"CECI N'EST PAS UN BOERKAVERBOD"

The Partial Ban on facecovering veiling in the
Netherlands 2015–2018:
a critical discourse analysis

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Summary

The most generous estimate of women wearing facecovering clothing in the Netherlands does not exceed four hundred. Yet, these women have been subject of a continuous national political debate since the beginning of the twenty-first century. Initially, this political debate was dominated by a New Realism discourse, which problematized the multiculturalist society, and later Islam. Within the ever-changing political arena, the subject of facecovering clothing has never left the political agenda. Therefore, this thesis asks *to what extent is the parliamentary debate preceding the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing (November 2015 – June 2018) representative of a New Realist dominance in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands?* I employed critical discourse analysis to unveil the interrelating ideas that ultimately determined this debate. The major discursive lines revolved around a) idealized uniformity of regulation and b) the idea that this law provides a fair balance. This *ensemble of ideas* found its basis in a practical approach instead of the ideological basis which is associated with the New Realism discourse. Thus, this thesis concludes that a new phase is dawning in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands: dominance of the Practical Balance discourse. Although it still has a disproportionate impact on Muslim citizens, the Practical Balance discourse is qualitatively different from New Realism in both its validation and goals. Islam is explicitly *not* their public target. They endeavor to deemphasize the religious aspect of the Partial Ban: *ceci n'est pas un boerkaverbod*.

Acknowledgements

Introduction

June, 26, 2018: the Senate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands approved the "Wet gedeeltelijk verbod gezichtsbedekkende kleding": a Partial Ban on wearing facecovering clothing in education facilities, public transportation, government buildings and healthcare institutions. The legislative process leading to this ban took more than ten years and was hotly debated both inside and outside the Parliament. Even though the law places a ban on any type of facecovering veiling, including balaclavas and full-face helmets, the debate revolved around one particular garment, which would be banned under this law: the burqa. The burqa, as media coined *any* type of Islamic facecovering veiling in the Netherlands,[1] was the true object of interest for this law: despite its neutral appellation, national and international media called the Partial Ban the "Boerkaverbod:" the burqa ban.[2] That label is particularly interesting. It is estimated that in the Netherlands, approximately a 100 up to 400 women wear some form of facecovering veiling for religious reasons.[3] That is less than 0,000003 percent of the population of the Netherlands. Considering these modest figures, how could facecovering veiling become a subject of national debate, and then produce legislation?

Politicians preparing the Partial Ban have referred to an 'urgent social need'[4] in society to curtail facecovering clothing. Most arguments of the parliamentary debate on facecovering clothing revolved around Dutch norms and values, and safety considerations. Individual politicians have even suggested that this law would be a means to "combat the Islamization"[5] of the Netherlands. Interesting statements, considering the particularly small minority of women in the Netherlands wearing facecovering veiling. How could that threaten Dutch norms and values? Moreover, there has not been any attack in the Netherlands where the perpetrator was wearing an Islamic facecovering veil.[6] How is Dutch security threatened? Observations like these makes one wonder: can we see the recent legislation on wearing facecovering clothing in public places as a manifestation of disproportionate attention for (female) Muslims as being non-Dutch, or even, a peril to Dutch society?

If the answer to that question would be affirmative, that would not be a unique case in Dutch history. Scholars have found that several national and international changes in the second half of the twentieth century have shifted the paradigm of the relation between Islam and politics

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[1] Even though the ban applies to any type of full-face covering veiling in specific public contexts, in the press coverage of this law, the Dutch public opinion often refers to the burqa (a one-piece long, loose garment covering the whole body from head to feet, including face). When relevant, this thesis will distinguish between the niqab, (face-veil which leaves the area around the eyes clear, often worn with a separate eye veil and accompanying headscarf) burqa, and other forms of Islamic veiling practices.

[2] For press coverage, see for example Time magazine (27 June 2018), CNN (27 June 2018), Le Monde (27 June 2018), Euronews (26 June 2018), die Welt (26 June 2018), Haaretz (26 June 2018), Al Jazeera (26 June 2018).

[3] Annelies Moors, *Onderzoeksrapport Gezichtssluiers: draagsters en debatten,* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam School for Social Science Research/UvA, 2009), 28.

[4] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 25.

[5] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 3.

[6] Parliamentary Papers II 2015/2016, 34349, 6, 14.

in the Netherlands. Baukje Prins, among others, has explained how a *New Realism* discourse gained traction in the Netherlands from the nineties onwards.[7] By that time, the Netherlands had invited thousands of 'guest workers', mainly from Muslim countries, who were settling in the Netherlands. Their integration had been handled by the Dutch government through a politics of 'multiculturalism': each denomination takes care of their own social and communal integration. However, as that policy seemed to reach its limits, grumbling increased that the political system did not take seriously the desires of the common man.[8] New Realist politicians, such as Frits Bolkestein and Pim Fortuyn, addressed national feelings of insecurity and frustration and boldened their criticism on multiculturalism and integration.[9] Thus, New Realism combined a critique of the multiculturalism model, of the integration of Muslims in the Netherlands and of the existing political system.[10] At the same time, on the international stage, Islam became increasingly controversial: the Salman Rushdie affair, the Gulf Wars and especially 9/11 connected the world of Islam to violence and war. Islam, in particular aspects that were associated with extremism, became an object of national security policies from the nineties onwards. And such, Islam became a subject of securitization. Beatrice de Graaf has shown in her research how Islam as a religion and Muslims as individuals were increasingly drawn into the domain of national security.[11] And while Islam was regarded more and more negatively, "Dutch" norms and values were held in higher regard. A distinct, but at the same time undetermined, cultural aspect was put forward as determining "Dutch citizenship".[12] Dutch politicians started to question whether Muslims could not or would not be part of this culturalized citizenship. Jan Willem Duyvendak has coined the term *culturalization of citizenship* for the Netherlands, while Martijn de Koning even refers to a *racialization of Islam* in this regard.[13] According to that latter scholarly view, the dominant, secular discourse imposed its worldview on religious citizens, who are systematically discarded as irrational, inappropriate and inadequate.

The reference works of the abovementioned scholars all cover a period roughly up until the first decade of the twenty-first century. However, these theories do not stop at these historical markers: the debate on religion, integration, security and the public domain continues until today.

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[7] Baukje Prins, "The Nerve to Break Taboos: New Realism in the Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism" in *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 3-3 (2002), 363-379.

[8] Nicolaas Landman, *Van Mat tot Minaret*: *De Institutionalisering Van De Islam in Nederland* (PhD diss., VU Uitgeverij, 1992), 31.

[9] Baukje Prins, "The Nerve to Break Taboos", 367.

[10] Ibid., notably 374-79.

[11] She has written extensively on this theme, see for example Beatrice de Graaf, "Religion bites: religieuze orthodoxie op de nationale veiligheidsagenda", in *Tijdschrift voor Religie, Recht en Beleid* 2 (2011), 62-80.

[12] Jan Willem Duyvendak, P. Geschiere & E. Tonkens (eds.) *The Culturalization of Citizenship. Belonging and Polarization in a Globalizing World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016).

[13] I would like to thank Mr. De Koning for his time and his clear explanation of both concepts. His recommendations in November 2018 were very useful for this thesis and have further refined my thoughts on the subject. See for the racialization and the "radically secular" discourse: Martijn de Koning, "Understanding Dutch Islam: Exploring the Relationship of Muslims with the State and the Public Sphere in the Netherlands" in Haideh Moghissi (ed), *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging* (Amsterdam: VU University, 2010), 181-195.

What is the place of the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing in this respect? Does that reflect a continuation of the New Realism discourse, or is something else at hand? At the time of writing, the "boerkaverbod" is still hotly debated.[14] That means that new research, and this thesis is certainly intended to be such an addition, could be of societal relevance. Especially the time frame under research and the critical approach in this thesis have led to new insights which are relevant for a broader audience. Though minor, there is a scholarly gap in knowledge on this subject from 2015 onwards. There is no critical discourse analysis known to the author that specifically covers the 2015 – 2018 period, while there is a promising scholarly field to which this thesis might add. The relationship between (Dutch) governance, Islam, and Muslims is a lively and contested subject in both Religious Studies, Political Studies and other social sciences. Thus, building on the works of Prins, De Graaf, Duyvendak and De Koning, this thesis asks *to what extent is the parliamentary debate preceding the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing (November 2015 – June 2018) representative of a New Realist dominance in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands?*

In order to answer this research question, I have critically analyzed the discourses in parliamentary documents of the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Critical discourse analysis focuses on the struggle for dominance of different actors in a discursive domain. The first chapter introduces the theory and method of critical discourse analysis as applied in this thesis. My approach to critical discourse analysis is inspired by the methodology of Paul Gee.[15] I analyze the parliamentary debate on the basis of three building tasks: particular research angles that have guided my analysis of the documents. These building tasks question the role *significance, social code* and *connections* played in the parliamentary language.

The second chapter provides an overview of the variety of veiling practices in Islamic tradition, asking whether facecovering veiling is, in fact, an 'Islamic' practice. As described above, facecovering veiling is only worn by a very small group of Muslim women. Throughout history, Muslims across the world have had different attitudes towards the idea of veiling. The idea of *hijab,* covering, has been explained as extending to face and hands, but also as being limited to only the hair or other parts of the upper body. In early Islamic periods, veiling was associated with a certain social standard in society. Veiling was considered recommended, honorable. Notably, *Salafi* communities of the nineteenth century have inspired current factions in Islam to endorse facecovering veiling. However, that group is statistically marginal. The vast majority of Muslims in the Netherlands does not see facecovering as a religious command. Yet facecovering veiling is

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[14] Mayor Femke Halsema of Amsterdam announced at the end of November 2018 not to prioritize enforcement of this law in Amsterdam. This sparked repercussions of the Minister of the Interior and many (angry) public responses. At the same time, mayors of two other large cities in the Netherlands (Utrecht and Rotterdam) indicated that they would not give priority to enforcement either. See also NRC/Thijs Niemantsverdriet and Lamyae Aharouay, "Halsema: geen boerkaverbod in Amsterdam" https://www.nrc.nl/nieuws/2018/11/23/halsema-geen-boerkaverbod-in-amsterdam-a2756400 (accessed 13-12-2018).
[15] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis : Theory and Method* (4th edition) London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2014.

presented in the parliamentary debate as an (ultimate) expression of Islam. How correct is that image? What role and place do women wearing facecovering veiling have in the Netherlands?

The third chapter is most interested in tracing the development of the Dutch political discourse on facecovering clothing. It introduces the relation between Muslims and the government in the Netherlands and details the various legislative attempts to ban facecovering clothing preceding the 2015-2018 process. Through a mostly historical approach, it provides an overview of the path towards the final legislative procedure. It exposes how Islam became increasingly demonized through processes of securitization, culturalization – and possibly even racialization of Islam. It shows how these processes have translated to politics mainly through the discourse of New Realism: individual politicians and political parties who combine criticism of the multiculturalist model, integration and, ultimately, Muslims and Islam. It explores the scholarly reflections on this process and thus precedes the critical discourse analysis of the last chapter both in chronology and theory.

The fourth and last chapter forms the critical discourse analysis of the parliamentary debate leading to the Partial Ban. The last three years of political debate on facecovering clothing were in many respects heir to the preceding ten years of public and political discussion. Yet, while New Realist politicians put the subject on the agenda, it were others that designed the final legislative proposal, in particular the Partij van de Arbeid, the Labour Party. Thus, while New Realists openly targeted integration and Islam, government parties had a different focus. They emphasized the importance of uniformity in regulation, communicational aspects and the non-excessive nature of the law. In their speeches, they denied the idea that the law would be connected to security concerns or that it was directed against Islam or Muslims. Greater emphasis was given to the aspect of *social code*: it was particularly oft repeated that facecovering clothing would impede communication, and therefore, societal participation. Moreover, Christian political parties suggested that the law was an outcome of the balanced deliberation, which characterizes the (Christian?) Dutch society. Especially *after* the debate in the House of Representatives, in the Senate, ownership of the political debate was held by politicians who did not wish to associate themselves with the New Realism discourse. Again, they emphasized that it was only a *limited* Ban, and not directed against Islam.

This critical discourse analysis yielded several observations, which informed my conclusion that a new phase is dawning in the relationship between Islam and politics in the Netherlands. Arguments that ultimately determined the debate on facecovering clothing in the period 2015-2018 were informed by ideas of uniformity, communication and balance. This *ensemble of ideas* thus found its basis in a practical approach instead of the ideological basis which is associated with the New Realism discourse. I called this new development the emergence of the Practical Balance discourse. This discourse does 'culturalize' citizenship by defining what should be inside and outside the 'uniform standard'. It may even 'racialize' Muslims by excluding or downplaying their

perspective. Finally, it is definitely informed by the recent securitization of Islam, in which a fear for the Muslim Other is instilled. However, it is qualitatively different from New Realism in both its validation and goals, which *as a discourse* was pitted against Islam. Politicians of the Practical Balance discourse do quite the contrary. They endeavor to deemphasize the religious aspect of the Partial Ban: *ceci n'est pas un boerkaverbod*.

1. Methodology: critical discourse analysis

"Alright guys, welcome to this training, we are going to start with some dribbling."

1.1 (Critical) Discourse Analysis

The fictional quote above communicates some information. There is a training, it has started and the exercise "dribbling" needs to be executed. If this would be communicated on a rainy Tuesday afternoon at a local football field, this might very well be all the information an audience of football players needs. However, transferring information is not the only purpose this sentence serves. Beyond this transfer, it allows both its announcer and its audience to *do* something and *be* something as well. For example, the announcer *opens* the training, *instructs* the audience and *commands* the audience to start dribbling, while at the same time the quote underlines that (s)he *is* a trainer.

Language, in the sense of the quote given here, is what we could call discourse. According to the linguist Norman Fairclough, discourse is "a way of speaking that does not simply reflect or represent things 'out there' but 'constructs' or 'constitutes' them."[16] This aspect of the spoken or written word has interested scholars over the ages, since it raises the question: if discourse is not only a *product* of communicational practices, how could we assess the (re)productive power of these statements and the systems of meaning they are embedded in? For example, we might wonder about our football-quote in a ton of different ways: if uttered by person A, in how far does that make him/her a football trainer? And the audience pupils? And what about the location? Is it through this utterance that a football field is 'made'? One might argue, that without any such statement, the so-called 'football field' is nothing more than a rectangular lap of grass. On the other hand, any such circumstances are at the same time decisive for the meaning of the statement as well. If uttered in a basketball court, the implication of the sentence would change as well.

Discourse *analysis* is, then, the study of communication in practice. It first emerged in the works of the linguist Zellig Harris, who attempted to construct meanings of sentences through relating the sentences to its direct context: the other sentences.[17] It was further developed by other linguists such as Malcolm Coulthard and John Sinclair.[18] They searched for deep explanations of *how* and *why* language works the way it does. This form of discourse analysis, also called *descriptive analysis*, primarily studies the connections among and across sentences.

These approaches opened up the field of linguistics and soon spilled over to other scholarly fields, including sociology and philosophy. Michel Foucault is among the notable philosophers who

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[16] Norman Fairclough, *Discourse and Social Change* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1992), 3.

[17] Arguably, this applies to his whole career, but see for example Zellig S. Harris, *Methods in structural linguistics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), v: "the logic of distributional relations […] constitutes the basic method of structural linguistics."

[18] See for example: John Sinclair and Malcom Coulthard, *Advances in spoken discourse analysis* (London: Routledge, 1992).

applied discourse analysis in a new way: he took a particular interest in power relations. Foucault wished to demonstrate the inherent relation between power and discourse by including in his research the social and political dimensions that are involved in communication.[19] New perspectives like these made discourse analysis a lively and contested field, especially since the 1990s. In that period, a group of researchers including Wodak, Van Dijk, Fairclough, Kress and Van Leeuwen held a conference which would officially introduce another development after Foucaldian discourse analysis: *critical* discourse analysis.[20] In line with Foucault, critical discourse analysis (CDA), takes an interest in power relations. Or, in the words of Ruth Wodak: "CDA aims to investigate critically social inequality as it is expressed, signaled, constituted, legitimized and so on by language use (or in discourse)."[21] The main critique of CDA to traditional linguists is that they are somewhat naïve in their approach. Descriptive analysis refers for its analysis of given words or phrases to a more or less autonomous system of language. This "system of language" is not neutral in CDA. It is constituted by competition among (actors of) discourses. These actors are not equal: on the contrary, some researchers in CDA actively see themselves as choosing the perspective of the underdogs.[22] Thus, critical discourse analysis, or CDA, has a particular perspective: studying dominance as manifested in language. This can be on a word-to-word level, but the focus is not necessarily only on text. A "full" discourse analysis includes a description of the historic and social context of a certain discourse and the ideologies that are at play.[23] According to CDA, discourses structure the interconnection of knowledge and power at a specific place and time. Not any *one* discourse is the ultimate framing of a historical period. Every time has its overlapping, competing and interfering discourses. Each discourse, then, has its own history of emergence and decline. Likewise, each discourse has its own assumptions and rules. Those discourses circulating together do not necessarily agree with each other: on the contrary, they may very well be competitive.

This method, like all methods, is grounded in a theory. Any method of research has its own angle, assumptions and blind spots. Critical discourse analysis is a helpful tool if one takes a particular interest in the relationship between text and context along with the role of language in constituting the world. Critical discourse analysis has therefore two distinctive advantages for this thesis: one on an 'internal' level and one on an 'external' level. Internally, its perspective is particularly appropriate for a text structure such as the parliamentary debate on the Partial Ban. In a debate, the actors are constantly in competition with each other: each party is particularly eager to defend its own positions. This competitive aspect is properly exposed by CDA. Externally, the parliamentary debate is put in its sociohistorical context in my application of CDA. This thesis includes an introduction of the origins and considerations of the women who wear facecovering

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[19] Michel, Foucault, *The History of Sexuality* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).
[20] Ruth Wodak, and Michael Meyer, *Methods of Critical Discourse Analysis* (London: Sage Publications, 2003), 4.
[21] Ibid., 2.
[22] Teun van Dijk, *Racism in the Press* (London: Arnold, 1986),4.
[23] Whether a "full" discourse analysis – be it critical or not – is possible, will be discussed under 1.4, Method.

veiling in the Netherlands. While I do not have the intention of actively 'proving' a social inequality or 'exposing' perverted power structures, I do believe that the dimension of context is a valuable addition to this thesis. An analysis of parliamentary discourses only becomes relevant when it explains how this debate fits into its broader social environment. Therefore, the position of veiled women is deliberately involved in this thesis.

1.2 Discourse

Discourse is, then, a useful category, but we still have to demarcate what we will term 'discourse' in the singular, or 'discourses' in the plural, form here. Scholars have had different definitions of discourse over time, ranging from any short coherent form of text to a more elaborate series of statements uttered within a wider timeframe. It is, for example, not uncommon to speak of discourse as comprising a whole set of public or professional communications on a specific topic, like 'medical discourse' or 'legal discourse.' Such an approach, however, would not aid us in deciphering which possibly conflicting views, arguments and sensitivities were put forward in the parliamentary debate on facecovering veiling.

In the present thesis, 'discourse' will therefore refer to something a bit more specific. A definition by Maarten Hajer is the starting point of this research: discourse is 'a specific ensemble of ideas, concepts, and categories that are produced, reproduced and transformed in a particular set of practices and through which meaning is given to physical and social realities.'[24] This definition gives us some further helpful tools to define our topic. *"A specific ensemble of ideas"* suggests that there would be some form of coherence within the discourse. This does, of course, not bar possible internal contradictions, but at least it indicates that the discourse is, at least, an *ensemble,* intended to be, quite literally, *together.* I am aware that this does not *necessarily* leads to an operationalization of discourse as a coherent idea or view, but it does make such an operationalization *plausible*, and in this context specifically, rather helpful. So, in short, in assessing the parliamentary discourses surrounding facecovering veiling in the 'Burqa Ban' we look for specific ensembles of ideas on facecovering clothing that are discussed throughout 2015-2018. These ensembles of ideas can, but do not have to have been put forward by one individual or one political party: the competitive field of (parliamentary) discourses is considered at the level of the discourses themselves. It is certainly relevant which parties are in favor or against the different *ensembles of ideas,* but it is these ensembles themselves that are the primary focus of the analysis, not the individuals behind it.

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[24] Maarten Hajer and Justus Uitermark, "Performing Authority: Discursive Politics after the Assassination of Theo Van Gogh" in *Public Administration* 86/1-5 (2008), 3.

1.3 Demarcation

As I have introduced earlier, it is not just *any* debate which is under review in this thesis. It is the parliamentary debate on facecovering veiling in the leading up to the partial ban on facecovering veiling in public places in the Netherlands that forms our subject. Or, as the official publications database of the government of the Kingdom of the Netherlands eloquently puts it: the dossier on the establishment of a partial ban on wearing facecovering clothing in educational facilities, public transportation, government buildings and healthcare institutions.[25] This database is the source of my primary material. The database contains all official reports as published in the Staatscourant, Staatsblad, Tractatenblad, Gemeenteblad, Provinciaal blad, Waterschapsblad and Blad gemeenschappelijke regelgeving of the government, as well as the parliamentary documents. It includes publications from Agendas, Acts and Parliamentary Documents of the House of Representatives and the Senate, and publications of Het Staatsblad and the Staatscourant. In this database, file no. 34349 contains all documents relating to the legislative proposal which was accepted on June 26, 2018.[26] The total number of files in this dossier is sixty. These documents cover the period of 27 November 2015 to 13 July 2018. All documents are part of this research. Of these documents, twenty-three contain only a short reference to the aforementioned legislative proposal, later law. These documents are mainly long-term agenda's in which a debate on the subject is announced, without further context. These documents *are* included in the analysis, though not in the same elaborate way as the other documents, due to the brevity of the relevant parts. As far as the legislative process is concerned, this dossier covers all documents that were used in the States General of the Netherlands. Of course, the debate on facecovering clothing was not confined to these chambers. In the same period, numerous (news) articles have appeared about the Partial Ban, both of supporters and opponents. An investigation into that larger debate would be incredibly valuable. However, I have chosen to focus solely on parliamentary debate. It is the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands that is under consideration here. However interesting these other interaction structures would be, within the current frame, they would only obscure my line of research. Therefore, news articles and other documents outside the parliamentary papers have only been included where they would be relevant for the critical discourse analysis of my primary sources.

The period here covers the past three years. Admittedly, any demarcation in time frames is necessarily the scholar's own artificial representation of reality. History does not unfold itself in neatly wrapped up episodes, ready for any scholar to unpack. I must, however, limit the scope of the present research in order to keep the data manageable, not to mention to keep this thesis readable. Discourse analysis involves close reading, and for those results to be sufficiently represented in this thesis, a choice had to be made. However, I did make a conscious choice to

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[25] https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/dossier/34349. Last accessed: 14-01-2019.
[26] Ibid. The dossier actually contains sixty-one files, but one of those is a double.

limit the scope of this thesis, beyond mere brevity. I specifically focus on the partial ban on facecovering clothing as was proposed to the parliament in November 2015. As mentioned in the introduction, that period of time has not been covered in scholarly literature yet for this subject. Additionally, this bill of November 2015 proved to be the final proposal, which was made into legislation. In line with the goals of CDA, this thesis specifically focuses on a set of discourses that quite literally *will have an effect* on (Dutch) society and veiled women in particular. Finally, the extra information that could be obtained from reviewing a broader period of time is largely absorbed by the relatively extensive historical structure in chapter three. The period from about the second half of the twentieth century will thus be taken into consideration, albeit in a different way than through the time-consuming method of discourse analysis. Thus, in the same way that chapter two introduces the reader to the perspective of Muslims, and Dutch women in facecovering veils, chapter three also serves as a substantiation of my critical discourse analysis. The observations that come from chapter two and three will then serve as the basis for the analysis in the fourth and final chapter.

1.4 Method

Having established our definition of discourse, demarcated our speakers and our time frame, we can inevitably investigate an abundance of opinions, discussions, viewpoints, assumptions, subtleties and arguments – could all arguably be relevant for the discourses under our present research. Our goal, however, to analyze the development of discourses in the parliamentary debate on facecovering veiling, asks for yet another academic intervention: the method as applied here. In critical discourse analysis, attention is primarily focused on power relations. This thesis made use of that perspective in order to discern not only which discourses have sprung up, but also how they 'survived' over time. In other words: I focused on the development of this struggle for discursive dominance in the parliamentary debate.

I have completed this analysis in several steps, which are based on the method of Paul Gee. In his *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: theory and method*, Paul Gee offers a comprehensive approach to (critical) discourse analysis. Although Gee has an emphasis on spoken language, often applied to individual speech acts, and this thesis focuses on political institutions of the Netherlands, I found his method particularly advantageous for this research.[27] Many of the documents involved in this research consist of reports of speeches in the House of Representatives and the Senate of the Netherlands, and Gee's approach is particularly useful to discern the dialectic between individuals, institutions and society as (re)produced in language. His building tasks are especially helpful to render the political and social interconnections of speech acts intelligible – the

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[27] N.B. This work by Paul Gee which forms the basis of my critical discourse analysis has seen its fourth edition in little over a decade and is recognized as one of the standard works, among others, for researchers wishing to work with discourse analysis. This popularity reflects his capacity to appeal to scholars for both mainstream and cutting-edge research, and reinforced my choice for his approach in CDA.

main goal of this critical discourse analysis. At the same time, no 'standard' method is ever ideal for any specific research. In his method, Gee introduces seven "building tasks" – seven ways in which we (often simultaneously) construct reality.[28] I will introduce my approach to the three building tasks on which I will focus: *significance*, *connections*, and especially *politics*, which is interpreted as *social code* in this thesis. Following that, I will shortly discuss why the other four building tasks of Gee are considered less relevant here.

First, of all, the building task of *significance*. Especially in a struggle for dominance in political debate, actors will try to use language to render particular aspects of their subject (in)significant. In this discourse analysis, this theme boils down to the question: "how is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not?" Since *critical* discourse analysis is specifically focused on the effects of the dominant discourse on the underrepresented, this aspect is particularly interesting for this thesis. What aspects are made (in)significant, or possibly even, *who* are made (in)significant?

The second building task is defined by Gee as *politics* and raises the question: what perspective on social goods is a certain piece of language communicating? Social goods could be called one of the core elements of my analysis. What is communicated as being, for example, "normal," "good," "bad," "threatening" or "appreciated"? What is "in" and what is "out" of the social standards as communicated through language? We will see that this element informed several dominating discourses in the legislative process. However, there is one practical disadvantage to this category of Gee. The term *politics* may very well be confusing in the review of a parliamentary debate. Therefore, I will refer to my interpretation of this building task as *social code*. In this thesis, this term refers to what perspective an actor expresses on discursively constructed social goods. The *social code* is an implicit matrix which shapes the response to certain actors in society: are they deserving of status, power, and acceptance? Do they abide by the *social code*, and possibly, are they even "winning" at that game; meaning, are they held in high regard? Or do they not fit the *social code*, and thus are denied the social good of appreciation, or even, participation? I believe that this new term does not conflict with Gee's interpretation of the building task *politics*, and at the same time, it helps to reshape the rather economical or individual approach Gee takes to this category.

The third, and final, building task that will be incorporated out of the seven that Gee offers, is *connections*. It asks: how does a piece of language connect or disconnect things, how does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another? One can discuss facecovering veiling and Islamic practices as being two entirely disconnected things, or one could choose to describe veiling as a *typically* Islamic practice. The first is an attempt to break the connection between the two, the latter an attempt to emphasize that very connection. Neither is a completely inadequate way to describe

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[28] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis : Theory and Method* (4th edition) (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2014), essentially in chapters 1, 7 and 8.

it, but they have a very different conclusions. Those conclusions shape the *ensembles of ideas* in the parliament.

As I mentioned earlier, Gee offers more building tasks. Four of those are considered less relevant for this thesis. The first one that is considered beyond the scope of this thesis, is *practice.* This building task investigates the socially recognized and supported endeavor, often a combination of actions in a certain way. For example, the opening statement of this chapter; *"Alright guys, welcome to this training, we are going to start with some dribbling"* would be a piece of language that enacts a *practice* of instructing. Though interesting as a research angle for parliamentary conventions, it is less relevant in the present context. Likewise, the building task *identities* will not be included in this discourse analysis. *Identities* refers to the way we use language for ourselves or others to be recognized as having a certain role or status. This is equally interesting for a research on conventions, but equally less relevant here, as we do not research the particularities and status of the involved parliamentarians. Third is *relationship*. By the tone of *"Alright guys,"* our imaginary football trainer is expressing familiarity or friendship, as opposed to a more formal option of *"Good evening, gentlemen,"* for example. These relationships, again, play a role in parliamentary debate, but will not be considered here, as the focus is not on the mutual relations between parliamentarians, but on the role of their respective discourses in a broader context. Lastly, Gee offers the building task of *sign systems and knowledge*. This investigates the use of for example, colloquial language versus jargon. For further research into the impact of the parliamentary debate on society, this category might be helpful. However, in this thesis, the debate will be analyzed in the isolation of the parliamentary context first, which makes including this last building task tempting, but not a goal of this thesis.

Does the use of only three building tasks limit the explanatory power of this thesis? Yes and no. Paul Gee readily acknowledges that answering all questions about our data would be cumbersome: it '*would lead to a very long analysis indeed. But that is what would constitute a "full" or "ideal" discourse analysis. For the most part, any real discourse analysis only deals with some of the questions.*'[29] My discourse analysis is most certainly open to that criticism of the unfinished background. Moreover, even when complete, questions of validity have often vexed qualitative research methods. We can never "prove" that the analysis as carried out in this thesis reflects reality in any way. Without going into the difficult discussion about "Reality" and the human (im)possibility of knowing it, this thesis is an attempt not to *reflect* but to *interpret* discourses. Validity, then, is not achieved in this thesis by an ultimate representation of "Reality." The validity of this thesis lies in the hypothesis that is being tested. My hypothesis was that the parliamentary discourses in this period would reflect a biased view on (orthodox) Muslims, in particular, the individuals wearing Islamic facecovering veiling. To test that hypothesis, I use three building tasks that are specifically aimed at unraveling these kinds of questions: *significance*, *social code* and

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[29] James Paul Gee, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis*, 141.

connections. The fact that adding multiple building tasks would yield a thicker analysis is self-evident. But for the sake of effectivity and usefulness, I have limited myself here to these three central themes.

And with this in mind, I went through a somewhat circular process of identifying and highlighting expressions that were relevant for the aforementioned themes. First per paragraph, then document, and later per bigger units, which resulted in connected time frames with more or less concurrent discourses in interaction. This analysis led to the identification of a new, emerging, *ensemble of ideas*, which started to increasingly dominate the parliamentary debate. This critical discourse analysis can be found in chapter four.

2. Wearing the veil: theology, history and local contexts

Facecovering veiling is presented in the parliamentary debate as an (ultimate) expression of Islam. Yet the actual amounts of Muslim women wearing such a veil are very limited. In order to assess the claims made in the public and political debate about the women wearing a facecovering veil, this chapter will explore the use and meaning of the veil throughout history. How correct is the image of facecovering veiling as an *Islamic* practice? Additionally, this chapter outlines the differentia of women in the Netherlands wearing such a veil. Who are they, what group do they belong to and what role and place do women wearing facecovering veiling have in the Netherlands?

2.1 Veiling: theological considerations

The term burqa has become a synonym for facecovering veiling in the Netherlands.[30] That has several confusing effects: first of all, the burqa is extremely rare in the Netherlands, as it refers to a specific type of veiling, often worn in Afghanistan and blue in color.[31] There have been no reports of any women actually wearing such a burqa in the Netherlands, beyond some practical jokes or undercover journalists. Most forms of facecovering veiling that we see in the Netherlands are actually something that could be called a niqab: a usually black, loose face veil, as is common in the Gulf States, Saudi Arabia and Yemen. Second, both garments, which may appear in different forms and styles, are actually a *type* of the more general term *hijab*. *Hijab* strictly means any type of curtain or membrane hiding a person or a thing, but is often used to refer to the action of veiling or protecting a woman (from the eyes of men).[32] Burqas and niqabs are among the most strict means to meet the conditions of *hijab*. The concept of *hijab* is connected to another Arabic term: *'awra*, literally translated as nakedness or shameful parts. *Hijab* is intended to prevent other people from seeing a woman's *'awra.*[33] This level of covering the *'awra* may differ in various situations: generally said, it is prescribed whenever there are two sexes present, and the closer the relationship, the lesser parts of the body are considered *'awra*.[34]

The compulsion of *hijab* has its origins in the Qur'an, to the extent that some concept of it is present in three to five verses[35] – but the interpretation of these verses is hotly debated. The

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[30] Alessandro Ferrari and Sabrina Pastorelli, eds. *The Burqa Affair Across Europe : Between Public and Private Space* (Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate, 2013), 15.

[31] That is referred to this type of veiling even though another type is more common is not merely ignorance on the Dutch side. The burqa has become known to the Dutch public after the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and is thus linked to ideas of suppression of women and the war on terror.

[32] Chelhod, J. 'Ḥid̲j̲āb'. In *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Second Edition), eds. P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs, et al. Last accessed January 15, 2019. doi:http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_2855.

[33] A man is also supposed to protect/cover his 'awra, which differs in scope and nature from the female 'awra.

[34] One exception is the moment of prayer or during hajj, when the face and hands are *never* 'awra and may not be covered.

[35] In Surat an-Nur: Q24:30, Q24:31 and Surat al-Ahzab: Q33:53, Q33:59, Q33:33. Note: the actual term itself, *hijab*, occurs seven times in the Qur'an (Q7:46; Q17:45; Q19:16–17; Q33:53; Q38:32; Q41:5; Q42:51). But, in five of these occurrences, the term hijab describes situations that have nothing to do with women and that do not treat the subject of a dress code. See also Sahar Amer, *What Is Veiling?* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2014), 24-28*.*

second classical reference for Islam, the collections of *hadith*,[36] also does not have a clearly articulated vision for *hijab*. On one hand, it does refer to the women of the Prophet as being covered, including the face. On the other hand, the references to *hijab* are not terribly numerous, nor are they exclusively directed at women. Taken together, veiling could simply mean to cover the breast of a woman, but it does lend itself to other interpretations as well.[37] Finally, there is Islamic jurisprudence, the translation of a Qur'anic law, or *shari'a*,[38] for practical legal circumstances. It is important to consider that the Islamic legal tradition has a diverse character. To summarize the centuries-long debate on veiling in Islamic jurisprudence here, would be both a cumbersome and excessive task for this thesis. Thus, I will only introduce some divergent conclusions of this extensive interpretation process, in order to indicate just how complex and multidimensional this question of veiling is for Muslims.

By the end of the eleventh century, four schools (*madhhab*, pl. *madahib*) of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence had emerged: Maliki, Shafiʿi, Hanafi, and Hanbali. Most medieval scholars in the four *madahib* treated the subject of facecovering veiling as a matter of Islamic etiquette. In other words, the debate on full-covering clothing did not consider mandatory religious practices (*fard*) such as praying, fasting during Ramadan, or giving alms to the poor. Rather, veiling was considered *wajib*: a recommended practice. That does not necessarily signal a lesser priority, the schools were very much preoccupied with defining commendable practices, but this does have different religious implications. Most medieval Maliki and Hanafi jurists believed that the entire body of a woman, except for the face and hands, had to be covered. The Hanbali and Shafiʿi schools of jurisprudence, being the most conservative of the four on this issue, taught that the face and hands could be parts of a woman's *'awra*, too, and thus had to be concealed as well. This last position is of most interest to this thesis, as we will consider those who do regard facecovering veiling as highly recommendable or even obligatory. Even within this interpretation, there are two answers to the question: how to prevent unlawfulness? One answer has been that men should lower their gaze and not look at a woman's beauty. Another is that women should cover their face and hands. That last answer leads to the most strict interpretation on *hijab:* both hand- and facecovering is *obligatory*. That obligation was first propagated by medieval Islamic scholars such as Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209/10), who claimed that the entire body of free, Muslim women is *'awra*. This was

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[36] Ahadith provide brief eyewitness reports of some of the sayings and doings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions.

[37] Y.K. Stillman, N.A. Stillman, *Arab dress : A short history from the dawn of Islam to modern times* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 141.

[38] Shari'a is a complex term which is often associated or translated with Islamic 'law', but it is has multiple meanings. Literally translated, it means "the path to the oasis." It does refer to Islamic law and ethical norms, but not in the unambiguous way that canonical laws are written down. It has a more metaphoric sense: the all-encompassing Way sent by God in the Qur'an and exemplified in the practices of the Prophet Muhammad. Cf. Timothy P. Daniels "Introduction: Sharia Dynamics and the Anthropology of Islam". In: T. Daniels (ed). *Sharia Dynamics. Contemporary Anthropology of Religion* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2017), 1-27.

echoed by Abd al-Rahman ibn al-Jawzi (d. 1200), and the famous Ahmad ibn Taymiyyah (d. 1328). Ibn Taymiyyah believed that only during prayer, a women's faces and hands should be uncovered.[39]

2.2 Veiling: Muslims throughout history

Throughout history, these advices have been followed up or interpreted in multiple ways. Positions on *'awra* have been revisited many times in theological discussions, but also in daily Muslim life. From the Ummayad period (ca. 661-750), we find different depictions of women wearing different levels of clothing, never covering the face.[40] By the 'Abbasid period (ca. 750-1517) however, veiling seems to have been part of normal life. Face veils are mentioned by different authors of that period, both with religious and nonreligious purposes of their works. It is in this time period, that we see the first mentions of the terms *niqab* and *burqu'*.[41] Veiling was, up until the sixteenth or seventeenth century associated with nobility, class and honor. Therefore, it is plausible that veiling, including the face, was popular among middle and upper class Muslim women throughout the Middle Ages.[42]

From the eighteenth century onwards, the Muslim world was increasingly faced with challenges from the West and within. Westernization, colonialism and imperialism reshaped the Muslim *ummah*.[43] At the same time, several Muslim theologians reconsidered tradition and religion.[44] As a result, many countries reconsidered their veiling practices. Turkey, for example, banned the Islamic veil in the 1920s under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In the 1930s, Iran followed with a similar law. In Egypt, levels of veiling dropped throughout the country.[45] However, this was followed by a second wave of response. In the postcolonial period, several countries made a swing to re-Islamization, and not unfrequently, veiling became a focal point in that. The same Iran that outlawed veiling in the 1930s, imposed the veil on all female subjects after the 1978 revolution.[46] Likewise, more recently the facecovering veil has been challenged once again. The government of Syria, in 2010, banned facecovering veiling with the deliberate aim to promote the secular character of the government.[47]

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[39] Sahar Amer, *What Is Veiling?,* 29-30.

[40] Y.K. Stillman and N.A. Stillman, *Arab dress*, 34. However, we must take into consideration that the scenes generally depicted served another purpose than showing the common types of dress in this period.

[41] Zohreh Sadatmoosavi and Mohamad Ali Shokouhi, Hijab of women in Islamic civilization history" conference paper for *World Congress for Islamic History and Civilization*, WOCIHAC 2011, Academy of Islamic Studies, University of Malaya, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

[42] Y.K. Stillman and N.A. Stillman, *Arab dress*, 145.

[43] In the Qur'an, ummah usually refers to communities sharing a common religion, whereas in later history it almost always means the Muslim community as a whole.

[44] The (for this thesis) relevant Islamic revivalist movements of the 19th century will be discussed under 2.4 Origins and Modernity.

[45] Laura Bier, *Revolutionary Womanhood : Feminisms, Modernity, and the State in Nasser's Egypt* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2011), 50.

[46] H. Sedghi, "Women, the 1979 Revolution, and the Restructuring of Patriarchy" In *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 199-220.

[47] The Guardian/Associated Press in Damascus, "Syria bans niqab from universities" via https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/jul/20/syria-bans-niqab-from-universities, updated July 20,2010. Last accessed 13-12-2018.

This short history *might* suggest that facecovering veiling is a debate of secularism versus religion in the Middle East. Yet, quite the contrary is true. The discussion is held just as much within the context of Islam itself. Most notably, in 2009, one of the most influential Sunni Islamic scholars, Shaykh Mohammad Tantawi of Al-Azhar, banned female students and teachers from wearing the niqab in classrooms and dormitories. He stated that the niqab has nothing to do with Islam and is a sign of radicalism.[48] This discussion is not confined to Egypt at all: for example, veiling has been the stake of heated debates in Tunisia for over a decade now. Mufti Hamza Said declared himself a supporter of a ban on niqabs in 2014 and some institutions, such as a university in Tunis, have already instituted such a ban.[49] Facecovering veiling is a theme where the mixing of religious matters with political and social themes comes into play. Tunisia is a good example of that: the garment is especially popular among Salafists, and Salafism in Tunisia is controversial: Salafist groups have challenged, and sometimes still challenge, the state. Political parties in Tunisia are also more or less divided along those lines: Islamist party Ennahda and their secular counterparts regularly debate the role of Islam in society. Discussions like these show once again that 'Islam' is not a single entity, but a series of divergent religious practices that change throughout time and space. Veiling is not a simple question of more or less Islam, nor just a political question. It depends on interpretations of Islam whether it is obligatory, advised, or even, banned. Veiling in general, and facecovering veiling in particular, is an important, but undetermined topic in Islam. The Qurʾan, *ahadith*, and the Islamic jurisprudence establishing the rules and ethical principles that most Sunni Muslims consider foundation to their religious beliefs and practices, are not unambiguous considering the concept of *hijab.* Over time, Muslims have interpreted the rules in many different ways and facecovering veiling continues to be subject of debate up until today.

2.3 Dutch Islam

That is particularly true for Muslims who have to reckon with their beliefs outside of the traditional context, as Muslims in the Netherlands have to. Islam started in the Netherlands as a religion of immigrants. While there has been a small minority of Muslims in the Netherlands since the Middle Ages,[50] their story truly starts in the twentieth century. In the 1960s and 1970s, the Netherlands recruited large amounts of guest workers, initially from Southern Europe, later mainly from Turkey and Morocco. These latter groups of guest workers brought their religion with them: Islam.[51] The Netherlands Central Bureau for Statistics estimated that at the end of the 1950s there were a little

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[48] Peter Kenyon, "Sheik of Al Azhar bans face veil" via https://www.islamicity.org/3670/sheik-of-al-azhar-bans-face-veil/ Updated October 28, 2009. Last accessed 13-12-2018.
[49] Robin de Wever/Trouw "Moefti Tunesïe wil een nikabverbod" on *Trouw* Online. Last updated 24-02-2014, last accessed 14 januari 2019. https://www.trouw.nl/home/moefti-tunesie-wil-een-nikabverbod~af48020a/
[50] Maartje van Gelder, "The Republic's Renegades: Dutch Converts to Islam in Seventeenth-Century Diplomatic Relations with North Africa" in *Journal of Early Modern History* 19-2/3 (2015), 182.
[51] Saskia Bonjour, *Grens En Gezin : Beleidsvorming En Gezinsemigratie in Nederland, 1955-2005.* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009), 50.

over a thousand Muslims in the Netherlands, that figure being raised to over 50.000 one decade later. Initially, they were both seen as, and regarded themselves as, migrants, not permanent citizens. They established mosques and religious and social activities, but not with the intention to make lasting structures for future generations.[52] However, these guest workers ultimately did settle in the Netherlands and were reunited with their families on Dutch soil. Their permanent residence raised new questions for this first generation. Upon arrival in the Netherlands, participation in the Islamic community was less self-evident than it had been in their countries of origin. As most guest workers came from Turkey and Morocco, they were accustomed to what could be called a (cultural) 'Islamic' society: the sound of the *azzan*, women wearing headscarves and mosques in the street. In the Netherlands, this Islamic identity had to be reinvented. Confronted with a Christian and secular context, the question what Islam meant for a Muslim in the Netherlands became more relevant. Scholars like Sipco Vellenga have identified several trends which characterized the responses of first- and second generation Muslims to this new context. Among the first generation, many "freezed" or idealized their Muslim heritage as they knew it from their countries of origin. This beacon of familiarity guided their identity and experience of their religious beliefs.[53] This first generation also had to establish the first permanent Islamic institutions in the Netherlands. In the late 1970s and 80s the first umbrella organizations were established and early Muslim initiatives in all kinds of social work sprung up.[54] Most of these organizations were formulated according to ethnic identities.

At the same time, their numbers grew: in the early 2000s, there were more than 900.000 Muslims in the Netherlands.[55] The maturing process of Islam was not an unambiguous, linear process of letting go of the ethno-cultural background. Many Muslims, especially the second generation, adopted a more personal approach to Islam. Olivier Roy, among others, has identified this international trend: *"a Muslim living in Europe has somehow to reinvent, to rediscover or, to be more precise, to define what, to his thinking, belongs to the religious world. Therefore, for a Muslim, being in a minority, or being an immigrant, compels him to ultimately think about the basic nature of Islam. He is forced to objectify Islam, i.e. to try to define the essence of Islam as objectively as possible."*[56] This held true for the first generation of Muslims in the Netherlands, but even more so for second and third. These young Muslims had different challenges than their parents had. They had not lived in a Muslim country, but grew up in a Dutch society, whilst still having to reckon with

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[52] Nicolaas Landman, *Van Mat tot Minaret*: *De Institutionalisering Van De Islam in Nederland* (PhD diss., VU Uitgeverij, 1992), 28-32. For a well-written critique of the idea that it was only after the recognition that migrants *would* stay, that the government took action, cf. the work of Saskia Bonjour, *Grens En Gezin,* 45.

[53] Sipco Vellenga, *Mist in De Polder: Zicht Op Ontwikkelingen Omtrent de Islam in Nederland* (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2009), 17-18.

[54] Sipco Vellenga, "Introduction" in *Mist in de Polder*, 15.

[55] Centraal Cultureel Planbureau, "Bevolking; Islamieten en hindoes in Nederland, 1 januari" via http://statline.cbs.nl/StatWeb/publication/?VW=T&DM=SLNL&PA=70086ned&D1=0-1,17-18&D2=a&HD=090710-1521&HDR=T&STB=G1 last updated 27 August 2004. Last accessed 14 December 2018.

[56] Olivier Roy, "Islam in Europe: Clash of Religions or Convergence of Religiosities? " in *Conditions of European Solidarity*. ed. Krzysztof Michalski (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2006), 132-133.

their Muslim identity. In simple terms, these young people did not have to think about how they wanted to *take* Islam *to* the Netherlands, but how they wanted to *shape* it *in* the Netherlands.[57] Islam had transformed from an immigrant religion into a minority religion. These new challenges had an array of responses. As a result, some first- and second-generation Muslims gradually let go of their native religion. However, this trend of secularization has never been widespread in the Netherlands.[58] Another – typically modern – response to the Islamic heritage of Muslims in the Netherlands entails quite the opposite. Confronted with a secular Dutch environment and a deterritorialized[59] Islam, they search for a 'true Islam'.[60] Islamic norms and rules are no longer internalized via cultural patterns, i.e. an Islamic society, and, must therefore be explicitly defined. Islam, for them, became *fundamental*: the Qur'an guides their norms and values and everyday life, rather than the Dutch constitution. This trend is controversial, but rather marginal. In the most generous estimates, a maximum of eight per cent of the Muslims is in some way or form associated with strict interpretations of Islam, more specific estimates do not exceed two to three per cent.[61] This form of individualization of religion refers to a way of thinking that can be found in various Islamic environments and can be promoted by different movements. It is not a coherent doctrine, but a modern form of religiosity, a trend and a way of thinking. Still, in the Netherlands, most Muslims of this attitude are grouped under the term 'Salafi'.

2.4 Origins and modernity

Confusingly, the term Salafi currently refers to a trend which is different from original Salafism. Salafism in its origins refers to several reform movements which sprung up in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Confronted with Western Imperialism, these movements tried to return to a 'pure Islam'. They believed that Muslims should rediscover their origins in order to be able to restore their dignity. Although the theological approaches the several movements took are different in both origins and results, these movements had a lasting impact on Islamic thought.[62] Most revivalists found their inspiration in the *salaf al-salih*, the first three generations of Muslims. The lifetime of

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[57] Sipco Vellenga, *Mist in de polder*, 15.

[58] Willem Huijnk, *De religieuze beleving van moslims in Nederland: Diversiteit en verandering in beeld* (Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau, 2018), 65-75.

[59] Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam : The Search for a New Ummah* (London: Hurst, 2004), introduction and chapter one give a convincing account of how Islam has become 'deterritorialized' in recent years.

[60] This is not to suggest that these Muslims literally 'start' searching *at some point in their life*. It is of course, not only or always a process of reconsidering the identity as a Muslim in the Netherlands which may result in a more strict interpretation of Islam for Dutch Muslims. Individuals may also, for example, bring these religious beliefs with them from their country of origin, or have grown up in this tradition and stick to it throughout life.

[61] Ineke Roex, Sjef van Stiphout en Jean Tillie, *Salafisme in Nederland. Aard, omvang en dreiging* (Research Report at the Instituut voor Migratie- en Etnische Studies, Amsterdam: UvA, 2010), 226-7. According to this definition and operationalization, 8 percent of Muslims in the Netherlands are defined as strictly orthodox and are considered to have "attitude structures that are in line with Salafist ideas" and are therefore considered to be sensitive to Salafism.

[62] Ahmad Dallal, The Origins and Objectives of Islamic Revivalist Thought, 1750-1850" in *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 113-3 (1993), 341-359.

these three generations has been famous for the rapid expansion of both the Islamic faith and territory, and is often referred to as a golden age of Islam. This is illustrated by a famous *hadith*:

> *The Prophet (peace be upon him) said, "The best people are those of my generation, and then those who will come after them (the next generation), and then those who will come after them (i.e. the next generation), and then after them, there will come people whose witness will precede their oaths, and whose oaths will precede their witness."*[63]

And thus, several movements, notably the one promoted by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab in Saudi Arabia, but also in Egypt, Iraq and Syria, promoted a reinterpretation of Islam which would reflect the ethics of the s*alaf al-salih*, and get rid of the 'cultural' or 'historical' additions to Islam. They aimed to create a strong and confident *ummah,* which would have the approval of God and could put an end to colonialism.

Confusingly, while qualitatively different, this historic Salafism *is* the inspiration for most current Dutch forms of Salafism. Salafists of the 19th century and of the modern day both emphasize the unity of God (*tawhid*) and are opposed to any form of expansion of the Islamic literature beyond the Qur'an and the Sunnah. They endeavor to separate authentic *ahadith* from false, are opposed to *bid'a,* (changes or adjustments to Islam), and they try to imitate the prophet in detail. When experienced this deeply, life itself can become a kind of ritual: every aspect of daily life is dedicated to attaining God's satisfaction. Salafists of the 19th century and modern day alike see themselves almost by definition as the only true Muslims and do not affiliate themselves with the existing Islamic law schools.[64]

However, what makes Dutch Salafism unique compared to its historic counterpart is its modern context. Outside the historically Islamic Middle East, Muslims search for 'true Islam' and 'true knowledge' and find answers in a Salafist approach to Islam. Modern communication systems, especially the internet, play a major role in this. Many Dutch Muslims do no master the Arabic language anymore, and therefore read translated or Western-language sources, which may be created by independent preachers.[65] Many of those influential speakers prefer audio and video files, which circulate on the internet. These preachers often refer to Wahhabist sheikhs and/or make their own selection out of the traditional sources. Since Salafists deny the authority of

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[63] Sahih al-Bukhari 6429, via https://sunnah.com/bukhari/81/18 last accessed 19-12-2018.
[64] Olivier Roy, *Globalised Islam*, 247. Chapter six in general is informative of the relation between early Salafism and contemporary movements which are related to its ideas.
[65] Martijn de Koning, Joas Wagemakers, and Carmen Becker. *Salafisme : Utopische Idealen in Een Weerbarstige Praktijk* (Almere: Parthenon, 2014), introduction.

traditional Islamic jurisprudence, these individual interpretations of classical texts can contradict each other while they are prominent at the same time.[66]

This denial of any 'blind' adherence to the leading schools of Islamic thought has an important implication for veiling practices as well: Salafists do not see themselves as heirs to the various Islamic discussions on veiling. Quite the contrary: as we have seen above, Salafists pride themselves in forsaking cultural 'additions' to Islam and returning to Scriptural evidence for their Islamic practices. One of the most prominent aspects of the Salafi lifestyle focuses on the devout and sober individual. Men and women strive to be an ideal Muslim, mimicking the lifestyle of the first three generations of Muslims. This applies to the question of *hijab* as well: the devout and sober female individual is not peddling her '*awra*. On Dutch Salafist websites, an interpretation of some Qur'anic verses and *ahadith* as indicating that the women of Muhammad – the ideal examples – wore a full-covering veil a symbol of worship, chastity and virtue is promoted.[67] By wearing such covering, it is inferred that the woman fulfills a grand act of worship while at the same time giving a strong signal to anyone with unchaste intentions.[68] Driven by this intention to mimic the first three generations, and not limited by the extensive Islamic jurisprudence, it is mostly women of the modern type of Salafi thought who wear facecovering veiling in the Netherlands.

2.5 Wearing the veil in the Netherlands

It would be simply too superficial to regard the religious practice of wearing a facecovering veil in the Netherlands as a pure importation of Salafi traditions born in the Middle East. Women wearing a facecovering veil are not only embedded in their religion and tradition, but also in a Dutch context, as we have seen in the previous sections. What, then, motivates these women to wear a facecovering veil?

Interestingly enough, despite the extensive public debate, that question is still shrouded in mystery. We are not even sure in how far facecovering veiling is 'imported' from other cultures, or that it is a Dutch phenomenon.[69] Field research in Denmark, France, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands suggests that a majority of the women is at least born in Europe.[70] Still, most of those studies were conducted in the period 2009-2012, and arguably, following the recent instability in the Middle East, the situation might be different now. There is no recent research that gives us an

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[66] For the international trend; M. Al-Rasheed, "The Local and the Global In Saudi Salafi-Jihadi Discourse" in *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 302. For the Dutch trend: *Salafisme in Nederland. Aard, omvang en dreiging,* 44-46.

[67] See for exmaple the fatwa section on al-yaqeen.com.

[68] Al yaqeen.com "De 'Awrah" video on https://al-yaqeen.com/videos/de-awrah/ last updated 20 maart 2016, last accessed 19-12-2018.

[69] Or at least, it has been suggested that 'cultural origins' play only a limited role in the Netherlands. Women wearing facecovering veiling of different backgrounds have participated in research: Dutch, Chinese, Portuguese, Moroccan and Turkish. B. P. Vermeulen et al. *Overwegingen bij een boerka verbod: Zienswijze van de deskundigen inzake een verbod op gezichtsbedekkende kleding,* 27.

[70] Eva Brems, *The Experiences of Face Veil Wearers in Europe and the Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), chapters 2 to 5 are case studies of the aforementioned countries.

estimate even of precisely how *many* women wear such a veil. Earlier estimates for the Netherlands stem from 2006 and 2009, and range from fifty to a hundred,[71] to two hundred to four hundred women.[72] Barely any justification is given for such estimates, mostly referring to the fact that it is hard to produce trustworthy statistics on such a particularly small group in society. Even if the most generous estimate would be true, within the context of Salafism in the Netherlands, that indicates a minority of a minority wearing a facecovering veil. This is an important distinction to make, as we cannot measure all Salafists by the same yardstick. Individual Salafists may have their own opinion on the facecovering veil.[73]

As a matter of fact, adding to the many misconceptions about Salafists, there is only one field research that specifically focuses on women who wear facecovering veiling in the Netherlands: dr. Annelies Moors interviewed a dozen of these women for her 2009 research. This research proved to be extremely valuable for almost all public, political and scholarly work on facecovering veiling in the Netherlands. Moors was particularly interested in the motivations to wear such facecovering veiling. Her interviewees emphasized two aspects in particular. Veiling was, for all interviewed women, a distinctive marker of their faith. They believed, and Moors emphasized the importance of emotions in this regard, that wearing a veil was an utmost act of Islam. The face veil was, for them, a last step in their personal religious journey. The personal aspect was important for these women, and for the other women wearing facecovering veiling across Western Europe as well. *They* had chosen to wear a facecovering veil, sometimes against the wishes of their direct family or other relatives.[74] That personal approach allowed some of these women to reflect on wearing the veil as something beyond religion as well. Respondents in the research of Annelies Moors indicated that they did believe that not *all* women wearing a veil were doing so purely out of religious beliefs. They addressed the possibility that especially young women started wearing a veil after public attention for the issue grew, in order to "join the hype". According to the respondents, these young women did stop wearing facecovering veiling after a while.[75] Many first experiences with veiling were described to be connected with a certain type of curiosity, or excitement, even beyond the religious belief. However, in general, for the most consistent women, veiling meant much more than a hype or try-out. According to Moors, veiling is considered by these women as a

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[71] B. P. Vermeulen et al. *Overwegingen bij een boerka verbod: Zienswijze van de deskundigen inzake een verbod op gezichtsbedekkende kleding* (Research report commissioned by the Minister for Immigration and Integration, 3 november 2006, Den Haag), 13. Interestingly enough, this estimate is based solely on press statements which mention that 50 or 100 women in the Netherlands wear a facecovering veil. It is unknown on which grounds this claim is based.

[72] Annelies Moors, *Draagsters en debatten*, 28.

[73] For example, I have conducted an interview with an informant who identifies as Salafist. He gave a nuanced picture of his personal attitude towards facecovering veiling: he stated, among other things, that in certain cities the discussion about facecovering veiling is more heated among Salafists than in other cities. He, for himself, was disappointed by the recent Partial Ban, but repeatedly weighed Dutch laws and culture and his own religious beliefs.

[74] Interviewees in the United Kingdom had relatively more relatives and friends wearing a facecovering veil, and were therefore met with less resistance from the direct environment. See Ostergaard, Warburg and Schepelern Johansen (Denmark, esp. 59-61), Brems, Janssens, Lecoyer, Ould Chaib, Vandersteen and Vrielink (Belgium, esp. 81-90) and Bouteldja (France and England, esp. 131-140) in Eva Brems, *The Experiences of Face Veil Wearers*.

[75] Annelies Moors, *Draagsters en debatten*, 39.

last step in a process towards piety. Feelings and emotions, were important factors for these women in their search for a bigger truth.[76]

Thus, while deep, heartfelt religious beliefs form the motivation to wear facecovering veiling, no practice is ever purely and solely connected to religious motivations. Other social dynamics play a role as well. Another complicating factor for making any claims on facecovering veiling in the Netherlands lies in the differences in consistency of the veiling: under which circumstances do women decide to wear a facecovering veil? As it turns out, many of them make deliberate choices in their timing. While these women are all of the opinion that wearing a facecovering veil in the presence of non-*mahram* men is obligatory or recommendable, they deal with this in various ways in everyday life.[77] Some women wear a face veil consistently, but there are considerably more women who do not. For example, women chose to usually wear such veiling, but made specific exceptions, for example when they visited family, school, or went to work. Or, they chose to only wear facecovering veiling under specific circumstances, such as when they attended lectures in the mosque or during festive activities.[78] The interaction of these women with the outside world were by no means limited to these mosques or homes. Most of the interviewees, of the research of Moors and the other field researches alike, were particularly eager to emphasize that they do not wish to shy away from other people in daily life. They see themselves as active participants in society. However, they did experience harassment and (verbal) abuse in public life. Documentaries that were filmed in the Netherlands portray a similar picture.[79]

Theological considerations of veiling formed the opening of this chapter, but it may be clear that veiling is not just a matter of religion. It considers interpretations of religion and sociohistorical context as well. Despite the Salafi focus on the seventh century, women wearing a facecovering veil are still situated in the multidimensional environment of the Netherlands. Moreover, these women are more than a woman in a veil: they have their personal lifestyle and emotions. Muslims in the Netherlands, and Salafi Muslims as well, have to find a way to reckon with their beliefs in the context of the Netherlands. It is therefore not easy to define to what extent facecovering veiling is a strictly *Islamic* practice. It has not been for Islamic theologians, it has not been for scholars on this subject, and most certainly this present thesis will not have a definite answer to that intricate question. In addition to the complicatedness of the question, there is beyond the Moors 2009 study barely any field research done in the Netherlands, which could give further suggestions. That is telling: this lack of research and public interest for the perspective of women in facecovering veiling

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[76] Annelies Moors, *Draagsters en debatten*, 40.

[77] Ibid., 28.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Obviously, documentaries cannot simply be accepted as a correct representation of reality. Nonetheless, certainly in view of the limited available data, they can give a modest insight into the personal experiences of these women. See for example "Shaista Khan" by the KRO, 10 December 2010 and available online via https://www.npostart.nl/de-wandeling/10-12-2010/KRO_1407155, "MO Doc: Burqa plus" by the Dutch Moslim Omroep, 15 December 2013 and available online via https://www.npostart.nl/burqa-plus/15-12-2013/NPS_1238790 or "Religieuze kleding" by the NCRV, 18 August 2015 and available online via https://www.npostart.nl/npo-spirit/18-08-2015/KN_1671509.

seems to be an European trend.[80] However, we have seen that it is a particularly small minority of women in the Netherlands who wear a facecovering veil. These women do so out of a deep, heartfelt belief that this is the fulfillment of a religious command. At the same time, these women do not live in splendid isolation: their considerations included social and personal dimensions. Moreover, the women who participated in interviews contradict the image that women are submissive, under the pressure of men to wear such veiling. They portray themselves as very strong-willed women who have made the choice to partake in society in this particular way.

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[80] Eva Brems, *The Experiences of Face Veil Wearers*, 2.

3. Politics and Islam in the Netherlands

Clearly, in absolute numbers, facecovering veiling is a marginal practice, even within the context of Islam. Nevertheless, today, facecovering veiling can no longer be seen as marginal in the public debate. That public debate was not so much dealing with Islamic theological considerations about modesty. The considerations, arguments and sentiments of the chapter above do not or hardly play any role. On the contrary, we will see in this chapter that this debate had much more to do with the position of Muslims in the Netherlands. Changing worldviews and changing demographics both had a profound effect on the public and political opinion in the Netherlands. The debate became both culturalized and securitized. To gain a first impression of the dialectic among societal and political arguments, attitudes, sentiments, and emotions which have played a role in this debate, this chapter gives a brief historical overview of those interrelating developments.

3.1 "Each according to their own": 1960-1980

Religious dress was not a novelty with the arrival of Muslims in the Netherlands. Different types of religious garments were worn throughout the ages, sometimes mixed with local dresses.[81] Notably, Roman Catholic religious workers wore distinctive types of religious dresses, and continued to do so in the Protestant country of the Netherlands. However, these and other public manifestations of religious preferences were decreasing over the course of the twentieth century. This century also saw the organization of the relationship between religion and the public domain through a typically Dutch concept: pillarization. Pillarization effectively segregates society alongside confessional or ideological groups. The Dutch government related to its citizens through several "pillars" which represented different religions and/or ideologies. This is not to indicate a certain hierarchy between the respective pillars, but rather a policy of "each according to their own". Pillarized institutions such as schools, political parties, trade unions, broadcasters and newspapers all served their own specific target audience. This form of segregation defined policymaking on religious issues in the Netherlands up until the second half of the 20th century.[82] The government distributed resources to organizations according to their ability to represent a specific confessional or ideological group in society. The arrival of large groups of immigrants in the 1960s and 1970s posed a challenge to this system. These newcomers, "invited" to come to the Netherlands as *gastarbeiders*, had their roots mostly in Turkey and Morocco. As we have seen in the previous chapter, many of these immigrants were Muslim. Since the existing confessional "pillars" were rooted in Dutch Christian history, Islam did not naturally find a place within this system. The initial governmental answer to

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[81] Interestingly enough, one of those – very local – religious dresses included the *huik*, a black facecovering dress, mainly worn in the community of Wieringen. Cf. F.A. Stoett, *Nederlandsche spreekwoorden, spreekwijzen, uitdrukkingen en gezegden* (4th edition) (W.J. Thieme & Cie, Zutphen 1923-1925), 378.
[82] See for pillarization in the Netherlands the reference work of Arend Lijphart, *Verzuiling, Pacificatie En Kentering in De Nederlandse Politiek* (Haarlem: Becht, 1990).

this challenge was multiculturalism: policymaking regarding minorities in the Netherlands was focused on "development in own tradition" along the lines of the pillarization tradition. And Muslims themselves abided by that system. They quickly tried to adapt to the norm of the Dutch "pillars." The distinctive ethnic and cultural character of the community was emphasized by Muslim leaders, to convince policymakers of the necessity of their own government resources.[83]

The Netherlands was regarded by policymakers in these years as a multicultural society. Moreover, cultural differences were generally regarded as an enrichment: Dutch politicians prided themselves in the multiculturalism system.[84] The focal point was to remove existing socio-economic challenges[85] for migrants to be able to function in society. Cultural tensions and identity problems existed, but cultural and religious differences *an sich* were not regarded as a factor that impeded the integration process of minority groups into Dutch society. [86] The dominant political and public discourse did not allow the presence of migrants to be problematized.[87] This 'multiculturalist' integration policy was partly rooted in a conviction that the many migrant workers in the Netherlands would soon return to their country of origin. However, the contrary turned out to be true. Throughout the 1970s, it became apparent that more and more immigrants were reuniting – and settling – with their families on Dutch soil. The demography of the Netherlands was changing, including more and more non-native Dutch people, more and more Muslims.

3.2 Integration and the Muslim Other: 1980-2003

That rapid increase of Muslims in the Netherlands, in combination with other political and international changes led to uncertainty whether the multiculturalist model was still ideal. Then Vice-President, Frits Bolkestein, was the first politician to cause quite a stir when he voiced his concerns on Islam and integration. In a newspaper article in 1991, he expressed the idea that Islam is hostile to "essential liberal values" – such as separation between church and state, freedom of expression, tolerance and non-discrimination – and added: "a civilization which honors these principles is higher than a civilization that does not do that,"[88] while indicating that the Dutch society *does* honor these values, in contrast to Islamic societies. He did not mince his words when he indicated that any negotiation with Muslims considering "Western liberal values" were *off the table.* His intervention turned out a determining one in the debate on Islam in Dutch society. He found

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[83] Thijl Sunier, "Interests, Identities and the Public Sphere: Representing Islam in the Netherlands since the 1980s", in Jocelyne, Cesari, Seán McLoughlin (eds), *European Muslims and the Secular State* (London: Routledge, 2016), 86-87.

[84] F. Sleegers, In debat over Nederland. Veranderingen in het discours over de multiculturele samenleving en nationale identiteit (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 16.

[85] Jan Willem Duyvendak, *De Staat En De Straat: Beleid, Wetenschap En De Multiculturele Samenleving* (Meppel: Boom, 2006), er was vooral aandacht voor de moeilijkheden die migranten veel tegenkwamen.

[86] Masja van Meeteren, *Discoursen van integratie. De omslag in het politieke debat over integratie in Nederland*, (thesis at the Erasmus University of Rotterdam, 2006), 15.

[87] Jan Willem Duyvendak, & R. Rijkschroeff "De bronnen van het integratiebeleid" in *Sociologische Gids* 51-1 (2004),7.

[88] Frits Bolkestein, "OPEN FORUM: Integratie van minderheden moet met lef worden aangepakt" In *De Volkskrant*, 12-09-1991. Last accessed via Delpher on 20-12-2018, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010867107:mpeg21:a0232.

acclamation of other prominent political and public figures such as the author Paul Scheffer[89] and columnist and professor of jurisprudence Paul Cliteur. They openly criticized the multiculturalist approach: "The multiculturalist drama" as Scheffer tellingly captioned his article.[90] These were the first spokesmen for a new approach in Dutch politics: the "New Realism." Under the influence of demographic and social changes, the initial policy focus on identitypreserving integration slowly shifted towards an emphasis on individual responsibilities and obligations, by the end of the 1980s. Politicians increasingly saw the integration of migrants as their own individual responsibility.[91] Negative opinions on integration gained traction. Dutch citizenship was seen less and less as a matter of socio-economically involved individuals: familiarity with "Dutch culture" and even embracing it would become increasingly more important.

Philosopher Baukje Prins identifies four characteristics of this emerging discourse. First of all, the New Realists portrayed themselves as being brave. They were the ones who dared to say what everybody else was thinking. Secondly, their standpoints, arguments and sensitivities expressed something which they saw as "truly Dutch": they claimed to embody the Dutch core norms and values. And how could they know they did so? Well, because their third pillar was the claim that they were speaking on behalf of the "normal Dutch person." The teacher, the shopkeeper, the policeman… good, hardworking people who were, according to them, the *true* backbone of this society, contrary to the new immigrants with their strange habits and preferences. The dichotomy between their target audience, which they portrayed as reliable and "normal", and the foreignness of the immigrants increased feelings of dissociation. Lastly, they claimed to bring an end to the "leftist elite," which was associated with pillarization, ignoring reality and whitewashing problems.[92] Their interference resonated with the public, perhaps not surprisingly, in this post-Cold War era. In 1993, Samuel Huntington had published his famous article "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*. Huntington believed that "the age of ideology" had ended with the end of the Cold War. Therefore, the world had returned to a "normal" state of affairs, which is "normally" characterized by *cultural* conflicts. And thus, conflicts in the future would be primarily cultural and religious in nature. His article, later book, caused quite a stir worldwide. We can recognize the idea of ("Christian" and "Muslim") civilizations turned against each other in Bolkestein's ideas of "higher" and "lower" civilizations.

In the same period, Islam became a prominent subject on the international stage, and not in a positive way – at least not in the eyes of the West. The Iranian Revolution, the fatwa of Ayatollah Khomeini on 14 February 1989,[93] and the First Gulf War all linked the Muslim world to associations

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[89] He has published both scholarly work and for broader audiences.

[90] Paul Scheffer, "Het Multiculturele drama"in NRC Handelsblad, 29 january 2000.

[91] Erik Snel, *De vermeende kloof tussen culturen* (Oration for the post of extraordinary professor of Intercultural Governance at Twente University: Enschede, 2003), 23-24.

[92] Baukje Prins, "The Nerve to Break Taboos: New Realism in the Dutch Discourse on Multiculturalism" in *Journal of International Migration and Integration*, 3-3 (2002), 363-379.

[93] A fatwa is a formal legal opinion given by an Islamic authority, in answer to a question submitted to him either by a judge or by a private individual. It is non-binding, but authoritative. D. B. Macdonald, "Fatwā", in *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, (First

with violence. That perception came to an explosive climax following the 9/11 attacks. The world of Islam seemed to be diametrically opposed to the Western world, and had struck in the heart of the West. And thus, the debate about Islam was not only gaining momentum, it changed in tone as well.[94] Islam was not discussed solely in terms of integration and the relationship between religion and state anymore, as had been the case during the multiculturalist approach. The 'New Realism" discourse was reinforced by a perceived danger originating in the world of Islam. Whereas Bolkestein and Scheffer had focused on integration and multiculturalism, the next men who attempted to 'solve' the immigrant 'crisis' arrived at an even more bold conclusion. Public academics such as Hans Jansen, Paul Cliteur and Herman Philipse claimed that it was not integration, but *Islam as an ideology* that was problematic. For the next generation in New Realism, Islam was inherently alien to Dutch society, to Dutch norms and values.[95] This discourse was adopted and primed by politicians such as Pim Fortuyn and Ayaan Hirsi Ali, who made the fight against Islam core to their political program. During the second social-liberal Kok government (1998-2002), the tensions surrounding immigration and national security increased. Pim Fortuyn was a particularly visible public figure in this debate: he can be regarded as the embodiment of the New Realism discourse. He was controversial, but at the same time successful in putting the issue of Islam and security on the agenda. The Pim Fortuyn List (LPF), won 17.5% of the votes on 15 May 2002, after Fortuyn himself was murdered a few days before, by a radical environmentalist on 6 May.

The idea of Islam as a non-Dutch, potentially dangerous religion was reinforced again, in 2002. It became public that a little over a dozen Moroccan youth had apparently been involved in the armed struggle in Kashmir, Chechnya and the Middle East.[96] These young people were affiliated with Salafi mosques in the Netherlands. This made international events terrifyingly close for Dutch society: Salafi Dutch Muslims – as they were framed in the media – were training to become foreign fighters: could any orthodox Muslim be a potential threat to Dutch society as well? This fear blurred the distinction between Islam as such on the one hand and radical Islam as an exceptional, specific interpretation of this religion.[97] Securitization of religion is a complex interplay between a frightened population and politicians wishing to put a religion on the national security agenda. As we will see,

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Edition, 1913-1936), M. Th. Houtsma, T.W. Arnold, R. Basset, R. Hartmann (eds). Last accessed 20 December 2018 via http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/2214-871X_ei1_SIM_2334. Ruhollah Al-Musavi al-Khomeini, "fatwa imam khomeini aliah ayaat shaitani" Persian text via http://www.tebyan.net/index.aspx?pid=15801. Last accessed 20 December 2018.

[94] Sipco Vellenga, "The Dutch and British Public Debate on Islam: Responses to the Killing of Theo van Gogh and the London Bombings Compared" in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 19-4 (2008), 454–55.

[95] See for example Herman Philipse *Verlichtingsfundamentalisme?: open brief over verlichting en fundamentalisme aan Ayaan Hirsi Ali: mede bestemd voor Piet Hein Donner, minister van Justitie en coördinerend minister in de strijd tegen terreur* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2005). Or Paul Cliteur, "De onuitstaanbare leegte van links", in *Trouw* 17-01- 2004. That Cliteur remains of this opinion may be clear from his latest book: Paul Cliteur, Dirk Verhofstadt, *In naam van God: Elke dag een aanslag* (Antwerpen: Uitgeverij Houtekiet, 2018). The title translates as: "In the Name of God: a terrorist attack every day".

[96] Beatrice de Graaf, "Religion bites", 66.

[97] Ibid., 80.

both currents influenced the debate on facecovering veiling from 2003, and especially 2005 onwards.

3.3 Culturalization and securitization unveiled: 2003-2005

It is Thursday January 23, 2003. Three Moroccan-Dutch students of the ROC Amsterdam[98] refuse to remove their facial veils at the ROC school complex. The three girls are denied access to the school: the ROC argues that a facial veil jeopardizes mutual communication, blocks necessary, classical identification structures, and that the girls fail to comply with statutory duties.

This would be the public start of a national discussion on facecovering veiling, which would last for more than a decade. The three students submitted a complaint to the Commission Equal Treatment (Commissie Gelijke Behandeling, CGB),[99] claiming to have been discriminated on the basis of religion. The CGB judged that in this case, the indirect discrimination on grounds of religion was present, but justified: the rule *did* disproportionately affect members of a specific religious group, *but,* the objectives of the prohibition on facecovering clothing were sufficiently important. It did not aim to discriminate, and the means were appropriate and necessary to meet the conditions set by the school.[100]

This first public incident concerning facecovering veiling in the Netherlands signals a few important factors for our analysis already. First of all, it took place in an educational environment, and the wearers were female adherents of Islam who claimed that their human right to freedom of religion was at stake. The CGB ruled that even though this right was indeed affected, it did not outweigh the other considerations: the aim of *good* education, the *appropriateness* of the institutional response and the *necessity* of the verdict. These three words in italics all signal sentiments that would be considerably important in the parliamentary debate leading to the ban of 2018. Another interesting aspect was that the CGB also stated that they considered the safety argument of the school valid, which required easy identification of pupils. On the other side of the perspective, it was not considered at all whether the girls themselves would feel safe in public without their veil.

The 2003 case was the first time the CGB ruled that an educational institution would be allowed to prohibit facial veiling in the school context. And that is indicative of the then prevailing political attention for Islam: there had been at least one earlier trial on the same issue of facecovering veiling in education, in 2000. That case had not attracted as much public attention,

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[98] ROC stands for Regional Education Center, Regionaal Opleidingen Centrum. It offers secondary vocational education.
[99] The Dutch Equal Treatment Commission. Currently part of College voor de Rechten van de Mens, but at the time independent organization to promote and monitor compliance with this legislation. The Commission also gives advice and information about norms and standards, anyone can apply for that. See also https://meld.nl/organisaties/gelijke-behandeling-commissie/
[100] Commissie gelijke behandeling, 20 maart 2003 (oordeel 2003-40) " Verweerder maakt geen verboden onderscheid op grond van godsdienst door het hanteren van een verbod op het dragen van een gezichtsbedekkende sluier binnen zijn instellingen" via https://www.mensenrechten.nl/en/oordeel/2003-40. Last accessed 20-12-2018.

and the verdict of the CGB had been contrary to this one.[101] This difference in attention had much to do with a changing public and political atmosphere. We have seen in the previous paragraph that both nationally and internationally, the religion of Islam had become an topic of public interest. A primary issue at the time in the Netherlands was the place of women in Islam – a concern voiced notably by the Somali born politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali (VVD). She was born into a Muslim family, but declared herself an atheist and critic of Islam. She stated in an interview: "I am *entirely* against a chador. It is the subjection of a woman in a most unpleasant way."[102] The suspected lack of freedom in a woman's choice to wear facecovering veiling became a repeated concern in parliamentary debate, just as their suspected lack of emancipation and participation in society.[103]

Incited by the international affairs, and amplified by local incidents, a rift in political and public opinion on Islam had taken place in the Netherlands. The ROC incident is a textbook case of this shift: one particular occasion in a local context was enough to incite a parliamentary debate on facecovering veiling for more than a decade.[104] Islamic veiling practices were increasingly perceived as deserving of attention, possibly even suspicion. Although it had not reached full maturity, we see here an introduction of what is called *culturalization of citizenship*. This process of priming Dutch norms and values and framing a threatening outsider has been coined by the sociologist Jan Willem Duyvendak. It is the "process by which culture (emotions, feelings, norms and values, and symbols and traditions, including religion) has come to play a central role in the debate on what it means to be a citizen, either as an alternative for or in addition to political, judicial and social citizenship. With the culturalization of citizenship, citizens are subjected to new 'feeling rules'[105] that render 'belonging' or 'feeling at home' a requirement."[106]

In this polarized atmosphere, Mohammed Bouyeri entered the stage on November 2, 2004. In broad daylight, he shot and stabbed the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh to death. A few months before his unfortunate death, Van Gogh, in cooperation with the politician Ayaan Hirsi Ali, had published a film called "Submission". That film aimed to highlight the subservient position of women in Muslim culture. Mohammed Bouyeri left a note on the body of Van Gogh with a death

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[101] Commissie gelijke behandeling, 26 June 2000 (oordeel 2000-63) "Indirect onderscheid naar godsdienst nu door het kledingvoorschrift van verzoeker overwegend mensen met een bepaalde geloofsovertuiging worden getroffen." via https://www.mensenrechten.nl/en/oordeel/2000-63. Last accessed 20-12-2018. In this case, the girl was enrolled in the program for pharmacy assistant.

[102] Parool 2003 Translation mine. Italics mine, as a way to translate her phrase "down until my toes I am against". Note her use of the term *chador*, which refers to a loose garment often worn in Iran, which conceals the body of a woman, but leaves her face free. This concurrence and alternation of Islamic terms is again indicative of the highlighting of veiling as an icon for Islam as a whole.

[103] See for example an overview of many ranging opinions on http://www.republiekallochtonie.nl/blog/opinie/argumenten-voor-en-tegen-het-boerkaverbod. Last accessed 20-12-2018.

[104] And sparked further debate in education. In the months following January 2003, facecovering veiling became an issue at several universities. The boards of the University of Leiden as well as Utrecht University expressed their opposition to facecovering veiling in the educational context, as did the VU University Amsterdam. Groningen University took another approach, by delegating the regulation of the issue to its individual faculties.

[105] Jennifer Hochschild and John H. Mollenkopf (eds), *Bringing outsiders in* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) and Jan Willem Duyvendak, P. Geschiere & E. Tonkens (eds.) *The Culturalization of Citizenship. Belonging and Polarization in a Globalizing World* (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2016), 1-3.

[106] Duyvendak, Geschiere and Tonkens, *The Culturalization of Citizenship,* 3.

threat for Hirsi Ali.[107] During the trial against Bouyeri, his affiliations with a Salafi network[108] were highly publicized. Earlier tirades of the Salafi imam of that network, Fawaz Jneid,[109] were widely reported.[110] Soon, the entire Salafi movement was branded in the eyes of the Dutch population. It became public that "radical" Salafi imams had spoken about the 'paganism' of the Netherlands, had made insulting comments against homosexuals, and were outspokenly negative about secular intellectuals. Those imams opened up the Salafi movement, and Muslims more broadly, to a growing current of Dutch Islamophobia.

3.4 Veiling discussed in the House of Representatives: 2005-2007

While the ROC case in 2003 sparked a national debate, in 2005 the first legal response was formulated. Member of the House of Representatives (Tweede Kamer) Geert Wilders filed a motion which aimed to prohibit burqas and niqabs in the public space.[111] Both time and place of this proposal were telling. Just a few months earlier, Wilders had broken ties with his former party, the VVD, because he was vehemently opposed to the admission of Turkey to the European Union. Geert Wilders embodied the next generation of New Realism: Islam was, in his opinion, absolutely incompatible with Dutch norms and values. Moreover, he saw the entire religion as a threat.[112] The occasion on which he announced his proposal was equally significant: during a parliamentary debate on the radicalization of Muslims in Dutch society. Wilders specifically linked the issue of veiling to safety concerns, more in particular, to terrorism. When, on 20 December 2005, this motion was put to vote in the House of Representatives, it was adopted with the support of CDA, VVD, LPF and the Nawijn Group.[113] Wilders proclaimed it as 'a huge victory for traditional Dutch standards of decency'.[114] These 'traditional Dutch standards of decency' remained further undefined, but nonetheless are another expression of a culturalization of citizenship, or possibly, a racialization of Muslims.

      This term, racialization, is coined by Martijn de Koning, an anthropologist of Islam. Culturalization of citizenship is a process which is mainly shaped by the changing definition of

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[107] It has been suggested that Bouyeri might have been present at a Friday sermon of Jneid, who did a dua for 'terrible illnesses' to afflict Van Gogh and Hirsi Ali.

[108] All these mosques are known als Salafi mosques and have been in the center of attention ever since. See Ineke Roex, Sjef van Stiphout en Jean Tillie, *Salafisme in Nederland. Aard, omvang en dreiging* (Research Report at the Instituut voor Migratie- en Etnische Studies, Amsterdam: UvA, 2010), 19-23.

[109] Most notably, this dua against Theo van Gogh and Ayaan Hirsi Ali. See http://extra.volkskrant.nl/bijlagen/preekFawaz.pdf

[110] See for example "Tweede Kamer: stop het salafistisch gevaar" in *Elsevier*, 25 april 2008, "Marcouch beledigd door heftige aanval imam" in *de Volkskrant,* 19 april 2008. Especially Fawaz Jneid is a prominent figure in this. See: "Aboutaleb: ontsla Haagse imam Fawaz" via *NOS Nieuws*, 26 april 2008, or a debate between a Dutch politician and Jneid on a late-night panel discussion show "Pauw en Witteman: Ahmed Marcouch in debat met imam Fawaz" via *Pauw en Witteman*, 18 december 2013. The controversy of the imam has still not diminished and is still in the public eye, see also "'Omstreden imam: Uitspraken worden verkeerd opgevat'" in De Telegraaf, 8 april 2018.

[111] Consider the language change from veiling in a range of terms to specifically burqa and niqab.

[112] Geert Wilders and Bart Jan Spruyt "De meeste allochtonen introduceren een geloof dat wezensvreemd is aan de kern van onze democratische ordening; Politiek nog altijd in greep nihilistisch cultuurrelativisme; islam is terugval in manier van denken die overwonnen was; Stop import islamitische cultuur", in Het Parool, 22 oktober 2004.

[113] Parliamentary Papers II 2005/2006, 29 754, 41.

[114] Annelies Moors, *Draagsters en debatten,* 11.

citizenship, of the Netherlands. It does explicitly brand Muslims as Outsiders, as not fitting into the culturalized citizenship as propagated by New Realism. Racialization primes another aspect of this process which is less prominent in the culturalization thesis: the balance of power. Starting in the 1990s, but increasingly in the first decade of the twenty-first century, culturalization of citizenship led to an exaltation of an idealized society which is liberal, and more importantly: *secular*. Both proponents of the New Realism discourse and their political adversaries shared an idea of the Netherlands as ideally "rational" and "neutral". But that ideal is not as neutral as it seems: it favors secular citizens over religious citizens who wish to give religion a place in their (public) life. Thus, idealized secularism indicates a certain bias of the ruling class in the Netherlands. It imposes particular modes of reasoning and argumentation, behavior, knowledge and sensibilities on their citizens. This secular discourse is seen as the embodiment of a universal reason with which religious people have to comply, while only modestly expressing their religiosity.[115] Mr. Wilders pulled no punches in his rejection of Islam, but that the culturalization of citizenship, if not the racialization of Muslims was at hand in this period, is not only apparent from his contributions in the public and political debate.

An interesting case for this might be the ministry of ms. Verdonk. Despite the support in the Chamber of Representatives, there were doubts as to the legal feasibility of a proposed ban on facecovering veiling in public. The Minister for Integration and Immigration, Rita Verdonk (VVD), was assigned with the task to investigate the legal landscape. For this purpose, she set up an expert committee to consider the possible social consequences of such a law. On November 3, 2006, after receiving confidential advice from an expert committee, Verdonk announced[116] that a legal basis could be found for a burqa ban, considering Article Six of the Constitution.[117] She announced that she intended to create such a law as soon as possible, as she regarded facial veiling "undesirable for public order, safety and the protection of civilians."[118] As such, the veiling affair had developed from an incident in an educational setting to a national security theme. Even more interesting in this regard is the fact that only later, upon the publication of the report,[119] it became public that Verdonk had *not* followed the advice of the expert committee. That report concluded that a general or case-specific burqa ban would be discriminatory; that a total prohibition of facecovering garments on objective grounds was unjustifiable; and that there were already

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[115] Martijn de Koning, "Understanding Dutch Islam: Exploring the Relationship of Muslims with the State and the Public Sphere in the Netherlands" in Haideh Moghissi (ed), *Muslim Diaspora in the West: Negotiating Gender, Home and Belonging* (Amsterdam: VU University, 2010), 187.

[116] ANP/De Volkskrant, "Toch algemeen verbod op gezichtssluier" in *De Volkskrant,* 17 November 2006. https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/toch-algemeen-verbod-op-gezichtssluier~b16b1695/

[117] My translation of Article 6: 1. Everyone has the right to freely practice his religion or belief, individually or in community with others, this being subject to everyone's responsibility according to the law. 2. With regard to the exercise of this right outside of buildings and private places, the law may set rules; for the protection of health, in the interests of [orderly] traffic and to combat or prevent irregularities.

[118] Yvonne Doorduin "Kabinet verbiedt boerka op straat" in *De Volkskrant* 18 November 2006. https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/kabinet-verbiedt-boerka-op-straat~b04147ba/

[119] B. P. Vermeulen et al. *Overwegingen bij een boerka verbod.*

sufficient possibilities to prohibit face covering clothes at specific places and under specific circumstances with, as a possible exception, public transport. Moreover, the report pointed to the danger that such a ban could stigmatize Muslims and could lead to a polarization between Muslims and non-Muslims.[120]

The announcement of minister Verdonk, the debate, and the report all took place at a very heated moment in Dutch parliamentary history. Both citizenship and security were subject of national debate at the time. A few months earlier, the Balkenende II government had come to an end following an affair surrounding the Dutch citizenship of Ayaan Hirsi Ali. A Dutch tv-program had revealed that Hirsi Ali had lied during her asylum application,[121] which could imply that she would lose Dutch citizenship. Verdonk was as Minister for Immigration in charge of assessing this. On 28 June 2006, during a debate on the management of this case, the functioning of Verdonk was questioned by both the opposition and by government party D66. As a result, the D66 party withdrew its support to the entire cabinet. The subsequent Balkenende III reintroduced Verdonk as Minister for Justice, in which position she received a vote of censure, again, related to 'vreemdelingen'[122]. Minister Verdonk was, thus, at the center of public attention during this period. In this context, she primed the securitization of religion in the context of facecovering veiling and arguably added to the culturalization of citizenship and the racialization of Muslims. Eventually, she was not able to actually draft a bill. The Balkenende III government was terminated prematurely. Overseeing this timeline, it is evident that by the end of 2006, facecovering veiling had become part of a broader discussion. Gradually, the issue over veiling became associated with bigger issues in society: the place of religion in the public sphere, integration issues and securitization of religion.

3.5 A continuous, but unfinished debate: 2007-2015

Balkenende IV was established on 22 February 2007. The 53 page coalition agreement included a comment on facecovering veiling, under the header 'safety, stability and respect'. Note the place this comment emerged: facecovering clothing, perceived as Islamic practice, was a safety issue – the securitization of Islam continued. Number six out of eighteen articles stated: "In order to protect public order and safety, facecovering clothing may be prohibited."[123]

Shortly afterwards, two Members of Parliament, who were not part of this coalition, Wilders and Fritsma, submitted a motion: a ban on burqas or niqabs in the public space. According to Wilders and Fritsma, the burqa[124] is incompatible with the Western fundamental constitutional

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[120] B. P. Vermeulen et al. *Overwegingen bij een boerka verbod,* 23.
[121] Ayaan Hirsi Ali was Somali-born (and to a Muslim family).
[122] A Dutch word meaning those who are unknown or alien to us, and meaning in this particular context a dossier on immigrants without legal status.
[123] Translation mine: "Ter bescherming van de openbare orde en veiligheid kan gelaatsbedekkende kleding worden verboden." Consider the word 'gelaat', which is different than the later 'gezicht'. Balkenende IV. *Samen werken, samen leven: Coalitieakkoord tussen de Tweede Kamerfracties van CDA, PvdA en ChristenUnie*. Via https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2007/02/07/coalitieakkoord-balkenende-iv. Last accessed 20-12-2018.
[124] Their term. They explicitly refer to burqa's and any other form of *Islamic* facecovering veiling.

values, impedes the emancipation and integration of women in Dutch society, and creates an undesirable safety risk. They stated that a ban could relieve the "social pressure" on Muslim women to wear a burqa and remove the problems of participating in social life.[125] This was, in a way, a consolidation of the arguments that were raised in the first period of debate on facecovering veiling. Facecovering veiling is explicitly linked to one particular piece of clothing: the burqa. This, in combination with the implication that women were forced to wear such veiling, meant that Islam itself was considered to be the cause of "problematic" veiling. This was a classic New Realism proposal, weighing heavily on a culturalized citizenship. The proposal was discussed in parliament, and although rejected, parts of it were considered legitimate arguments and useful for a possible further debate on the same subject.[126]

In January 2008, another legislative proposal followed. Member of Parliament Henk Kamp (VVD) submitted an initiative bill for a prohibition on wearing clothing which covers the face in public sphere and in buildings open to the public.[127] In contrast to the proposal made by Wilders and Fritsma, this proposal did not only prohibit burqas and niqabs, but *all* forms of facecovering clothing. This second proposal was a consolidation of a trend as much as the Wilders/Fritsma proposal had been of another: it solely refers to security issues as justification for a prohibition of facecovering. Apparently, the securitization of Islam was represented well beyond the Ministry of Justice and Security. Also, it is a preliminary to a trend that would develop later, as is explained in the last chapter of this thesis: the Kamp bill disconnected the religious dimension from a prohibition on facecovering veiling.

In a letter, dated 8 February 2008, the Cabinet sent its position on facecovering clothing to the House of Representatives. It stated that the Cabinet deemed that there were, at the time, sufficient legal possibilities to prohibit facecovering clothing in specific contexts, and therefore, a general ban was considered unnecessary. However, the government showed to be of the opinion that *specific* further limits *should* be imposed, because "facecovering limits open communication", especially where it is essential for the development and functioning of the "democratic constitutional state".[128] Facecovering clothing was considered incompatible with "good," official function and civil servants were prohibited from wearing facecovering clothing during their work. In June that same year, this House Rule was effectuated and spread among the Ministries.[129] Furthermore, the letter announced that a legislative proposal would be prepared for a ban on facecovering clothing in schools and educational institutions. In this letter, the argumentation had partly shifted from the security issues addressed in the Kamp proposal to communication and 'good' civil service. And thus, again, good citizenship was linked with particular communication

[125] Parliamentary Papers II, 2007/2008, 31108 no 3, 2.
[126] Parliamentary Papers II, 2007/2008, 31108, no. 7.
[127] Parliamentary Papers II, 2007/2008, 31331, no 1-3.
[128] Parliamentary Papers II 2007/2008, 31200 VII, no. 48, 2.
[129] Staatscourant 25 juni 2008, nr. 120, 9.

modes. This culturalization of citizenship meant that a very specific, *Muslim*, part of the Dutch population was outside of this social code. Interestingly enough, in its examples, most politicians referred to situations where safety, not communication, would be at stake.[130]

In September of the same year, then Minister for Education, Culture and Science, Ronald Plasterk, tried to implement the Cabinet's position. He proposed measures on facecovering veiling in education. At first, he intended to only include primary and secondary education, but after parliamentary debate, the Minister proposed a total ban, including higher education.[131] It is significant to observe that parliamentary discussion led to an *expansion* of the proposed law. Apparently, by the end of 2008, a majority of the House of Representatives was in some way or form in favor of legislation on facecovering: New Realism seems to have been quite successful in making their ensemble of ideas dominant in the House of Representatives. That can be seen in the light of public attention for Islamic garments in that same year: 2008 marked another discussion about clothing for Islamic women. The burqini (Dutch: boerkini), a swimming suit, sparked national discussion in the Netherlands. Proponents of the garment pointed out the opportunities it gave Islamic women to participate in Dutch society, Opponents saw in the burqini mainly a symbol of women's oppression, and questioned its hygiene as well. The discussion about this garment is too extensive to discuss here, but the simultaneity does indicate that the discussion about facecovering clothing was not an isolated phenomenon – and especially not the Islamic aspect of it.[132]

The third proposal for banning facecovering veiling by Plasterk did not lead to legislation either. That does not mean we can say that public or political attention for the issue was diminishing. In September 2010, another incident sparked attention: a woman wearing a niqab was denied access to a bus. At that moment, there was no legislation on facecovering, and the transport company offered their apologies to the woman later.[133] Politicians voiced their opinion on the incident *en masse*, but the event came at a time at which the Cabinet was refraining from any 'controversial subjects' due to its demissionary[134] position.[135] But shortly after, the Rutte I cabinet was established. In the Coalition Agreement "Freedom and Responsibility" of 30 September 2010, it was stated that "the Cabinet will propose a *general* ban on facecovering clothing, *like burqa's*" (italics mine). Interestingly enough, this statement was made under the header of "Immigration," sub header "Integration." This, in combination with the term burqa, confirms that at least for the Cabinet, any legislation on facecovering clothing was connected to Islam, and Islam was perceived

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[130] Parliamentary Papers II 2007/2008, 31200 VII.
[131] Parliamentary Papers II, 2008/2009, 31700 VIII, no. 127.
[132] Another significant event in this year is the publication of the internet film Fitna by Member of Parliament Geert Wilders on March 27. It does not deal with issues of religious clothing, but it does emphasize in a most explicit manner the controversy surrounding Islam in the Netherlands.
[133] Note: the *company* did so, not the driver himself.
[134] A form of caretaker Cabinet in the Netherlands: the government offers its resignation to the Monarch but a new Cabinet has not yet been installed: the former Cabinet takes care of ongoing business and organizes new elections, but generally does not touch on 'controversial' dossiers.
[135] Parliamentary Papers, 2009/2010, Aanhangsel aan Handelingen 3337.

as an immigrant religion at the same time. Notions of a culturalized citizenship in the Netherlands were as recognizable as they were in the early 2000s.

The debate on facecovering clothing was from that moment on held in the explicit context of integration. This led opposition parties to the reproach that Rutte I was proposing a clothing rule aimed at "allochtonen:" Dutch citizens with an immigration background.[136] The Rutte I bill – much the same as the former ones – proposed a ban on the basis of four arguments: protecting the social order, ensuring open communication, the emancipation of women and the prevention of safety risks. These arguments highlighted social aspects and were rather closely connected to norms and values – arguably, slightly more than had been the case in previous proposals.[137] Culturalization of citizenship seems to be more primed in these last years than the securitization of religion. Perhaps not surprisingly: in these years, the (inter)national scene was relatively calm compared to the situation in the years 2000-2005.[138] Incidents that attracted public attention in the Netherlands mainly concerned 'civil' incidents like the burqini or the bus affair. Therefore, a political focus on the limits of Dutch citizenship would be a more logical consequence than one on securitization. It is therefore not surprising that the subsequent parliamentary debate highlighted the emancipatory aspect. Primary issue was the suspected subordinate position of women wearing Islamic facecovering clothing.

3.6 New Realism

Concluding, we have seen that from 2005 onwards, four legislative proposals to ban facecovering clothing have been submitted. That extensive political attention did not come out of the blue. If we go a little more back in time, we have seen that from the 1960s onwards, the position of Islam in the Netherlands, or rather, Muslims in the Netherlands has evolved in several dimensions.[139] The role of religion in the public domain had been regulated for years by the Dutch system of pillarization, and initially policy makers imagined to regulate the Muslim immigrants along the same lines. However, due to changing demographics and expectations, the Muslim migrant workers did

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[136] Parliamentary Papers II, 2010/2011 Handelingen, 58.

[137] See for example statements like "[…]given the aforementioned major importance of open communication and *equality between men and women* […]" (translation and italics mine) or "In a *dynamic* country like the Netherlands, with a diversity of cultures, religions and philosophies, it is essential that the state sets a clear standard for a *balanced* society, in order for everyone to be *able to participate* in society." (translation and italics mine). Parliamentary Papers, 2011/2012, 33 165, no. 3.

[138] Of course, that depends on the definition of 'calm'. But when we look for example for terrorist attacks coming from the Islamic world [not to say that those terrorist acts were Islamic] which took place in the Western world, this is my impression. The Al Qaeda attack on the USS Cole, 9/11, the Calcutta attack (Harkat al-Jihad al-Islami), the train attack in Madrid, the murder on Theo van Gogh and the London subway attacks all took place in 2000-2005. In the Netherlands, the murder on Pim Fortuyn also increased feelings of insecurity, but his murderer was not affiliated with Islam. In 2006-2011, several attacks had been prevented. Other incidents which got a lot of (inter)national coverage in this period was the 2011 Liège attack and the 2012 Toulouse and Montauban shootings.

[139] The fact that during this period not only facecovering veiling was debated, but other 'Islamic' practices as well, like halal slaughter and the burqini, further substantiates the idea that the debate about facecovering veiling is part of a larger picture. This research is not designed to indicate one clear reason why the debate about facecovering veiling in particular has taken so long. In any case, it can be observed that prior to and during the Dutch debate, similar debates were ongoing in other Western European countries. A mutual influence is therefore likely.

not seem to find a lasting place in this system. The multiculturalism model came under pressure in both political and public perspective. Prominent public figures such as Bolkestein and Cliteur changed the paradigm in society – although, of course, they were also a product of their time. "New Realism" started to gain a foothold in the Netherlands. In the beginning, multiculturalism was perceived as a problem. Later, this discourse turned against Islam as a religion in itself. Citizenship was no longer self-evident, no longer dependent on a socio-economic situation, i.e. the legal or physical ability to work and live in the Netherlands. Certain, but at the same time undetermined, cultural aspects were put forward as determining "Dutch citizenship": a culturalization of citizenship. In some respects, this culturalization could also be seen as a racialization: Muslim citizens would never be able to live up to the dominant secular 'standard', by their very act of being a Muslim. At the same time, both international events and attacks on Dutch grounds by individuals who claimed to have been motivated by Islam made Islam, and Muslim citizens by extension, possible suspects of radicalization and violence. Islam itself became securitized: Islam was put on the national agenda as a security issue, rather than as a "neutral" religious belief.

It was in this context of ongoing culturalization of citizenship, racialization of Muslims and securitization of Islam that facecovering veiling became subject of national debate. No less than four legislative proposals to prohibit face-covering clothing would be submitted. The first was the most controversial: a general burqa ban based on the incompatibility of the garment with what has been phrased as "Western fundamental constitutional values". The arguments against facecovering veiling were distinctively New Realist: (facecovering) veiling was perceived as a hindrance to emancipation and integration, as well as a safety threat. This proposal did not succeed, nor did a later proposal for a general ban on facecovering clothing on account of safety considerations. The third proposal was more specific, focusing on education. Finally, the last proposal discussed in this chapter was a general prohibition on wearing face-covering clothing to protect the social order. All failed to be accepted, but during this long period, the theme was rarely ever off the parliamentary table. A New Realist discourse had firmly established Islam as both a security and a integration issue. What we will analyze in the next chapter is the last three years of debate leading up to the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing. Did that debate continue to represent a securitized Islam, a culturalized citizenship, possibly even the racialization of Muslims? To what extent did the New Realist discourse dominate the debate in 2015-2018?

4. The Partial Ban on face-covering clothing: a critical discourse analysis

As described above, in previous years, no less than four bills on facecovering clothing were proposed to the House of Representatives. None of them was accepted, but nevertheless, the issue remained on the political agenda. In Spring 2012, Rutte I fell[140] and further debate was postponed. That could have meant that the bill would now have come to its end. However, the Chamber of Representatives decided to – although the Cabinet was demissionary – not declare the proposal controversial: therefore, the issue had to remain open as a subject for discussion for the next cabinet as well. And thus, in the coalition agreement of the Rutte II cabinet "Bruggen slaan"[141] of 29 October 2012, it was announced that facecovering clothing would be banned. This time, this would yield a more limited and specific bill than had been the case in previous legislative proposals: it banned facecovering clothing in educational facilities, healthcare, public transportation and government buildings. Autumn 2015, the government followed up on this announcement with the legislative proposal titled 'Partial prohibition of facecovering clothing'. It proved to be the first successful legislative proposal concerning facecovering clothing. It is the arena of political discourses in the process of this particular law, which will be critically analyzed in this chapter.

4.1 A(nother) legislative proposal: November – December 2015

Societal and parliamentary debate continued, and in November 2015, then Minister of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, Ronald Plasterk of the Labour Party (PvdA), submitted a fifth proposal. Any legislative proposal consists of four parts: the legislative proposal itself, an accompanying letter from the king, an explanatory memorandum and an advice from the Council of State on the above. The Minister of the Interior then adds a so-called 'further report' to this advice. Subsequently, all this is discussed in the House of Representatives. Before turning to that debate, we will firstly review the documents concerned with the proposal itself.

The legislative proposal of November 2015 focused on four specific public areas: the properties and buildings of education, healthcare and government, and on public transportation. The ban applied to clothing that completely covers the face or covers it in such a way that only the eyes are uncovered, as well as clothing that makes the face unrecognizable. A few exceptions applied to the ban. The prohibition would not apply if the wearing of such clothing is necessary for the protection of the body in for reasons of health or safety, when relating to the exercise of a profession or the practice of a sport, or when appropriate in the case of participation in a festive or

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[140] The cabinet fell on financial prospects, not in relation to this legislation.
[141] Rutte II. *Bruggen slaan. Regeerakkoord VVD - PvdA.* Via
https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/documenten/rapporten/2012/10/29/regeerakkoord Last accessed 20-12-2018.

cultural activity. Furthermore, the prohibition would not apply to clients, patients or their visitors in residential parts of healthcare institutions.[142]

Taking into account the past decade-long parliamentary debate on facecovering veiling, this law presents us with several interesting aspects. Using our threefold critical discourse analysis on *social code, significance* and *connections*, we might firstly ask ourselves, how does this law construct the Dutch social code? First and foremost, this proposal proposes what should be considered as explicitly *bad* behavior in specific contexts. In doing so, it constitutes the visibility of the face as a social good. What might be most interesting about this, is not just that observation, but more importantly, to see that in relation to its sociohistorical context. This legislative proposal is the product of and response to a parliamentary and public debate of more than a decade. Therefore, the proposal validates this discussion while at the same time, we see how certain considerations have developed, resulting in a more modest legislative proposal than had been the case in most earlier bills. While not explicitly mentioning them, this document *connects* the historical events and subsequent parliamentary discussion. The significance of facecovering in the public sphere is confirmed by this legislative proposal – while at the same time limiting the affair to a specific legal framework. It places a ban on facecovering, but limits the consequences to a *certain extent*: it will be considered as a *violation*, which is under Dutch law the lowest form of a criminal offense. Violation is to be punished with a fine of the lowest level, which ranges between 3-415 euro's. Thus, the means to punish the practice are kept relatively low. Moreover, the first article gives us the conditions under which veiling is prohibited. This means that the following aspects are highlighted as *significant*: location (here: areas belonging to governmental, healthcare or educational institutions), exceptions (here: residential areas, protection, necessity in relation to occupations [sports, profession] or actions [passaging to a residential area]) suitability and temporality (here: cultural or festive activities). When we recollect the past debates and proposals, these all indicate slight or bigger changes as to the aims and scope of the ban. After seeing earlier attempts fail on political and legal grounds, Plasterk apparently adjusted his efforts. How that is discursively related to Plasterk's aims, will be further discussed in the context of the explanatory memorandum.

But first, a rather short, but nevertheless interesting document. The royal statement is a short supporting letter, always of the same style. It is intended to be neutral in tone and not to communicate any more information than announcing the legislative proposal. Yet the concluding sentence: "*And with this We command You in God's sacred protection,*"[143] does signal a *significance* of the Christian (Protestant) God in Dutch politics. Especially since the issue of facecovering clothing has been explicitly connected to an Islamic practice, this detail is striking. Not only can we wonder if the sacred protection of the Christian God affectively extends to Muslim

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[142] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 2.
[143] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 1.

citizens, but more importantly, the Islamic image of God, or Allah, is out of this picture. Or, to paraphrase that in Gee's terms: Allah has been *disconnected* from this perception of God. A royal statement ratifies a legislative proposal as genuine, and although the role of the King and God in Dutch politics is often regarded as merely symbolic,[144] no bill is properly submitted without it. In this rather subtle way, the Christian God is made *significant* for this debate – and as we will see, that did not stop at this reference.

The minister substantiated his motivation for the proposal in the explanatory memorandum. Here, we can get a relatively large number of signals on the perspective of the government on facecovering clothing. First of all, it repeatedly emphasized the importance of *uniform regulations* and interestingly enough, of *freedom*. Both the freedom to dress as you like, but also the freedom of bystanders, which is apparently hampered by the presence of a covered person. That is highlighted for example in the following quote: "*An important principle here is that in a free country like the Netherlands everyone has the freedom to behave in the way that suits them, provided that the freedom of others is not restricted by doing so.*"[145] It is not made explicit in what way facecovering clothing restricts the freedom of other people, but in the subsequent sentences it is implied that facecovering is a threat to both qualitative communication and safety. In other words: not only is facecovering *connected* to issues of safety and communication, there is a distinctive way it which that is done. Safety and communication are discursively linked to the very nature of the Netherlands – namely, a 'free' country. This *connection* makes facecovering clothing an un-Dutch act. Besides, this principle of Plasterk prioritizes certain values over others: the freedom of a Muslim to dress as (s)he likes can be surpassed by the freedom of a by-stander, the needs of the latter being the most *significant* for Plasterk.

Another quote is exemplary of the connection between social code and the visibility of the face, one of the major arguments of this document: "*A pluriform country like the Netherlands where different groups of people live closely together can only function if everyone participates and shares the basic principles of society. Mutual communication between citizens is of great importance in places where people meet and meet each other.*"[146] Here, communication is presented as a core principle of the society, just as freedom was before. Not necessarily a bold claim in itself, but in the following sentence it is claimed without further ado that facecovering *cannot* be a part of good communication. Following this, covered women are effectively put outside of the *social code* by their very veiling practice. Moreover, this quote indicates another implicit assumption: veiled citizens are not participating in society. They are not losing at the game of *social*

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[144] See for example https://www.parlement.com/id/vh8lnhronvvr/de_koning. Last accessed December 18, 2018.
[145] Translation mine. Original text: Een belangrijk uitgangspunt hierbij is dat in een vrij land als Nederland een ieder de vrijheid heeft om zich te gedragen zoals dat bij hem past, mits de vrijheid van anderen daardoor niet wordt beperkt. Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 3, 1.
[146] Translation mine. Original text: Een pluriform land als Nederland waar verschillende groepen mensen dicht op elkaar leven kan alleen functioneren als iedereen meedoet en de basisprincipes van de samenleving deelt. Onderlinge communicatie tussen burgers is daarbij van groot belang op plaatsen waar mensen elkaar tegenkomen en ontmoeten." Ibid., 3.

code: they are not even participating. The principal value of a visible face is further indicated by a section which suggests that 'good' civil service is exclusively possible *without* facecovering: *"The Cabinet did indicate [...] that facecovering clothing is incompatible with good civil servantship."*[147] Within a few sentences, facecovering has been changed from a barrier in communication to an insurmountable obstacle to participating in society. The wearer is marked, as it were, as an Outsider. The government, on the other hand, is presented as the guardian of norms and guidelines, a necessary and responsive role – Plasterk only shoulders his responsibilities, he is not a driving force. The perspective of the women who wear facecovering veiling is not part of this document: their possible role in society is *disconnected* from any considerations. That seems to be related to the endeavor of Plasterk to discursively *disconnect* Islam and the Partial Ban: *"It does not matter whether it is a face veil, full-face helmet or a mask. A headscarf, a veil that does not cover the face, a yarmulke or other headgear obviously do not fall under the prohibition."*[148] This, for him, validated that the Partial Ban was not a dress code aimed at Islam.[149] At the same time, religion (and specifically the fact that it is *not* aiming at Islam: the nondiscriminatory nature of the ban) was often a concluding section in the paragraphs. In a sense, Plasterk does not seem to have a concluding answer to the question: what role is religion allowed to have in the public place? He is relating to an inferred *social code*: for example, note here the use of the term *obviously.* This suggests "real Dutch" people would understand the purpose of this bill, they would not have trouble discerning which type of religious clothing is acceptable. At the same time, he does not want to be accused of meddling with religious practices: would it therefore be only a Muslim Outsider who would have problems with this issue?

Finally, the fourth document consists of the remarks of the advisory department of the Council of State and response of the Minister to these remarks: the 'further report.' This document has two actors with opposing standpoints: Minister Plasterk, who is the advocate of the ban, and the Advisory Section of the Council of State, which advises against it. This document highlights several aspects for discussion. Following the line of the document, I will first introduce the arguments of the Advisory Section, and follow with the remarks of the Minister.

The advice of the Advisory Section was dissenting. This was based on two major arguments: a lack of necessity and considerations of religious freedom. They repeatedly questioned the lack of specific facts concerning the nature and scope of this problem with Islamic facecovering clothing, implying that there are no real (risks of) incidents which would necessitate this law. The Advisory Section deemed it unlikely that schools, government institutions, transport or care would be

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[147] Translation mine. Original text: Het kabinet gaf wel aan [...] gezichtsbedekkende kleding onverenigbaar te vinden met goed ambtenaarschap. Ibid., 3.

[148] Translation mine. Original text: "Het maakt daarbij niet uit of het gaat om een gezichtssluier, integraalhelm of een masker. Een hoofddoek, een sluier die het gezicht niet bedekt, een keppeltje of ander hoofddeksel valt vanzelfsprekend niet onder het verbod." Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 3, 2.

[149] Ibid., 5.

effected on any relevant scale.[150] Furthermore, the Advisory Section drew attention to the fact that the government in 2008 had come to the conclusion that there were already sufficient legal possibilities to effectively deal with safety risks associated with wearing face-covering clothing in the public space and in public transport. Any school, institution or transporter could set "house rules" and act accordingly without needing such regulations as proposed by this law.[151] The government had explained in the memorandum that they wished to replace those 'incoherent' house rules with uniform regulation. The Advisory Section objected to that, arguing it had not emerged in any situation that a lack of national legislation had led to ambiguity and legal uncertainty.

And again, religion was on the table. In 'those cases where women wear facecovering veiling to express a religious belief', the Advisory Section noted that this falls under both the constitutional and international treaty-protected freedom of religion. The ban as proposed by the government did not, according to the Advisory Section, answer any urgent need, which would be needed to justify a restriction on the right to freedom of religion.[152] Yet while the Advisory Section 'defended' the right of Religious Freedom, again, none of the considerations for Islamic women to wear facecovering veiling, nor their position was taken into account. That perspective was entirely *disconnected* from the first round for the House of Representatives.

The second part of this further report document contains Plasterk responses to the concerns raised. Overall, he maintained that a majority of the arguments as explained in the memorandum remained valid. He reemphasized that the necessity for a law prohibiting facecovering clothing in these public areas was based on "the social and parliamentary discussion that has been going on for a number of years."[153] He reiterated that the law concerns a "general standard in Dutch society."[154] In his opinion, the limited scale on which the phenomenon occurs did not detract the government from its responsibility. Generally, his major argument revolved around the importance of uniformity. He valued the law as a way of providing clarity, equality of rights and predictability, and he placed a strong emphasis on the *practical* aspects of the law. The ideological arguments of the explanatory memorandum are less prominent in this further report-response.

In summary, using our adaptation of Gee's analysis helps reveal several interesting discursive elements from the exchange between the Advisory Section and Plasterk. From the government perspective, that type of veiling is opposed to two intertwined "Dutch" social goods in particular: freedom and qualitative communication, these implicitly resulting in more safety. However, the effectiveness of these arguments was not in the ideological substantiation – the

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[150] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 4, 5.
[151] Ibid., 4-5.
[152] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 4, 2.
[153] Ibid., 1, where this argument is presented in its original form by the Committee. On page six, the Minister repeats this exact same argument as an answer to the earlier objection that this is not a valid reason.
[154] Ibid., 7.

deep, heartfelt belief that facecovering veiling *itself* is reprehensible. It is only as far as the veiling is an obstacle to the *social code* of Plasterk, that he objected to it. And even though this effectively results in a proposal that has a disproportionate effect on certain Muslim citizens, his discourse is qualitatively different from the New Realism discourse of politicians such as Wilders or Hirsi Ali. Plasterk underpinned his idealistic arguments on communication by arguments relating to what he sees as the role of the government: to provide uniformity and certainty, and to respond to society: note his emphasis that the ban is suitable in relation to its purpose. If we compare this to the earlier proposals of the previous chapter, this does seem to be a shift in ideological substantiation. Ten years earlier, banning facecovering clothing was part of a discourse claiming the incompatibility of Islam with Dutch norms and values. Now, this discourse seems to have had its effect on other parties as well. However, this does not mean that the underlying goal of this discourse had been met: the arguments were not focused on Islam anymore. Furthermore, this proposal explicitly mentioned that a former *general* ban was off the table: it aimed at closing off a part of the discussion that was specifically focused on Islam in the public sphere. When we turn our attention to the response of the Advisory Section, two things in particular deserve our attention. First, the Advisory Section made the biggest difference in the category of significance. Contrary to Plasterk, they made *historical events* and *sectors* significant, and linked these to the necessity of an, in their opinion absent, *indispensable advantage* of the law. The Section deemed existing local regulations more practical and efficient. Furthermore, they dedicated significant space to the (international) jurisprudence on freedom of religion. They valued restraint concerning limiting freedom of religion. Still, there is one thing on which the Section agreed with their collocutor: the "importance of open social communication," especially in education. Thus, they implicitly acknowledged that facecovering would be contradictory to this.[155] The major discursive element of Minister Plasterk, relying on *social code*, was not contradicted entirely. Moreover, neither of the partakers reflected the perspective of the women themselves.

The legislative power of the Advisory Section lies in their consent or dissent, an authoritative recommendation for any Minister. However, even though they recommended that the bill would *not* be sent to the House of Representatives, the Minister decided to send it, unaltered. At the same time, we must not reduce the influence of the Advisory Section solely to this. Their influence would certainly be noticeable in the subsequent debates, as we will see in the remainder of this chapter.

4.2 A first round of debate: January – March 2016

The first time the complete file of these four documents was discussed by members of the House of Representatives was in January 2016. All parties had the opportunity to offer their comments and questions in a written note to the Ministry. Members of the VVD, PvdA, SP, CDA, SGP, D66, the

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[155] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 4, 6.

ChristenUnie and the Kuzu/Öztürk Group made use of this opportunity.[156] The Standing Committee combines these comments in a written report to the Minister for the Interior. In the response note, the Minister deals with the remarks and questions.

This first discussion – although one on paper – gives us an interesting insight in the aspects that were deemed *significant* by both the opposing parties and those in favor of the law. At the time, the Rutte II coalition was in office, led by Prime Minister Mark Rutte of the VVD, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy. The VVD traditionally associates itself with, among other things, security. [157] It is therefore unsurprising that they strongly supported the legislative proposal, whilst citing the importance of security as the core of their arguments. According to the VVD position, social interaction is crucial in society in order for the society to function and for all members to feel safe.[158] Beyond the mere argument for safety, the VVD used strong ideological rhetoric for their arguments. The suggestion that people wearing facecovering clothing did not even 'participate [in society] at least on a minimum level'[159] is exemplary of that. Interestingly enough, they first mentioned that the legislative proposal considered 'any type of facecovering,' but they dropped this term rather quickly for the term 'burqa'. Apparently, the religious aspect was not as *insignificant* for them as the VVD would like it seem appear.

At the time, the VVD formed a 'grand coalition' with the Labour Party, the PvdA.[160] These political differences within the government would be apparent during the legislative process of this Partial Ban as well. The PvdA, the party of Minister Plasterk, emphasized the practical aspects of the issue at stake. Like their coalition partner VVD, they started with some ideological considerations, like the 'basic principles of society,' but whereas the VVD continued on this theme, the PvdA chose a different road. Their questions and arguments mainly revolved around the applicability of the law. The goals of the two government parties were, thus, fairly different: that difference would continue to grow along the years to come.

The opposition had three major approaches in this session. Firstly, the Christian approach, secondly, the secular approach and thirdly, the rejective approach. The Christian Democratic Appèl, (CDA), seemed to have been fairly positive about the legislative proposal. Whereas the PvdA seemed at unease to repeat wholeheartedly the arguments of the VVD to support the legislative proposal, the CDA, together with the VVD asked whether a general ban would still be an option. A

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[156] Respectively: Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD, conservative liberal), Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA/Labour Party, social democratic), Socialistische Partij (SP, Socialist Party), Christen Democratisch Appèl (CDA, Christian-democratic), Staatkundig Gereformeerde Partij (SGP, orthodox Calvinist), Democraten '66 (social-liberal), ChristenUnie (CU, Christian Democratic), Kuzu/Öztürk (two-man party, formerly PvdA, Turkish). Other parties of the House of Representatives at that time were the 50Plus party (Pensioner's interests, 2 seats), the Partij voor de Dieren (PvdD, animal rights/testimonial party, 2 seats), the Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV, nationalist/right wing, 15 seats) and GroenLinks (Green, leftwing, 4 seats).

[157] One of their proclaimed 'pillars'. Interestingly enough, on their website, their search suggestion is "safety" as well. See for example https://www.vvd.nl/standpuntenoverzicht/ .

[158] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 5, 1.

[159] Ibid., 2.

[160] Grand coalition refers to the fact that VVD and PvdA are of opposed political ideologies, but united as largest political parties in a coalition government anyway. Rod Hague, Martin Harrop and John McCormick, *Comparative Government and Politics : An Introduction. (10th edition)* (New York: Palgrave, 2016), 330.

thought-provoking element, on which we will elaborate later, but not even the most interesting factor in the discourse of the CDA for now. All the more interesting for the analysis on this Partial Ban is the shared approach of the Christian parties. What the CDA and its Christian counterparts had in common were their references to *social code.* The SGP, the ChristenUnie and the CDA all referred to a certain standard of 'normal interaction',[161] as exemplified in the following quote of the ChristenUnie: *"A balance must be found between the manners common in our society, ways of communication on the one hand, and individual liberties and freedom of religion on the other."*[162] This argument on the importance of a certain balance was implicitly *connected* to a Christian culture of moderation. In the end, the balancing argument would prove to be an important pillar of the success of the Partial Ban. It is therefore important to note, here, that this argument entered the arena through the scope of the Christian parties, all three explicitly reliant on their confessional background to arrive at this 'balance'.

Non-confessional opposition parties had more or less the same questions as did the Christian parties and the coalition, but the basis of their arguments led to a different interpretation of what was *significant* about this law. The Socialist Party (SP) and the Democrats 66 (D66, social liberal) were predominantly concerned with the – in their eyes, unsatisfying – response of the Minister to the Advisory Section. The SP referred multiple times to practical issues and historical events. Most importantly, D66 explicitly referred to the thesis of Muslim Othering: "[D66] sincerely asks by which images of fear the government is led, if they are able to state that a covered face [impedes] in such a way [our ability to read] the response and intention of a potential conversation partner that public security is jeopardized."[163] And: "The idea that the burqa is dangerous comes from an irrational fear of "the Other," which no ethical society should honor."[164] These quotes seem to confirm a process of securitization and racialization that takes place in the Netherlands – but while those claims are widely supported by scholars, as we have seen in the previous chapters, the Do Not Create A Muslim Other discourse of D66 failed to be repeated by any other parties, despite the Group Kuzu/Öztürk.

This last Group was most unequivocally negative about the law. The Kuzu/Öztürk Group consisted of two name setting members, who had left the PvdA party in November 2014, only a year earlier. They mainly represented voters of Turkish or other non-Dutch descent. Two years later, they would form the party Think (Denk) and secure three seats in parliament, but at the time, their influence was more limited: they had not established their own party yet, and relied only on their own personal presence for their legitimacy. Their arguments covered both ideological and practical

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[161] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 5, 2.

[162] Translation mine. Original text: "evenwicht moet worden gevonden tussen de in onze samenleving gebruikelijk omgangsvormen, wijzen van communicatie enerzijds en individuele vrijheden en godsdienstvrijheid anderzijds." Ibid., 11.

[163] Translation mine. Original text: "De aan het woord zijnde leden vragen zich dan ook oprecht af door welke angstbeelden de regering geleid wordt om te kunnen stellen dat een bedekt gelaat zodanig de mogelijkheid reactie en intentie te peilen van een potentiele gesprekspartner dat daarmee de openbare veiligheid in het geding komt." Ibid., 6.

[164] Translation mine. Original text: "De gedachte dat de boerka gevaarlijk is, komt voort uit een irrationele angst voor «het andere», die geen fatsoenlijke maatschappij zou mogen honoreren." Ibid., 6.

concerns with an overall plain negative assessment of the arguments of the government for this law. Their position might be best represented in their concluding remark: "The members of the Group Kuzu/Öztürk are wondering whether the government actually believes that all these costs and difficulties for a legislative proposal to regulate an extremely limited group of people, are worth the effort. Is not it a lot of hassle for a non-existent problem of a tiny group? Is not it just a bullying measure? Is it not just symbolic politics?"[165]

Thus, we have five distinct lines of thought represented in this document. Not surprisingly, the VVD added a great *significance* to safety concerns, while the PvdA and CDA were more verbose on the importance of 'open communication'. While both D66 and the Christian parties took ethical approaches, their ethical frameworks were quite distinct: D66 represented a rather academic position, as exemplified by their comment on the Other. The Christian parties based most of their arguments on their interpretation of a *social code* or common decency. The Group Kuzu/Öztürk discarded each and every argument of the government. They bluntly blamed the proposal for being 'symbol politics.' This last remark would prove to be significant one, as symbolism would become one of the more frequently discussed aspects, but not entirely in the way Kuzu/Öztürk may have foreseen. Besides, Kuzu/Öztürk was the only political party which actively represented and made *significant* the perspective of the veiled women. Lastly, the Kuzu/Öztürk group, like D66, emphasized the importance of a professional (as opposed to political) review of this law. Kuzu/Öztürk suggested that there was an adamant lack of interest in expertise opinion in creating this law.

This report gives us a prototype of many arguments that would prove to be core to the discussion the following two years. And, many of those arguments are reminiscent of the New Realism discourse. Several parties discussed the social pressure that might be on women to wear a niqab, or the risk of radicalization as a response to this law. And thus, although implicitly, Islam was continuously connected to all kinds of threats both on a personal and national level. Islam, or Muslims, were definitely the stake of this discussion. Even though strictly speaking, this proposal applied to anyone wearing any type of facecovering in public areas, this January 2016 report left no doubt that Islam was perceived as principal issue. On the other hand, there is a diverging trend from the New Realism discourse here, as well. Islam was not explicitly pointed out as an "immigrant religion", with exception of the SGP. They *did* mention that: "this bill is mainly concerned with the appearance of the burqa and the niqab in Dutch public life, which is mainly connected to the growth and diversity of groups from other cultures that settle here."[166] Still, it is noteworthy that the term

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[165] Translation mine. Original text: "De leden van de Groep Kuzu/Öztürk vragen zich af of de regering al deze kosten en moeiten voor een wetsvoorstel ter regulering van een uiterst beperkte groep mensen eigenlijk wel waard vindt. Is het niet ontzettend veel gedoe voor een niet-bestaand probleem van een piepkleine groep? Is het niet gewoon een pestmaatregel? Is het niet gewoon symboolpolitiek?" Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 5, 12.

[166] Translation mine. Original text: Gezien de eerdere voorstellen gaat het bij dit wetsvoorstel met name om het verschijnen van de boerka en de niqab in het straatbeeld, wat vooral samenhangt met de groei en verscheidenheid van groepen afkomstig uit andere culturen die zich hier vestigen. Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 5, 10.

"immigration" or "integration" was not voiced in the other comments at all. Besides, we see some criticism on the idea of a 'dangerous Islam' as well. The most clear example of that are the Othering comment of D66 and the remarks of Kuzu/Öztürk, but for example the SP and ChristenUnie alluded to it as well. Finally, this report gives us another interesting aspect of the 2015-2018 debate. One of the core arguments of the PvdA was the *appropriateness* of this specific *sectional* law. The VVD however, declared itself to be in favor of even more large-scale legislation. The grand coalition was apparently not grandly agreeing on the exact purposes of this law.

A little over a month later, the Minister answered the questions in his Response Note. That note was, unsurprisingly, very much in line with the PvdA approach. First, it confirmed that the Minister did not see any grounds for a *general* ban on facecovering veiling, because this would not be "in line with the freedom of Dutch society"[167]. The safety argument, which formed a large part of the questions raised by the VVD, was deemphasized. While the Minister alluded to this issue in some of his answers, he clearly was not intending to make security aspects *significant*. For example, the Minister answered negatively on the question whether terrorism had played a role in drawing up this legislative proposal, indicated that he did not expect the law to have a radicalizing effect on the focus group, and that lowering the current 'dreigingsniveau', national threat level, was not an objective of this law.[168] Overall, the Minister tried throughout the document to make *significant* issues of communication, while *downplaying* issues of safety.

Beyond the more or less ideologically motivated argument of communication, the main argument of the Minister was uniformity. This emphasis was a continuation of his line of thought when discussing the proposal with the Council of State, and it proved to be his answer here as well. On a variety of questions, like what the Minister had done with the advice of the Council of State, what the Minister expected to be the effect of this legislative proposal, if he had taken into account that the affected sectors were not in favor of the law, why legislation was needed while there seemed to be no real problem, et cetera. In his answers to all these kind of questions he referred to the necessity and profitability of uniformity. According to the Minister, actual numbers of women wearing facecovering clothing, or their motives for wearing such *hijab* should not be decisive in this matter – uniformity should.[169] This latter argument was a clear attempt to *completely disconnect* the perspective of the women involved from the parliamentary discussion. With that, their perspective became automatically less, if not *insignificant*, as if they were not full participants in this bill which would directly affect their rights and responsibilities.

In response to the ideological objection of D66 that this legislative proposal was motivated by fear and the Kuzu/Öztürk objection that it would be discriminative, the Minister referred to a similar type of argument. It was the public opinion, the national concerns, at stake, and the answer

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[167] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 6, 1.
[168] Ibid., 7
[169] Ibid., 8.

of the government should be uniform. The interests of a purported societal majority were more *significant* to Plasterk than the interests of the women themselves. Besides, uniformity was particularly *significant* for Plasterk. He substantiated his prioritization of uniformity by claiming that this legislative proposal was a 'balanced' response to all discomfort surrounding this issue. This attention for balance had not at all been part of the New Realism proposals of 2003-2012, nor was it part of the discourse of the VVD, the other coalition party. The effect of this argument would be major, and will gradually unfold in the following discussions.

4.3 The House of Representatives discusses, amends and votes: 23 November 2016

The official, in-person debate on the legislative proposal took place at the end of 2016. Such a debate has a fixed pattern. First, the spokespersons of the political groups in the House of Representatives will speak. Then, the minister responds to this, thereby concluding the first term. Usually, and in this debate as well, a second term follows, in which the present Members of Parliament can speak again, followed by a reply of the Minister. If the questions would still not be answered satisfactorily, a third term may follow, which was not the case in this debate. Plenary debates in the House of Representatives are public, and the room offers a visitor's section on the balcony. Normally, these are not particularly crowded, but this time, a number of visitors wearing the niqab were in attendance.

D66 opened the debate. The opposition parties D66 and GroenLinks drew mainly on ethical considerations and objections for their arguments. This time, D66 did not refrain from the accusation of symbolism, an argument addressed earlier by Kuzu/Öztürk. D66 continued on their argument of Othering, as well. In addition to the reproach of symbolism and injustice from the D66 angle, GroenLinks also emphasized the lack of real incidents.

The debate took an interesting turn when the concept of freedom was discussed. D66 indicated that it would fight for the "individual freedoms" of the women to wear whatever they want.[170] This notion of "individual freedom" clearly struck a chord: several parties agitated against it, in particular the Christian parties. Individual freedom, according to them, was not something D66, nor, as turned out later, GroenLinks could "own." According to the Christian parties, these two parties had obstructed that very individual freedom in earlier debates. Freedom dominated the discourses of several parties, without, for the moment, anyone being able to really make their discourse on freedom dominant. The VVD, who had focused on the notion of freedom from the beginning, *connected* it to safety. They objected to adversaries of the Partial Ban that they "[do] not weigh [the individual freedom to wear whatever you want] against the importance of the other individual, who also wants to be free in this society and wants to feel safe."[171] Another approach to

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[170] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, Handelingen 34 349, 3.
[171] Translation mine. Original text: "Maar mevrouw Voortman weegt dat niet af tegen het belang van dat andere individu dat ook vrij wil zijn in deze samenleving en zich veilig wil voelen. Een randvoorwaarde voor het zich vrij voelen is veiligheid." Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, Handelingen 34 349, 9.

connect freedom to a former argument was done by the ChristenUnie, which balanced religious freedom and societal norms: "On the one hand, you have the religious freedom of very orthodox Muslim women. On the other hand, you have the *social norm* of normal interaction. Looking each other in the face is an elementary form of civilization. Facecovering clothing is a frontal blockade of that."[172]

A few parties were strongly representing the New Realism discourse. They were explicitly in favor of a ban on *Islamic* face-covering clothing, and of the opinion that the current proposal was not sufficient. Proponents of a ban on Islamic clothing included duo- and one-man parties "Bontes/Van Klaveren"[173] and "Monasch",[174] who repeatedly pointed out that facecovering is a symbol of women's oppression. Monasch also repeatedly objected to the presence of the women in niqab on the balcony in the visitors' section.[175] The PVV had a similar position, and *emphasized* that the Netherlands was flooded with mass immigration, subject to Islamization, that integration would have failed and that we could expect the introduction of shari'a any time now – if this kind of Islamic practices would not be stopped.[176] The PVV also emphasized that they were the original submitters of a ban on facecovering clothing, thereby claiming ownership of the subject – and *connecting* the current debate to the New Realism discourse. This was something that was repeated by opposite parties as well, be it in a negative sense. Even though most parties objected to their position on Islam, debates like these show the New Realism success in putting the theme of Islamic clothing on the agenda – and keeping it there. Are we looking at a continuation of the New Realism discourse, be it in a different setting?

Not entirely. The House of Representatives was alive to New Realism claims, but even more to a newer discursive thread: a practical approach. The PvdA attempted to transform the debate into a more technical discussion, trying to make less *significant* the religious discussion. They tried to *disconnect* the law from discussions about emancipation in this debate as well. Their own discussion points revolved around the issue of "avoidance of care",[177] a concern that was voiced by other parties as well, but was made their central issue by the PvdA. Again, they emphasized that the law entailed only a *limited* prohibition, and that it therefore was a plausible and appropriate prohibition, based on 'rational' arguments. Can we see this practical implementation language as purposefully obscuring the issue from its ethical implications? From a critical standpoint, it may seem as if the ethics do not matter that much in this practical/rational approach. Is it a

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[172] Translation mine. Original text: "Aan de ene kant heb je de geloofsvrijheid van zeer orthodoxe moslima's. [...] Aan de andere kant heb je de maatschappelijke norm van normale interactie. Elkaar in het gezicht kunnen kijken is een elementaire vorm van beschaving. Gezichtsbedekkende kleding staat daaraan frontaal in de weg." Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, Handelingen 34 349, 5.
[173] Former party: PVV.
[174] Former party: PvdA.
[175] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, Handelingen 34 349, 24.
[176] Ibid., 14.
[177] The expectation that women in niqab would start to avoid (necessary) healthcare, since they would not be comfortable, willing or capable to show up uncovered.

reincarnation of the New Realism discourse, this time led by the grand coalition? Not entirely, as we will see in the further progress of the debate.

Biggest opponent of the ban, both on practical and ethical grounds, was still the Group Kuzu/Öztürk. Having recently parted[178] with the PvdA, mister Kuzu requested no less than thirty minutes of speech time to show his disapproval of this PvdA proposal. He first referred to the *huik,* the "indigenous" facecovering garment that was worn in the Netherlands up until the first decades of the twentieth century. He stressed the conflict of this law with Human Rights, as well as the lack of incidents or other reasons for a ban. He accused the government of symbol politics, xenophobia and a "pestmaatregel".[179] Again, Kuzu/Öztürk tried to make *significant* the perspective of the women in facecovering veiling. But despite his long argument and his many objections, Kuzu did not really succeed in having his message echoed by Minister Plasterk.

A minister is expected to respond to all questions and remarks at the end of the first term. Minister Plasterk chose to pay *significant* attention the practicalities of the Partial Ban, like he had done in previous answers and as had been done by his party as well. He argued that the law was more than just symbolic politics precisely based on those practical issues: its uniformity and clarity would aid Dutch citizens in a way house rules could not provide for. The proposal was deliberately limited, as to both end the societal debate and refrain from excessively limiting religious freedom.[180] All these arguments were in line with, or the same as, previous arguments. Minister Plasterk strongly kept to his practical discourse and, at least to some extent, he succeeded in that. A major part of the discussion in the second term revolved around enforceability – a practical issue. This technical debate never excluded notions of religion, but pros and cons were weighed on a scale of implementation, not ethical arguments. This interpretation was the dominant discursive line of the PvdA Minister, and, judging from this second term, he was quite successful in setting the tone. The "practical balance" discourse of the PvdA was starting to dominate the debate on the Partial Ban from this debate onwards. Arguments on ethical or ideological grounds simply did not resonate with the other parties like this discourse. Ethical comments, like those of Kuzu, were dealt with relatively shortly, which even invoked the annoyance of Mr. Kuzu, who felt that his arguments were not taken seriously.[181] The New Realism groups in the House of Representatives did not get too much response of the other parties, either. The safety argument of the VVD was not frequently debunked, but not attacked or discussed in extensive detail either. The practical approach of the PvdA, supplemented with the "balancing" ingredient, the input of the Christian parties, was more prominent.

In the second term of this debate, Kuzu called for a withdrawal of the proposal. That brings us to the next stage of the debate in the House of Representatives: amendments and motions are

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[178] In 2014, over integration issues.
[179] Roughly translates to "bully-rule". Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, Handelingen 34 349, 19.
[180] Ibid., 26.
[181] Ibid., 32.

dealt with in a separate meeting, this time one week later. The motion of Mr. Kuzu, withdrawal, was not supported by any of the other parties.[182] One the one hand, this is not too surprising. Motions and amendments of the opposition are not frequently accepted in the Dutch House of Representatives.[183] On the other hand, it gives us an interesting insight in the dominance of discourses in the House of Representatives. Especially since the motion of Kuzu was a rather special one, too. Simply put, his motion constituted nothing more than a vote against the legislative proposal. His motion was thus a strong symbolic signal to the government that he was actively opposed to the *entire composition of discourses* that would enable this proposal. It is therefore telling, that no other party, not even the opposition, supported his motion. Notwithstanding any other changes in the parliamentary debate, a complete objection to anti-Islamic sentiments failed to gain any dominance for the 2015-2018 period, especially since the Kuzu/Öztürk Group was not represented in the Senate. Their contributions ended here.

Two other amendments, by Ms. Voortman, to exclude education (first) and healthcare (second) were supported by some, but rejected as well. A third amendment of Mr. Bisschop, to extent the law to *building*s of public transport, was rejected, too.[184] Finally, the legislative proposal itself was put to vote in the House of Representatives. The members of the SP, PvdD, PvdA, Van Vliet, 50PLUS, Klein, Houwers, Monasch, VVD, SGP, ChristenUnie, CDA, Bontes/Van Klaveren Group and PVV voted in favor of the legislative proposal.[185] Upon that voting, the legislative proposal was officially adopted by the House of Representatives on November 29, 2016.

4.4 The Senate

The adoption of the legislative proposal by the House of Representatives brought it to the Senate of the Netherlands.[186] The Senate has a revising role in proposed legislation. Its members do not have the right of amendment, like the House of Representatives: they can only vote for either acceptation or rejection. Before the debate was planned, the parliamentary committee decided that this proposal should have a preparatory study, which is not uncommon for these kind of bills. That study consists of roughly the same elements as we have seen with the original legislative proposal in 2015: the members of the Senate present their views and pose their questions in a written document, to which the Government replies in a note or memorandum of reply.[187] This time, after

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[182] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 13 and 14.
[183] They have a general success rate of cira 20%.
[184] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, numbers 9 III, 10 III, 11, 12 II and 13.
[185] Parliamentary Papers II, 2015/2016, 34 349, no. 13.
[186] The seventy-five members of the Senate (Eerste Kamer) of the Dutch Parliament (the States General) are elected by the members of the twelve Provincial Councils. These elections are indirect, plus the members of the Senate are part-time. Therefore, they are often regarded as being rather remote from daily politics, compared to the House of Representatives. The core task of the Senate as co-legislator is to test the quality of the (proposed) legislation on three aspects: legality, feasibility and enforceability. Source: https://www.eerstekamer.nl/begrip/hoe_werkt_de_eerste_kamer Last accessed 06-12-2018.
[187] Senate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. "How are bills dealt with by the Senate?" Via https://www.eerstekamer.nl/begrip/english_2 Last accessed 20-12-2018.

the first round of written preparations, the Minister was asked to deliver a further memorandum of reply. That is telling: generally, one round is considered sufficient. Apparently, this proposal was both attracting considerable attention, and considered still ambiguous.

Even more than had been the case in the written commentaries in the House of Representatives, this first round of questioning in the Senate mainly revolved around the presence of any "real" problem – in other words, the frequency or size of the problem in question. All parties focused their questions on the necessity of the ban weighed against the possibility of local regulations. This, of course led the respective parties to different conclusions. Most of these conclusions were in line with the views represented by their colleagues in the House of Representatives. PvdA focused on care avoidance, the VVD wondered about the possibility to extend the ban to other areas, the CDA focused on education and GroenLinks reemphasized its advocacy for individual freedom. In this sense, this first exploration of the Senate was a continuation of the aforementioned positions that had already been mentioned in the House of Representatives. Therefore, while the Minister seemed to have succeeded in a certain way in making his "practical balance" discourse prevail over the ideological and ethical arguments, the latter ones were far from off the table.

Moreover, we see the resurgence of some earliest arguments that had lost their prominence over the course of the debate in the House of Representatives: a *reconnection* with earlier debates. One argument that is particularly interesting in this respect is the question of integration. The VVD wondered "whether the stated goals [of the Minister], […] could not be achieved via the gradual road of integration."[188] Integration issues had been mentioned at the start of the debate in 2015, but after the response of the government that a majority of the women wearing Islamic facecovering clothing were native Dutch, this notion had barely been mentioned again. Here, roughly the same answer was offered: the Minister responded that integration was not an objective of this law and that "a large proportion of the wearers of facecovering clothing was born in the Netherlands"[189]. However, as we will see in the subsequent debate in the Senate, this idea of facecovering being part of an immigrant religion would become more *significant* than it had been in the House of Representatives.

In his response note, the Minister largely remained with his considerations of clarity, legal certainty, providing a general standard, equality of rights and uniformity. He also frequently repeated that it was his objective to "settle the public debate", for him a reason to see this law as necessary. The lack of figures, or the presence of existing house rules, was not supplemented by new arguments, but mostly repeated. This repetition of moves mainly was a reiteration of the "practical balance" discourse that had been core to his approach from early on.

[188] Parliamentary Papers I, 2016/2017, 34 349, A, 2.
[189] Parliamentary Papers I, 2016/2017, 34 349, B, 1.

There is another aspect of this first round in the Senate that is interesting with regard to the past discussion. Considerations of safety and communication were frequently discussed, but often as a statement along the lines of "the quality of service and safety would be under pressure in the presence of a covered woman". Such statements were oft repeated, but not further substantiated. Rather, the practical application of safeguarding this safety and communication formed the issue at stake in the questions of the various parties. Thus, the actual consideration whether qualitative service or safety *would* be hampered by facecovering clothing was made almost entirely *insignificant*. If we recall Gee's building tasks, both discursive approaches of *significance* and *social code* had crucial effects in this process, relying on the *connection* of facecovering clothing to safety and communication. The question was not whether communication or safety is hindered by wearing facecovering clothes, but more so whether this is a (common) problem and whether this can be maintained in a proportional framework. The security and communication elements in the discourses appeared to have been transformed into basic facts, as if they were aspects of a *social code* to which veiled women did not abide. Reviewing the development of the first, written, discussion in the Senate, it seems to have been the complete *insignificance* of actual, historical evidence that made this discourse triumph: the government had, by admitting plainly that there was no problem of physical size or available a wide arsenal of examples, detached ethical considerations and made them as *insignificant* as possible.

4.5 Writing to both Ministers

Few weeks later, in a second written report, the Senate further questioned the first explanatory memorandum given by Minister Plasterk. As I have mentioned before, such a second round is not necessarily standard procedure. It is therefore even more interesting to recall our questions on dominance: did Plasterk really succeed in attaining discursive dominance? A first glance at the second written report would suggest he did not, but we will have to take into account some simultaneous political changes: elections had taken place on 15 March 2017.[190] The Senate was of course not yet re-elected, but the elections did have a significant effect for the discussion here: the Minister responsible for this file had changed. After a long and laborious formation period, Rutte III was appointed, with D66 Ms. Kajsa Ollongren as Minister of the Interior. That was an interesting new dimension for this debate. D66 had voted *against* the legislative proposal in the House of Representatives and had been highly critical in the written report in the Senate as well. Thus, while during the first presentation of the proposal to the Senate, Minister Plasterk (PvdA) was representative, now, its defense was up to a minister coming from a party that did not support this legislation at all.

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[190] This followed the end of the standard parliamentary term of office of the Government. Rutte II was one of the few cabinets from the past decade which had remained in office for a complete period.

Three political parties, VVD, PvdA and SP, made use of this second opportunity to make comments which would be answered by a new Minister. In particular, regarding the necessity, the groups turned out to be dissatisfied with the earlier response of Minister Plasterk. The PvdA most in particular showed itself to be critical of the bill, now that they were no longer a supplier of the Minister. They "request[ed] the government to substantiate the necessity that the freedom of this small group of people who wear facial clothing for religious reasons should be limited."[191] This was the first time that they made the perspective of the veiled women *significant*, an interesting move, compared to their earlier arguments. In general, they could more easily express their objections now that the responsibility to enforce the law was no longer on this party. For example, the PvdA used this opportunity to put forth their positions on health care – arguably, more to reflect their party agenda than out of a desire to actually change the legislative proposal.

VVD also clearly showed what they politically stand for: in addition to safety, they also profile themselves as a business party. It is therefore not surprising that their questions concerned the safety of shopkeepers. The SP had a question about transport and about the application of this legislative proposal in the case of vaccinations. Basically, all three parties made their own political program *significant*, in relation to this law. But they had to wait for their answers: Minister Ollongren did not respond until after a repeated request for an answer from the Senate. On 3 April 2018, almost eight months after the second written report, she did follow up with a further memorandum of explanation. This delay, seen in connection with the negative D66 standpoint on the Partial Ban, suggests that Minister Ollongren, and by extension her party, were not particularly interested in *priming* this legislative proposal in the Senate.

In that further memorandum, we see for the first time how she presented her position in this debate. This is of crucial importance, since Ollongren was in the position to either transform the government discourse or stay in line with Ronald Plasterk. Her position is perhaps best characterized by the first sentence of her answer: "The freedom to dress as one wishes is paramount, and [that freedom] is limited as little as possible with this bill."[192] It is this element, the *significance* of the *limitations* of the prohibition, which, together with an emphasis on uniformity, predominates in the arguments of Minister Ollongren. She effectively managed to block the arguments of the VVD for an extension of the ban to shops. However, she seems to have been less successful in selling her perception of this Partial Ban to be "as limited as possible", as we will see in the debate following this further report.

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[191] Translation mine. Original text: "waaruit de noodzaak blijkt dat de vrijheid van deze kleine groep mensen die uit religieuze overwegingen gezichtsbedekkende kleding dragen beperkt dient te worden."Parliamentary Papers I, 2016/2017, 34 349, C, 2.
[192] Translation mine. Original text: "De vrijheid om gekleed te gaan zoals men wenst, staat voorop en wordt met dit wetsvoorstel zo min mogelijk beperkt." Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, 34 349, E, 1.

4.6 Final debate and voting: June – July 2018

That last debate on facecovering clothing in the political arena took place in the Summer of 2018. In a debate that lasted more than seven hours, many arguments that had been raised during the previous debates were reiterated, *reconnecting* political differences with the present bill. At the same time, this debate had a new angle as well. There are two trends to note. First, ideological considerations were certainly not avoided in this debate, but they were focused on political game, rather than ethical considerations. Second, various misconceptions found their way back to the Senate, while at the same time the substantive arguments disappeared into the background of discursive power.

That latter element was most prominently tangible in two words: "burqa" and "emancipation". The word burqa was regularly repeated in the Senate to refer to facecovering veiling in the Netherlands. Still, the burqa is and was not worn regularly by those who cover their face for religious reasons. The ongoing employment of this negatively interpreted term symbolizes a bias in Dutch politics: the burqa is associated with Afghanistan, and in the Netherlands especially with the Taliban, women's oppression and terrorism.[193] Moreover, what is all the more striking is the reiterated assumption that the veiled women at stake would be immigrants, or at least belonging to other cultures. Concerns about emancipation allowed a culturalization of citizenship to shine through almost the complete of the Senatorial debate. According to a statement from the CDA: "We also understand that wearing facecovering clothing does not contribute to the integration of other cultures and the emancipation of women from these cultures, widely supported objectives in our country for many years."[194] Again, the research which states that most women who wear facecovering veiling are native Dutch, is the same research that had been referred to in parliamentary debates. These prejudices are all the more important in this Senatorial debate, because they were paralleled with a certain amount of fatigue concerning the fundamental arguments on safety and communication. The VVD literally said: "the government also has other interests to serve, such as preventing of problems on the work floor and guaranteeing good quality in care, *well, you know the drill*."[195] This combination of a resurgence of misconceptions and a reduced attention for the fundaments for the Partial Ban, again, suggests a continued racialization process of the Muslim Other: their perspective is dealt with superficially, while allowing for general claims on their nature and lifestyle.

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[193] Under their rule, the Taliban required women to wear the burqa in Afghanistan. The Netherlands has a military mission in Afghanistan since 2002 and is fighting the Taliban there, specifically in the context of terrorism and radicalization. This operation was set up after 9/11 (and Afghanistan's refusal to extradite Osama bin Laden). See also Rijksoverheid, "Nederland ondersteunt Afghanistan" via https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/internationale-vrede-en-veiligheid/afghanistan.

[194] Translation mine. Original text: "Ook begrijpen we alleszins dat het dragen van gezichtsbedekkende kleding niet bijdraagt aan de integratie van andere culturen en de emancipatie van vrouwen uit deze culturen, breed gedragen doelstellingen in ons land sinds vele jaren." Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, 34 349, E, 20.

[195] Translation and italics mine. Original text: "de overheid heeft ook nog andere belangen te dienen, zoals het voorkomen van problemen op de werkvloer en het garanderen van een kwalitatief goede zorg. U kent het rijtje wel." Ibid., 13.

At the same time, the appreciation of the Partial Ban by those parties who voted in favor, was not unconditional. According to the CDA, their approval was "a struggle". The CDA claimed to set great store by religious freedom and subsidiarity, and ultimately judged that the government had to give "a strong signal"[196] by setting a norm. The accusation of "symbolic politics" by Kuzu/Öztürk from the House of Representatives had taken an entirely different turn here. The ChristenUnie explained that they saw the limited prohibition as a minor, explicable restriction of religious freedom and therefore "proportional": again, the balancing act was presented as being a part of a certain *social code*: this is how we are "reasonable" in the Netherlands. The SGP, the last Christian party present in the Senate joined this position, and was most obvious in its referring to *social code* stated that the Partial Ban could be justified on the basis of the Christian tradition of the Netherlands: "our country is not free of values".[197] The Christian parties were actively constructing that *social code* by referring to this 'general standard' as if all Dutch citizens would generally agree on this interpretation. That this, however, was a discursively constructed truth rather than reality, is clear from the opposition offered by GroenLinks and D66. GroenLinks continued to oppose this "*insignificant* and stigmatizing piece of legislation"[198] – even more vehemently than they had done in the House of Representatives. And interestingly enough, D66 did not seem to hold back their criticism now that their Minister was responsible for this law: they maintained their earlier position that if they "focus on the objectives of this proposal, on the measures in this legislative proposal and on everything that is possible. If that is weigh[ed] against each other, this is a useless proposal. It is symbolic, without actually meaning anything, while other possibilities already exist. That is a [clear] reason not to want it."[199]

Finally, even though years ago, the PvdA had been the first political party to raise questions in parliament about facecovering veiling and the PvdA had to defend this Partial Ban for years, the PvdA turned out to have changed their position entirely in this Senatorial debate. They did not defend the law anymore, on the contrary, they spoke of "symbolic legislation that is in direct opposition of fundamental rights".[200] Their language in the Senate was for the ethical part completely *disconnected* from their language in the House of Representatives. That is interesting to note: although they were reminded during this debate that they had been in favor of the ban for years, without too much difficulty, the PvdA could change its moral position. And in terms of practical issues, the position of the PvdA remained intact. Concerns about the application of the law in health care and education, two political focal points of the PvdA, predominated.

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[196] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, 34 349, E, 23.
[197] Ibid., 18.
[198] Ibid., 10.
[199] Translation mine. Original text: "Ik richt mij dus op de doeleinden van dit wetsvoorstel, op de maatregelen in dit wetsvoorstel en op alles wat kan. Als ik dat tegen elkaar afweeg, is dit een nutteloos wetsvoorstel. Het is symbolisch, zonder dat het feitelijk iets betekent, terwijl er al andere mogelijkheden bestaan. Dat is een reden om het niet te willen." Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 9.
[200] Translation mine. Original text: "[…] symboolwetgeving, die indruist tegen het fundamentele recht […]" Ibid., 7.

Besides, a political game was certainly at hand in this debate. Most parties took their time, especially in the first term, to explain and defend their party's positions. These arguments seem to have had a different function than actually discussing the Partial Ban itself. Many of these arguments were not focused on gaining discursive dominance for the Partial Ban, but rather gaining discursive dominance for the parties themselves in the arena of the Senate. For example, the phrase "we stand for ..."[201] was regularly repeated. The parties also regularly accused each other of inconsistency, albeit in relation to the House of Representatives, albeit within this debate itself. In terms of critical discourse analysis, these debating structures lessened the *significance* of the direct subject of the Senate in this debate: the women wearing facecovering clothing. Their voice, their perspective, was flooded out and replaced by political voices. That could explain why again, much like the situation in the House of Representatives, much attention was paid to subsidiarity. Moreover, that attention for subsidiarity had another important effect, as well. Many parties opened their speech with ethical considerations, which led to doubts about the acceptability of the ban. But, the questions asked at the end of the first term indicated a very different prioritization. That structure is important for our analysis, because these questions are discursively the most interesting: the Minister is bound to answer them in the second term. This question-element was therefore crucial in the result of the debate: the type of questions to be answered determine what the rest of the discussion is about. As it turned out, the questions posed by the Members of the Senate were much less about the veiled women themselves. The questions were mainly about enforcing, application, maintaining and the precise conditions under which face-covering clothing would or would not be prohibited. These questions "defend" an entirely different group than the Muslim women who would affected by the ban: they rather defend teachers, hospital staff, or bus drivers. In this way, the debate in the Senate determines the focus group of this ban: Dutch officials. And as became clear early on in the House of Representatives: these people form the *social code*, and these "normal Dutch people" were expected not to be in favor of facecovering clothes in public at all. In an implicit way, the debate shifted from paying attention to the veiled women to focusing on "native" Dutch people, with an inferred shared *social code*.

That explains in part why the ethical objections during the debate did not play a major role in the response of the Minister. Ollongren defended the ban by maintaining that it is a nuanced compromise. According to her, "a fair balance"[202] had been found between the freedom to dress as one likes and the general interest of communication and security.[203] Although Ollongren had to admit that there were "no concrete problems"[204] which gave cause to this law, she *emphasized*

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[201] Translation mine. Original text: "Wij staan pal voor…" this was repeated several times, mostly by the VVD, but in different phrases by other parties as well. Cf. the CDA comment: "As *the* party of the society we attach great importance to self-organization and self-regulation […]" (Italics mine, Dutch: "Als partij van de samenleving hechten wij zeer aan zelforganisatie en zelfregulering […]") Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 22.
[202] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 25.
[203] Ibid., 25-26.
[204] Ibid., 32.

that the Partial Ban would be a standard that offered clarity for everyone, something that house rules could not offer.[205] Thus, essentially, Ollongren continued on the same path that her predecessor had taken: an emphasis on a 'practical balance' combined with a high regard for uniformity. Her earlier argument from her further report that this Partial Ban was the most limited prohibition, seemed to have disappeared into the background. Also, few Senators had picked up this line of argument in their speeches. And thus, while Ollongren had tried to make significant that this was only a very *limited* Ban, she did not succeed to add a new dimension to the dominant discourse of the 'practical balance'. The question is of course to what extent that would even have been her goal. On the one hand, it is unlikely that Minister Ollongren herself was a personal enthusiast for this law. Her party had been opposed to it from the outset, and she did not seem in *any* hurry to start the debate in the Senate. Therefore it would have been understandable if she would have tried to transform the discourses in the Senate. On the other hand, she was bound, as a coalition partner, to the agreement with the ChristenUnie, CDA and VVD. Thus, it is questionable whether she was in the position to influence the debate here to be more in line with D66 views. In any case, it has become clear that she did not want to make the D66 position on this prohibition the stakes of the coalition agreement. And thus, once more, the Senatorial debate revealed that party interests prevailed over the interests of those involved in the actual ban itself. However, before we can conclude what *ensemble of ideas* did indeed dominate the legislative process of the Partial Ban 2015-2018, we have two last documents to consider.

First, the voting process itself. This was an interesting process, because most actions in these short documents confirmed in some way or another the observations that have emerged in the past chapter. Even though the voting was planned for 19 June, the actual voting took place one week later. The SP faction had requested – and was granted – some extra time to file a motion. The purpose of this motion was to obtain a commitment from the government to consult the concerned sectors and to monitor the effects of the law. Their request was that the government would summarize their findings after a period of two to three years, in which the experiences in other European countries would be included in addition to the national experiences. This motion did not really deviate from the bill in terms of purpose or considerations, and was simply called a 'motion of clarity'[206] by the SP itself and the other senators. It is therefore striking that once again the interests of sectors and enforcers are represented here. The veiled women are only discussed as secondary. This motion was rejected by a small margin, precisely because of that secondary element: among others, the VVD did not agree on the motivation behind the monitoring.[207] The second motion that was voted on had been submitted earlier, by Mr. Schalk. This motion from the SGP was about the desirability of an investigation to prohibit face-covering clothing in general at

[205] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 32.
[206] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 6, 2.
[207] Parliamentary Papers I, 2017/2018, Handelingen 34 349, 7, 1.

manifestations and demonstrations. This motion was adopted. The latter confirms once again that Minister Ollongren had little effect with her arguments for a limited ban. At the same time that the current ban was adopted, the desirability of expanding it was already being considered. That such research is not the same as a legislative expansion itself, may be clear. However, in the context of discursive dominance, this motion is indicative of the direction towards more, not less, restriction.

Last but not least, this whole legislative process resulted in one document, consisting of two pages: the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing. Despite fifteen years of debate, motions, amendments, discussions and votes: the final law was *exactly* the same as the 2015 proposal. That does not mean, of course, that the parliamentary discussions in between have been pointless. On the contrary, this critical discourse analysis shows how considerations of safety and communication and a defense of the veiled women from a perspective of religious freedom slowly gave way to more practical considerations and the search for a 'fair balance'. These developments in parliamentary discourses show a clear bias in the attitude of politics towards a practice that is considered to be Islamic. But, the most important question remains: is the parliamentary debate preceding the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing (November 2015 – June 2018) representative of a New Realist dominance in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands? We will dive into to that question right now, for the conclusion of this thesis.

Conclusions

Over fifteen years of public and political debate on facecovering veiling led to the Partial Ban on wearing facecovering clothing in education facilities, public transportation, government buildings and healthcare institutions in the Netherlands. Compared to centuries of debate on the same subject across the Islamic world, that seems like the blink of an eye. Yet this Partial Ban, and the political debate preceding it, can tell us a lot about the relationship between Dutch politics and Islam.

It is striking that several politicians have referred to an urgent need to regulate this type of veiling. Probably no more than four hundred women have unwillingly mobilized the entire political system and the national news facilities for over a decade. Four hundred women, who are convinced that wearing face-covering clothing is the ultimate act for their God. Four hundred women, who experience the choice for such veiling as very personal. Four hundred women, maximum – because there is hardly any scholarly research that could give us well-founded statistics.

That small number has everything to do with the fact that facecovering veiling is not self-evident for Muslims. For the women who made the choice to wear such veils, it is a final step in a religious process: an ultimate expression of Islam. For politicians in the Netherlands, too, they see facecovering veiling as an Islamic phenomenon par excellence. At the same time, there are only a few hundred women in the Netherlands who do wear such veils, while the Netherlands has more than 900,000 Muslims. Throughout the course of history and geography, there have been many interpretations of a possible commandment on veiling in Islam.

None of the classic sources is unambiguous on the practice of veiling. The Qur'an does refer to modesty and garments to protect the female from unwanted gazes, but there is no reference to any concrete type of mandatory veiling. Some *ahadith* refer to veiling as recommendable, but their use and interpretation differs among the various Islamic schools of jurisprudence. Many Islamic theologians have hotly debated the issue throughout Islamic history, often with completely different outcomes. The Hanbali and the Shafi'i school are open to a concept of *hijab* that includes the face and hands of a woman, but throughout the Middle Ages, this remained subject of discussion. From the 18th and 19th centuries onwards, various new Islamic movements, often labeled as (early) Salafism, revised their interpretation of 'true' Islam. They abandoned the extensive Islamic jurisprudence and relied on their own interpretation of the classic sources. Salafist interpretators arrived at the conclusion that the face and hands of a woman *should* be covered. These new interpretations of Islam inspired groups of Muslims across the globe in the present day. Modern forms of this strict religiosity are *also* known by the appellation 'Salafi'. They are convinced that the covering of face and hands is at least recommended, if not mandatory. This has led a limited group of women in the Netherlands to cover their faces in everyday, public life.

However, facecovering veiling remains an unusual phenomenon in the Netherlands, and, converging with larger discussions about Islam in the public domain, it became subject of national debate. That started in 2003, when major commotion rose about three Amsterdam schoolgirls, who had been denied entry to their school because of their facecovering veils. An extensive public and parliamentary debate ensued, with no less than four different bills to put an end to this, apparently, "un-Dutch" practice.

The fifteen years of debate on facecovering veiling is a textbook example of the changing relationship between Dutch society and its Muslim population. A growing displeasure with the state of affairs in the Netherlands, and in particular with the perceived many newcomers, led to a culturalization of citizenship over the course of the late twenty- and early twenty-first century. Not a passport, but the endorsement of Dutch norms and values became an implicit or explicit condition for full citizenship. The emergence of an anti-multiculturalism discourse at the end of the nineties seems to be at the root of this national reflex. This Dutch anti-multiculturalism was part of the emerging New Realism discourse. Prominent public figures such as Frits Bolkestein and Paul Scheffer openly criticized the integration of (Muslim) immigrants. Others, like Paul Cliteur and Herman Philipse brought this New Realism discourse to a new phase by insisting that Islam *itself* constituted the problem. At the same time, terroristic attacks shook the world and caused fear, which revitalized the New Realism discourse even more. Islam was put forward as a topic for the security agenda.

At the turn of the century, new and eye-catching representatives claimed the New Realism discourse: politicians such as Ayaan Hirsi Ali, Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders followed up on this line of thought and made the fight against Islam the focal point of their political ideologies. These simultaneous trends of culturalization of citizenship, racialization of Muslims and securitization of Islam mutually reinforced each other and cleared the way for a negative political attitude towards "ostentatious" "Islamic" practices – even though the practice in question is not endorsed by many Muslims themselves. Question is, if this New Realism is still dominating the political scene. Are legislative proposals like the Partial Ban a continuation of this discourse or is there a shift in paradigm? That query prompted the research question of this thesis, which asks: *to what extent is the parliamentary debate preceding the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing (November 2015 – June 2018) representative of a New Realist dominance in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands?*

In a way, the 2015-2018 debate on facecovering veiling confirms existing theories about the relation between Dutch politics and Islam. Clearly, the 2015-2018 debate is not a debate which *engages* Muslims in the Netherlands. Beyond the few Muslim politicians present in the House of Representatives and Senate, the Muslim perspective was only marginally referred to. Above all, the Partial Ban debate was a debate about the Netherlands itself. What is "Dutch" acceptable behavior? What is the role of religion in the public domain, which role is it allowed to have? To what

extent is religion a security issue? In what way are religion, indigenousness and culture part of citizenship?

All these aspects are reminiscent of the New Realism discourse. However, the political debate of the past three years is not just another representation of New Realism in the Netherlands. On the contrary, New Realism failed to attract *proper* traction in this period. Firstly, they failed to find allies. Their core element was the incompatibility of Islam with Dutch freedom and social norms. Several parties in the Parliament addressed those issues, sometimes arriving at similar conclusions as New Realism had done. However, their New Realism discourse was not shared: other parties did not *join* them in their arguments. For example, the most dominant New Realism party, the PVV, could only count on the support of a few one-man parties. Other parties generally ignored or opposed their claims. Secondly, the arguments that *did* inform the ultimate Partial Ban, were qualitatively different from the New Realism arguments. Out of the three major arguments, qualitative communication, safety concerns and uniformity of legislation, only the second one was in line with the New Realism discourse. As such, the Partial Ban debate shows a new phase in the relationship between Islam and politics in the Netherlands.

That new phase was uncovered by a critical discourse analysis which was specifically focused on three aspects of the parliamentary debate: the way in which language is used to make certain things *(in)significant*, to promote a perspective on *social code*, and how it *(dis)connects* certain aspects of the issue. This critical approach allowed me to trace the emergence, dominance and decline of certain ideas within the parliamentary debate. What followed was that Muslims, or more specifically, women wearing facecovering clothing, were largely *disconnected* from the parliamentary debate. Their perspective was regarded or treated as *insignificant*, and rarely referred to beyond the idea that these women were passively enduring the religious obligation imposed on them by male relatives. Gradually, the attention for their interests gave way to the focus on another group who would be concerned with this law: public servants. Several parties expressed their concern for the effects of this law for professionals in the health care, government and transportation sectors. It was carefully debated that the public servants could not be burdened with enforcement. The major argument for the Partial Ban was put forward as serving *their* best interests: to create uniformity, and thus clarity, in legislation. Even though these sectors had indicated earlier that they were *not* in favor of governmental regulation, they were the favorite subject of protection, especially in the Senate. These people were the example of the politician's *social code*: "normal" Dutch people look each other in the eye, shake each other's hands and participate in society. Veiled women, on the contrary, did not live up to these standards in the minds of most politicians. Although rarely explicitly defined as such, numerous references suggested that these women would be Outside of the Dutch society. These modes of significance, connections and social code all came together in one discourse, which I have termed 'practical balance' here.

Practical in this regard refers to the political emphasis on the necessity and profitability of uniform legislation. The politicians had very few, if any, historical incidents to cite to substantiate the necessity of a Partial Ban. That was especially the case since most parties endeavored to exclude the religious aspect of the law. They did not want to link this Partial Ban to Islam or security threats: a trend divergent from the 2003-2012 debate, where security was very much part of the discussion. Instead, the responsible Ministers focused on the practical uniformity this law would provide for the sectors involved. While a major part of the debate was dedicated to the implementation of this law, the perspective slowly shifted from ethical considerations of religious freedom to practical concerns of enforceability. This practical approach was crucial in determining the debate: the responsible Ministers were able to answer questions and make promises about those aspects far more easily: debating and designing nuances of regulation is part of the politician's job.

Balance, the second aspect of the Practical Balance discourse, suggested that although the parties curtailed religious freedom with pain in their hearts, they had to do this to arrive at a judicious position, acceptable for all involved citizens. These parties were in favor of the ban precisely *because* it was limited: they could both answer the 'urgent societal need' and refrain from excessively limiting religious freedom. That this balance had a Christian proclivity, was self-evident for the responsible parliamentarians who first suggested this approach: the Christian parties. The other participants in the parliamentary debates rarely objected to the subjectivity of this idea. The balancing aspect silenced ethical objections, while on the other hand it did not give in to the call from right-wing parties for a general ban. Especially after more than ten years of debate, the idea that a balanced, fair, conclusion had been offered, was very attractive. As such, the Partial Ban was presented not as a step towards more limitation, but rather as a balanced answer to two extremes.

These observations lead us back to the central research question. *To what extent is the parliamentary debate preceding the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing (November 2015 – June 2018) representative of a New Realist dominance in the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands?*

The answer might be that this parliamentary debate indicates that a new phase in Dutch politics is dawning. We have seen that the arguments that ultimately determined the debate on facecovering clothing were informed by a practical approach and a balancing act. I have called this new, dominant *ensemble of ideas* the Practical Balance discourse. The intertwined argument that uniformity served the interests of public servants, and as such was a good solution to a currently inadequate system of subsidiarity, was backed by a suggestion of a fair balance. And thus, arguments that revolved around a practical implementation instead of a strong ideological basis gained the upper hand over the course of the Partial Ban debate. Although this legislation still has a disproportionate impact on Muslim citizens, the Practical Balance discourse is qualitatively different from New Realism in both its validation and goals. Islam is explicitly *not* their public target.

On the contrary, the Partial Ban on facecovering clothing is, as several political parties emphasized, *not* a "kopvoddentaks"[208], no headscarf ban: *ceci n'est pas un boerkaverbod*.

Further research suggestions

Two interviewees have been kind enough to inspire me with their reflections on the Partial Ban from a Muslim perspective. Especially since my critical analysis of the Practical Balance discourse, it is ironic to admit that it have been practical considerations which have prevented me from extensively discussing their perspective. But if there might be one conclusion possible for Dutch Salafi Muslims, then it might be that including their perspective could open up better, more comprehensive and dynamic interpretations of the interplay between the Salafi community and Dutch authorities. A comparative perspective which would situate the Dutch debate in a broader landscape of similar discussions throughout Europe – and especially the Middle East, could literally and metaphorically broaden horizons of research. I have discussed the possibility of a "full" discourse analysis in my first chapter. Whether any such "full" discourse analysis is scientifically possible (and readable!) remains open to debate, but I have already suggested some promising perspectives that the building tasks not included in this thesis could offer. Furthermore, the concept of my thesis was born thanks to a very pleasant conversation with three employees of the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They inspired me to examine the interaction of the Salafist narrative and the Dutch governmental narrative. Although the outcome of this thesis has its main focus on the latter, research into the effects of this Partial Ban would be incredibly valuable, both in the societal context and in the scientific context. Finally, this thesis has been a study into the political approach to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands through the case study of the Partial Ban. With that, I hoped to take a first step in what is, of course, an incredibly diverse and multifaceted process. To paint a clear picture of the changing attitude of the Dutch politics toward Islamic groups in the Netherlands, a study of broader legislative processes would be an incredibly promising next step.

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[208] The intentionally pejorative term used by Geert Wilders, for his first proposal to ban the headscarf in the Netherlands. Roughly translates to head-rags tax. The Dutch term "kop" has a negative connotation: it is used for heads of animals, not humans, or in impolite phrases such as "houd je kop!" (shut up!).

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In particular, dossier no. 34349 was subject of this thesis. Therefore, all documents included in that dossier have been part of the discourse analysis. To prevent unnecessarily listing sixty-one documents here, I confine myself to the following:
Parliamentary Papers II, 34 349, (documents arranged by official serial number).
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