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My research investigates the discourse of Indonesian immigrants on religion and modernity in the Netherlands. Although colonial history and the migration history from the Netherlands East Indies are not the core of my study, this history, nevertheless, plays a role as a “members’ resource” (Fairclough, 1992) in the discourse of Indonesian immigrants. The study finds that on the one hand, Indonesians described the Netherlands and Dutch people as “very secular” and “super liberal”. On the other hand, Indonesians described the Dutch as adhering to “religious”, “universal” and, for Indonesian Muslims, “Islamic,” values which are embedded in Dutch “institutions”, “policies” and “attitude”. Indonesians viewed “security”, “tolerance”, “freedom”, “respect”, “justice”, “no discrimination”, “care about poor people”, “care about the environment”, “being on time”, and “keeping things clean” as religious values which are being implemented in the Netherlands.

For Indonesian immigrants, religious practice and religious institutions in the Netherlands are declining. Nevertheless, religious values do exist and are “very ingrained” in Dutch society although the Dutch do not view them as religious values. The concept of religion that Indonesian immigrants know from Indonesia is the concept of religion that was constructed by the Dutch during the colonial era. This concept of religion is no longer taken for granted in the Netherlands, and it is also increasingly contested in Indonesia. Thus, the underlying question is what is religion? What religion are we talking about?