

Bachelor Thesis Political Psychology

The nature of tolerance

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8400 words

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Introduction

For many years political tolerance has been studied in political psychology, and for a good reason. A democracy, the most prevalent model of state rule, is only possible when there is political tolerance. The backbone of democracy, a constitution, requires equal rights for all citizens. It is not possible to have a democracy when people or groups are excluded from decision making or political power in general. Therefore, people must be politically tolerant towards all different groups in society, in order to work and live together. In this age of globalization, where traveling has become much easier and people migrate more than ever before in order to find safety from war, jobs or to find a partner, populations of western countries are getting more heterogeneous. At the same time most Western countries are democracies and therefore tolerance is a crucial factor for internal peace and stability. In times of crisis, as is presently the case, the level of xenophobia rises. In particular among lower educated people who work in former government sectors that have been opened to the free market, often under influence of globalization, the fear and antipathy towards religious and cultural minorities rises (Krisie, 2008).

This phenomenon can be seen in most European countries with extreme-right parties that are present and powerful in the political arena. Examples hereof are the Party National in France, Flemish Block in Belgium, the Hungarian Party for Justice and Life in Hungary, and the Golden Dawn, a 'Nazi-like' party in Greece¹. In Denmark the Danish Folk party gave essential support to the government from 2001 to 2011². And in the Netherlands, the country which is the subject of this study, the Party for Freedom (PVV) also functioned as a partner to the governing coalition for almost a year.

These parties try to keep different groups outside their country, or try to send them back to their native country. Mostly, their antipathy is focused against asylum seekers and low paid workers. Furthermore, they often see the Islam as a huge threat for their culture, and in reaction they propose restrictions on the building of mosques or allowing burqas in public areas and rejecting radical Imams³. In the Netherlands, the party of Wilders (PVV)

¹ Gosseling, C. 2010. "Ultrarechts rukt op in Europa", 21/ 09

<http://www.bndestem.nl/algemeen/buitenland/7318922/Ultrarechts-rukt-op-in-Europa.ece>, visited on may 24, 2012.

Kuit, E. 2012. "Gouden Dageraad: neofascisten beloven 'ware' Grieken nieuwe waardigheid". *Volkskrant*: 07/05, via

<http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/7264/Schuldencrisis/article/detail/3251884/2012/05/07/Gouden-Dageraad-neofascisten-beloven-ware-Grieken-nieuwe-waardigheid.dhtml> visited on may 24, 2012

² Visser, J. 2011. "Deense gedoogconstructie bijna zeker ten einde". *Volkskrant*, 14/09, via

<http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2668/Buitenland/article/detail/2906702/2011/09/14/Deense-gedoogconstructie-bijna-zeker-ten-einde.dhtml> visited on may 24, 2012

³ Schippers, N. 2012 "Omstreden shariageleerde Haitham al-Haddad weer naar Nederland", *Trouw*, 23/03 via

<http://www.trouw.nl/tr/nl/5091/Religie/article/detail/3230035/2012/03/23/Omstreden-shariageleerde-Haitham-al-Haddad-weer-naar-Nederland.dhtml> visited on 23/05/2012

wants to forbid the Koran, because they believe it is full of hate speech (Verkiezingsprogramma PVV, 2010-2015). The urgency for a study of tolerance is therefore high, and it raises the question of whether the Netherlands is still as tolerant as it was always believed to be.

In this article the research question is not about levels of tolerance, or about when tolerance becomes intolerance, it is about tolerance itself. What exactly do people do when they tolerate a group? Are people conscious of the constitutional right of others and therefore tolerate their actions? Or do people just not care about others, or refrain from taking action and appear to be tolerant? These are only a few examples of the different ways in which people can behave or think tolerantly.

Despite all the research that has been done on levels of political tolerance and its sources in personality traits, little research has been done on why people tolerate others and what they actually do when they tolerate. So far, the research has mainly been quantitative and has measured levels of tolerance. Several theories have been published on the motivation of tolerance, but these don't answer the question of what people do, when they are tolerant (Buikhuisen, Drost & Schilt: 1976, Ten Hooven ed.: 2001). I believe that these questions are more about explaining people's attitudes than about a level of tolerance, because many forms of tolerance are based on pseudo-tolerance (Kinneging, 2001). Furthermore, we know that tolerance can more easily be changed for intolerance, but vice versa, intolerant people are rarely persuaded towards a tolerant opinion.

Literature Review

“Kabinet gaat gewoon door met voorstel boerkaverbod”, *Volkscrant*: 22/05/2012. Via <http://www.volkscrant.nl/vk/nl/2824/Politiek/article/detail/3259429/2012/05/22/Kabinet-gewoon-door-met-voorstel-boerkaverbod.dhtml> visited on 23/05/2012

For this research, I want to examine the true idea that people have about tolerance, and in which way we can describe their tolerance. Different from many of the quantitative researches that have been conducted about this subject, I am not interested in the level of tolerance. This does not explain the real attitude of people, only the extent of which people can bear the presence of other groups they reject. What this research should reveal, is with what attitude, approach and feeling, and on what basis this toleration occurs. To explain this, it is necessary to look for what we already know about the roots of tolerance in people's minds, which forms the psychological component of tolerance. The theory of the conceptual meaning of tolerance in the perspective that I just described forms a more philosophical component. A final perspective is the historical, because the meaning that people have given to the concept 'tolerance' varies in time and place. There is, of course, overlap in these three components, because what we see as tolerant by concept, determines the psychological characteristics we look for. For example, when can we speak of tolerance and when is it necessary for humans to defend themselves and reject people that put their lives in real danger? The answers given to these questions, determine the history of tolerance. Where do people draw a line between accepting (political) differences and, from their point of view, defend their own way of living?

Historical background

The Netherlands has a reputation for being tolerant. This tradition started during the enlightenment era, when many philosophers and scientists could publish controversial books that were forbidden in other European countries. In the sixteenth century, the Dutch Republic allowed some freedom of conscience, under influence of humanists and other deviant Christian groups. Due to a lack of unity in the Republic and the absence of a state religion, some regions were fairly liberal towards deviant ideas. Merchant interests were perhaps most influential however. As long as printing presses were earning their bread with publishing books, controversial or not, they continued to do so. However, the extent of this freedom was always determined by the foundations of Christianity, which were never really questionable. If we want to characterize the reasons here for the tolerant attitude of the Republic until 1800, practical reasons were probably of greatest importance. There were many minorities living in the Republic, and peace had to be preserved. Finally, the economic benefits that this particular freedom brought were often considered more important than the costs of preserving strict Christian rules and morals (Zijlstra, 1989:41-67).

Another important time period for the Netherlands where we find a remarkable state of tolerance is at the end of the 19th - and the beginning of the 20th century. Confessional groups started to organize themselves politically in reaction against the liberal dominance in politics. They not only established political parties, but

almost any organization from cradle to grave was divided into religious groups and political groups. Life was strictly organized along the lines of these so called 'pillars' in many organizations (Andeweg & Irwin, 2005: 23-25). Between the groups there existed a lot of mistrust and rivalry. Tolerance in this era was mostly based on avoidance, as long as there was freedom within the pillar (Aerts, 2001: 74-75). Robert A. Dahl, who researched this situation famously said: "*Technically, your country can not exist*" (Daalder, 1989:26). The fact that this nevertheless happened in relative peace by the way of avoiding each other, and cooperating on elite level out of practical considerations. This form of tolerance actually is pseudo tolerance, which will be discussed later on.

A new era of tolerance, that is breaking with this history of tolerance is the introduction of anti-immigration parties. In the 1970's the first immigration wave of guest workers from Morocco and Turkey took place. Due to government policy, they formed a separate group from Dutch society and integration went difficult. For many other reasons as well this resulted in alienation and segregation between the Dutch and the immigrant groups (Trappenburg, 2003). In the 2002 elections, a new politician, Pim Fortuijn, suddenly rose to prominence and won 26 seats in parliament⁴, despite his assassination just a few weeks before the elections (Andeweg & Irwin, 2005:16-17). His ideas about immigration and Islam were breaking with the continuity of tolerance because he stated that 'full is full' and stated that no more Muslims should enter the country⁵. Moreover he stated that the Islam was a backward culture. After his death, Wilders and his Party for Freedom (PVV) carried on these anti-immigration ideas and supported the governing coalition from 2010 and 2012 with 24 seats. Since they were in this power position the burqa has been forbidden in the Netherlands⁶ and the already existing cleavage between immigrants and original Dutch is heavily politicized. Tolerance in the Netherlands, or at least the image thereof in the international community, has negatively changed⁷.

The concept of tolerance

The first necessary condition for tolerance is rejection of someone or something. Second, people must have the ability to change the situation; for example saying that you tolerate Muslims when you live in an Arab country

⁴ In the Dutch parliament exists of 150 seats in total.

⁵ Poorthuis, F en Wansink, H. 2002. Pim Fortuyn op herhaling: 'De islam is een achterlijke cultuur', *De Volkskrant*, 09/02 via <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2824/Politiek/article/detail/611698/2002/02/09/De-islam-is-een-achterlijke-cultuur.dhtml>

⁶ "Instelling van een algemeen verbod op het dragen van gelaatsbedekkende kleding", Memorie van Toelichting, 6 februari 2012. Kamerstukken II, 33165 nr. 3, PVV 2010, "De agenda van hoop en optimisme", via <http://dnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/programmas/Verkiezingsprogramma/2010/PVVverkiezingsprogramma2010.pdf>

⁷ Lanting, B. 2004. "Nederland verliest lieve imago". *De Volkskrant*, 3 maart, via <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2668/Buitenland/article/detail/698367/2004/03/03/Nederland-verliest-lieve-imago.dhtml>

is a farce, because it lies not in your power to change this, and so there was no other options. Real tolerance finally, should come from a notion of respect and affection. When any of these elements is not present, this is called pseudo- tolerance (Kinneging, in: Ten Hooven, 2001: 170). For example, when someone is indifferent, there was no rejection or appreciation in the first place. Therefore the acceptance of differences cannot be called tolerant; the real nature of it lies in carelessness and irreverence and the absence social feelings or thoughts about it. Another form is resignation, this is: people accept their putative impotence to change the situation and take this for granted. This also is no tolerance because the idea has not changed, only they way of dealing with it. The last kind of pseudo- tolerance is to preserve peace an tranquility out of self interest or fear for confrontation (Kinneging, in: Ten Hooven, 2001:172-173). These forms of pseudo-tolerance do not com from respect for the other, and are strictly seen not real tolerance, but these attitudes appear as tolerant because the rejected group is not actively rejected. But in many studies of political tolerance, the conceptualization often take only a small part of tolerance or put negative and positive approaches of the concept together.

One of the most used definitions is the willingness to allow political rights to disliked groups in society (Stouffer, 1963, Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus, 1979, 1982). This ‘willingness’ is of important value to positive tolerance where citizens support democratic values or human rights which is stronger than the rejection of ideas of lifestyle of a group. As we have seen in the practices of tolerance in the Dutch history, what is called tolerance is not necessarily a willingness to put up with disliked groups, but also exists of tolerant practice. This is, people silently deal with differences and behave tolerant by the absence of expression of intolerant attitudes. When the natural reaction of intolerance is suppressed by other social values, like liberty fairness and equality, then tolerance is likely to occur. This process is referred to by Stouffer (1955) as a “sober second thought” (Duch & Gibson, 1991:239). This concept is quite precise and only deals with real tolerance that has a strong connection with understanding of democratic rules and internalizing them.

Sullivan et al. measure political tolerance in both positive ways as negative; the first is done by asking if people are willing to grant others they dislike political rights, the latter by asking questions about excluding disliked groups from political rights (Sullivan, Piereson & Marcus, 1979:785). This measurement is tenable because it addresses to the concept from different ways and thus captures a broader concept.

An important critique on this study is about the use of the least- liked approach that provides tolerance attitudes about grouse that are mostly violent, extreme and undemocratic (Petersen et al. 2010). In this study is stated that these are particularly least-liked is because of deep seated moral of reciprocity (Petersen et al.,2010:584). People strongly feel that groups, who do not play by the democratic rules, do not deserve to be protected by these same rules. This is when they use violence or when they what to restrain or deny the rights others

(Petersen et.al. 2010:585). They found high level of tolerance in Denmark, when violent or undemocratic groups are excluded from analysis.

Psychological theory

For an answer on the question who will be tolerant or intolerant, political psychology studies have so far emphasized most on personality traits. Demographic factors do not have a direct influence on political tolerance, instead indirectly they do. More important are psychological and political factors. The latter is based on perceived threat and commitment to general rules. The first is a combination of the factors self- esteem, authoritarian personality and personality development (Sullivan et.al. 1981:95). Low self-esteem affects social learning and therefore political learning, what results in less internalization of democratic values. Low self-confidence will constrain people in learning them, because they rather stick to familiar ideas and tend to take less part in discussion and other forming activities that relate to democratic practice. Because of a negative feeling about themselves and the lack of self- confidence this also results in low trust in others, and therefore also low trust in politics. People with high self- esteem are more aware of the benefits of freedom within democracy, the offers that have been made to achieve this, and the complexity. This leads in most cases to higher levels of political tolerance (Sniderman, 1975:185-186).

Another personality trait that Sullivan (et.al.) investigates is the authoritarian personality. About this Rokeach (1954,1960) wrote important studies and constructed the “dogmatism scale” to measure to what extend people have an open- or closed mind (Rokeach,1960:73-80). This is based on beliefs and disbelief system; the first is someone’s perception of the world, what it is or should be. People with a closed mind are making a sharper distinction of what is right and what is wrong, based on what fits in this beliefs system and what belongs to their disbeliefs system. The disbeliefs system is the total of every other idea that is not part of the beliefs system. Dogmatic people accepted ideas for as long as they are congruent with the belief system, but as soon as it falls into the disbelief systems it will be rejected and not tolerated (Rokeach, 1954:201). Furthermore, people with a closed mind are more sensitive for authority, see the world around them as threatening and prefer to live within their own homogeneous group. People with an open mind are more able to value the sender and the message separately, and therefore see things more in perspective. Furthermore there are more gradations among the disbelief system and between ‘good’ and ‘bad’. As a consequence, open- minded people are more tolerant than closed- minded people (Rokeach, 1960: 57-63).

What plays an important role is the perception of threat that creates anxiety. According to Rokeach (1960) and Adorno (et.al.1950) anxiety as result of threat is the underlying cause of authoritarianism which

leads to intolerance. Sullivan (et.al.1981) however, only looked for the independent influence of perceived threat on political tolerance and found a very strong negative correlation. According to Feldman and Stenner, the truth lies in between, because they found no evidence for the contribution of threat for becoming authoritarian. Instead they found that threat activates behavior like intolerance, prejudice and punitiveness that are a manifestation of authoritarian personality traits. It is thus an independent variable, just like authoritarian personality with intolerance as dependent variable (Feldmann & Stenner, 1997).

When we look to the research about tolerance that has been conducted so far, we see most of it focusing on the causes of intolerance instead of tolerance. However, Rokeach concludes that “(...) *acceptance and rejection have a common structural base*” (1960:396). Therefore these personality traits form a base for tolerance as well as intolerance for this research.

Research design

As we have seen there are many sorts of tolerance, and not all of them are as positive as some researchers stress. When and how do people actually become positively or negatively tolerant? And in what way do personality traits affect these different types of tolerance? The answer to these questions will be provided through in-depth interviews with 16 people. Before the design of these interviews is explained, a good conceptualization is needed on the subject tolerance, the dependent variable.

The concept of tolerance

As we have seen in the literature review, there are many ways to approach tolerance, and the conceptualization of tolerance mostly depends on the purpose of the research. In this research, the motivation for tolerance is the dependent variable. Tolerance is defined as the decision for inaction towards disliked group or idea. This absence of trying to change the situation appears to the outside world as tolerance but in reality this can be divided into negative tolerance and positive tolerance. Disinterest, fear or impotence of taking action, self-interest, in short the types of tolerance that Kinneging defined as pseudo tolerance, are taken in this research as negative tolerance. On the other hand, positive tolerance is the conviction that others must have the same civil rights and opportunities in society as every other civilian. Positive tolerance is expected to come from a notion of reciprocity, love and affection. Strictly speaking this is the ideal or true type of tolerance. Negative tolerance only consists of the appearance of tolerance, but in the mind there is no sincere tolerance. The difference between rejecting and tolerating is that rejecting is an active attitude where people can express themselves negatively about those who are rejected, and might even take action, like voting for a party like the PVV. Tolerance in the broad sense, including negative and positive tolerance, is thus an inactive attitude with the where rejection of a group or idea is put aside for some reason, and there are no consequences tied to it, while people had the possibility to do so.

The operationalization of the concept 'tolerance' is by asking people what tolerance is according to them, if they see themselves as tolerant, and for what reason. The last question is obviously the most important. Furthermore they are asked if they express rejection of groups or ideas in any way, and why they do or do not. These questions form the core to analyze whether people are positively or negatively tolerant: people that revise their rejections by the idea of equality or democratic rules are positively tolerant. When people do not have some think like a sober second thought but in any other way do not actualize their rejection are negatively tolerant. The last group handles according to their rejection, and would undertake action against this group when

possible, like rejecting someone from the least liked group in the family or voting a party with this intolerant opinion.

Independent variables

As other studies on tolerance did in the past, this one also focuses on the same independent variables that are proven to have great influence, namely the psychological and social factors. As we have seen in the theoretical background, the factors that contribute to intolerance do so for tolerance as well. However, in previous researches the emphasis was mainly on the degree of some personality traits on the degree of tolerance. In this study the emphasis lies on the relation from personality traits on the nature of tolerance. The indicators that have been found and used before will be used for the interviews as well. However this will not be done as extended as the original questionnaires are, because this research will be based on face-to-face in-depth interviews. In a conversation some things become clear by what people tell or how they tell it, and what connections they make in their story. Therefore some indicating questions are used as a proxy for the different personality-traits, that are discussed below.

The psychological factors that are investigated in this research are perceived threat, self-esteem and authoritarian and dogmatic personality. *Perceived threat* was measured by three questions inspired by previous research of Sniderman and Feldman and Stenner. These were: Do you feel safe in your country or city? To what extend do you have faith in people? Do you worry about your future? (See appendix A). Self-esteem questions are based on the self-esteem questions of Sniderman (1960:53). He constructed a twenty-two item scale with statements about personal unworthiness, status inferiority and interpersonal competence. Originally, the questions were survey -questions and therefore could be far more personal than the questions asked in a face-to-face interview. In order to make them suitable for the interview only six of the least personal questions were chosen and asked at the end to avoid disturbing the conversation. Examples are: “*People should feel ashamed of themselves every now and than*”⁸, “*I never try harder than I know I can, because of fear of failure*” “*I would rather not have a lot of responsibility for other people*”⁹.

The variables authoritarian and dogmatic- personality are combined into one, namely *open and closed-mindness*. Rokkeach described closed- mindness as thinking of in-group versus out-group, rigid and strict opinions about what is right and what is wrong valuing tradition or authority. Open- mindness is the absence

⁸ The original question was: *People have forgotten to feel properly ashamed of themselves*, but this sounded too old-fashioned in the temporary context.

⁹ For the rest of the self-esteem questions see Appendix A, question nr. ... to ...

from this kind of thinking (Rokeach, 1954,1960). Dogmatism and authoritarian thinking are closely linked to each other. There are minor differences, because the dogmatic person worries if actions of others are according to what *he* thinks is right, while the authoritarian person worries if these are in according to what is right based on the *authority* he respects. The rigid person then, cares about what he does is in accordance to what he thinks is right or what people in general think is right (Buikhuisen, Dros, Schilt,1976:41). The scale of this study is too small to precisely differentiate on these personalities, and asks too much specified questioning. This will also result in too many details that would not serve the purpose of the study to find out the nature of tolerance. Instead, indications of self- esteem and open-minded versus closed- minded thinking will be sufficient. Questions used to find authoritarian personality are the child-rearing values (Feldman and Stenner,1997:747, Martin, 1964:86, Kohn, 1977). This scale is constructed of four pairs of qualities: independence or respect for elders; obedience or self- reliance; curiosity or good manners and being considerate or well behaved. According to previous research this is the most accurate measure for authoritarianism (Feldman & Stenner, 1997: 747,750-51).

Dogmatic en rigid thinking will probably appear in the question to what group he belongs, or feels connected, and the questions about the social environment. Rigid or dogmatic persons tend to be more family oriented or live in the same place where they were born or raised and stay within this safe environment. To the question if people are trustworthy, they will either respond negatively or think that you can only trust the group you belong to. If these personality traits do not appear naturally in the interview by what people stress and value in their answers, a couple of items from Rokeach can be asked to clarify this out. Possible questions are “*The West and The Arabic world have nothing in common*”¹⁰, “*If we compromise with [least-liked or disliked group] this is a sign of weakness*” , and “*Do you feel that of all theories in the world, only one is true?*” (Rokeach,1960, Buikhuisen, Drost en Schilt, 1976:37). Based on these analysis respondents will be divided into open- minded and closed- minded. Most important will be the influence and mechanisms from these basic values on tolerant of intolerant thinking and behavior.

Furthermore, the social factors that were measured are based on many researches (Stouffer, 1955, Sullivan et.al. 1981, Feldman and Stenner, 1997, Buikhuisen, Drost and Schilt, 1976). These factors may be considered as standard factors, like age, education, social status, sex, rural and urban living environment and religious views. But also the social environment they grew up in, and they live in nowadays is a factor that will be investigated. This environment can be homogeneous, with people of the same ethnic background, religion and social status, or heterogeneous with more differentiation on these factors. The people that grew up in a heterogeneous society

¹⁰ Originally Rokeach (1960:73) asked this question about the West and Russia, but this was obviously during the Cold War. In these times the cultural clash is probably the strongest between the West and Arabic countries.

will most likely be more open and tolerant towards different groups in society than people that have always lived in a homogeneous environment. Respondents will also be asked how they raise their children in this respect. The influence of the upbringing by the parents can be an important factor, either to choose the same approximation or a total deviant one (Buikhuisen, Drost and Schilt, 1976:45-46).

The Netherlands have a special position when it comes to tolerance. As discussed in the literature review, this country was often more tolerant and sometimes even revolutionary in this way, than other European countries. The reputation of the Netherlands has changed dramatically since 2002 when Pim Fortuijn entered the political arena, and spoke about Islam as being a 'backward culture'¹¹. The Netherlands are also famous for their free and tolerant soft drugs policy. However, since the entrance of populist parties, a law to prohibit the burqa has been taken, and the soft drugs policy is getting less tolerant as well.¹²

For the selection of the respondents, people were chosen based on the independent variables, from the greatest variety as possible (See table 1). However with restricted time this was not ideal, people from rural as well as urban environment were asked. Also a variety of age, religion and education was controlled for. In the table below the age of the respondent is displayed, by sex, residence and education. The total amount of respondents was sixteen; eight woman and eight men. This is a particular small number, but the research is especially designed to give a starting point for qualitative analysis on tolerance. As previously stressed, this is the first time, at least in The Netherlands, that qualitative research is done on the motivations of people, to tolerate. More research is needed to be able to give a complete picture of tolerance, and therefore this must be seen as exploratory research.

From the different personality traits and other independent factors will be analyzed and described how this exactly leads to tolerant behavior to identify the nature of tolerance and in what way the different factors have their influence. I will try to indicate some probable main characteristics that give us a clue on significant factors of influence. This method is also called the straw-in-the-wind-test (Collier, 2011:826). It fits in exploratory qualitative research with a small N that cannot give general conclusions, but rather a strong indication of interactions or directions of influence of independent on dependent factors.

¹¹ Poorthuis, F en Wansink, H. 2002. Pim Fortuyn op herhaling: 'De islam is een achterlijke cultuur', *De Volkskrant*, 09/02 via <http://www.volkskrant.nl/vk/nl/2824/Politiek/article/detail/611698/2002/02/09/De-islam-is-een-achterlijke-cultuur.dhtml>

¹²Novum. 2012. *Coffeeshop moet wietpas invoeren*. via: <http://www.nd.nl/artikelen/2012/juni/11/coffeeshop-moet-wietpas-invoeren>. *Instelling van een algemeen verbod op het dragen van gelaatsbedekkende kleding*, Memorie van Toelichting, 6 februari 2012. Kamerstukken II, 33165 nr. 3, PVV 2010, "De agenda van hoop en optimisme", via <http://dnpp.eldoc.ub.rug.nl/FILES/root/programmas/Verkiezingsprogramma/2010/PVVverkiezingsprogramma2010.pdf>

recidence	Man		Women		Total
	High educated	Low educated	High educated	Low educated	
Rural	23 25, 25, 25,	76, 55	45, 38	23	6
Urban	25	45	23	20,45,56,55	10
Total		8		8	

Table 1. Distribution of respondents by age

Analysis

Of the sixteen people interviewed, half of them were positively tolerant, and 7 were negatively tolerant; one person was not tolerant at all. Three of the negatively tolerant persons lacked interest; what are the reasons for putting up with disliked groups in society, and how do independent variables influence this nature? To answer this, I will first discuss some general investigations about the concept of tolerance, and then the important independent variables will be discussed.

Tolerance and acceptance are easily confused concepts; most people use these terms mixed, and in spoken language these terms are interchangeable. For the purpose of the research however, it was of crucial importance to keep both separate. Furthermore, there are many areas to be tolerant: cultural, religious, social and political, and in every area people can have different levels of tolerance and have different reasons for that. For example, person 7a¹³ is religiously tolerant, but thinks that Muslims must not have too much power in politics. Is she intolerant? At least she is not fully tolerant, but maybe more than some people who applauded it when Muslims were in politics, because “*those are the ‘good ones’*”, and at the same time found that all unemployed or strictly religious Muslims and those who wore scarves should leave the country. Obviously, tolerance is no linear line from fully tolerant to fully intolerant but on the contrary, it has many exceptions.

Second general remark is that not everybody has a ‘grey zone’ between acceptance and rejection; a zone where a ‘sober second thought’ takes place. Probably, many people either accept or reject things, like person 3a. This finding supports research on intolerance levels instead of tolerance levels, because tolerance will be easily confused with acceptance. Finally I found that the social environment is not merely an independent variable; It is often a choice with who you want to be. I expected that people in the city per definition were surrounded by a heterogeneous environment, but it is still possible to only move within family circles and live a neighborhood with equals. This behavior is mostly due to rigid or dogmatic personality traits.

The effect of low self esteem

Low self- confidence probably minimizes the occurrence of true tolerance, because this variable is nearly always the cause of rigidity or dogmatism. Patterns of dogmatic or rigid people are risk avoiding, and predictable. For example, person 4a answers on the question whether she thinks life is in her own hands: “*You can either choose to live adventurous and than there’s a greater chance that accidents will happen in your life*

¹³ The women all have the letter a and the men are coded with the letter b

or you can chose to settle down safely and live quietly". Obviously she chose the last option. This illustrates the lifestyle of many of these people. They often have a difficult time handling deviant behavior, groups of lifestyles. To avoid inner conflict, they avoid either thinking about it, or get in contact with these groups and rather stick to their family or other kind of familiar environment. High education however, can counterbalance the effect of low self-confidence on tolerance. Person 5a and 7a are both high educated, and both tolerant. Person 7a was more religiously tolerant than political, because everybody should have the opportunity to practice their religion in the way he beliefs is right, however she whole-heartedly disagreed with Muslims and felt that the Netherlands should not be overruled by Muslims in politics. *"A little peace of power may be their part, but not too much"*. From this example can be concluded that for political tolerance, some mirroring with the own situation may be needed in order to empathize with the other. In case of person 5a, she said that rationally it is important for democracy to be a reflection of society, and therefore everybody should be free to speak and join politics, however she strongly disagreed with strictly Christian people.

Both women do not have a lot of self-esteem; they feel anxious sometimes in society, and live in a quite homogeneous environment. In table 2 we see that only their level of educations and their tolerance opinion is different from the other respondents with low self esteem. It is plausible that due to their education they have had learned to think critically, logically and on an aggregated level and therefore are more conscious of the working of democracy than the respondents with low education. They are both positively tolerant from a rational belief in democracy and for person 7a also from equality in religious freedom.

Respondents 4a, 6a and 8b behaved tolerant in general, but at times had an intolerant opinion, however person 8a barely had an opinion and never really thought about other groups; he simply never came in contact with them, because he had always chosen to live in a small village with familiar people and family. They all proclaimed to accept different groups and newcomers, as long as they had a job, and were willing to adjust to the Dutch society. They all made the distinction between the 'good ones' and the 'bad ones', the latter describing as unemployed or criminal. Furthermore they all proclaimed that if they would have to work with a member of a disliked group, this would not be problematic. Very remarkable as well, was that person 3a, 4a and 6a all replied the same to the question how they would like it if members of their disliked group were represented in national or local politics. They argued that those were 'the good ones' and argued that if someone is in politics he must be schooled and integrated in the Dutch society. They all had different tolerance attitudes however; person 8a was just disinterested, person 6a felt impotence to do something against the presence of disliked groups and person 4a thought we had been generous enough and had to close the borders for a while. Both women however, rejected to vote for Wilders or match their vote to a party that had the same opinions

about immigration as they had; this was either too extreme or not effective, they thought. Their tolerant behavior had the character of resignation. They were not tolerant about Muslims at times but neither thought this could be solved or even should be solved. *“If politics would solve these problems, we would create some kind of police-state, and I definitely wouldn’t want that”*

Number	Self-esteem	Education	Open/closed-minded	Perceived threat	s.e youth hom/ het *	s.e now hom/ het **	childhood-open/closed	Tolerance nature
1a	-	-	X (dogmatic-conformist)	+	=	=	X	Negative Tolerance- Fear
4a	-	-	X (rigid)	+	=	=	0	Negative Tolerance-impotence
5a	-	+	0	+	=	=	0	tolerant
6a	-	-	0	+	≠	≠	0	Negative tolerance-impotence
7a	-	+	X	+/-	=	≠	0	tolerant
8b	-	-	X	-	=	≠	0	Negative tolerant-disinterest
3a	+	-	X (rigid)	+	=	=	X	intolerant

Table 2. Low self- esteem

Self- Actualization

Tolerant behavior is the absence of attempts to restrain right or freedom of others. Self- actualization is needed for intolerant behavior and therefore self-esteem is necessary. But most people with high levels of intolerance have low levels of self-esteem, and as a consequence they actually fear expressing their intolerance. Thus, they behave tolerant but in reality this is pseudo-tolerance. Problematic however is voting behavior: this is an anonymous expression of intolerance, and therefore does not take courage or self- esteem but makes the difference between intolerance and pseudo-tolerance.

When comparing person 3a and 1a the only difference found on the independent variables is self-esteem. Both women share negative feelings towards Muslims; person 1a more than 3a, because she can only accept adapted Muslims, preferably without any religious symbols, while person 3a accepts them unless they are employed. Both women vote for Wilders to empower their discontent and frustration. Person 1a also avoids cities with too many ‘foreigners’ because she feels unpleasant and anxious with this. She sees cities where Muslims are in

majority as the specter and rejects their religion. In daily situations she is also anxious to give her opinion and for example when the neighbors are making noise, she does not dare to ask them to keep quiet. At first, she declared that sometimes you just have to tolerate things from one another, because probably everyone will bother another at times. But later on it turned out that she was afraid for the reaction and that her complaint would be inappropriate. When her intolerant thoughts are covered by tolerant behavior, they have the same origins as her tolerance, namely low self-esteem, rigid thinking and conformism. Respondent 3a is nearly another extreme; her high level of tolerance makes that she never keeps intolerant opinions quiet for whatever reason, but speaks out what she thinks. She supports attempts of others to bully away foreign neighbors, argues in public with foreigners or Muslims when she does not accept certain behavior and discusses her vote for the PVV at her work with her Muslim colleagues. At the same time, she has a friend who is a Muslima, and even went to a Turkish wedding. In her experience there are 'good ones' and 'bad ones', and toward the last group she behaves intolerant; the first group is not bothering her, so in that case we can only speak of acceptance. These two women have both very negative attitudes towards the same group, but the nature of their tolerance is extremely influenced by self-esteem: respondent 1a is anxious to actualize her intolerant attitudes and only does this anonymously by voting; respondent 3a has no tolerant behavior at all because she barely restrains expression of intolerant attitudes.

High education, self esteem and open- mindedness

Looking at the consequences of those high in self- esteem and open- mindedness, this leads to positive tolerance; a strong support for democracy and equal rights was expressed by these respondents (1b, 2a, 2b, 5a, 5b, 7b, 8a). They did not feel threatened by deviant groups nor did they perceive threat on the street. They all were even able to empathize somewhat with the group they liked the least within society. The main reason for that was based on reciprocity; they respected others rights and freedom and expected others to respect them in the same way. As a consequence, 6 of the 7 people found the party of Wilders therefore problematic, because they argued that he lacked this principle by insulting Muslims and even advocating restrictions the expression of their religion. Nevertheless, all of them rationally believed that this was allowed because of the freedom of expression. This rational approach is interesting, because a 'sober second thought' or an inner revision of intolerant ideas for that sake of an idea can be called rational. For negative tolerance this revision is mostly based on a feeling (like fear) of the opinion of others.

What is also attributing to the awareness of the democratic rules and freedoms is that these people over all had a strong opinion, and some of them liked to have political discussions. Also in this case they stressed the

importance of equality; others must have the same freedom and right to speak and take part in the political discussion.

The analysis that open-mindedness or the absence of authoritarian, dogmatic or rigid personality traits is the responsible factor for positive tolerance is supported by the data of person 3b and 4b. They were both high educated, had a high-self esteem and accepted differences in society naturally, due to their heterogeneous social environment during their lives. They were both pessimistic about humankind, and had low trust in individuals. Respondent 3b thought that you do not have your life in your own hands, which indicates conservatism. Person 4b appeared at times authoritarian; foreigners were either hard working or take advantage from social security, and the last group should better leave the country. According to him, everybody could be successful with hard work. The child rearing values showed half authoritarian, half post-modern values for both. Apparently these two respondents felt attracted by order, authority and have some kind of pessimistic worldview. They tend to be ethnocentric in the sense that they were self-interested and disinterested in social problems or differences. The result of this personality was a negatively tolerant attitude; in both cases out of a lack of interest and from avoiding confrontation in the case of respondent 4b. Person 3b gives a very plausible explanation for this attitude by stating that personal luck and the absence of societal ideals is the core beliefs system that forms this generation: *“We only care about their rights and freedom but hardly ever about duties and giving in”*. The question is how this combination of ethnocentrism and authoritarianism must be interpreted. They clearly had post-modern ideas that do not congruent with true authoritarianism, dogmatism or rigidity. It is very well possible that contemporary ideas and growing up in a heterogeneous society, influences authoritarian personality for some part. The other possibility is that there is an age factor and people will become more authoritarian when they grow older. However, high –education and being familiar with different cultures influence their tolerance attitude in a positive way.

Justice and reciprocity

Overall, two remarkable motives were leading to the logic of tolerance; the personal situation and reciprocity. What others should tolerate from you, is what you will tolerate from others. Justice and reciprocity are based on what you expect from society yourself, and this is a leading motive for tolerance. For example; person 1a was a quite deviant person, not originally from the Netherlands and from his early ages he was different from others in what he did, how he looked and what he thought. This is what others have to tolerate from him, and thus he will tolerate deviance from others as well. This is for him the core of tolerance.

The two orthodox Christians in the research (7a, 6b) expect the freedom to peacefully practice their faith and thus they feel they have to let others do so as well. Respondent 6b found the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands in the deepest sense not good and their ideas objectionable. But religion is of major importance to these respondents, and so they strongly felt everybody should be free to practice their faith; *“There is nothing worse than being prosecuted in whatever way because of your faith”*.

For people that have a more conformist lifestyle, strive to act ‘normal’ and as others expect from them. Respondents 3a, 4b, 6a and 7b, all emphasized that everybody needs to work hard for his money, and this makes you a good and valuable person. People that did so, no matter what ethnicity or faith, deserved to live in their country and to be left alone. One of the respondents told a quick illustrating story: *“Once they broke the windows of the Turkish baker on the corner to bully him and make him leave. The whole neighborhood spoke of shame, because the man worked hard for his money”*. On the other hand, people that do not work, or do not try hard to participate, go against this feeling of fairness and do not deserve this respect.

Discussion

The content and the nature of tolerance is mostly approached from the top, on an aggregated scale. But the interpretation people give to tolerance themselves is strongly underexposed. This study was conducted to give a new view on the question why people tolerate and on what ground they do so. First of all, in this research a distinction was made between positive and negative tolerance. As far as is known there are no previous studies within political psychology, that made this distinction before and formed a complete concept of tolerance. The answer for intolerant people is captured within negative tolerance. Positive tolerance is the type that was found with tolerant people.

The general conclusions of this research are in line with the previous research; the independent variables that lead to intolerance, probably have an important working on negative tolerance as well. These variables are: perceived threat and general norm (Sullivan et. al.1982), the influence of self -esteem on dogmatic personality (Rokeach, 1960), authoritarian personality (Sniderman, 1975) as well as rigidity and conformism (Buikhuisen, Drost &Schilt, 1976). Low self-esteem not only has a great influence on these personality traits, moreover they withdraw people from expressing their intolerant attitudes because of fear for confrontation or they feel powerless towards the situation which causes resignation. These are the most important things that have been found on the nature of negative tolerance. Tolerance by disinterest has its source in rigidity, for people with this personality trait tend to be introspective within their own group and ideas. Within this beliefs system there is view room to consider others. This may as well come from ethnocentric personality traits but this needs more research. Respondents that showed high self- esteem had a stronger opinion and were not afraid of expressing it. Consequentially there was no negative tolerance among them, because negative tolerance means: keeping quiet intolerant ideas. Most people with high self-esteem also have an open mind and there intolerant ideas are internally revised by this *sober second thought*, what many people also called rationality.

Second, reciprocity appeared to be of incredible importance and is actually the base of tolerance. Petersen et. al. found that people were in particular intolerant towards groups that they saw as violence and disrespecting democratic rules. It was striking that Muslims appeared to be intolerated even when they were not associated with tolerance or not living by democratic rules. This is because Muslims have come to the centre of the polarized debate about immigration, according to this Danish research (Petersen et.al. 2010:589). During the interviews I found that in the Netherlands also Muslims are the only group that is rejected (respondents that named Wilders were tolerant). It requires a whole study to find why this is, but I have to mention that in this research, many respondents said 'Muslims' while they mean anybody that has origins in the Middle East or North African countries that did not had a job. This part may be related to reciprocity while paying taxes for

those who do not want to work and are instead involved in criminal activities is not a fair situation. Therefore reciprocal principals are violated. This social unfairness is expressed in political intolerance.

What people expect from others is strongly based on what they need from society in terms of tolerance.

Religious people will value religious freedom more and people that feel deviant from society will emphasize more on general freedom and tolerance. As personality traits have influence on the positive or negative tolerance attitude; personal needs of society have great influence on the subject of what should or should not be tolerated.

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Appendix A

General Questions

Sex

Age

Origin

Education

1. What is according to you tolerance?
2. Would you call yourself a tolerant person?
 - a. Where does this show?
 - b. To whom or what are you tolerant?
 - c. Are there groups or activities in society you won't tolerate?
 - d. Where does this show?
3. how would you like it if this group
 - a. ..Would govern in your country/ municipality?
 - b...would demonstrate in your neighborhood?
 - c.. if would would have to cooperate with one of it's members?
4. How would you react if your son/daughter would chose a partner from this group
5. What do you try to do when you are confronted with one of these things you reject?
Why?
6. How would you say the Dutch government should deal with these people?
- 7.a. How do you think others treat with them?
- 7.b. how do you think they should be treated?

9. In your personal life, with what kind of people (religion, origin) do you have to do?
How do you deal with cultural clashes/ how does these make you feel?

10. How did your social environment look in your youth?
 - a. Did you play with children from another religion/origin?
 - b. Would you have done this if this was possible?
 - c. How did your parent expect you to deal with this?

d. how do you think of this now?

11. a. how do you raise your children in this respect

11.b What are the most important values for you to teach children

independence or respect for elders;
obedience or self-reliance;
curiosity or good manners and
being considerate or well behaved

12.a. Do you feel safe in the dutch society?

12. b. Do you have faith in people?

13. c. you think people have life in their own hands?

personal unworthiness

1. I never do more than expected for I won't make mistakes

2. people should be ashamed of themselves now and then

status inferiority

3. Rich and successful people are better to be around with than poor ones.

4. I wish I was born in a higher position in life

interpersonal competence

7. I don't like to speak in public.

8. I would rather have not too much responsibility over people.

