

Contribution to the Expert Panel on Social Integration of Immigrants, organized by The Metropolis Project, the European Commission, UNESCO and the Library of Parliament, held at the House of Commons on January 24, 2005 in Ottawa.

Dutch Integration Policies after the Van Gogh murder.

Rinus Penninx, Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, University of Amsterdam

1. Introduction¹

The murder on Theo van Gogh on November 2nd, 2004 has not only become a landmark in Dutch discussions on Islam and immigration and integration policies, it has also been world news. What happened in the Netherlands that – within Europe – had a leading position in discussions on integration policies for quite some time. How should the murder and the development that it set in motion be evaluated? Particularly for a non-Dutch audience these are difficult questions. More background information is needed here.

In this contribution I will try to explain somewhat more elaborately the context and background of what is happening nowadays in the Netherlands. I will do this by asking four more concrete questions:

- What is (or was) the Dutch Integration Model?
- How has the public and political discourse on integration of immigrants and integration policies developed in the course of time in the Netherlands?
- What has been the significance of the murder of Van Gogh (and Pim Fortuyn)?
- Is the Dutch Model for integration of immigrants in disarray?

I will try to answer these four specific questions in the order mentioned above.

2. Conception and implementation of Dutch Integration Policies

To understand the coming into existence of postwar integration policies in the Netherlands we have to go back in time for a moment. Historically, the Netherlands has been a country of immigration during the period of the Dutch Republic until about the late 18th century (1550-1800). Since 1800 until the 1960s, the Netherlands developed into a country of emigration. After WW II, the Netherlands faced considerable levels of immigration of diverse origin: from its former colonies (the 'repatriates' and Moluccans from the Dutch East Indies after independence of Indonesia in 1949; immigrants from Suriname before and after its independence in 1975), from labour migration and more recently asylum migration. Continuous net immigration figures made it factually once more a country of immigration since 1967 (Lucassen & Penninx, 1997). These facts, however, did not match the perception and the norm. Like in other West-European countries, there was a powerful norm that the Netherlands should not be an immigration country. Immigrant residence was to be temporary, because the Netherlands regarded itself as overpopulated. That is why most of the factual immigrants were regarded to be temporarily in the Netherlands, e.g. as 'guest workers'.

¹ The full and documented text of this lecture has been written after the lecture in January 2005.

This ambivalence created a tension between the norm of not being a country of immigration and the fact of increasing immigration and permanent immigrant residence in the 1970s (Entzinger, 1975). It expressed itself most dramatically in a series of terrorist acts in the 1970s (a school-kidnapping, two train hijackings) by youngsters from one particular immigrant group, the Moluccans. This small group of ex-soldiers from the colonial army in the former Dutch East Indies had arrived in 1951 in the Netherlands and by then had been 'temporarily' in the Netherlands for about 25 years. These acts served as focus-events, drawing attention to their position in the Netherlands and setting in motion a policy revision (Köbben, 1979).

The impetus to introduce a new integration policy for all immigrant groups came in the late seventies by a report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy, called 'Towards a general Ethnic Minorities Policy' (WRR 1979). This advice to the government depicted the untenable situation caused by the assumption of temporary stay and the practice of long-term stay of most immigrants and its unintended consequences. Standing policies were shown to be inadequate and the report argued for a policy revision that would recognise the permanent residence of particular immigrant groups and lead to a policy aimed at the integration of these groups. And indeed, in 1980, 1981 and 1983 policy documents were written and discussed that formed the basis for a completely different policy called Ethnic Minorities' Policy (Ministerie.. 1980, 1981 and 1983). The Netherlands was hereby one of the first Western-European countries to develop such an integration policy, Sweden being the first one in the mid 1970s.

The main principles of the new EM-policy can be summarised in three points:

- 1) The policy aimed to achieve equality of ethnic minorities in the socio-economic domain, inclusion and participation in the political domain and equity in the domain of culture and religion within constitutional conditions and to the extent feasible.
- 2) It was targeted at specific groups that were regarded to be in danger of becoming distinct minorities by the combination of their low socio-economic situation and their being perceived as culturally different from mainstream society. This implied that it was not an immigrant policy *per se*: not all immigrants, but specific groups of low class immigrants, plus some native underprivileged groups were the target groups of the EM-policy: guest-workers, Moluccans, Surinamese and Antillians, refugees, gypsies and caravan dwellers.
- 3) The EM-Policy should cover all relevant domains and ministries, and be anchored strongly in the governmental organization. The Ministry of Home Affairs was appointed as the coordinating ministry. Substantial specific financial means were made available at the national level for the policy and an elaborate system of monitoring was put in place.

What did the EM-policy mean in practice in its implementation? I will outline some of the major elements in three domains. The first is the *legal-political domain* that formulated 'inclusion and participation' as its aim. Four elements of policy are important here. The first is that the full legislation of the Netherlands was scrutinized on discriminatory elements on the basis of nationality, race and religion (Beune & Hessels 1983) and many changes were made. Anti-discrimination legislation was reinforced and a structure for reporting and consultation established.

Secondly, active and passive voting rights for alien residents were introduced in 1985. This has led to direct political participation at the local level and in larger cities significant numbers of city council members are of immigrant background nowadays. Moreover, the introduction of local voting rights had a profound (and at

that time unforeseen) effect on the national level in the course of time: the Labour Party's initial success to attract the new local immigrant vote seduced other parties to look also for candidates from immigrant background. The result – 15 years later - is that some 8% of MP's in Dutch Parliament are of immigrant background (born abroad, naturalized citizens) distributed over all parties.

Thirdly, the Dutch nationality Law was changed in 1986 to include more elements of *ius soli*, thus making it much easier for alien immigrants to become Dutch citizens. Next to that the practice of condoning double nationality was actively introduced since 1992.² The consequence was that naturalisation peaked in the nineties. By way of example: by now more than 2/3 of all immigrants of Turkish origin in the Netherlands have Dutch citizenship.

Fourthly, in the course of time a consultation structure for all target groups of minorities' policy was established that should give these groups a voice in matters that regard their position in society.³ There was furthermore the idea that immigrant organizations would be important both internally for individuals within groups, but also for integration activities, bridging between immigrants and the larger society. Subsidizing such organizations both at the national and local level, and trying to engage them in integration efforts became an important strategic aspect of policy implementation. This basic assumption, however, is strongly put in doubt in recent political debates and governmental support for organizations is waning.

In the second, the *socio-economic domain* three themes were key: the labour market/unemployment, education, and housing. Let me very succinctly review the implementation of policies in these fields.

Firstly, EM-Policies combating the high *unemployment* has turned out to be the most problematic part of policies. Since the 1960s the influence of government on labour market has decreased and governmental authorities had not real instruments to steer the distribution of scarce jobs. Efforts to influence that distribution in the free market took initially the form of a voluntary agreement between employers and workers' unions to strive for more jobs for immigrants: it turned out to be symbolic paperwork only. Then in the beginning of the 1990s a soft law was introduced, inspired by the Canadian Employment Equity Act, that obliged employers to report on the ethnic composition of their work force and stimulated to make plans for more balanced recruitment. It turned out to be a symbolic law and implementation has been erratic (Jonkers 2003). The only real forceful instrument that the government used in the period 1986 – 1993 was an affirmative action plan for national and local governmental employers. That was effective in the sense that the percentage of government employees of immigrant background rose significantly in that period. All in all one has to say that EM-policies for the labour market have been weak and ineffective, simply because of the lack of powerful instruments. The interesting thing is that the high unemployment of immigrants in the 1980s and early 1990s was solved to a great extent by the market itself: the continuous booming of the Dutch economy, particularly in the second half of the 1990s, led to a sharp decrease of general and

² This policy was redressed in 1997 when a proposal to anchor that policy in the Law on Naturalisation was rejected. Legal provision remained the same as before (dual nationality remained possible as an exception), but the lenient practice of application changed.

³ In 1985, a National Advisory and Consultation Body (LAO) is established, in which the most important minority organizations are represented. The LAO was to advise government on issues of immigrant integration, and to be consulted in the context of administrative issues related to the integration policy. In 1997, the LAO was replaced by the LOM, the National Consultation Body for Minorities. This meant that its advisory function was decreased whereas its role changed more into that of a consultative body.

immigrant unemployment and even to clear labour shortages in certain sectors at the turn of the century (SCP 2001b). It was the market that brought down the unemployment rate of immigrants of between 30-40 % to below 10 % in 2001.

Policies in the domain of *education* have been an important part of minorities' policies from the beginning. Actually by far most of the specific financial resources have been spent in this domain. By far most resources have been spent on measures to compensate arrears of immigrant children in the regular educational system. That was done by a point system in which schools received significantly more money for children of immigrant background than they did get for standard middle class native pupils. Immigrant and minority children were rated at 1,9, while native children of low socio-economic background were rated at 1,25 and the standard was 1. A recent proposal of the Minister of Education proposes to abolish the specific high rating for minority children altogether and shift the extra financial means to the general category of pupils of low socio-economic background.

Apart from this general financial assistance to schools also a relatively small part was dedicated to specific measures: education in their native language and culture. This part has been problematized in the course of time: in the nineties it was perceived more and more as ineffective and even counterproductive. So first it was taken out of the regular program, and recently it has been abolished altogether.

A specific feature is the rise of state-subsidized Islamic and Hindu schools since the end of the 1980s. Their establishment was the consequence of existing laws, allowing denominational schools to qualify and obtain state funding. Such initiatives were taken by the elite of immigrants, not in the least to avoid 'black' public schools. Results of these schools turn out to be quite satisfactory, but they are looked at increasingly with suspicion nowadays.

Looking over the long term at the results of immigrant children in the educational system strong arrears of immigrant children have been shown by monitoring reports time and again over a long period. An important factor has been the continuous inflow as a consequence of family reunification. It was only in the late 1990s that reports started to show significant better results: more children in higher forms of secondary education and recently also a strong increase in Universities and higher professional education (SCP 2001a).

Policies in the domain of *housing* have been among the most successful. Already in 1981 a fundamental change was introduced that allowed legally residing aliens full access to social housing, which was denied before. Given the fact that social housing makes up for the larger part of all housing in big cities in the Netherlands (a typical welfare state phenomenon) and that social housing is (supposed to be) distributed 'colour blind' according to socio-economic criteria like income, this measure had very positive consequences for the position of alien immigrants in housing. One of the consequences of a colour blind distribution system was that there are no 'ethnic homogenous concentrations' in quarters: immigrants of different background, and Dutch, sharing the same socio-economic characteristics live together in quarters dominated by low-rent social housing.

In *domain of culture, language and religion* the initial policies may be called 'multicultural' *avant la lettre*. I mentioned language policies in education earlier, and also the recent redress of it. Developing their own culture was in the philosophy of the minorities' policies in principle left to groups and their organizations themselves, the limits of this being set by acceptance of general laws of the Netherlands. The role of the government was defined as facilitating, i.e. creating opportunities for minorities. Initially such opportunities were created in the media, for special programmes in

immigrant languages. This liberal principle has been attacked in public discourse later, the argument being that 'preservation of their own culture' would hinder integration of immigrants. Most of the supportive facilities did not survive as a consequence in the 1990s.

As for religion policies should be understood in the light of history. Dutch society has a particular history, that of pillarization, in which society was organized according to religious segments that each used to have its complete institutional arrangements within their pillar: own schools, workers and employers' organizations, political parties, etc. That pillarized society does not exist any more as a consequence of the strong secularization from the 1960s on, but the legal structure of it still persists in many domains. It is against that background that new religions brought into the country by immigrants could legally claim facilities such as denominational schools and broadcasting facilities on the same conditions as established religions had. The new minorities' policies in the early 1980s furthermore stressed the importance of equity and equal facilities in this field. The results was that in a time in which Dutch society increasingly secularized, and tried to rearrange the relations between State and Church in the beginning of the 1980s, Muslims and Hindu's were invited to the negotiating table, together with established churches, to formulate the new principles. The outcome was a relatively quick institutionalization of these religions on the same footing as other churches. (see Rath *et al.* 1999 and 2001). It was only in the nineties that these new institutional arrangements came under fire again.

The foregoing brief overview of policy implementation shows a mixed picture of success. In some domains policies have been successful. This holds for the legal-political domain where that success is expressed among others in a high rate of naturalization and a relatively strong presence of elected representatives of immigrant background in the national parliament and the larger cities. It also holds for the domain of housing, where opening of the social housing system has guaranteed access for immigrants to better quality housing. In other domains, such as that of education, the picture is mixed: significant arrears remain, but also gradual improvement of the educational attainment of the second generation is visible. In still other domains, particularly the labour market, policies have been unsuccessful. Ironically, it have been market forces in the 1990s that have led to a (temporarily?) better situation. Finally, policy in the domain of culture and religion has become the most contested part of policies.

What can we on the basis of this brief description conclude about the 'model' of (early) Dutch integration policies and its conception? Firstly, it has to be noted, that the shift of policy towards integration in the early 1980s did not imply that the permanency of immigration as such was recognized; the post-war immigration of certain groups was seen as a historically unique event and further immigration was to be restricted or prevented. Secondly, from its main principles it transpires that the EM-Policies were conceived strongly from a welfare state philosophy. EM-Policies of the early 1980s can best be characterised as an integration policy according to the Welfare State Model. Thirdly, it was surely not conceived as a 'Multiculturalist Model' in the normative sense that this term acquired in the course of the 1980s and later in integration theories. The term 'multiculturalism' does not appear in the original policy documents and the term multicultural society only a few times, indicating the increasing divers composition of cities and the country. The EM-Policies could be called 'multicultural *avant la lettre*' in the sense that it formulated

the aim of 'equity in the domain of culture and religion within constitutional conditions and to the extent feasible'.

It has also become clear in the description that the hightime of EM-policy has been the decade of the 1980s. Already in 1989 a new Report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR 1989) was published, this time explicitly asked for by the government that was not satisfied with the results of policies. In this report the first strong critique on the EM-policy was formulated. Briefly stated the message was that there was too little progress in two crucial domains of policy: labour market and education. An interpretation was added to this: too much attention was given to (multi)cultural aspects and subsidizing organizations, suggesting that that could hinder individual participation in education and labour market rather than enhance it. The advice was consequently: more efforts should be made in the key areas mentioned, and in a more compulsory way. 'Obligations of migrants should be more balanced with the extended rights', and policies should focus less on cultural rights and facilities.

The direct effect of this new diagnosis on policy was limited in the sense that policies did not change immediately (Ministerie..1990), but the seeds for a different conception were sown, to grow later. A first distinct change in policy focus and policy goals is to be found in a new policy document, the Contourennota, of 1994 (Ministerie.. 1994). In this document a renewed 'Integration Policy' with a more 'republicanist' character was adopted, focusing on 'good citizenship' of individual immigrants. The main policy goals were now to promote equal participation of immigrants in the socio-economic sphere, in housing, education and labour, and to facilitate the initial integration of newcomers by providing civic integration courses. This new instrument for integration was developed at the local level in a number of cities in the Netherlands: reception courses for newcomers who should be given a toolkit of Dutch language training and information on the functioning of important institutions in Dutch society. Local policy makers felt the urge to provide these tools to all newcomers who needed it, and developed it systematically in their cities. This instrument was taken over by national policies later and the WIN-law of 1998 made it national reception policies.

Han Entzinger (2003) signals a new 'turning point' in Dutch integration policy after the turn of the millennium. He finds a growing emphasis on communitarian values in relation to immigrant integration demanding a greater extent of adaptation to Dutch norms and values. Some observers characterise the recent changes in Dutch policy as laid down in the 'Integration Policy New Style' (Ministerie.. 2004) even stronger: as a turn towards 'assimilationism'.

To conclude: the answer to the question what the Dutch integration model is, proves not to be an easy one. My appreciation is that the initial Ethnic Minorities' Policy was essentially a welfare state model, combined with a group-based emancipation principle. That model had a chance to institutionalize itself for more than a decade. Policy shifts from the mid-1990s have changed the policy discourse significantly. Policy practice, however, changes less quickly and less pervasively than the discourse may do. The consequence is that the Netherlands has a mixed model in which still many elements of the initial EM-policy are present, that has changed partly its aims and focus, but most significantly has changed its discourse and tone.

3. Changing political discourse: from depoliticization to polarisation

Let us now turn to our second question: How has the public and political discourse on integration of immigrants and integration policies developed in the course of time in

the Netherlands? The new Ethnic Minorities' Policy of the early 1980s received wide support at that time. A broad political consensus among the elite of all political parties endorsed the new policy. That consensus was symbolized by the fact that a right wing Liberal/Christian-Democratic government coalition appointed a socialist (of the oppositional Labour Party) as head of the Coordination Department within the Ministry of Home affairs.

This consensus did not mean that there were no diverging conceptions about integration among parties, as Fermin (1997) showed. Such diverging conceptions, however, were not explicitly played out. Conflict avoidance and depoliticization were dominant in this domain at that time (Hoppe 1987). There was a gentlemen's agreement among the elites of the main political parties not to raise the immigrant issue. Issues of immigration and immigrant integration were rather resolved through technocratic compromise (Rath, 2001), resorting to science-based policy advice as a motor of policy development, and by co-opting ethnic elites (Guiraudon, 1998), or involving ethnic leaders in special advisory bodies to ensure a broad consensus. This depoliticization also took an active form: when in the early 1980s, several extreme-right parties had managed to enter local and national political arenas, this led to a '*cordon sanitaire*' against extreme-right parties that wanted to 'play the race card'.

Especially during the 1980s, immigration and integration issues were effectively depoliticised, providing stability to the Ethnic Minorities' Policy. However, in the early 1990s, the public and political debate started to change. Three major factors account for this change. Firstly, already at the end of the 1980s a feeling of disappointment was felt with the results of the EM-policy. The discontent focused specifically on the absence of progress in the domain of labour and education. The second report of the Scientific Council (WRR 1989) defined this failure predominantly as a consequence of too liberal policies in the cultural and religious domain. The suggestion of the 1989-report was consequently that policies should be less on culture and religion, and less on immigrants as groups, and at the same time be more obligatory and focus on the individual level in the domains of work and education.

Secondly, Frits Bolkestein, leader of the Liberal Party and of the opposition in Dutch parliament added a new element in his statement in 1991 on Islam. Apparently inspired by Huntington's Clash of Civilisations he suggested that Islam was a threat to liberal democracy and a hindrance for integration of immigrants and that immigrant integration should be handled with more courage. Bolkestein political message was of a completely different kind than before⁴, although the practical consequences that Bolkestein saw for his thesis were not as far reaching as others would claim later.⁵

Thirdly, the public and political discourse in the nineties on immigration in the nineties became dominated by what I would call the asylum crisis. Asylum seekers from all parts of the world had started to apply in the Netherlands already since the middle of the 1980s, but it was particularly in 1993, briefly after Germany had changed its lenient asylum policies, that asylum peaked to a number of 53.000

⁴ Earlier tensions around the Rushdie Affair and Golf War had been solved typically the Dutch way: the minister of Home Affairs calling all leaders of Islamic organizations to the ministry and giving them a double message: 1) we have rules for disputes that muslims should respect, so no fatwa's and book burnings, and 2) if you are threatened because you are a muslim, we will protect you!

⁵ In practice he pleaded for a 'liberal Islam'. For example, he took the initiative to bring a liberal interpreter of Koran and Islam as professor to the University of Amsterdam.

applications in one year. The initially very friendly asylum reception had been changed already in the late 1980s to a sober system of reception, but by 1993 both the reception and handling of evaluation procedures got completely jammed. Years of attempts to reform asylum procedures followed, but the crisis did not cease. The number of applicants in limbo for years, not allowed to work or to follow education, increased. The number of asylum seekers denied refugee status, but not sent back, increased and swelled the ranks of illegal residents. This happened exactly in a period in which measures were taken to exclude illegal residents from all facilities of the welfare state through introduction of the linkage law that required civil servants to check for legal residence before service could be delivered. All this resulted in the public feeling that not only 'integration policies did not work', but additionally that 'it could not work, since there was no control any more on immigration and admission. Increased marriage migration to the Netherlands, hotly debated somewhat later, added to this feeling of policy being out of control. Paul Scheffer, a former collaborator of the scientific bureau of the Labour Party, brought much of this discontent together in an essay in 2000, published in a leading Dutch newspaper under the ominous title 'The Multicultural Disaster' (Scheffer 2000). In the eyes of public opinion the so-called failure of integration and of policies had become a fact.⁶

Such a new framing woke up a 'silent majority' that was weary of 'multiculturalism' but did not have the courage to speak out until then (Entzinger, 2003). In response, political parties started to take more explicit positions on these policy issues, breaking definitely with the earlier politics of depoliticization. A discourse of 'New Realism' (Prins, 1997) emerged, which tried to break with 'taboos' and engage in debate and confrontation with immigrants 'as a signal that they are taken seriously'.

All elements discussed above have become stronger during the 1990s, each of them separately. It was in 2001 and 2002 that the populist politician Pim Fortuyn brought all these together. He made strong statements about the failure of integration and about Islam in particular (calling Islam a 'backward' culture). In his discourse he combined the following elements:

- a) the idea of failure of integration and integration policies;
- b) the threat of Islam, particularly fundamentalist Islam, for democracy;
- c) the accusation that the political elite (including researchers) had enhanced this failure in the past 'hiding the real problems behind a curtain of political correct speech';
- d) that the victim of all this was the common (native) Dutch voter.

His populist campaign used this discourse very successfully. His party first won a great victory in the local elections of March 2002 in the second largest city of the Netherlands, Rotterdam. A few weeks later Fortuyn was murdered, just before the national elections of May 2002. Notwithstanding (or thanks to the murder) his newly established LPF-party won a landslide victory, gaining 26 out of the 150 seats in parliament.

However, the winner had been killed (by a lawyer who was strongly associated with the ecological movement) and the new party was not really a party, but rather a collection of inexperienced opportunists without a leader and party programme. The new government coalition in which the LPF was one of the partners, fell within 100 days after its establishment. In the new national elections, early 2003,

⁶ In 2003 this led to an official Parliamentary Inquiry on the failure of integration policies. The relatively balanced conclusions of that Committee (Tijdelijke Commissie.. 2004) were heavily criticized by many politicians when they were published.

the LPF was reduced from 26 to only 8 seats. But the harm was done. Other political parties had to a large extent taken over the populist thinking on immigration and integration in their political programmes and a 'new integration policy' was now led by a special minister for immigration and integration of the Liberal Party, Mrs Rita Verdonk.

4. The murder of Van Gogh

On November 2nd, 2004, the popular filmmaker Theo van Gogh was killed. The murderer was a young Dutchman of second generation Moroccan origin. The murder was clearly an intended one, politically/religiously motivated, carried out by a radicalised Muslim. The letter of motivation, written in excellent Dutch, testifies to that. It was murder in daylight, *en plein public*, and the murderer was prepared to die in his struggle rather than being caught (which was prevented by good police work).

How was this assassination perceived? What meaning was attached to it? Immediately after the event two predominant ways of giving meaning (framing the murder) manifested itself.⁷ The first framed the murder as *an attack on the freedom of speech, and thus on the basic principles of democracy*. Van Gogh was murdered because of his 'straightforward statements' on Islam and Muslims, made in public broadcasting programmes and in a short film 'submission' which he made in close collaboration with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, a Dutch member of Parliament of Somali origin for the Liberal Party. The film was broadcasted on Dutch public television and both Van Gogh and Hirsi Ali had been threatened for insulting Islam. (Van Gogh had used a confrontational style of portraying the 'submission' of women in Islam, among others by showing naked women's bodies with Koran text written on them, as he frequently used confrontational terminology in his public comments on Islam, for example by using the word 'goat-fuckers' to indicate Muslims). This framing of the murder as a threat to democracy confirmed the earlier thesis of Bolkestein that Islam and democracy were irreconcilable. It also tended to confirm Fortuyn's thesis of Islam as a 'backward religion'. In short, Islam as a religion became suspect. The second framing exposed the murder as *the ultimate evidence of the failure of integration of immigrants and integration policies*, in particular of Muslim immigrants who segregate themselves, and are allowed to do so in Islamic schools, who import intolerant and fundamentalist imams, etc.

These interpretations did not come from the media only. Dutch politicians, particularly from the LPF and the Liberal Party (but not exclusively from these two parties) made statements to this effect. The minister for Immigration and Integration saw the murder not only as a justification for her new, more obligatory policies of integration, but also announced new measures such as closer surveillance of mosques and their imams, stricter naturalization policies, including the possibility of loss of Dutch citizenship.

The logic of these dominant interpretations led to a series of further actions and polarization. First of all, some groups affiliated to the extreme right movement, exploited the situation by attacking Islamic symbols: Islamic schools and mosques

⁷ Hajer & Maussen (2004) have described three 'frames' in the discussion on the murder. Apart from the frames 'attack on the freedom of speech' and 'failed integration' discussed here, their third frame is that of 'the war on terror'. Indeed, this frame can easily be recognized in the discussion after the murder, but in my view that frame does not explain the murder as much as it explains the reaction (of politicians and public) to it. Hajer and Maussen rightly stress that such a frame immobilizes a sound discussion on adequate strategies.

were set on fire. Secondly, great pressure was put on Muslims and their organisations to distance themselves from the murder and show their loyalty to democracy, freedom of speech and integration. Representatives of Muslim communities and organisations complied to that pressure to an amazing extent. But at the same time they did not do that in exactly the terms they were asked to:

- Yes, indeed they declared themselves in favour of freedom of speech, but then not only for Van Gogh, but also for Muslims and their religious leaders.
- And yes, they were all for integration, but not for the kind that is assimilationist and demands to forget about their Muslim religion.

It was only after a few weeks that more balanced views started to appear and a bottom-up solidarity movement (as a counterweight against the verbal and physical attacks on Islam and Muslim immigrants) became visible.

How to evaluate these dominant framings in term of their reality value and their consequences for policy? My thesis is that firstly both dominant interpretations are obviously wrong, and secondly that they are bad advisor for policy. Let me substantiate these two points.

Firstly, on the interpretation of the murder on Van Gogh as an attack on the freedom of speech and democracy: yes, one can see this murder in this way, but surely not by Islam as such, but by a specific radicalised person or possibly a group of which the murderer was part. It is this strong tendency to generalize (towards Islam and the Muslim immigrants) that made this interpretation dangerous. Prejudice towards Islam and Muslims behind this becomes clear, when we compare the murder of Van Gogh with that of Pim Fortuyn, 2,5 years earlier: that murder was a comparable attack on the freedom of speech and democracy by a native Dutchman of the ecological movement. That murder, however, has never been seriously put on the account of the ecological movement as a whole.

Secondly, on the interpretation of the murder as the symbol of failed integration: the murderer of Van Gogh was a well integrated person by all common standards. He has been a successful student and had worked as a community worker. The group he was affiliated with consisted all of well educated young people of mixed origin: native Dutch, Moroccan, American. They had in common that they had been converted to radical Islam in their adolescence.

My first preliminary conclusion at this point is then: if these interpretations do not stand, there is no reason to re-discuss integration policies. But nevertheless, there are some lessons to learn from the Van Gogh murder and the developments that it set in motion. First of all, liberal democracies should be attentive to any form of radicalisation that undermines democratic societies, whether they come from the political left or right, or from politicised movements of any religion. From this point of view there is little difference between the Rote Armee Fraktion, the Red Brigades, right-extremist or fascist organisations, or violent fundamentalists of Christian, Jewish, Muslim or Hindu origin. Direct and targeted oppressive measures should equally be applied in all these cases.

Secondly, if such targeted oppressive measures are taken, the question remains how to combat or prevent radicalism in the long run. Here the message of past experience with radical movements is clear: prevention and eradication of radicalism in democratic contexts is only possible, if the broader (political or religious) movement from which radicals stem, isolates radicals and actively prevents the feeding of radical groups.

In this case Islamic communities and organisations are to be the most important partners to do this. The cooperation of all Muslims is needed to isolate and prevent Islamic radicalism and trust is the only basis on which that cooperation can be won. Polarization as it has taken place in the Netherlands after the Van Gogh murder did and does exactly the opposite: starting basically from distrust it tends to (implicitly or explicitly) make all Muslims co-responsible for the radicalism, and it puts an impossible pressure on Muslims that works counterproductive.

5. Is the Dutch model of integration in disarray?

This final question should be answered with both yes and no, to be explained as follows:

Yes, the Dutch integration policy is in disarray, if we take a close look at how these policies are managed nowadays, particularly at the national level. That management has become the victim of polarisation and tries to answer primarily the populist vote. Nearly all of the recent new measures of that policy do have a strong symbolic, political message. I call them symbolic, because in most cases the government does not have adequate instruments to implement them. The tone of policy management is authoritarian and policies are more and more mandatory, laying the burden of integration unequally on the shoulders of immigrants. Many of the new measures, such as the requirements of command of the Dutch language and knowledge of Dutch society before admission to the Netherlands is given, are furthermore implicitly or explicitly meant to restrict immigration. In my view this is the wrong order of things. The consequence is that such a policy polarizes, sustains and increases the divide between natives and immigrants, feeding distrust rather than the trust among immigrants that is needed to speed up integration processes of admitted immigrants.

The answer is also partly no, for two reasons. The first is that many of the earlier instruments developed in twenty years of integration policies, are still in place. And they have had their effects and they still have, in spite of the predominant definition of the failure of these policies. A number of these instruments, such as the early reception courses are good instruments. There is a real danger, however, that participation in these early reception programmes will decrease as a consequence of the recent reform of this policy, implying on the one hand a rigorous, overall and mandatory implementation, but at the same time putting the financial burden of it on the immigrants themselves and leaving the implementation of the programme to local authorities and the free market.

A second reason for the no-answer is that apart from the national level policies that we have discussed until now, the situation at the local level gives more reason for optimism. It is at this local level that integration takes place, and where policies have to be implemented. What we see increasingly is resistance to the new national policies at that local level, coming both from the local government, but increasingly also from civil society at large. In my view the key for future policies and its implementation lies at the local level. It is there that practical solutions have to be found for difficult and long-term integration processes.

Rinus Penninx is professor of Ethnic Studies and director of the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) of the University of Amsterdam since 1993, co-

chair of International Metropolis since 1999 and coordinator of the IMISCOE-Network of Excellence since 2004.

He has written for many years on migration, minorities' policies and ethnic studies. His report 'Ethnic Minorities' (1979) for the Dutch Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) formed the starting point for integration policies in the Netherlands. From 1978 to 1988 he worked as a senior researcher in the Research and Development Department of the Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture, particularly for research relating to migration and integration of immigrants in the Netherlands.

His recent publications in English include *Newcomers: Immigrants and their descendants in the Netherlands 1550-1995* (with Jan Lucassen), Het Spinhuis Publishers 1997; *Immigrant Integration: the Dutch case* (with Hans Vermeulen), Het Spinhuis Publishers 2000; *Trade Unions, Immigration and Immigrants in Europe 1960-1993* (with Judith Roosblad), Berghahn Books 2000; *Western Europe and its Islam* (with Jan Rath, Kees Groenendijk and Astrid Meyer), Brill 2001, and *Citizenship in European Cities* (with Karen Kraal, Marco Martiniello and Steven Vertovec), Ashgate 2004.

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