

CASE STUDY 5

Party For Freedom leader Geert Wilders: Henk and Ingrid against Mohammed and Fatima



On October 11, 2020, **Geert Wilders**, leader of the Dutch Party for Freedom (PVV) sent out the **tweet** below (figure 1). He suggests that the indigenous Dutch people, represented by the proverbial 'Henk & Ingrid', face disadvantages in treatments for all kinds of diseases, because the Intensive Care beds are occupied by Muslims, the similarly proverbial 'Mohammed & Fatima'. Geert Wilders regularly uses both couples to express his distaste for Muslims and to denounce the alleged injustice that befalls ordinary Dutch people through the behavior of Muslims.

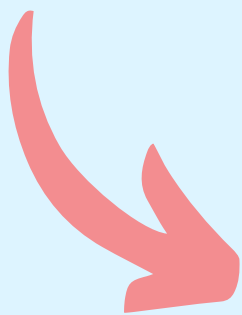


Figure 1 The Tweet of Geert Wilders

The translation of the tweet reads as follows:

'So treatments and operations of Henk and Ingrid with cancer, heart failure or other illnesses are postponed again because the ICs are mainly used by Mohammed and Fatima who don't speak our language and don't care about the rules? Are those the facts @MinPres Rutte?'

IMPORTANT POINTS:



The Party For Freedom of Geert Wilders is a party that has been opposing the presence of Muslims in the Netherlands and Western Europe for years. The Party would prefer an 'Islam-free' Netherlands and in the 2014 municipal elections Mr. Wilders [called](#) for Moroccans 'to be expelled' from the country. He was [convicted](#) for this appeal, but Mr. Wilders continues with his hate speech against Muslims. He does this by presenting a sharp black-and-white image of 'us' against 'them': the 'indigenous Dutch people' against the foreign invaders, as indicated above, represented by Henk & Ingrid and Mohammed & Fatima. Wilders' image is very much black-white, because the truth is of course that everyone is affected by Covid, including Muslims who speak Dutch well, who are vaccinated and who adhere to all governmental regulations as well as those 'original' Dutch people who deliberately did not have the vaccination.

Furthermore, Mr. Wilders holds the Dutch state, represented by prime minister Mr. Mark Rutte mentioned in the tweet, responsible for these 'abuses'. The prime minister knows about the discrimination against his own people in the hospitals, but does nothing, according to Wilders. It is true that members of minorities in the Netherlands are [more affected](#) by the Covid pandemic and that some of them have vaccination rates below the average population, but so are some [orthodox Protestant communities](#) that Wilders obviously does not mention. After all, the latter have a high 'Henk & Ingrid degree'. It is also striking that Mr. Wilders ignores the fact that Muslim leaders around the world have called on followers of Islam to be fully vaccinated and to adhere to the Covid measures announced by governments (see this [link](#)).

Elsewhere on this website is a guide describing how we rate the various Internet posts in terms of fake news. Mr. Wilders' tweet falls under category 4: it is 'misleading content'. Mr. Wilders suggests that it is the fault of the Muslims that 'ordinary people' are no longer eligible for all kinds of medical treatment in hospitals. Moreover, he seems to blame the prime minister for not knowing these "facts". The latter statement means that the tweet can also be classified under category 2: 'false context'. It is true that relatively more immigrants have not been vaccinated and have become victims of the pandemic, but that also applies to orthodox Protestant Christians and it is also not the case that these groups are solely responsible for the overcrowding of the hospital. Consciously unvaccinated people from whatever- ethnic- origin also occupy places in the ICU. The picture is therefore fundamentally different from what Mr. Wilders claims.

COMMENTS:

Below are two comments disapproving of Wilders' tweet:



FIGURE 2 NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM TWO TWITTERERS TO WILDERS' TWEET

The Tweet of Luuk van Amstel reads as follows:

'I think it is mainly the Dutch churchgoers from Staphorst (village in the Netherland with high proportion of orthodox Protestants, CoMMITTEd) who don't care about the rules. There are no Mohammed and Fatima to be found there. Cherry-picking at its finest.'

Tim Hofman writes:

'Why are you doing this now?'

Najla van Veen tweets:

'This "Fatima" lets go of her regular work so that she can work in the ICU so that Henk, Ingrid, Truus, Dunya and Mohamed receive the care they need.

(Last wave (I) provided care for 4 (!) different Henk(s) .. #knowyourfacts)

It is remarkable that Luuk van Amstel refers to the orthodox Christians (in this case

from Staphorst) who also 'do not care about the rules'. And Najla van Veen presents herself as a 'Fatima' who works in the ICU so that Muslims and non-Muslims get the care they need.

The following screenshot shows **two tweets that support Wilders' opinion**.



Figure 3 Supportive reactions from two tweeters to Mr. Wilders' tweet

The **tweet by Leon van Kuik** 1961 reads as follows:

'Would a Dutch Man or Woman be given priority in Muslim countries? Do not think so! They want their Own Mosques and cemeteries then let them build their own Hospitals they can claim a Bed there.'

The **text on the flag** reads as follows:

'OWN PEOPLE FIRST'

Beps writes simply:

'so that': in Dutch 'dat dus' implies a conformation of what is stated.



Leon van Kuik continues in his tweet on the frame that Mr. Wilders has used and wonders whether Dutch people in Muslim countries are given priority in hospitals for medical treatment. He says that he believes that Muslims are given priority in Dutch hospitals, something Mr. Wilders did not claim in his original tweet, but he will not be unfamiliar with the claim. Van Kuik also continues the 'us-them' scheme by stating that if 'they' want their own mosques and cemeteries, 'they' should also provide their own hospitals.

Mr. Wilders' tweet was retweeted 907 times, it was quoted 825 times and it received 3,342 likes (on April 19, 2022). Strikingly, most of the responses to Wilders' tweet reject his claims.

SUMMARY:

Tweets are ideally suited to make statements in short terms. The tweet from Mr. Wilders discussed in this case is no exception to this rule. Mr. Wilders dresses his aversion to Muslims and his wish for an Islam-free Netherlands in the guise of the Covid-19 pandemic and thus provides misleading information in an untrue context (categories 4 and 2).