

**CHANGING DUTCH IDENTITY IN MODERN EUROPE:  
EVOLUTION OF IDENTITY VALUES**

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**Abstract:** Modern realities allow us to characterize the national identity of the Netherlands with the same stereotypes about liberal values, free people and a nation that is quite open to all specific and extraordinary groups. Over the centuries, the Netherlands has acquired values and developed traditions that create a true identity. However, there are a number of factors that go deep into national unity. This article explores the problem of defining the Dutchness in Modern Europe as the nation has been obtaining more progressive elements throughout its development. In addition, the article explains a special form of nationalism – anti-nationalism in the Netherlands, a special structure of behavior and acceptance of the country by the Dutch. To understand the values of the Dutch the article provides information obtained from the official surveys, documents and other scientific analyses. The uniqueness of the Dutch identity loses itself among other European countries because of the vanishing sense of belonging to the traditional Netherlands. One of the factors that influences this process is the “others” or non-Dutch people, who mix the local culture and contribute their origin’s values. Despite of being open to those people, the Dutch became concerned about the gradual destruction of their views and perceptions. Another group under discussion, namely the LGBT community, coexists harmoniously in the country being provided with equal rights and supportive environment.

**Introduction.** Studies of national identity always occupy a unique place in the study of social ties within the state and their representation abroad. A person can identify himself with a country, an entire region, or have individual characteristics. In the context of state belonging, following questions arise: how strongly can people identify with the state in which they live? To what extent does nationalism begin to manifest itself? Can nationalism be perceived positively?

Identification in Europe possesses a strategic significance in identifying a certain position of a country not only within a region, but outside the territorial borders. If most of European states have already created a vision in which their national identity is visible strongly, then the Netherlands are still in the process of fixating their identical peculiarities among other states. Since it is not quite prominent, we cannot confidently define the identity of this country in Europe nor we can reveal what the Netherlands represent and stand for.

Based on the fundamental principles that many countries adhere to, the Netherlands also pays attention to religious elements, belonging to a political party, the main identifiers of the life of society (educational institutions, social assistance institutions, additional governing bodies, etc.), as well as the hierarchy itself, which is inherent in the state system. Thus, the surface layer of Dutch identity is formed by given principles. In the modern world, people have identified signs that characterize the Netherlands: a unique culture, a free lifestyle, including drug use, tolerance to the LGBT community and other fields which are not supported by a majority of world countries. The theory of liberalism explains modern concepts of the country; hence the government actively sticks to it. By doing that, they provide a stable arena for beneficial trade and economic cooperation with other countries, and also are portrayed as kind and liberal nation [1, p. 1]. Most importantly, the Netherlands represent a “smart economics”, where gender equality is taken into account, which

contributes to the additional strengthening of collective identity, but also contributes to the development of the national economy.

Nevertheless, I cannot argue that the identity of the Dutch ends there. Geert Mak [2] mentioned the identity crisis that the Netherlands had been experiencing in the 17th century. The identity crisis that Geert Mak touched upon was more about the degradation of the rich Dutch culture, which was gradually overshadowed by corruption and slowed pace of development. Moreover, the events of Rampjaar (Disaster Day), which took place in 1672, had a tremendous impact on the further development of the country. The attack on the state by France and England showed that the Dutch Republic is unable to maintain the previous success [3, p. 217-218]. The identity crisis cannot be compared to what has been happening in other European countries: armed conflict in the Western Balkans during the 1990s, Poland's path towards the EU membership, Spanish internal identity instability and Catalonia, etc [4, p. 2]. The Dutch version of the "crisis" is better described as a gradual progress along with modern processes. The modern Netherlands has acquired a new form of Dutchness, absorbing the common features of the nation and new concepts of life.

Dutchness in the definition of Burke Wendy [5, p. 109] given in his work means all specific characteristics of Dutch people including values and habits, linguistic, political, social and economic aspects of life, and even personal qualities and traits. In other words, Dutchness describes the Netherlands overall expression, the associations and stereotypes the country represent. Another interpretation of the Dutch identity belongs to Li Minghuan, whose research on Dutch people conducted the similarities between the Chinese and the Dutch people, explaining and discovering more of their true characters [6]. He complements the Dutchness with the complexity of the language, people's initiative behavior and unique landscapes.

One of the Dutch researchers claims that there is no actual identity. And the reason lies in the fact that classifying people is extremely subjective, especially when it concerns a certain nationality. It is impossible to be and act according to the same structured model, and have one patterned lifestyle. The only exception should be cultural and historical elements. Therefore, this article includes two main sections which answer following questions:

- Firstly, what does it mean to be Dutch in the modern world and what principles do they adhere to?
- Secondly, as a liberal country, how has the success of an individual LGBT community progressed?

These issues are particularly important in considering the Netherlands, since it is impossible to make a complete portrait that would depict the country and its inhabitants. I assume another problematic issue is that we do not fully understand what the Netherlands is and why they have acquired modern elements. The second question comes from the country itself, which has promoted new legal views on sexual orientation, implemented a variety of programs. The general scientific methods of international political research are used, such as: hypothesis building, generalization, deductive method, historical method, comparison, critical analysis.

This article will consider the issue of the development of national identity in the Netherlands, as it has changed over time. In addition, it is necessary to consider issues that negatively influenced the further formation of common views. I argue that modern Dutch people do have their own values however the process that has started in the last century made them less associated with the country's original traditions. Namely their anti-nationalist principles they have developed to survive in Europe and stay stable. The accumulation of liberal values affected their attitude towards non-Europeans and non-Dutch drawing a sharp line between what is "ours" and what is "other's". **Liberal and nationalist Dutch: what does it mean to be Dutch?**

In this section of the article, I will consider the main provisions that the concept of Dutchness hides. In particular, it is essential to dwell on the problem of nationalism, the problems

of culture and liberal construction. As the introduction outlined, the Netherlands has long had its own image and its own stereotypes, which can often be confused or correlated with the national identity of the country. Despite the large European countries that have gone through the identity crisis, the Netherlands has not experienced a major shift in the identity development. The Disaster Day impacted the country's prestige and authority, it slightly influenced national identity's representations in terms of cultural features. Now it is problematic to highlight the qualities characteristic of the Netherlands without repeating the words "liberal" and "progressive" several times. Thus, in this article, in addition to the "liberal", new signs and reasons why the Netherlands is in such a state are included.

Analyzing the history of the formation of Dutch identity, the common view was formed in the 1960s, when the population of the Netherlands began to support and accept problems related to gender factors, sexualities' ideas, and a freer lifestyle. Thus, society in the Netherlands actively began to use progressive liberal opportunities and values in their speech and behavior. This opinion was accepted not only by citizens, but also by political representatives who use these indicators in constructing their policies. More than half of the Dutch claim that marriage and adoption of children should be legal for same-sex couples living in Europe. This percentage of quite adequate attitude of people to this social group is the highest among the rest of Europe. The same percentage of the population opposes statements that women are obliged to give birth to children in order to continue the traditional way of life. Such moral foundations in the Netherlands have become the norm in society, and the Dutch themselves are included in the list of the least influenced by cultural polarization that took place in Europe. Here, cultural polarization is usually understood as the negative impact of external factors on the development of cultural values, resistance.

Although the population of the Netherlands has common views in some areas, it is difficult to maintain stability on common European issues, such as immigration and the invasion of nonEuropeans into Europe and, in particular, the Netherlands, religious groups and minorities. Despite progressive and modern views, the Dutch continue to draw boundaries from those who are not like them and do not share the same principles. In such cases, the Dutch "us" and "others" begins to be expressed [7, p. 150]. A clear border between them begins to emerge, excluding possible clashes due to fears that "others" will leave a mark on the identity of the Dutch. Nevertheless, the situation that arises in the country speaks about the multiculturalism of the nation and that the incoming identities absorb the peculiarities of Dutch society, later starting to resemble them.

In the context of nationalism, the Dutch could manage to overcome weak features of nationalism and absorb more sturdy and cultured aspects. If earlier there was nationalism in the Netherlands, in which xenophobia and chauvinism prevailed, along with the denial of religions that are not professed in the country, in the early 2000s the situation stabilized. A current of antinationalists began to appear, usually consisting of people from elite circles with more modern views. Although we mean by the concept of "nationalism" the negativity of views, Josip Kesic and Jan Duyvendak distinguish between "bad" and "good" nationalism [8, p. 582]. And the middle ground that exists between these two concepts is a characteristic feature of Dutch identity. The state policy also plays a major role here, since political parties having the power to influence use these factors in their policy programs.

Although the history of the anti-nationalist movement in the Netherlands dates back to the beginning of the 20th century during the life of the Dutch scientist Johan Huising, it has become a more accepted phenomenon over the past twenty years. The people began to discuss the origin of their identity. Such discussions spread more culturally than politically, including the same progressive new ideas. Nevertheless, right-wing political parties have become more common to talk about migration and integration issues [8, p. 583]. Generally accepted notion that through integration of people and other communities the real national society of citizen can be formed.

Together, this would create a single national culture - identity, unique and special. While left wing parties disrupt the nature of the Dutch identity attempting to build multiculturalism, even though they never succeeded to take power [7, p. 341].

Did a sense of national dignity, pride and a desire to strengthen and spread this national spirit exist in the Netherlands? As one Dutch author Paul Scheffer said, the Netherlands lacks all of the above ideas [7, p. 456]. That is, the Dutch themselves, although they understand the importance of their culture, they reject the term nationalism, replacing it with a simplified “anti-nationalism”. Scheffer’s claims tend to the fact that the Dutch no longer cherish their past and the same cultural ambitions. They stopped talking about the Netherlands, about the Dutch language and traditions. This behavior was the result of the adoption of those ideas that are now common in the country.

Liberal values in the Netherlands have long been considered the collective values of society, which create a collective identity [1, p. 2]. Public debates and discussions about common problems strengthen its formation and ensure further development thanks to the solidarity of the nation. Although the Dutch deny nationalism, they must first understand the concept of “we”, “us” and those signs that undoubtedly characterize them. In the modern interpretation, as already mentioned, the Dutch are liberal and free. But this is not the only true one statement about the Dutchness. Temperance, sophistication, eccentricity and fanciness are intricately in their national portrait, and the Dutch have to enjoy their freedoms articulated in the national Constitution.

The studies of Josip Kešić and Jan Willem Duyvendak focus on “good” nationalism, which they consider within the framework of three important aspects: constructivism, lightness and essentialism. Constructivism states that perception of an identity is very subjective, meaning there should not be single definition that would describe typical Dutch person. It is impossible for millions of people under the same citizenship to be exactly the same. By lightness is meant the connection between a citizen and the state, namely a calm and non-coercive attitude. The Dutch will not persistently and purposefully impose their values of the state, they will not shout about their influence. They live in harmony and enjoy liberal ideas, respecting human rights. As for essentialism, the Dutch identity has always been characterized by a certain level of sincerity, impressiveness, thrift, pluralism and personality.

Political parties in the Netherlands, which also have their influence on creating the foundation for the development of national identity, both the left and the right have their own visions and set their own priorities. The percentage of left-wing parties in the Netherlands is about 21-25%, according to the poll by Pellinwijzer [9]. This allows us to state that they did not have sufficient power. The progressiveness of the Netherlands has already been celebrated for several decades with all the “extraordinary” laws and policies adopted. Back in the 1980s, the capital of the Netherlands, Amsterdam, was considered a free territory for drug use and prostitution. They were considered pioneers for the same progressive ideas that could make the world more open and freer. As already mentioned, the whole situation did not consider the main political decisions. Progressivity of Dutchness still did not imply socio-economic reforms and problems. Thus, the left-wing parties could not achieve victory because of conservative and socialist views and foundations.

Regarding the issues of immigration, migration, non-Europeans and non-Dutch, the Netherlands shares xenophobia along with other European views. This became especially evident after the regular parliamentary elections that took place in 2017, when political parties sharply considered both migration and racism. The question is, how do citizens who do not have Dutch roots feel? Or those who were born in the Netherlands, but are not ethnically European? These people are immigrants from Turkey and Morocco, Somalia and Suriname [10, p. 70]. This population group continues to be considered non-Europeans, even if they identify themselves first as Europeans, second – as their relatives’ origin country. Right-wing parties, in particular the Party

for Freedom and Pim Fortuyn List, continuing their populist movements, focused their policies on alienation of Islam, and racism [11, p. 15].

From the standpoint of official documents, in 1988 the Dutch Integration Law, the first document of its kind, was formulated. The initial success included the economic benefits of migration flows, but then appeared concerns about the ability of migrants to fit in the society and accumulate this identity. Instead of emphasizing political and economic results, the government concentrated on cultural fragmentation. This is tightly connected with the Muslim population residing in the Netherlands [11, p. 49]. Islam hinders successful cultural integration. According to Stam Valerie's research, the chosen path of integration of society is not unique in Europe. In my opinion, the policy of rejection and negative evaluation of non-Europeans will always exist in the practice of the Netherlands. "Other" and "Unlike Us" groups of people are automatically excluded. This is how this policy works, if one does not meet the criteria based on human race, sexual orientation, religious views. Even despite all the progressive views I have already mentioned, the Netherlands suffers from a policy of denying new migrants. This position is easy to understand – the state is trying to protect the local population and traditional ideas.

A type of nationalism common in Europe and the Netherlands, the so-called "white nationalism", proclaims primacy of white people and decide which demographic groups can and cannot join their community and cross the borders to acquire the same values [11, p. 122-123]. Such factors can negatively affect the acclimatization of immigrants, because in reality they remain without support and guarantees of successful integration into Dutch society. In addition, further stay in the state as an immigrant or "non-European" may be accompanied by discrimination and a condemning attitude on the part of citizens of an already existing community.

To be Dutch, it is enough to be guided by two basic phrases: *doe normaal* (to be normal) and *doe maar gewoon* (just to be normal already) [11, p. 123-124]. In this way, the true Dutch nature is expressed, which seeks to make "others" and non-Europeans normal. *Doe normaal* is widespread in the Netherlands, which can be considered a single and collective principle. For example, in celebration of the King's Day in the Netherlands, it is customary to wear the same clothes of the national color of the country – orange. It can also denote behavior on the street or in society. Some [12] residents think about the political context of this phrase or just about social attitudes. Although the phrase itself is quite simple and may be relevant in other countries, in the Netherlands it categorizes and excludes people, confirming a cautious attitude.

Thus, what is called Dutchness, Dutch national identity, in the world is associated primarily with liberal progressive views. Almost half a century ago, the country was considered the most open in every sense, which was considered an example for creating a better and favorable environment. A certain role in the formation of national identity has been played by political parties that disseminate and put forward programs and reforms, focusing on certain ideologies. The left-wing parties of the conservative order have never reached heights in political governance: they have never been able to earn more seats in parliament in elections. This choice demonstrates the national mood and the desire to continue promoting the same values. Multiculturality can never become real in the Netherlands due to the lack of Dutch support for non-Dutch and other immigrants. Here the concept of nationalism begins to manifest itself. However, as I have already found out, this nationalism takes on a lighter form and does not contain negative overtones. The anti-nationalism that exists in the Netherlands denies a strong and deep connection between the state and the population. There is no concern and desire to be praised. However, the same factor can destroy that national identity.

### **The Netherlands and the LGBTQ**

The most controversial and unusual topic for analysis in many countries that do not share the same principles as the Netherlands, cannot be ignored in the study of the national identity of the Dutch and the whole concept of Dutchness. Those progressive and modern views that have

developed over several decades continue to surprise and at the same time outrage the world community and conservative politicians. Issues of sexual orientation, same-sex relationships, gender equality are always the most contested discourses. In this regard, the Netherlands is demonstrating success in this development. However, this may also go beyond what is permitted, which is why the Netherlands and the Dutch themselves are already perceived as the most “strange” and “inadequate”. This section of the article will allow you to define these values and the stages of gaining rights.

Sexual orientation is one of the possible characteristics of one’s individual identity. The Netherlands has long been on the list of the most tolerant countries. It is clear that attitudes towards LGBT people can vary:

- Those who are directly part of it and experience all the changes in their direction;
- Those who just accept the situation;
- Those who decide which programs and reforms should be implemented.

To begin with, I will reveal the history of the emergence of such an attitude in the Netherlands. The problem dates back to the end of World War II, before which even the idea of homosexuality was forbidden in Dutch society circles. People compared it to dangerous diseases and even personality disorders. For these ideas punishment was assumed in the form of dismissal or suspension from work. This story is closely related to the process of winning of legal acceptance. The process of gaining their own rights and freedoms began to be actively implemented in the late 1950s. This was surprisingly served by the statement of the Protestant and Catholic Churches that there is no sin in relations between same-sex partners, on the contrary, as representatives of the human race, it is in the order of things. In the 1960s, the positive side of this struggle began to manifest itself, as the documents previously prohibiting acts of homosexuality underwent changes in favor of the LGBT community. A few years later, since 1994, discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation is prohibited. Subsequently, the Netherlands became the first country to legalize same-sex marriage in 2001. The current situation in the Netherlands continues to develop in favor of the rights of sexual minorities. The law established equality of representatives of the LGBT community and prohibited discrimination, besides allowing same-sex couples to adopt children.

Thus, the country has moved from the status of one of the religious and conservative to a more liberal path, becoming a distinctive culture with national principles. This process of transition is closely connected with a distinct trend in the development of the identity of the population [7]. At the moment, the rights of representatives of the LGBT community are protected by law and the Constitution. Article 1 of the Constitution of the Netherlands states the mandatory equality of citizens of the country, and discrimination is considered prohibited. The document, which entered into force in 1994, also contains the wording of equality, regardless of various religious factors, gender preferences and racial differences.

The problem in this situation can be the attitude of the population to this category of people, since not all citizens agree with the decisions of the government or the same sexual minorities. Official statistics state that there are no obvious irritants among Dutch society, equality between people is viewed positively and openly. For these indicators, the Netherlands was at the top of the list of countries with a positive attitude to homosexuality [13]. In the Netherlands, compared to other countries, a number of social improvements are being made in the fields of education, medicine, social networks and media, sports events and others in order to create a friendly environment [14, p. 7-8]. According to the official website of the Government of the Netherlands, the country implements various projects to support the LGBT community, accumulative funds, provides close contact with organizations [15]. For instance, in 2014 the Government approved the New Transgender Law according to which the process of filling out and changing official documents has been simplified [15, p. 4]. In addition. the map below shows the percentage of

people who openly consider themselves a part of LGBT. The Netherlands shows one of the two highest rates in this category along with Denmark with 43% and 45% respectively [16].

Therefore, homosexuality and other sexual minorities live in harmony in the country and enjoy their rights, continuing to fight not only within the state, but also outside the borders of the Netherlands. The number of programs that are specially created within this community exceeds the attempts of other European countries. In reality, the Netherlands is the first to go this way and show prospects and results. Thus, they are rightfully called the most tolerant nation of Europe.

### **Conclusion**

Being Dutch in the modern world means being proud of your nation, but not to a great extent. This identity is free, open, quirky and cautious. The Dutch know their rights and are ready to fight for them outside the Netherlands. Such a characteristic could be true if it were not for a number of factors that change the picture. Their attitude towards everyone who comes from outside the borders of “normal” is changing due to fears of introducing a negative effect on the culture of the nation. But at the same time, the Dutch will not praise their nation and are not attached to it, like Great Britain or Japan. Because of this factor, the Dutch are beginning to forget about true traditions, replacing them with modern values, which made the Netherlands famous. Nationalism, which the country is accused of, is being replaced by anti-nationalism, which is a milder form of promoting the national spirit. As already mentioned, the Dutch themselves are not interested in actively promoting them, trying to focus on domestic problems. This is especially true for political parties, which structure the nation’s positions through elections. The positions are understood as integration and immigration policy, which directly affects the population. It was determined that those born outside the State or who are relatives of immigrants, that is, non-Europeans, suffer from discrimination. The word discrimination, given all the values that the country promotes, should not be used. It is also one of the factors that spoil the external picture of national identity. The success that the Dutch have demonstrated in the struggle for human rights and for the equality of people regardless of gender, sexual orientation, speaks of a willingness and a deep desire to develop and not live outside of modern realities.

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UDC 327

**THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT SIGNED  
BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND JAPAN**

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The current state of bilateral relations between Japan and the European Union is considered to be quite strong, dynamically developing in various areas of cooperation, favorable and having positive results. Japan, as one of the largest Asian countries by economic indicators, takes all the benefits from cooperation with the countries of the European Union, while the EU deepens ties and its influence in the East Asian region through Japan. Such bilateral benefits allow countries to continue the integration process through the signing of partnership and cooperation agreements. This article will consider the main points of the evolution of economic relations between the European Union and Japan, the current state and size of the markets, the history of signing the Economic Partnership Agreement and the advantages the countries receive.