them to get a more positive view.

To hear a man who was twice victimized and was still be able to retain a calm approach and logically deduce that his assailants represent a minority of their cultural group was incredible. In general, all of my respondents answered this question with the same sense that the situation is being misrepresented to the Dutch electorate and that, through this misrepresentation, the gay community is being used to polarize with and ostracize the migrant communities. Also, it is important to understand that all of my respondents were somewhat left-wing academics and professionals, mostly gay, and would be expected not to ever downplay a threat which is very real to all of them.

Conclusion

The New Dutch “Pets”

In general when trying to understand and make educated realizations regarding ongoing social interactions the most difficult assessment is the gauging of sincerity. In terms of my project specifically, the only way to truly judge opportunism and reach a definitive, concrete conclusion would be an admission of opportunistic goals on behalf of the right-wing aligning behind the gay movement; clearly that is a fantastical impossibility. Already, these parties operate under the guise that they are representing genuine sentiment; the objective of this study was to be able to make an educated assessment of that guise and be able to defend that argument through legitimate research. To be brief, this was an illogical and impossible outcome which can probably never be achieved. That said, despite inherent shortcomings in the research, the first half of this conclusion intends to report the case to be made either for or against surmising opportunism on the part of the right-wing parties. The second and more important half intends to discuss how my initial research objectives spawn an even more important question surrounding the same subject.

In the November 21, 2007 ‘Out in the Netherlands’ discussion panel which was convened in order to discuss pressing issues for the Dutch gay community, professor David Bos briefly addressed the issue of right-wing parties aligning behind the gay movement as an instance where the Dutch gay community was being treated as Dutch “pets”. Initially, this seemed like a very bold way to characterize the political alignment

behind the gay movement, yet it does still run in unison with the suspicion that this political alignment is opportunistic, and in a sense, the gay community is being used. When asked for her reaction to this description of the Dutch gay community as pets, Joyce Hamilton responded, “Yes, totally, I mean there’s a difference when you look at the different parties, but totally, that is a good of way describing it, that [right-wing parties] use the gay community as a pet, the Dutch pet”. In general, I asked the majority of my interview subjects and people I know socially how they felt about this very agitated description and nearly every person had the same reaction: an immediate laugh, a brief pause, and thoughtful consent to the rhetoric. It seems as if, in a very basic, non-academic way there is a consensus that the gay community is being used by right-wing parties to further an anti-migrant policy agenda.

Through the research and the interviews conducted in this report, it is safe to conclude that the knowledge base contained in this ISP all strongly supports the notion that these right-wing parties *are* to some extent opportunistic. Looking at the empirical facts, this case is made through a few basic realities. For one, the reality that support for a gay agenda is so recent and that some of these parties show patterns of tolerance rather than acceptance does seem to contradict the fervor with which they support a gay agenda. Further, the fact that the issue of polarizing the Muslim community and ostracizing them seems to take priority to accurately representing the true threat to gays in the Netherlands is even more troublesome. Also, it is imperative to synthesize these two facts with the key reality that it is politically advantageous to be in favor of gay rights, as a majority of the voting electorate seems to represent that view. Another key fact is that the gay community is a very readily available tool to use in order to create a polarity

between the concepts of “Islam” and “Dutch” within the public discourse in the Netherlands.

In short, this conclusion, that indeed it seems this alignment behind the gay movement is opportunistic, was deduced from research from a specific knowledge base. As clarified in the assumptions and limitations portion of this paper, it is impossible for me to represent the data and conclusions of my research without recognizing that it is inescapably marred by the inherent biases of the people I spoke with. That said, I do not believe that there were any other perspectives which I was denied access to nor were there any that I neglected in my research, and in terms of evaluating the contributors to this study, I could not have desired a more objective group of experts through which to help me understand these political phenomena. With that said, it is through the synthesis of their contributions and my own personal analysis that a conclusion was reached which articulates that in fact there *is* a compelling case to be made that the political right in the Netherlands is acting in a manner that could be described as opportunistic. That is to say, their methods and manner of mobilizing support and framing the discussion, in terms of the issue of Islam and homosexuality, can most certainly be described as being disingenuous at times. However, it is imperative to realize that this question, of whether or not these parties are acting out of opportunism, is largely irrelevant in the current context.

At the outset of this study, the underlying suspicion that motivated the initial inquiry into this subject was that these political groups were in fact disingenuous and opportunistic. Beyond that, the continued application of that initial assumption leads the conclusion that, if opportunism is the case, that this is a negative thing which can hurt the

gay community. There was the underlying assumption that opportunism and misrepresented intentions would somehow end in a negative consequence for the larger gay Dutch community. In large part, the relevant motives behind this move of the right-wing political parties are not yet and may never be understood; the more relevant question, at this specific point in time, is what implications this specific and definable move by the right-wing holds for both the migrant and gay communities in the Netherlands.

From the perspective of the gay community, the important question must be asked, “What *are* the consequences, both short-term and long-term for the gay community which stem from the support of right-wing parties”? At this point, the motives which inform the decisions and positions are irrelevant and inconsequential in the short-term – only the actions seem to matter. So in the short-term, there are both positive and negative consequences. In terms of positive consequences, since the gay community is invoked with inclusivity to the greater Dutch population, the gay community is seen as a poster-child of the Dutch in some aspects, and the protection of their rights is the entire basis for the discourse. Harkening back to the initial reference to group identity formation, it is logical to understand that these are very beneficial instances of acceptance and confirmation for the gay community; these are all good things which have important, tangible, and positive results in the immediate social reality. In terms of the short-term, currently there are no true, immediate consequences in terms of the realignment of the right-wing behind their agenda.

In the long-term, there are perceived positive benefits of this phenomenon. In a sense, we can characterize the gay movement in the Netherlands as no longer the left-

wing, progressive movement it started as. The movement has become normalized and integrated within the larger Dutch context, and while many will argue that this is a negative reality, it is very difficult to ignore the fact that this process of integration and normalization already has and will continue to have positive material benefits by opening up traditionally non-gay-friendly spaces, specifically in more traditional, conservative, right-wing places, for a gay person to exist peacefully. Despite some of the incogruencies between the ideology of traditional right-wing rhetoric and traditional gay emancipation rhetoric, let us examine the example of the young gay child growing up in an Orthodox protestant family for example. Traditionally, coming out of the closet would be a nightmare and maybe an impossibility for a child growing up and out of that type of background. With the marriage of gay emancipation to nearly all degrees of the political spectrum, regardless of how tarnished the original left-wing message becomes in this process, the life of *that* child is unarguably made easier. That child's living environment is undeniably made more accepting, even if just on a superficial level, towards his/her gay identity. This truth about the process of normalization and the integration of gay emancipation to the wider society is clearly making traditionally-unfriendly spaces now friendlier to the gay community, specifically to its members who experienced a much harsher and miserable sense of exile. For that reason alone, the opening of more and more spaces, it nearly seems like the question of right-wing motives is still irrelevant; the argument goes, "Since the material results seem to be furthering positive goals for the gay community and are not currently hurting the movement in the immediate present, *and* in the long-term there is promise for creating more acceptance in traditionally unfriendly spaces, who cares what these right-wingers really think?".

However, it is somewhat troublesome to think about the future without considering the true motives of these right-wing supporters. It makes logical sense that this adoption of a gay agenda by the right-wing is creating a positive reality in the lives of gays in traditionally conservative environments without hindering the rights or jeopardizing the left-wing environment of gays either; however, there is a case to be made that this current phenomenon, which largely pits Muslims and Dutch against one another because of gays, could pose a threat in the future.

It is important to understand that the current empirical data shows that, despite the fact that immigration has largely abated, the migrant communities in the Netherlands, Amsterdam specifically, are growing in size and the trend indicates that they will continue to do so (Mattias Duyves Interview). As it seems right now, the over-exaggerated conflict between Islam and 'gay' is polarizing and ostracizing a large amount of the migrant communities, many of whom might not even have an aversion to homosexuality otherwise. In essence, this current phenomenon is creating a growing number of people who see their lives as unfairly difficult and who understand their own discrimination as the result of this catalyzing issue: homosexuality. For the gay community, this is an extremely dangerous and troublesome trend, not only because it is unfair to the current group of migrants which is ostracized but because that group is growing and could eventually be sizeable and powerful enough to react in a negative manner towards the future gay community in the Netherlands.

In essence I do stipulate that opportunism, on the part of these right-wing parties, is not a foregone conclusion, it is debatable and while this study *does* find the argument for these right-wing parties being opportunistic more compelling, that is still a very

subjective conclusion. Nonetheless, it is apparent that the right-wing is siding, for whatever reasons, with the most popular stance, supporting gay rights, and is thus acting accordingly. As a result of this, we see the growth of a community who is being continually ostracized and discriminated with the issue of homosexuality as the tangible discriminating factor. At this point in the analysis, it is important to reexamine the theoretical basis upon which this study is built. The theories of Coser and group identity formation will support the assertion that the gay community is strengthened and seemingly a more cohesive member of the current larger Dutch society simply through the inclusive rhetoric they are characterized with. However, a cognizance to the power of rhetoric and semantics in the vein of post-modern ideology suggests that the implications of applying the label “deviant” or “backwards” affect an organically changing makeup of Dutch society. Hypothetically, the data logically points towards the truth that, if the current trends continue, this migrant community will one day be as sizeable in population as the current “native-Dutch” whites (Mattias Duyves). Also, if the current realities of discrimination persist, we can expect this increasing population of migrant people to continue to feel ostracized because of homosexuality. It is at this point that the question of right-wing motive will become particularly relevant. It currently seems that a day is fast approaching where these migrants will no longer be bullied and may possibly seek retribution, and it is only logical that they will seek it from the gay community. On that day, the real question begs, will these same supporters of gay rights who now jeopardize their future still care about what happens to them?

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Appendix: Broad Organic Interview Guide

In terms of interviews, it is important to note that the questions I asked each of the six people I spoke with were constantly evolving and changing. I did cherry-pick the questions based upon time restraints and interviewee expertise. This questionnaire guide presents all of the perspectives which I delved into through my interview research.

1. The American right-wing is characterized by a lack of concern with minority rights, specifically the gay community
 - a. Who specifically are the right-wing parties who are linked to the COC and gay rights in the Netherlands
 - i. Specifically, how is that link manifested (cosponsored bills, alliances between specific persons, similarly stated positions by persons and parties, etc.)?
 - b. How are these parties different from American right-wingers, what social climate permits a right-wing community in the Netherlands to be able to get behind an agenda of gay-rights?
 - i. How is it that gay rights can be linked to a right-wing movement in today's Netherlands, more specifically, how did the movement shift from the political left to the right?
 - c. What are the stated reasons, by these right-wing factions for supporting gay rights
 - d. What are the believed opportunities through this alliance, what does either side believe they can accomplish through this alliance
 - e. To what extent, if any, are Muslim immigrant desires and needs hindered by this alliance
2. Some gay rights activists assert that while there have been numerous advances for the gay community, that a large number of the Dutch population (not including recent immigrants) do still hold a lot of reservations about the moral aspects of homosexuality
 - a. Do right-wing parties feel that it is politically pragmatic to support a gay-rights agenda? Why or why not?
 - b. Does the right-wing see supporting gay-rights as a moral issue in any sense? Specifically, is supporting gay rights the "right thing to do", in the eyes of the right-wing?
 - c. If it were the case that supporting gay-rights was not politically advantageous for the right-wing, would those parties aligning behind the gay movement opt to change their stance?
 - d. To what extent is the homosexual community seen as a part of Dutch society, are they accepted, not accepted, or not seen as an important point of discussion?
 - i. To what extent does the alliance between right-wing factions and the homosexual community affirm either group's sense of self-identity

3. Clearly the homosexual community is seen as somewhat endangered or threatened by Muslim immigrants
 - a. In General, how do these aforementioned right-wing parties feel about immigration? Has this stance changed in recent years?
 - b. Can religiously and culturally encouraged attitudes of Muslim immigrants coincide with traditionally manifested truths about Dutch society?
 - c. Does immigration pose any threat to the larger Dutch community beyond the apparent rift between the immigrant community and the gay community?

