# From Neo-Enlightenment to *Nihonjinron*: The Politics of Anti-Multiculturalism in Japan and the Netherlands

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All communities are postulated; projects rather than realities, something that becomes after, not before the individual choice.

Zygmunt Bauman, Liquid Modernity

#### I. Introduction

On September 6, 2007, politician Geert Wilders addressed the Dutch Parliament, boldly proclaiming that "multiculturalism" was destroying European civilization:

Madam Speaker, the Islamic incursion must be stopped. Islam is the Trojan Horse in Europe. If we do not stop Islamification now, Eurabia and Netherabia will just be a matter of time. One century ago, there were approximately 50 Muslims in the Netherlands. Today, there are about one million Muslims in this country. Where will it end?...No Islamic tradition must ever be established in the Netherlands: not now and also not in a few centuries' time.<sup>1</sup>

Only a few years earlier and several thousand miles away on the island of Japan, Tokyo Governor Ishihara Shintaro warned the Japanese public about the imminent threat foreigners posed to their social fabric after relaying a recent report of criminal activity:

In due course, the perpetrators were captured, and, just as had been suspected, the crime was one of revenge among Chinese criminals. There is fear—and not without cause—that it will not be long before the entire nature of Japanese society itself will be altered by the spread of this type of crime that is indicative of their ethnic DNA.<sup>2</sup>

In both cases, the total eclipse of multiculturalism was more than political. It was existential.

While many view globalization as a process fundamentally reshaping the way individuals, communities, and nation-states interact, the emergent patterns of social and political order are unclear and often contradictory. Between the neo-Marxist critics and neo-liberal advocates of what is to come, a contentious debate centers on how policies, discourses, and social movements within democracies react to heightened cultural interaction as a consequence of global migration patterns. As the past ten years have witnessed a resurgence of nationalist sentiments in several advanced industrialized countries, the following questions have emerged. How is political xenophobia justified to the general public? What are the relationships between these political movements in separate countries and their perceptions of "multiculturalism" and "difference"? What are their social consequences? Finally, how do we understand political nationalism in the broader context of globalization?

This essay seeks to critically analyze discourses of xenophobia and clarify their relationship to perceptions of multiculturalism in the comparative context of Japan and the Netherlands. These two advanced industrialized countries have very distinct historical traditions in dealing with immigrant populations, with the Netherlands considered one of the most accommodating to foreigners and Japan one of the most resistant to outsiders. Yet recently politicians in both countries have justified hostility to foreigners along similar lines. I refer to the use of these specific discourses as the politics of anti-multiculturalism. This study makes two comparative conclusions: first, given the great differences in their respective identitarian myths, xenophobic political movements in both cases are fundamentally the same in their hostility to difference and methods of justification. Second, this essay critiques political anti-multiculturalism for mischaracterizing the realities of immigration and exacerbating intercultural tensions in an era of seemingly irreversible global flows of people.

The article is organized in six parts. First, I outline the broader theoretical context of globalization and its sub-themes of identity and multiculturalism, and I justify comparing these two particular countries in light of their similarities and differences. Second, I briefly explain my methodologies of discourse analysis and field interviews. Third and fourth, I look at the respective stories behind Dutch and Japanese nationalist politicians in the historical context of immigration poli-

cies, and critically analyze their anti-multicultural discourses. Fifth, I draw comparative conclusions based on both common justifications and common social consequences. Lastly, I return to the theme of globalization and conclude with several remarks about the significance of understanding anti-multiculturalism.

#### II. Theoretical Context

Globalization, in its broadest sense, is the contemporary catchword for change. A seemingly endless number of articles and books on the topic dot the landscape, but most commentators agree that deep changes are afoot. The units of analysis vary from NGOs to transnational corporations, from nation-states to city councils, from forms of government to mechanisms of governance, but most means of uncovering what indeed is changing and how new normative potentials can be harnessed or suppressed vary from place to place, from person to person. Some see change for everyone, others only for some. Shaw defines globalization, or "globality," in terms of a shift in something as axiomatic as the intersubjectivity of the world population:

I propose that we understand this as the development of a *common consciousness of human society on a world scale.* We mean an increasing awareness of the totality of human social relations as the largest constitutive framework of all relations...The distinction between global and preglobal is therefore that, with the development of global relations, the understanding of human relations in a common worldwide framework comes to *predominate* over other, more partial understandings.<sup>3</sup>

Of course, as resurgent nationalism and xenophobia demonstrate, Shaw's globality is never as simple as the spread of a global ethic or consciousness, even in the wealthiest parts of the world. If anything, national identities and globality engage each other in a dynamic, dialectical process. The meaning of any supposed global moment rests on where one's place is to begin with. As Zygmunt Bauman remarks:

An integral part of the globalizing process is progressive spatial segregation, separation and exclusion. Neo-tribal and fundamentalist tendencies, which reflect and articulate the experience of people on the receiving end of globalization, are as much the legitimate offspring of globalization as the widely acclaimed 'hybridization' of top culture—the culture at the globalized top.<sup>4</sup>

With the varied experiences of globality in mind, my analysis of political nationalism and xenophobia draws from and extends into two highly contested sub-themes of globalization: identity and multiculturalism.

### A. Essentialism and Beyond: Rethinking Identity as Politics

Before understanding nationalism and xenophobia, it is necessary to see how identity has been rethought, given the degree to which people with differences increasingly interact. The theoretical literature and empirical realities of globalization have led to divergent views. Some answer with "essentialism," describing the idea that there is an inherent "essence" to identity, be it in ethnic, national, cultural, or value-based terms. Samuel Huntington serves as one example, arguing that core identities can be classified along discrete lines "defined by common objective elements such as language, history, religion, customs, institutions, and the subjective self-identification of the people." To him, identity is composed of qualities that can be preserved through culturally protectionist policies.

On the other side of the spectrum, some argue that a supposed essence of identity is a constructed manifestation of something inherently hybridized and seemingly infinite. Badiou summarizes this view of identity in his conception of "multiplicity": "There are as many differences, say, between a Chinese peasant and a young Norwegian professional as between myself and anyone at all, including myself." In other words, for Badiou and others like him, when it comes to identity, nothing can be taken for granted.

The aim of this analysis is to promote a more reflexive account of national forms of identity by looking into the political implications of these debates. As will be discussed later, not only do Dutch and Japanese populists employ essentialist views of identity to support their claims, but they also depict its bleak alternative as a deracinated "multiplicity" that has no common history or culture to relate its citizens and is likely to collapse into chaos. I hope to illustrate that nationalism today stands diametrically opposed to hybridity.

### B. Globalization's Challenge to Democracy: (Anti)multiculturalism

Increasing intercultural interaction as a consequence of continued migration patterns has made the term *multiculturalism* a prime tar-

get of academic discussions. Multiculturalism is indeed a semantically promiscuous and often misused concept, but nevertheless provides an important framework for understanding how democracy and difference are and can be related. Perspectives differ in terms of how individual rights and group claims can be reconciled through theories of justice and forms of governance in poly-ethnic societies. The major question underlying most debates about integration and immigration is to what extent minority cultures have the right to be protected from disintegration and absorption into the dominant one. Will Kymlicka defends the right of minority and majority cultures to exist because culture precedes freedom: "Put simply, freedom involves making choices amongst various options, and our societal culture not only provides these options, but also makes them meaningful to us." His argument follows that choosing to access or abandon culture must be a right guaranteed by governments, as it provides the necessary foundation for self-identification and the relationship to peers.

The debate becomes complicated, however, when liberal individual rights are seen as conflicting with communal or cultural ones. Some continue to place cultural rights over individual ones. Freemen contends that, "Multiculturalism prescribes a policy not just of toleration, but also accommodation of disparate cultural groups, many of which do not endorse liberal social or even political norms." This belief leads many critics to argue that multiculturalism is nothing more than a philosophical justification for cultural relativism. Specifically, Barry attacked its "communitarian" underpinnings and suggests that only liberal egalitarian principles can remain relevant in a theory of social justice because illiberal groups cannot ensure individual rights.

While many questions remain unresolved, this essay extends the debate into a different direction. Rather than discuss multiculturalism only in terms of theories of justice and its relationship to liberalism, I look into the social and political dynamics involved in absolutely rejecting a multicultural society. The term *anti-multiculturalism* thus refers to the belief that difference can only be constructed and viewed in purely negative terms, and that minority cultures should not coexist alongside majority ones. Anti-multiculturalism is different from multiculturalism in that the former attempts in policies of immigration and integration to eliminate difference, while the latter allows for qualified, pragmatic responses.

# C. Nationalism Beyond the West: The Promise of a Comparative Analysis

Comparing the specific countries of Japan and the Netherlands along the lines of political xenophobia is important for a number of reasons. First, looking at their similarities forces a rethinking of resurgent nationalism as a Western phenomenon. Indeed, much literature on populism and xenophobia reduces anti-immigration and the creation of a "fortress" society to common American or European traits. 10 Certainly at first glance the case of the Netherlands supports many of these claims. Priding itself as being among the birthplaces of the Enlightenment, scholars on all sides of the spectrum argue that the Netherlands has consistently been a bedrock of the Western liberal values of tolerance, rationality, and "civilization," and its history of art and philosophy are often attributed quintessential "Western" traits. 11 Moreover, some view it as one of the first countries to develop the capitalist social relations often associated with Westernization. On the other hand, Japan defies many of these "Western" cultural traits. Unique Japanese characteristics extend to aspects as fundamental as social individuation, systems of ethics, emotional configurations, and ontological assumptions concerning a human-nature duality.<sup>12</sup> While some might argue that Japan became Western in its project of modernization, in actuality those in charge of this project during the Meiji Restoration described it as "transcending modernity" (kindai no chokoku) and its Western categories.<sup>13</sup>

Stepping outside of the conceptual cage of the West forces a recontextualization of this analysis into the broader intersections of political economy, national discourses, and global migration patterns. From a political economy perspective, it is critical to note that the two countries share certain similar characteristics. The Netherlands and Japan remain two of the wealthiest countries in the world. Both are members of the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development. The Netherlands' GDP per capita is \$38,600 and Japan's is \$33,800, and unemployment is well below five percent in both cases. Lach can be considered post-industrial, with 73.8% and 73.3% of all jobs in the service sector, respectively, and the technological achievement index placing the Netherlands at sixth most advanced and Japan as fourth. Politically, both countries are formally Constitutional monarchies but act as Parliamentary democracies, as national and local elections determine which parties will constitute the ruling coalition. Certainly differ-

ences exist in respective party politics, but general procedures remain fundamentally alike. Moreover, contemporary research on the style of politics suggests that the media presence of political figures now plays an important role in determining electoral patterns.<sup>17</sup> The example of populist politicians in both countries supports this claim. In other words, one of the aims of this comparison is to show that political xenophobia is not only a Western phenomenon, but is one of the many faces of globalization.

### III. Political Words and their Consequences

The term discourse has become more and more commonplace in academia as either a method (discourse analysis) or to describe a mechanism of power relations. Underpinning discourse analysis is the idea that language is not a neutral tool to mediate external reality, but actively serves to give reality part or all of its meaning.<sup>18</sup> This essay will use discourse analysis in an attempt to unravel the inner logic of political xenophobia and how the specific language employed by political actors actively draws lines between "foreign" and "domestic" elements of social life. In particular, I will look at the arguments made in favor of preserving national identity against outside people and ideas. However, discourse analysis must not be limited to language itself, but must also look at its social effects. As Bauman notes, "it is the behavioral and political consequences that count and affect the quality of human cohabitation, not the words used to narrate them."19 Thus, while one part of this article analyzes the logic of political arguments, the other draws on field interviews with immigrants and empirical evidence to look into effects on the larger society.

#### IV. Cases

# A. The Neo-Enlightenment in the Netherlands

While many mark the radical politics of anti-multiculturalism on the Dutch political scene as a "seismic shift"<sup>20</sup> in its historical record of immigration and integration policies, it is first necessary to sort through the often-romanticized Dutch history of tolerance and to understand the story as one of both continuity and change.

Immigration played an important role in post-war Holland. The Dutch government began recruitment of low-skilled labor from coun-

tries in the Mediterranean in the 1960s and early 1970s. In 1973, however, recruitment came to a virtual standstill because of the overabundance of unemployed natives and a decreased demand for unskilled labor as a result of the global oil crisis. Even though the government expected migrant workers to return home, immigration continued for three reasons. First, the government permitted family reunification and also continued a "back door" immigration policy through the Foreign Workers Employment Act (1979). Second, about 180,000 colonial immigrants arrived in the wake of Surinam's independence. Third, asylum seekers continued to grow in numbers, reaching 50,000 applicants at its peak in 1994. As a result, there were large increases in immigrant population. Out of the two largest ethnic groups, Turkish nationals grew from 53,500 in 1974 to 308,000 in 2000 and Moroccan nationals from 29,600 to 262,000.

Most mainstream accounts of the Netherlands view the country as one of the most accommodating toward foreigners. Originally, Dutch models for integration grew out of its system of verzuiling, or "Pillarization," which organized self-autonomous social groups based upon denomination. Its political corollary, the Polder Model, was a "consociational" democracy that allowed the major subgroups of Protestants, Catholics, and socialists to facilitate political decisions between elites of each group.<sup>24</sup> Typically evolving out of pragmatic adjustments to reality, Dutch post-war policies of immigration were based on these Pillar and Polder idealtyps. The idea of an ethnic minority pillar is best represented by the government's 1983 White Paper, which promoted three objectives: to improve the socioeconomic conditions of minorities, to counteract discrimination and improve the legal position of specific minority groups, and to increase minority participation in Dutch society.<sup>25</sup> In short, stereotypical depictions of the Dutch integration model emphasize the cultural autonomy of ethnic and religious minorities.

While these policies typically presented the Netherlands as a "harmonic multicultural society," many critics point out its organizational flaws. Vink argues that the creation of an ethnic minorities pillar was more of a myth than a reality, and government policies never permitted new religious groups to integrate in the same way old ones had.<sup>26</sup> Government policies addressing cultural autonomy grew out of the belief that foreigners would eventually leave the country; when the government realized immigrants would stay, they quickly favored integration measures over cultural autonomy.<sup>27</sup> Entzinger suggests that Dutch multiculturalism had a static view of culture, and that policies

were aimed more at protecting "traditional Dutch values from outside impulses" than creating new channels for dynamic interaction between newcomers and old residents.<sup>28</sup>

Fact or fiction, the reality was that large groups of immigrant populations had begun to settle into Dutch society. It became the topic of political discourse in the 21st century.

### 1. Enter Pim Fortuyn

The story of Dutch immigration and integration policies may be one of both continuity and change, but a post-9/11 world saw the radicalization of anti-multiculturalist discourse in the politics of Pim Fortuyn. Fortuyn burst the cracks in the pillarization model in his run up to the 2002 Parliamentary elections, attacking political elites and leading a strong campaign against immigration. Fortuyn announced his intention to run for Parliament on August 20, 2001. He decided to be leader of the Livable Netherlands Party and quickly adopted the slogan, "at your service." Drawing from his bestselling book, The Mess of Eight Purple Years, <sup>29</sup> he used his "pink" platform to attack the ruling "purple" coalition. Fortuyn's agenda centered around two issues: restructuring the public sector and taking a firmer stance on immigration policies, particularly regarding asylum seekers. Once on the political scene, he immediately offered a polarizing voice on the latter issue, saying in de Volksrant that, "Islam was a backwards culture, and no new immigrants would be allowed, and that if necessary to protect freedom of speech, the first article of the Constitution<sup>30</sup> should be repealed."<sup>31</sup> Because of this controversial statement, the Livable Netherlands Party dismissed Fortuyn, but he quickly formed his own party, the Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF), to continue campaigning and making bold remarks about Islam in the Netherlands. His story was cut short, however. On May 6, 2002, he was assassinated. Nine days later, Fortuyn's party won 26 seats in the Parliament, a record number of seats for a new party. According to the Pedersen index, the elections of May 15, 2002 ranked fourth among all Western European elections since 1900<sup>32</sup> in terms of voter volatility.

Fortuyn's success presented an important link between nationalism and anti-elitism. General descriptions have often referred to him as a populist. This explains why, for example, he directed his comments to "general Dutch people" against the legacy left by "elites in The Hague." Canovan has argued that when populism refers to "the people" or a "homeland," the political platform can quite often be

turned into a nationalist project.<sup>33</sup> Yet, to call Fortuyn a nationalist is not precise enough to describe his values. Akkerman used a typology of nationalism to classify Fortuyn's party program as "civic nationalism." Civic nationalism, according to Akkerman, differs from "ethnocratic nationalism" because Fortuyn's vision was more utopian than nostalgic.<sup>34</sup>

While Fortuyn's party success was short-lived, much debate remains over his role as a leader in shaping the public opinion of foreigners. Some argue that many people voted for his party as a vote against the ruling coalition more than a vote for his platform. Others contend that Fortuyn actually served to form new perceptions of foreigners and was the main catalyst in creating anti-immigration sentiment. According to a study done by Belanger and Aarts, it was a combination of the two. Fortuyn's party success was due to both policy preferences and previous attitudes of political discontent. Regardless, by the time of the elections, he presented a new set of arguments against immigration and Islam in particular, and his appeal has unquestionably left a residual impact on Dutch politics and its political treatment of difference. Importantly, Fortuyn based his vision on a historical reconstruction of the Western Enlightenment.

# 2. Fortuyn's Neo-Enlightenment and its Heirs

Looking at specific arguments and statements, Fortuyn's Neo-Enlightenment discourse can be broken into four different components: identifying core liberal values, reducing Islam to a homogeneous culture, perceiving Islam as the prime threat to liberal values, and linking the political elite to an impotent form of cultural relativism.

First, Fortuyn argued that the Netherlands arrived at its liberal value system through the evolutionary Enlightenment process whose core principles were secularity and tolerance. His book, *The Islamization of the Netherlands*, argued that Islam was a threat to the separation of church and state. He contended that it is vital that, "the public domain is protected from the direct influences of ideology." To defend the principles of the secular Enlightenment, Fortuyn called on Dutch people to become "self-aware of our norms and values." He urged their defense, declaring, "We must pass on these norms and values…I am talking about core norms and values." Because Fortuyn invoked women's and homosexual's rights as core values, he linked leftist ethical values with civic nationalism. Ironically, he acted as a living embodiment

of tolerance as he was openly gay and claimed to have good sexual relations with Muslim immigrants. When asked in an interview why he neglected to spend time with immigrants despite his policies, his response was, "spend time with them? I sleep with Muslim boys!"<sup>37</sup> Fortuyn's charisma and ability to complicate the traditional values of the right and left with immigration and nationalism granted him a wide appeal. It also allowed him to distance himself from conventional rightist or racist accusations because of his approving stance toward domestic ethical issues such as euthanasia and abortion.

Second, Fortuyn based the fault lines between Dutch society and Muslims on culture. In an interview he gave right before the election, Fortuyn made the remarks, "Legally, all religions are equal. Culturally they are not." This had two effects: it reduced Muslim immigrants to a homogenous ethnic group despite great internal variations, and it created an unclear conflation of religion and culture. Turkish immigrants were grouped with Moroccan immigrants, for example, even though they have had significantly different experiences in integrating into Dutch society. Also, this prevented Islam from being seen in its varied religious experience across immigrant generations. While first-generation hermeneutical perspectives may vary from second- and third-generation ones, this promoted a black-and-white view of the Muslim religion. The message to the general public suggests that one is either completely secular and "capable" in Dutch society or one is devoutly religious and fundamentally incompatible with Western values.

Third, Fortuyn turned his cultural construction of Islam into the primary threat to core liberal values. This can be seen in remarks he gave at a press conference immediately before his assassination: "I want to discuss and if necessary fight the Islam by just saying that our standards and values...are different than theirs. In some points they are totally opposite to each other...yes I think that [it] is retarded, that's what I said." He contrasted Islam to liberal values by claiming it cannot "wholly participate" in Dutch culture unless it can assimilate these liberal qualities. The failure to integrate Muslims was because their faith had not yet been through the phase of the Enlightenment.<sup>39</sup> Invoking examples of the oppression of women in Muslim societies, Fortuyn was able to create a public belief that intolerance within the Muslim community was not only commonplace, but had the potential to contaminate the values of Dutch society as well.

Fourth, Fortuyn invoked claims of a democratic deficit to rouse support. His populist critique attached cultural relativism to elite values.

Pim Fortuyn once justified his claims by critiquing the Far Left for disabling critical remarks toward non-Dutch ethnic groups:

The extreme left—the greens and the pvdA, plus their henchmen in the civil service and media—have tried to suppress, via the subsidized thought police, and the increased number of anti-racist committees, all critique of the blessings of a multicultural society.<sup>40</sup>

This line of argument feeds back into the populist characteristics described earlier, and helps explain much of his initial electoral support. Fortuyn demonized the ruling coalition not because of economic problems, but because they represented the paralyzing consequences of "political correctness." Fortuyn led many to believe that a politically correct Left stifled individual expression and thought. Logically, he was able to link many ideas at once: elites no longer spoke on behalf of the general public but tried to force their own values onto society, and they had used their power to ensure that no one would challenge their rule unless a savior like himself stood up to them. This also allowed Fortuyn to turn his anti-immigrant platform into a campaign with larger implications about the state of democracy in the Netherlands. Along his line of argument, a vote against him would be a vote against democratic principles. The BBC issued a general survey about Fortuyn's popularity following his death, and one man noted, "There was much more to Fortuyn than his views on immigration."41

Although Fortuyn's party broke up in chaos shortly after its triumph and despite his assassination, the ideas remain politically active. Geert Wilders is one of the most outspoken and controversial critics of Islam to come out of the legacy of anti-multiculturalism. Wilders' anti-Islamic language is even stronger than that of Fortuyn, but he employs almost the exact same tactics that Fortuyn pioneered in his neo-Enlightenment discourse. In an interview he gave on the Fox News channel after the release of his movie *Fitna*, he stated:

The Koran is a fascist book. Islam is an ideology...The adrenaline through my veins is that I feel a lot of support in my country to make a change and be proud of identity, not to be xenophobe or racist, but to speak out against an ideology that is threatening everything in the Western world...We are still cultural relativists to the bone, and the government is politically correct, and the large amount of people who live in my country are fed up with it.<sup>42</sup>

Wilders reiterates the strikingly similar general principles: attacking the elites for cultural relativism, charging Islam as the prime opponent of Western civilization, appealing to "the people," and attempting to preserve a core-value-based identity. Wilders continues to use the media as his main vehicle for anti-Islamic remarks, and although he has many critics in both the Netherlands and other places, his appeal is not dwindling. As of now his party controls 9 of 150 seats in the Parliament.

Former Immigration Minister Rita Verdonk also represents a part of Fortuyn's essentialist and preservationist legacy. Verdonk responded to the changing political climate by instituting new regulations regarding asylum seekers and integration measures. In 2005, she turned down the applications of more than 26,000 refugees who had been living in the Netherlands for over five years. She proposed that all women who wish to wear the Muslim headscarf or burga would be banned from public spaces because they were a threat to national security, and that only the Dutch language could be spoken outside of private homes.<sup>43</sup> The conservative VVD Party took away her membership in September of 2007 after she criticized it for having too little visibility on the issues of immigration and integration. Verdonk has since started her own party, Proud of the Netherlands. According to her website, two principles that immigrants must abide by include Dutch language learning as well as "in public space, [using] only Dutch values and norms." 44 Her popularity does not appear to be diminishing. A recent poll by Maurice de Hond shows that the Proud Netherlands Party of Verdonk would pick up 26 seats in the next Parliamentary election. 45

### B. Nihonjinron in Japan

Before looking into the radical politics of Ishihara Shintaro, it is necessary to understand the historical context of Japan and its attitude toward outsiders. Japan has long been characterized as a country resistant to foreigners and tolerant of racist rhetoric. 46 Some argue that Japan's slow adaptation to immigration and integration policies is because the country relied on long work hours and automation instead of foreign unskilled labor during its period of post-war economic growth. 47 Still others have argued that immigration occurred after the post-war boom, but through irregular and undocumented measures, because the government made a conscious effort not to deal with the illegal influx of workers. 48 Nevertheless, in the 1980s, increas-

ing demand for foreign labor led to a larger influx of foreigners from South and East Asia and South America, and by the turn of this century, 1,686,444 registered immigrants resided in the country.<sup>49</sup>

According to a United Nation's report in 2000, Japan's total workforce is expected to contract by 13% by 2025 as a result of having the world's lowest fertility rate. This prediction has forced much debate within the country, not only about the need for foreign labor, but also about its political and social stance on outsiders.

Japan's attitude toward foreigners in its immigration policy can be broken into three restrictive ideas: first, admitting foreign workers on any basis should be a last resort; second, unskilled workers should not be admitted; and third, all foreigners should be admitted on a temporary basis only.<sup>50</sup> While laws such as the Immigration Control and Refugee Act have been amended several times, Japan's ban on unskilled labor and severe punishment of illegal aliens remains firmly rooted. Consequently, a side-door mechanism emerged for importing unskilled labor by expanding "trainee programs" and allowing greater flexibility in visa categories. The trainee program allows workers to come to Japan under the justification that they will learn technical skills and then return to their country of origin. From the 1990s onward, the number of trainees has ranged anywhere from 40,000 to 55,00 entrants per year.<sup>51</sup> In reality, many trainees receive little training and actually perform jobs that native Japanese will not perform because they are dirty, dangerous, or low-paying. Along with its sidedoor, Japan also has a relatively accessible back door, namely, illegally overstaying visa permits or underground trafficking channels. The government attempted to crack down on the number of over-stayers in the early 1990s by making it harder to obtain a visa from targeted countries, such as Bangladesh and Pakistan. Even after these measures, the estimated number of visa over-stayers is approximately 250,000, not counting the considerable number of people who enter the country clandestinely.52

The responsibility for immigration and integration policies continues to bounce between different ministries in the central government. Immigration control is in the hands of the Ministry of Justice, but lacks any jurisdiction over integration policy. Other ministries, such as Health, Labor, and Welfare, control the restrictions on visa and work permits, but usually leave the provision of services (such as language-learning facilities) to local governments and NGOs. Ultimately, the lack of a centralized bureaucracy to deal comprehensively with immi-

gration and integration has prevented any systematic policy to address both the economic reality of unskilled labor and the growing number of illegal residents in the country. This has allowed politicians to capture the public imagination about the uncertainty of Japan's status as an immigrant country.

### 1. The Popular Face of Nationalism: Ishihara Shintaro

Given Japan's history of immigration, its political climate deserves special attention in light of a popular and powerful individual and his explicit remarks against foreigners. Governor of Tokyo, Ishihara Shintaro represents some of the most extreme views against a multicultural Japan. Shintaro has been a well-known figure in Japanese pop culture and politics for a long time. At age 23, he won the prestigious Akutagawa Literature Award for his novel, The Season of the Sun. Using this literary fame he entered politics in 1968 and was elected to eight consecutive terms in the House of Councillors, serving in the environment and transport ministries. In 1989, he published another controversial bestselling book titled, No to ieru Nihon (The Japan that Can Say No), with Sony co-founder Morita Akio. In it he argued for Japan's need to be independent from the United States in its foreign and domestic policy. After twenty-five years, Ishihara decided to retire from politics, lamenting that Japan had been reduced to the "level of eunuch."53 This political hiatus was short-lived, however, when he announced his candidacy for Governor of Tokyo in 1999, just days before official campaigning began.

Ishihara immediately won support from the general public because he was seen as a fresh face, one that would be different from the monotony of party politics that had taken shape over the course of the past few decades in post-war Japan. While he was once a member of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), his departure from its roster in 1995 symbolized a break from its bureaucratic and decreasingly popular ways. He ran as an independent, despite the LDP urging him not to enter the elections against the field of other candidates they supported. Using his connections in the film industry, Ishihara hired a well-known production team to help with his campaign, and he frequently made bold statements about his role, proclaiming that he would lead a "revolution against the central government." He tapped into national pride by deriding Japan's two largest diplomatic partners, China and the United States, saying that old-style politicians had become too

"timid" in the face of international pressures. He claimed that he represented a Japanese identity: "I have a unity with Japan in my body." He pledged to return the U.S. Air Base in Yokota to Japan, and openly declared his hatred for China after declining to attend the twentieth anniversary of Beijing's and Tokyo's sister-city relationship. He suggested that Beijing's accounts of the Nanjing massacre were largely fabricated and proffered that its human rights violations in Tibet were unacceptable.

Ishihara Shintaro won twice as many votes in the 1999 election as his nearest rival, with 30% of the total vote. According to an exit poll by *Asahi Shinbun*, Ishihara's independent status and nationalist project earned him 41% of voters who typically voted for the LDP, 20% of voters who supported the DPJ (Japan's second largest party), and 27% of unaffiliated voters.<sup>57</sup> He has since been re-elected to a second term in 2003, with a victory of more than 70% of the votes, and then a third term in April of 2007. After his landslide victory in 2003, there was a large amount of speculation that he would be the successor to Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, although these plans have yet to come to fruition.<sup>58</sup> Given his increasing popularity and public appeal, it is important to critically interrogate the specifics behind his radical antimulticultural approach.

# 2. Ishihara and the Legacy of Nihonjinron

Ishihara's politicization of Japanese national identity can be broken into four different components: all immigrants are criminals, foreigners can be distinguished from each other by ethnicity and the types of crime they will commit, Japan is an ethnically homogenous culture that will self-destruct if it is not consciously preserved, and most old-style elites in the central government have failed to stand up for a Japanese identity.

The first and most explicit mechanism used to justify xenophobia and anti-multiculturalism is the construction of immigrants as criminals. Shintaro's critique of foreigners extends to all cultures, including Americans, but generally the targets of his sweeping generalizations are illegal workers. In a speech given to the Japanese Defense Force in April of 2000, he explained:

With Sangokujin [Third world people] and foreigners repeating serious crimes, we should prepare ourselves for possible riots that may be insti-

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gated by them at the outbreak of an earthquake. As police are not always fit for handling all contingencies, the Self-Defense forces should be ready to respond to threats to public security besides natural disasters.<sup>59</sup>

In his view, immigrants are so dangerous to Japanese society that they should be rounded up in the event of a national emergency. Even though these remarks caused a large amount of international controversy (the United Nations conducted a special examination of discrimination and racism in Japan shortly afterwards), a survey conducted by TBS radio suggested that 87% of Japanese callers less than a week afterwards supported his comments. The construction of immigrants as "dangerous" is part of a time-honored governmental tradition of shaping the Japanese public imagination. Often Ishihara "substantiates" his claims by manipulating statistics issued by the NPA, or Japanese police agency, on foreigner crime. These statistics usually depict immigrant crime as on the rise, even though the percentage of native Japanese criminality far exceeds their foreign counterparts, and the reporting of immigrant crime is far more commonplace. The implications are quite clear: foreigners are criminals by definition.

Second, as an extension of the construction of immigrants as criminals, they are also differentiated from each other based upon ethnicity. Ishihara unapologetically applies these markers to generalize about the types of crime they commit. Chinese are largely grouped under the categories of organized prostitution and mafia activities; Iranians are typically viewed as drug dealers; and people of African descent can be seen as the most hostile in that their actions are erratic and unpredictable. While the largest groups of criminals are Chinese and Iranians, Ishihara remarked that Africans are among the least trustworthy:

Why don't you go to Roppongi? It's now virtually a foreign neighborhood. Africans—I don't mean African-Americans—who don't speak English are there doing who knows what. This is leading to new forms of crime. We should be letting in people who are intelligent.<sup>62</sup>

Ishihara's views coincide with the central government's views of foreigners in its immigration and integration policies created for different "types" of workers, which vary according to nationality. Legal documentation, for example, is correlated with place of origin: resident Koreans obtain "permanent resident" status, while Chinese, Filipino, and Thai workers enter under "trainee" or "entertainer" visas. Work-

ers from Southeast Asia are usually given "temporary visitor" status, and Iranian men had no visa requirement at all until 1993. The end result of these policies creates a racialized hierarchy in which different ethnic groups obtain different kinds of work, legal or illegal, usually based on their permit status.<sup>63</sup> According to Shipper, this spills over into the types of crime that illegal immigrants might become involved in as a result of circumstance.<sup>64</sup> Ishihara Shintaro confirms these ethnic associations by unabashedly deriding different groups in public.

The third mechanism that permits anti-multiculturalism is a long-standing desire to preserve a myth of ethnic homogeneity and cultural uniqueness, also called *nihonjinron*. In the case of Ishihara, this implies that immigrants act not only as criminals, but also as agents capable of contaminating a pure ethnic Japanese identity. The source of crime can logically be reduced to the lack of a clear identity:

People who have entered illegally and who do not have clear identities will certainly cause riots...Crimes in Tokyo are getting more violent. If you ask who is committing them, they are all *sangokujin*. In other words, foreigners...who have entered illegally and remain in Japan are criminals, is that not so?<sup>65</sup>

In the cultural concept of *nihonjinron*, race, ethnicity, and nation are tightly bound up within the "theory of Japaneseness." Sugimoto refers to the relative interchangeability of these three concepts as the "N-E-C Equation." He argues that *nihonjinron*, which is based on "racial classifications and the state ideology of integration," has been used to "not only mask ethnic minority issues in Japan but also its intra-national, non-ethnic variations and conflicts." As a result, it has been used to preserve the "core of Japaneseness." In light of this preoccupation with Japanese identity, which continues to play out on several platforms of life, including graphic art, pop culture, and literature, politicians can exploit these assumptions about core identity in attacking foreigners. *Nihonjinron* is not a new concept. It has been built into the social fabric of Japanese society for centuries, but now seems to manifest itself in the political rhetoric of anti-immigration.

Lastly, Ishihara generates wide appeal for his politics of anti-multiculturalism through his anti-elitism and populist media personality. As mentioned earlier, Ishihara's general election campaign linked many old-style politicians with failure, saying that they had failed to stand up for Japan in the face of international pressures from the U.S. and China. His personality, however, also shaped public consent. This view is best summed up by a voter interviewed by ABC News after the election: "I wouldn't have bothered voting if Ishihara hadn't been running. He's outspoken; he's cool. I voted for his leadership." 68

# IV. Comparative Conclusions: Cultural Discourses and Common Denominators

In light of the rise of anti-multicultural politics in both of these countries, each exhibits general characteristics in terms of how xenophobia can be justified to the general public and what the consequences are for immigrant realities.

### A. Common Justifications: Essentialism and Populism

First, while the fault lines—social demarcations of the foreign and domestic-may differ, both the Netherlands and Japan draw upon an essentialized interpretation of identity that allows for protectionist measures. Pim Fortuyn based his claim on common Enlightenment principles, but ultimately argued that until a culture can subscribe to these universal principles, it is inferior and should not be allowed a presence in society. He framed fault lines in terms of values as opposed to other explicitly racialized causes. Unlike the universal prescriptions of the Netherlands, Japan's identitarian myth is based on uniqueness; foreigners are discriminated against not because they have not undergone the necessary assimilation, but because they are incapable of doing so. Moreover, while values form a part of the Japanese identity, its fault lines extend into ethnicity and race, or "biological" traits. As the comparison with Japan shows, drawing fault lines based on either culture or ethnicity can have the same political consequences on immigration and integration.

Second, nationalist politicians consistently rely on the logic of populism. The public support behind preserving an identity promulgated by Fortuyn, Wilders, and to a lesser extent Verdonk, rests on the perceived failure of an outdated, incompetent group of political elites. Similarly, Ishihara Shintaro gained popularity in his campaigns by speaking out against old-style politicians and resonating with an identified common Japanese people. While their political platforms vary on other issues, the general tendency remains the same: national identity and populism complement each other and will likely continue as an

unavoidable symptom of both perceived disjunctures in the democratic process and the failure of the public imagination to come to terms with the many faces of globalization.<sup>69</sup> Rightist populism now comes with a human face. The task is to sort through the appearance of politicians as humble citizens, some who even embody liberal characteristics like homosexual rights, and the actual platforms and hostility they engender.

### B. The Consequences of Xenophobia: An Immigrant's Perspective

The standards of anti-multiculturalism in both countries can also be measured by the degree to which these constructions of foreigners have actual consequences on immigrant lives, and how these consequences are either ignored by the general public or overlooked in government policies. Constructions of all foreigners as backwards, dangerous, or illegal come at the dehumanizing expense of the many immigrants who live peaceably with their neighbors and remain active members of society. In Japan, I interviewed a Nigerian who sold trendy urban clothing at a boutique in Shibuya, the youthful shopping and entertainment district of downtown Tokyo. When asked how he felt living in Japan, he explained to me that, "Life here is so much better than in Nigeria. So many people try and get over here for a new start, and I was lucky enough to be one of them." He worked six days a week at the same store, and knew many other Nigerians in similar situations. I asked him about the perceptions of foreigners, particularly Africans, as criminals, and if he had an opinion on the subject. He said that he did not take that too seriously, and that he was "just happy to be living and working here, with a new life." He also said that almost all of the people he knew from Africa "were not criminals, but people looking for a normal life like you and me," and that "most Japanese people respected that when they get to know me."

In populist discourses, the problems foreigners pose to general society are always perceived as the consequence of their own doing, never in terms of long-standing or failed governmental policies on immigration and integration. While in Japan, I had the opportunity to interview other individuals who were often the target of political attacks. I spoke with a Korean woman, who was a prostitute by night and a department store cashier by day, to get a better perspective on life as an illegal immigrant in Japan. She had come to Japan for economic employment because she had a cousin "who could get her over here

because she knew people." She lived with three other women in an apartment building that had a large Korean and Thai immigrant population. When asked why so many immigrants here stayed longer than their visas allowed, she contended it was a flaw in government policy, "not the fault of immigrants." In another interview with several Indonesian guest workers in the process of training for general custodial work in factories and restaurants, I discovered that they had traveled to Japan for a better life and were likely to stay even when their visas expired. They had taken classes for fifteen hours a day, six days a week, in order to be accepted into Japan's guest worker program. Most had acquired a general proficiency in the Japanese language in a matter of three months. One man whom I spoke with on the subject of nationalism and discrimination in Japan seemed to think that the problem was not the election of anti-immigrant politicians, but the fact that it was "becoming harder for people to come and work here, to live a better life than the one in Indonesia."70 He asked me, "Why would I leave this country when they need me and I need them? It seems foolish." Still, in Japan the media and political nationalism have contributed to general paranoia about the intentions of foreigners. According to a survey conducted by the Roper Center, the number of Japanese people who oppose the importation of foreign labor increased from 49.2% in 2000 to 70.7% in 2004. Also, 72.5% picked the "deterioration of public safety" as the most important reason.<sup>71</sup>

Similarly, in the Netherlands the construction of Muslims as the primary threat to Dutch values has prevented the government and general society from making important distinctions between different ethnic groups. In particular, Turkish and Moroccan immigrants exhibit very different tendencies in terms of integrating into the labor market and being prone to violent activity, particularly amongst male youths. In an interview with Jeroen Doomernik, an academic expert on comparative policies of immigration and integration, the Dutch government has yet to make any real distinction between types of Muslim communities, particularly between Moroccans and Turks.<sup>72</sup> According to his research, despite both Moroccans and Turks lagging behind their native Dutch peers in education and employment, several cultural variables had produced divergent trends between the two groups. As an illustration, Moroccan females typically outpace their Turkish counterparts in obtaining an advanced degree, while Moroccans males seem to suffer from higher discrimination rates when seeking semi-skilled employment.<sup>73</sup> Yet, populists have led many to reduce problems to Islam.

Dutch populism has also come at the expense of understanding the motivations of migrants and the risk of being an asylum seeker. In an interview with an immigrant named Karl<sup>74</sup> from the Democratic Republic of Congo, who works as a freelance sociologist as well as a banker for a major Dutch corporation, asylum seekers often choose to enter illegally and become involved in underground activities like drug dealing as a result of circumstance. He had lived in an asylumseeker center for several weeks doing research and noted a number of stressors in the asylum-seeking process. Among them is an inadequate living allowance, the possibility of a long wait to hear back on acceptance status, the inability to obtain meaningful employment or a degree from an accredited educational institution, and being forced into closequarter housing situations with people of radically different ages and lifestyles. According to him, people he knew who were once asylum seekers ended up selling drugs because they "didn't have much of a choice" and were "forced to live this life." Similarly, there was a lot of discontent amongst asylum seekers that the "government was babying the immigrants too much, that it was the state's job to free people." This caused problems because it meant that these immigrants had little responsibility over their own lives in terms of language acquisition or employment, but it also engendered a backlash within the Dutch public when they became increasingly aware that their tax dollars were financing immigrants for extended periods of time. Karl felt that this helped give rise to politicians like Fortuyn and Wilders.

In both countries, similar responses have been voiced by immigrants concerning their situation and how it relates to anti-multicultural politics, whether they have chosen to make a living through illegal actions or simply came to these wealthy countries for a new start and the chance to obtain meaningful employment and a livable income. Their opinions suggest that if one is to take the realities of globalization seriously, adding greater restrictions to immigrants and asylum seekers and increasingly deriding public displays of difference will likely lead to failure in theory and practice. This is not to suggest that borders and identities need to be eliminated, but that democratic societies need leaders who can responsibly direct public impulses away from racism or cultural intolerance and towards a common grammar of tolerance. This is also not to suggest that because immigrants are the targets of these political remarks their actions should automatically be shielded

from any criticism. As the analysis of Fortuyn and Ishihara's rise to fame indicates, their popularity was based to a certain extent on the ability to demonize other political leaders because they felt this right had been taken away.

### V. Globalization and the State, Nationalism and Multiculturalism

I chose to explore the topic of nationalism because it not only presented unique theoretical and conceptual challenges, but its consequences seemed to be some of the most extreme for the people who remain "on the receiving end of globalization." The task was to step outside of the Western analysis by comparing the Dutch political climate to the Japanese one. I drew from several debates existing in the canon of globalization, particularly surrounding identity and multiculturalism, but did not expect to resolve my questions. Rather, I wanted to generate common characteristics in the ways political xenophobia takes shape in two countries, despite their historical and cultural differences, and to illustrate the complex ways in which democratic procedures reflect and refract global changes. This analysis has led me to conclude with several general remarks about understanding globalization.

First, immigration demands a responsible political and social response. In many ways, the task has already begun. My analysis portrays an extreme caricature of the path that two countries could continue to travel, that of demarcating clear and absolute boundaries between who has the legitimate right to belong to the society and who does not. In particular, the aforementioned politicians base their membership criteria on cultural factors, with little or no regard for the many other ways people coexist. While my analysis depicts a bleak picture, it should not overlook the numerous NGOs and local governments, social movements, and think tanks all involved in debate and dialogue about what immigration means for the host society. The political climate, now suited to populists, is only one manifestation of the many ways people can respond. Given the modest sampling of interview perspectives I was able to generate, it seems that as long as there is the possibility of living a better life in wealthy countries like Japan or the Netherlands, people will be migrating there whether it is legal or not.

Second, it has become clear that the new cultural fault lines many Western politicians employ have the same consequences as more traditional forms of racism. While Japan's leaders based their discriminatory measures on phenotypic and biological traits, Dutch political

leaders reduced differences to cultural or "mental" characteristics. The implication is clear: racism must be redefined if it is to be an effective pejorative claim against Western politicians. Many times politicians like Pim Fortuyn, Geert Wilders, or Rita Verdonk are able to sidestep conventional understandings of racism because they invoke culture as opposed to ethnicity. An example of this is a speech in which Fortuyn called Islam "retarded" and then claimed, "it has nothing to do with racism, nothing with foreigner hatred." Dutch politicians like Fortuyn can avoid accusations of conventional racism by framing attacks on foreigners in terms of values, culture, and religion. Yet, if the consequences of Japanese and Dutch actions are the same regardless of fault lines, then this confirms the claim of Pierre-Andre Taguieff that the new forms of European racism have evolved from biological traits to mental or cultural ones. The confirmation of the property of the confirmation of the property of the property

Third, the nation-state remains a vital methodological tool in the literature on globalization. Ulrich Beck argues that the social sciences suffer from "methodological nationalism" and that people must no longer think of societies and polities as containers bounded by given territories.<sup>77</sup> On the one hand, Beck is correct and academics need to think of social relations outside of their national communities. On the other hand, formal institutions confronting people on a day-today basis exist through nation-states. States operate through legitimate procedures like national elections, and parliaments and their constitutional safeguards are, by definition, of nations. If, following Beck, we are to look past methodological nationalism, then how do we deal with institutions like domestic electoral politics when gauging globalization? The point here is that the unit of analysis is certainly important, but the context in which it is analyzed will likely have a far greater impact in enriching the literature on globalization. To be certain, this essay would not exist if I could not take the nation as a unit of analysis, although I have attempted to keep its significance within the broader scope of global changes.

The fourth related point is that there needs to be a much deeper look into the relationship between nation, state, and democratic institutions, in light of the changes globalization brings. One way these concepts have been bridged is the debate on multiculturalism. Multicultural theorists understand societies to be in constant cultural flux, and look to democracy as the means of securing peace and justice, albeit in very different ways. This literature, however, needs to be placed in the larger context of globalization and the nation-state. It thus seems

that there are two strands of political theory confronting globalization that are yet to confront one another: the macro-sociologists who take the nation-state, or what is becoming of it, as their unit of analysis, and the multiculturalists who take democratic institutions and cultural groups as their units of analysis. I hope I have helped bridge these two by acknowledging the links between electoral dynamics, international migration, and common discourses of anti-multiculturalism, but much further analysis and conceptual refinement is required.

Finally, any adequate political account of globalization will look deeply into the relationship between socioeconomic disparities, migration patterns, and the responses of host countries. It will hopefully engage larger theories of justice. It seems that although anti-multiculturalism takes place within a given country, identity politics can also be seen as a politics of space, or, to return to Bauman, the "global hierarchy of mobility":

The so-called 'globalizing' processes rebound in the distribution, of wealth and poverty, of resources and impotence, of power and power-lessness, of freedom and constraint. We witness today the process of a world-wide *restratification*, in the course of which a new socio-cultural hierarchy, a world-wide scale, is put together.<sup>78</sup>

My encounters have taken me to people and places confronting both sides of the globalization coin. I have spent the past year of my life not only caught in its theoretical web, but living across and between national boundaries. I am certainly unable to draw a complete conclusion about what the future will look like for many parts of the world. Yet this much is clear. The questions we must continue to ask of globalization are: Who is powerless? How is this justified? How can it change?

#### Notes

<sup>1.</sup> This is taken from Geert Wilders," "Party for Freedom" (21 Feb 2007), online at http://www.groepwilders.com.

<sup>2.</sup> Shintaro Ishihara, "Japan—Defend your Flank!," Sankei Shinbun (8 May 2001, 12 Feb 2007).

<sup>3.</sup> Martin Shaw, *Theory of the Global State: Globality as an Unfinished Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 12.

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- 22. Vink, p. 340.
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- 24. See Arend Lijphart, *The Politics of Accommodation* (Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press, 1968).
- 25. Muus, p. 268.
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- 29. Pim Fortuyn, *De puinhopen van acht jaar Paars* (The Mess of Eight Purple Years) (Rotterdam: Karakter Uitgevers, 2002).

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- 30. The first article of the Dutch Constitution, adopted in 1984, states: "All persons in the Netherlands shall be treated equally in all circumstances. Discrimination on the grounds of religion, belief, political opinion, race or sex or on any other grounds whatsoever shall not be permitted."
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