

**National government policy for ethnic minorities;  
the case of the Netherlands 1975-2005**

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**Paper Involve conference Netherlands, Deventer, 2006**

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## 1. Introduction

National government policy for ethnic minorities has evolved in the past 30 years in a way that has been closely related to the size and social position of these groups in Dutch society. The size of ethnic minority groups has increased fivefold in the last 30 years. The number of people belonging to ethnic minorities, when expressed as a proportion of the Dutch population, has increased from just over two percent in 1975 (around 300.000) to ten percent in 2005 (over 1.7 million). Moreover, the diversity of ethnic groups has become greater, in particular in the 1990s as a result of asylum immigration. The social position of ethnic minorities has undergone considerable change as a result of general economic developments and the related financial scope of central government. Conceptions of the role of the welfare state and the desirability of administrative decentralisation also play a role in changes in government policy. But also international developments such as the intensification of globalisation through ICT and terrorist attacks conducted and inspired by extremist Muslims in the twenty first century has a huge impact. Government policy not only responds to developments, for example a more restrictive policy on admission to the Netherlands in the event of an increased influx, but also initiates certain developments such as administrative decentralisation<sup>1</sup>. However, cause and effect cannot always be easily unravelled. For example, the notion of 'temporariness' and re-migration were the dominant concepts in the 1970s and served as the basis for the residence of minorities. A change occurred in the early 1980s, when the concept of permanent residence was adopted as the starting point. In the early 1990s there was still some doubt as to whether the Netherlands was (or had become) an immigration country. By the end of the 1990s, however, the national government had acknowledged this in practice: the Netherlands was an immigration country<sup>2</sup>.

Government policy and the changes in it can be traced above all in the policy documents and reports which are usually part of the annual debates in the Lower House of Parliament.

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<sup>1</sup> We will not deal in more detail with admissions policy here (for a more detailed explanation of this subject see chapter 5). We use the term ethnic minorities because this is the term used by national government. Ethnic minorities include Antilleans/Arubans, Greeks, Italians, ex-Yugoslavs, Cape Verdians, Moroccans, Moluccans, Portuguese, Spanish, Surinamese, Tunisians, Turks, refugees (like Iraqis, Afghans and Iranians), caravan dwellers and gypsies. Immigrants or non-indigenous people constitute a wider category: for example, Ghanaian immigrants are not treated as belonging to the ethnic minorities.

<sup>2</sup> In a demographic sense the Netherlands had already been an immigration country for many years, since immigration exceeded emigration. However, for these purposes immigration country is interpreted in a policy sense. In other words, the central government currently explicitly recognises that immigration has consequences for the institutional framework of the State. The recognition that the Netherlands is an immigration country does not mean that the central government actively aims at and promotes immigration. As a consequence of labour shortages in many industries, however, pressure is being exerted by the business community to create more facilities to enable foreigners, particularly the highly skilled, to migrate to the Netherlands

Reports of advisory bodies such as the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) play an important role in the development of policy<sup>3</sup>.

## **2. Welfare policy for Moluccans, 'guest workers' and immigrants from overseas parts of the Kingdom of the Netherlands**

After the influx of guest workers largely tailed off in the late 1960s and the process of family reunification and mass immigration of Surinamese (partly as a result of the approaching independence of Surinam in 1975) started in the early 1970s, it was felt that there was a need for a more intensive policy for these groups at national government level. A specific policy already existed for the Moluccans, who at that time were still known as the Ambonese. The first welfare policy for all the ethnic minorities was developed by the then Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM) and flourished in the 1970s. The national government subsidised numerous institutions that were engaged in welfare work, advocated the cause of the minorities and represented their interests. The institutions established by and for Surinamese and Antilleans, the institutions for immigrants and the institutions established by Moluccans carried out what was known as 'category-related' welfare work (i.e. welfare work for the specific category concerned). The specific group approach was an important principle. It should be noted that unemployment among the former guest workers at that time (i.e. the 1960s and early 1970s) was lower than among the indigenous Dutch population. However, unemployment among the Surinamese was higher. Occasional instances of discrimination were identified in the labour market and in public life, but in general there was still no major ethnic minorities issue. Since it was envisaged that their residence would be **temporary, immigrant** children were given instruction in their own language and culture (OETC).

The Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work drew up policy documents concerning the welfare of immigrants from the overseas parts of the Kingdom, Moluccans and foreign workers. These documents contained policy proposals and the national government contributions and schemes. The ambivalence in the immigration policy continue to exist in the 1970s. The view was that the Netherlands should not be an immigration country (Lower House, 1974-1975). Nonetheless, the Netherlands was more generous than most neighbouring countries in granting entry to immigrants from overseas parts of the Kingdom and to members of guest workers' families. The United Kingdom, for example, had much stricter rules governing the entry of immigrants from its former colonies. The influx of Surinamese and the process of family reunification for guest workers (the terms foreign workers and Mediterranean workers gradually caught on) created housing problems.

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<sup>3</sup> It is, however, evident from the overwhelming quantity of literature on ethnic minorities that there is a shortage of analyses and descriptions of (national) government policy as contained in the policy documents and reports. There are few studies dealing explicitly with national government policy. A frequent complaint in government circles is that so little use is made of official documents and reports in the analyses of the position of ethnic minorities. This article endeavours to provide a chronological account and to take the government documents and reports as a guideline without losing sight of developments in society. But we do not deal with the differences between the political parties. For the most part there has in fact been consensus on integration policy but a fair degree of disagreement about policy on admissions (Fermin 1997).

The policy on the reception and housing of the Surinamese involved dispersal. In order to prevent concentration of minorities a policy was pursued in Rotterdam of dispersing ethnic minorities more evenly. This encountered objections from the ethnic minority organisations. There were also occasional problems with the indigenous Dutch population. The community work system, which flourished at that time, managed to cope with most of these problems. Nonetheless, members of the indigenous Dutch communities started to move away. They left the old urban districts where more and more members of the ethnic minorities were settling. Cause and effect became entangled. As new districts were developed many Dutch people were able to move away more easily, but at the same time it was often the arrival and settlement of minorities that prompted Dutch people to move away to the new neighbourhoods. This made it possible for more members of ethnic minority groups to settle in the old inner city areas.

There was an increasing need for systematic research to gather information about the ethnic minorities. The Advisory Council on Community Relations Research (ACOM) was established in 1978 to coordinate an annual research programme. Many members of the ethnic minorities cherished the idea that they would one day return to their countries of origin, but few actually remigrated. However, the idea that residence was temporary did not change until the late 1970s.

### **3. The 1979 WRR advisory report on ethnic minorities**

1979 saw the publication of an advisory report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), which examined the weak position of the ethnic minorities. This first WRR report on the subject recognised that these groups would remain in the Netherlands. It recommended that the government adopt a restrictive policy on admissions and pursue an active policy for those members of minorities entitled to reside in the Netherlands. "Unless policy measures are intensified the existing problems are likely to be exacerbated. The social disadvantage and cultural isolation of the ethnic minorities may well be reinforced as a result of strong trends both within these groups and in indigenous Dutch society. There is therefore a real prospect of a society in which the ethnic minorities are among the weakest groups over a long period." (WRR, 1979, p. X). The Scientific Council also noted that "the positive acceptance of the multi-ethnic character of Dutch society means that is necessary, in our view, for a renewed effort to be made to deal first of all with the disadvantaged position in which the minorities find themselves in many areas" (p. XVIII). An active policy on minorities should be aimed at promoting dialogue and participation, abolishing discriminatory practices and improving the legal status of the minorities. The policy measures should therefore focus on the employment, housing, education and training, and health care.

The government accepted the broad thrust of these recommendations and announced that it would make a special effort for foreign workers and other cultural minorities. It announced a coordinated policy on minorities.

In 1979 the Minister of the Interior was designated as the government minister responsible for coordinating policy on minorities. As the Ministry of the Interior had a strong position of authority by virtue of its responsibility for administering policy on the municipalities, it was made responsible for coordinating policy on minorities. It was also, after all, the intention that the municipalities should be induced to pursue a policy on ethnic minorities at local level. It was the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior to coordinate the policy measures of the various specialised government departments. In 1980 a general policy on ethnic minorities was announced. This was followed in

1981 by a draft policy document on minorities. In 1981 the then Minister of Education published the policy plan entitled 'Cultural minorities in education', which defined policy on education for children from the so-called cultural minorities.

#### **4. The Minorities Report of 1983**

Both the government's response in 1980 to the advisory report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) and the draft Minorities Report of 1981 presented the first steps towards a policy on minorities. "The policy on minorities is aimed at establishing a society in which members of minority groups living in the Netherlands will have an equal place and proper chances of development both individually and as a group." (Ministry of the Interior, 1983, p. 10).

The policy then announced was based on the principle that the ethnic minorities would remain permanently in the Netherlands. This therefore departed from the idea that their presence would be of a temporary nature. The emphasis shifted somewhat from separate measures that focused on their particular problems to general policy. General where possible and specific where necessary was the motto. After detailed commentary of the special interest organisations the final Minorities Report was published amid much publicity in 1983 under the responsibility of Mr Rietkerk, the then Minister of the Interior. The policy on minorities consisted of three elements:

1. combating social and economic disadvantage;
2. improving the legal status of minorities and combating discrimination;
3. dealing with the low level of participation and the danger of isolation.

An important change of emphasis, compared with the welfare policy, was that attention shifted to the so-called 'hard sectors': namely housing, employment and education. A move was also made to decentralise the approach to the problem by the adoption of the Problem Cumulation Area Policy: this involved a special approach and the allocation of extra funds for the urban districts with the largest concentrations of minorities. Certain groups were explicitly mentioned as target groups, namely foreign employees from the eight recruitment countries, Antilleans, Moluccans, Surinamese, refugees, caravan dwellers and gypsies.

The point of departure was that the policy on minorities would focus on society as a whole. "This meant that Dutch society should provide the opportunity for minorities to develop, but also that the minorities could be expected to adapt to participating in Dutch society and to make efforts to acquire the social skills, including a satisfactory command of Dutch, necessary for this purpose. The organisations of the groups themselves should play an important role in maintaining and developing their own culture and identity." (Ministry of the Interior, 1983, p. 11).

Numerous measures were taken to ensure above all the 'accessibility' of facilities and 'proportionality' in participation. Accessibility and proportionality were key concepts of the policy on ethnic minorities. A longitudinal project was established to promote accessibility and proportionality and monitor the results. The research project entitled 'Social Position and Use of Facilities by

Immigrants' was established for the purpose of monitoring. Various measures such as the 'Ethnic minorities in the public sector' plan and later the 1,000 job plan for Moluccans' gradually achieved positive results. In addition, measures for the improvement of the legal status and housing of minorities started to bear fruit. Foreigners obtained the right to vote and stand for election in local elections and dual nationality was made possible. Municipalities were required to report on the allocation of housing. The national ethnic minority organisations, including the Dutch Centre for Immigrants (NCB), were allocated facilities and could play a role as countervailing power. In addition, subsidies were provided for various national participation bodies of different groups. The National Advice and Consultation Structure (LAO) was established in 1985, thereby providing a forum for periodic communication between the national participation bodies and the central government. The so-called 'minorities policy coordinators' were appointed in various municipalities. As far as education was concerned, however, the results were meagre. Extra funds were made available in order to tackle the disadvantaged position of pupils from, cultural minorities. Schools received additional funds for these pupils (0.9 per 'CUMI' pupil). Informally, these pupils came to be known as the '1.9 pupils'. The debate focused mainly on the necessity of intercultural education. The Lower House of Parliament was kept informed of progress annually in the form of a minorities policy action programme.

A restrictive policy on admission to the Netherlands was a fundamental condition for the success of the ethnic minorities policy in 1983. By this time the ethnic minorities numbered approximately half a million people. Although it had been expected that immigration would gradually decrease after 1983, the number of immigrants did not fall but actually rose over the years as a result of family reunification and the arrival of asylum-seekers. The immigration surplus (the balance of emigration and immigration) rose from under 10,000 in 1983 to 30,000 and thereafter in the 1990s to over 50,000. Even more important were the consequences of the economic recession. The Government Scheme for the Reception of Asylum-Seekers (ROA) was introduced in 1987 and the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture (WVC) were put in charge of the reception of asylum-seekers.

## **5. The economic recession, racism and combating discrimination**

The economic recession and the restructuring of the Dutch economy in the 1980s caused the position of the ethnic minorities to deteriorate. Their access to the labour market was blocked. Moreover, a large number of foreign workers, particularly older workers, became redundant as a result of the transition from an industrial economy to a services economy. The tensions between indigenous Dutch people and immigrants became increasingly marked in the older districts of the big cities. Parties of the extreme right, including the Centre Party, gained considerable support. Indeed, this party even won seats in the Lower House of Parliament in 1982. The advent of political racism and discrimination in various fields resulted in the establishment of the National Bureau against Racism (LBR). Unemployment among the ethnic minorities rose on average to over one-third of the working population of these groups. Among Turks, Moroccans and young immigrants the rate of unemployment even rose to just under half, in other words many times higher than among the indigenous Dutch population. Studies commissioned by the National Bureau against Racism clearly showed that the disproportionately high level of unemployment among the minorities was due to a considerable extent to direct and often indirect forms of discrimination. The unemployment problem became increasingly acute. The Ministry of the Interior therefore commissioned the Advisory Council on Community Relations Research (ACOM) to study ways of solving this problem. In its report entitled 'A fair chance' it recommended that positive measures be taken (Ministry of the Interior, 1986). However, when the Social and Economic Council (SER) introduced a series of training measures and steps by organisations of employers and employees in 1987, the central government decided to defer a decision on the adoption of a policy of affirmative

action. By this time the ethnic minorities had grown to around three quarters of a million people as a result of family reunification, immigration and a higher birth rate. Ethnic concentration and segregation were also increasing. The phenomenon of all black and all white schools appeared, partly because some Dutch parents removed their children from schools with a high percentage of black pupils since they believed these schools underperformed. The central government could do little to combat this in view of the freedom to provide education as regulated in Article 25 of the Constitution. In addition, the trend towards decentralisation continued and resistance to specific policy increased, particularly at local level. The worsening of the position of the minorities and the poor results of policy obliged the central government to request the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) for fresh recommendations.

## **6. The 1989 WRR report on 'Immigrant policy'**

The report entitled 'Immigrant Policy' was published in 1989. This second report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) noted that the Netherlands had become an immigration country. The Scientific Council recommended that account be taken of the policy implications of this fact. The main measures proposed were integration of newcomers and promotion of participation in the labour market. The Scientific Council advocated the introduction of statutory measures analogous to the Canadian Employment Equity Act. Legislation to promote employment opportunities for immigrants and a form of contract compliance for public sector contractors were proposed. In addition, the Scientific Council recommended that intercultural education should not be treated as a separate subject and should instead be regarded as a perspective for the entire system of basic education. This education should be given outside normal school hours. The Scientific Council proposed that ethnic minorities should not be regarded as categories requiring special care. The policy on immigrants should be distinct in three areas: alien's policy, integration policy and a community relations policy reflecting the multicultural nature of Dutch society.

The government did not adopt all the recommendations of this second report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy. For example, the term 'immigrant policy' was not accepted. This suggested, after all, "that the policy would be aimed at all immigrant groups, with integration policy being targeted at people from these groups in disadvantaged situations. In addition the government wished to ensure that the group of caravan dwellers of indigenous origin continued to be included in the coordinated policy on ethnic minorities" (Ministry of the Interior, 1990, p. 6).

The report of the Scientific Council for Government Policy generated a broad public debate. Above all, the statutory measures proposed by the Scientific Council met with much opposition from employers. The consultative body of the two sides of industry (the Labour Foundation - STAR) produced a so-called '60,000 jobs plan' for minorities in order to avoid the need for statutory measures. Statutory measures were postponed pending the result of this plan.

There was by this time a growing view that excessive attention for minorities and affirmative action would put some of the Dutch indigenous population in the old urban areas at an even greater disadvantage. This played into the hands of extreme right. This was why a general policy was increasingly proposed and the relevance of the ethnic-cultural dimension was pushed somewhat into the background. The third Lubbers government, which had taken office in 1990, adopted a policy of social regeneration designed to tackle general social disadvantage generally rather than the specific disadvantage of ethnic minorities. Many facilities for ethnic minorities were abolished or merged. A

debate was also started in order to merge the national minority organisations. After many years of negotiations, these organisations combined to form Forum - the Institute for Multicultural Development. However, the Dutch Centre for Immigrants (NCB) remained in existence in slimmed-down form and marketed its services as a centre of expertise for intercultural issues.

## **7. The 1992 social debate on integration and the 1994 Contours Report**

A general declaration against racial discrimination was adopted in the Lower House of Parliament in 1991 and was followed by numerous anti-discrimination activities. However, the problem of integration proved acute and the need for debate remained. In 1991 the then leader of the parliamentary Liberal party Mr Bolkestein raised the issue of possible obstacles to the process of integration caused by Islam. In 1992 the then Minister of the Interior Mrs Dales organised a public debate on integration that came to be known informally as the ethnic minorities debate. Her aim was to generate greater support for the integration of ethnic minorities. As a result of the debate, various conclusions were confirmed and stated even more forcefully, for example the rejection of assimilation and segregation and the advocacy of integration and preservation of the ethnic minorities' own identity. In addition, various issues connected with the acceptability of certain values and standards such as the separation of Church and State and the equality and equivalence of men and women were raised. Other topics dealt with were the necessity of pre-school education and compulsory integration. It was argued that the integration policy was a necessary and long-term investment for the future of our society.

It was also emphasised that the opportunities of ethnic minorities to receive education and find employment should be equal to those of other citizens. This was the joint responsibility of all concerned. Various measures were suggested, ranging from the sponsoring of 'concentration schools' by businesses to 'doorway conversations' between residents.

A strong integration policy was also advocated. By this time, the action programmes established under the ethnic minorities policy, which were presented annually to the Lower House, had been converted into annual policy surveys. The Social and Cultural Planning Office (SCP) was asked to draw up an annual report on minorities that would serve as a basis for these annual surveys.

The Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture published a report entitled 'Investing in integration' in 1994. This put the emphasis above all on the role of ethnic minority organisations in the integration process and stressed the responsibility of the ethnic minorities. The 1994 minorities annual survey noted a fall in unemployment among ethnic minorities, but also observed that they were still at a disadvantage, particularly in education. The Lower House requested a review of policy on minorities. This led to the publication of the 'Contours Report' entitled 'Ethnic minorities integration policy' (Ministry of the Interior, 1994). Citizenship became the key principle in a new vision of a society consisting of people from different cultures. Citizenship implies that all persons involved in the integration process opt for permanent participation in Dutch society, with all the rights and obligations that this entails. It was stated that "the government opts for citizenship and emphasises the integration of members of minority groups in society. This is why the term minorities policy will no longer be used, and reference will instead be made to the policy on integration of minority groups" (Ministry of the Interior, 1994, p. 6).

Concern was expressed in the Contours Report that support for the policy was in danger of being undermined by the continuing high level of immigration, in particular of asylum seekers, and the presence of illegal residents. In order to prevent the further marginalisation of young people from ethnic minority groups and their descent into crime policy efforts were intensified. Projects were started for the reception of young people and the provision of educational support. The Contours Report also examined the restrictive immigration policy and the possibility of introducing a new integration programme of a more obligatory nature. The government called on everyone to make the tremendous effort necessary to make a success of integrating new citizens. It was announced that there should be regular assessment of the effectiveness of the results.

During this period the process of administrative decentralisation continued and the municipalities were thus assigned a greater role in administering integration policy. Control of the reception and integration of persons entitled to asylum passed from the Ministry of Welfare, Health and Culture to the Ministry of the Interior. This reduced still further in the 1990s the influence of the Ministry of Welfare, which had played such a prominent role in relation to minorities in the 1970s. Although the economy was starting to pick up, there was little visible improvement in the position of the minorities. Asylum immigration was increasing all the time. In addition, the excessive rate of crime among minorities and in particular among young immigrants was a hot issue, as was the education problem and the problem of ethnic segregation. The general policy on disadvantage and the Big Cities Policy, which had largely replaced the policy on social regeneration in 1994, did not yield the desired effect for minorities. In particular, the relevance of the ethnic-cultural dimension became a subject of debate in curative care and criminal justice circles. However, ethnic minority organisations continued to stress the relevance and necessity of special policy for ethnic minorities.

## **8. The 1996 Round Table Talks, the 1997 'CRIEM' Report and the 1998 RMO Advisory Report**

In 1996 round table talks were held with immigrant and indigenous experts under the direction of Mr Dijkstal, the then Minister of the Interior, on new emphases in integration policy, in particular the aspect of outlook on life and the youth problem. Reference was made to the difference in standards and values within different systems, the importance of scope for emancipation based on individual identity and self-awareness, the role of self-help organisations, the effect of the creation of a balanced image and measures based on positive developments. It was concluded in the final report (Ministry of the Interior, 1996) that the integration policy "had certainly been successful in given areas. On the other hand, there is still an urgent problem in that many members of ethnic minority groups are seriously disadvantaged." The importance and relevance of the ethnic-cultural dimension, including the role of religious leaders, was recognised, particularly since it was found that religious identity did not become diluted over time. More and more mosques were being established, and Hindu temples and 'black' churches too were becoming more numerous. The Brinkman Committee noted in 1997 that minorities had received too little attention in the Big Cities Policy.

Concepts and terms such as intercultural management, interculturalisation, multiculturalisation, diversity management, empowerment, value added and the strength of cultural diversity - many of which came from America - emphasised the positive aspects of cultural individuality and diversity and opposed the trend of general policy. The 1998 report of the Social Development Council (RMO, 1998), entitled 'Integration in perspective', also emphasised the importance of the immigrant factor and the ethnic-cultural dimension.

The worrying level of crime among minorities and in particular among young Moroccans and Antilleans, which was to some extent revealed in the findings of the parliamentary committee of inquiry chaired by Mr Van Traa, elicited a response from central government. The Ministry of the Interior published a report on crime in relation to the integration of ethnic minorities (the 'CRIEM' Report) in 1997. The report stated that it was desirable for "explicit attention to be paid to the indications that, notwithstanding the favourable changes in the position of many ethnic minority groups, some groups, in particular young people in these groups, seem not to be part of this development and to be distinguished by a disproportionately high rate of involvement in crime"(Ministry of the Interior, 1997, p. 7). A preventive approach designed to offer an alternative to young people from ethnic minorities involved in less serious forms of crime was developed. The spearheads of this policy included integration, measures to tackle truancy and dropping out of school, and substantial investment in the pre-school period. Various pilot projects were started in the big cities in order to combat crime among these groups.

## **9. Statutory measures**

Various reports of advisory bodies recommended statutory measures to help improve the poor labour market position of the ethnic minorities. Two special acts were introduced. After evaluation of the '60,000 job plan' (as advocated by the two sides of industry) showed that the participation of ethnic minorities in the labour market had not been substantially improved, the introduction of legislation became unavoidable. The Fair Employment of Ethnic Minorities Act (WBEAA) was introduced in 1994. Under this Act all businesses and organisations employing 35 or more people had to report annually to the Chambers of Commerce on how many immigrants they employed and what measures they were taking to reduce the under-representation of immigrants. This Act met with much resistance from the employers' organisations. The main objections were the administrative red tape and the concept of ethnic registration. A large proportion of the organisations failed to comply with their reporting obligations under the Act. After evaluation of the legislation, it was converted in 1998 into the less far-reaching Employment of Minorities (Promotion) Act (Wet SAMEN). Under this Act employers are required to report annually to the manpower services organisation and were not required to indicate what measures they were taking to reduce the under-representation of minorities. Evaluation has shown that only half of the employers observe the provisions of the new legislation, which was incidentally introduced with the support of the two sides of industry.

The participation bodies of the ethnic minorities and consultation between ethnic minorities and central government was put on a statutory footing in 1997 when the Minorities Policy (Consultation) Act (WOM) was introduced.

The instruction in own language and culture (OETC), referred to previously, became increasingly controversial, particularly when it transpired that the majority of immigrants did not return to their country of origin and that the language gap of the Turkish and Moroccans was almost as wide as ever. The policy on instruction in own language and culture was replaced by a policy on education in immigrant languages (OALT) after the Van Kemenade Commission had published the 'Cedars in the Garden' Report on the subject in 1992. In fact, the cultural element of instruction in own language and culture had been abandoned earlier, leaving only instruction in own language. Education in immigrant languages (OALT) is now given outside the regular curriculum in primary schools and can be chosen as a subject in secondary schools.

It was not until 1998 that the Newcomers Integration Act (WIN) was introduced. Under this legislation immigrants arriving in the Netherlands have an obligation to participate in an integration programme. Subsequently, programmes were also developed for immigrants who had arrived previously and had still not developed adequate language skills in Dutch.

## **10. The 1998 'Getting Chances, Seizing Chances' Report**

During the formation of the new government in 1998 a new ministerial post was created for open policy and integration of ethnic minorities within the Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations. The relevant Minister, Mr van Boxtel, favours active citizenship, which involves promoting good communication and debate on integration policy and on the consequences of recognising that the Netherlands is an immigration country. Fairly soon after his appointment he published a report entitled 'Getting Chances, Seizing Chances' (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 1998). This recognised openly for the first time that the Netherlands was an immigration country. This was in keeping with the coalition policy agreement of 1998, which contained a number of specific guidelines for integration policy, including measures to tackle the language disadvantage of immigrants already in the Netherlands. The spearheads of the policy in this report are coordinated measures for children and young people from birth to the age of 18, and measures to combat the disproportionately high level of unemployment among ethnic minorities, to promote active involvement in society of people who are not immediately employable, and to prevent and combat discrimination and racism.

The 1999 report on 'Minorities Integration Policy' assesses how the position of minorities has evolved (Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations, 1999). The improvement in the participation of minorities in the labour market has been translated into substantially lower unemployment figures in recent years. According to Netherlands Statistics (CBS), the rate of unemployment among ethnic minorities has actually fallen relatively sharply, namely from 26 per cent in 1994 to 16 per cent in 1998. This has been despite the large influx of immigrants, in particular asylum-seekers, around half of whom obtain a residence permit and can therefore be counted in due course as part of the legal population.

Progress has also been made in education as immigrant children are now doing better than their parents: the second generation is easily outperforming the first generation. For example, the proportion of ethnic minority pupils in higher education has increased to 15-20 percent. However, since this is still only half of the rate of participation among the indigenous Dutch population (30-40 percent) the gap between the ethnic minorities and the indigenous population has still not been closed.

Thanks in part to the fact that the second generation is doing better than the first generation, an ethnic middle-class is developing. This is in turn creating new problems, such as equal opportunities for promotion within organisations. Nonetheless, the creation of an ethnic subclass - a society whose lowest layers consist mainly of minorities - continues to be a possibility.

The issue of the participation of ethnic minorities in cultural activities and the provision of cultural events catering for a multicultural society has been raised in various policy documents by the

Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, in particular by Mr Van der Ploeg, the State Secretary for Cultural Policy. The proposal by the State Secretary that subsidies should be reduced for organisations that did not meet the multicultural objectives has met with stiff resistance. Nonetheless, a means has been found to encourage cultural institutions to engage in a process of 'interculturalisation'.

Studies carried out by the Netherlands Court of Audit have reinforced the need felt by the Lower House of Parliament for reports on the effectiveness of integration policy. This is why a biennial integration monitor describing the progress of the integration process will be compiled from 2000 onwards. A policy impact assessment report will also be produced every two years from the same date onwards.

## **11. Economic growth and multicultural debate in 2000**

The economy has grown since the late 1990s. Unemployment is falling, partly as a result of the age structure of the working population. In addition, substantial funds are available for new policy since the central government budget has benefited from various windfalls, partly due to the decline in the volume of unemployment benefits.

According to the publicist Paul Scheffer, the annual estimated influx of approximately 50,000 immigrants of non-Western origin, the increasing ethnic segregation, the disadvantaged position of minorities in education and, to a lesser extent, in the labour market, and the assumed - problems with different values and standards are leading to a multicultural drama (NRC Handelsblad, 29 January 2000). As he blamed the indigenous Dutch middle class for their resignation and indolence in relation to integration policy, he fuelled a new debate known initially as the multicultural debate and later as the integration debate. The concept of a multicultural society and the related normative concepts became a subject of debate. The effectiveness of the integration policy and, in particular, education policy was the target of much criticism. Reports of the Education Inspectorate showed that the performance of pupils at black schools had continued to the substandard.

Ms Adelmund, the State Secretary for Education, produced an Educational Opportunities Schools Plan which provided for pilot projects to be started at designated schools in order to improve the performance of immigrant pupils. The plan to appoint more teaching staff from the ethnic minorities has also failed as yet to achieve good results. The need to appoint representatives of the ethnic minorities to the governing boards of schools and as employees of the institutions of civil society is being promoted by the central government. This is also designed to involve ethnic minority organisations and religious institutions such as mosques more closely in expediting the integration process.

## **12. Integration new style policy, the impact of extremist Islamic terrorism and economic slow down**

In 2001 the WRR published a third report about integration policy with the title *Netherlands as immigration society*. Compared to the two former reports of the WRR the impact of this report was

small, because the general mood in the Netherlands was that immigration must be restricted. Immigration was perceived as a liability while the WRR stated that immigration could be an asset. Furthermore resistance against the multicultural approach in the Netherlands grew. Many indigenous citizens moved from the big cities to the suburbs, because they felt that they have become strangers in their neighbourhood.

The 9/11 attack in 2001 on New York and Washington carried out by Islamic extremists linked to AL QAIDA had a huge impact on the integration policy in the Netherlands. It turned out from a poll, which was conducted directly after 9/11, that a large proportion of the immigrants from Islamic background showed (some) understanding for these attacks. Furthermore a group of Moroccan youngsters in the Dutch city Ede seemed to have been rejoicing the attacks, but this news turned out to be false. This was shown on CNN television. The politician P. Fortuyn pointed towards the danger of Islamization of the Netherlands and got a response among a large part of the population. Not only from the indigenous population but also from segments of the ethnic minorities. The Muslim population grew in size to almost one million. Among a segment of the Muslim population a revival of Islam practices was taking place. This was visible in dress (more Muslim women seemed to wear headscarves) and behaviour. Also on Dutch television secretly filmed preaches were shown of some radical Muslim clerics (imams) who were preaching hatred against the West. In this atmosphere the national election took place in 2002. The slow pace of integration of ethnic minorities in particular of the Muslim population was one of the main themes of this election. P. Fortuyn was murdered two weeks before Election Day on the 6<sup>th</sup> of May of 2002. It was a relief that the murderer was not a Muslim, but a white activist fighting for animal protection. Nevertheless the party of Fortuyn won the election and formed the national government. A more strict integration policy was designed and restriction of immigration. Furthermore the integration department had to move from the Ministry of Interior to the Ministry of Justice. It was merged with the immigration department. A minister for Immigration and Integration was appointed from the party of Fortuyn. Subsidy for multicultural activities was curtailed. The government with the party of Fortuyn holding key post in the Cabinet has to resign soon because of quarrels and mismanagement in the Fortuyn party. After the election in 2003 a new government was formed. Mrs. R. Verdonk, from the liberal party was appointed as the Minister for Immigration and Integration policy. She designed an integration policy new style. Key concepts of this new policy were that social-cultural aspects became very relevant while social-economic aspects of integration became less important. So multicultural policy was abandoned, while unity and shared citizenship among the population was pushed. She proposed mandatory integration of immigrants through learning the Dutch language and customs and practices in the Netherlands. It was also stressed that the basic values and norms, like gender equality and non discrimination of homosexuals must be respected irrespective of one's own religious beliefs. Furthermore immigrants were held responsible for their integration in the Dutch society. The immigration was successfully restricted. A policy against further radicalisation of young Muslims was designed and implemented. Laws like the law *Samen* stimulating employers to report how many ethnic minorities they employed were repealed.

In 2003 a report of the parliamentary commission (of the Second Chamber) was released by Mr. Blok about thirty years of integration policy. The conclusion of the Blok report was not that the integration policy has failed as was expected. The Blok report stated that the impact of government policy to integrate immigrants was very small. On the other side the Blok report concluded that many immigrants had succeeded in their integration on their own merit.

On November 2 in 2004 Theo Van Gogh was murdered by a Muslim extremist Mohamed B. Also attacks by Muslim extremists in Madrid (Spain) and Bali (Indonesia) and in 2005 in London (England) created an atmosphere of fear for radical Muslims. It turned out that also citizens of the Netherlands from Islamic background had linkages with these terrorists and some Muslim radicals were planning attacks in the Netherlands. So the integration policy was more focussed on

preventing radicalisation and marginalization of Islamic youngsters and stimulating their bonding with the Dutch society. In the aftermath of the murder of Theo van Gogh there have been also attacks on Muslim properties such as arson on Islamic schools and mosques. The relations between the indigenous population and ethnic minorities in particular the Muslim populations became constrained. Some assumed Muslim practices like genital mutilation of women, honour killings and oppression and maltreatment of women became important policy issues from the perspective of shared citizenship.

The economic slow down of the Dutch economy starting in 2000 with the explosion of the internet bubble lead to a growth of the unemployment. Ethnic minorities faced a growth in unemployment compared to the reduction in 1990s. But intervention in the labour market through laws or specific measures to improve the situation of the ethnic minorities were not introduced. In the field of education in general the position of ethnic minorities improved. The social cultural dimension of integration is seen as main focus of the integration policy at the eve of the twenty first century. Another focus of the integration policy is the reduction of criminal activities among ethnic youngsters in particular young men. There is an overrepresentation of youngsters for in particular of Moroccan and Antillean background in criminal activities. But policies to reduce their participation in the activities are still not so effective.

All in all in the Netherlands lacking trust and fright for Islamic extremists and terrorism became driving forces for the integration policy. Some groups like the Surinamese are successfully integrated, while the Muslim population is considered and perceived primarily as group that the integration policy must be focussed.

### **13. Conclusions**

The predicted growth of the so-called 'new groups', the former asylum-seekers who have obtained a residence permit, and their less fortunate position in Dutch society will mean that an even more vigorous integration policy will have to be formulated for them. The increasing proportion of ethnic minorities in the population of the big cities, the economic growth or slow down, the ambitions of the ethnic minorities and international developments will help to determine how integration policy evolves in the future. An important question will be whether and, if so, how the third generation should be registered and which members of this generation should still be regarded as immigrants. The number of children from interethnic relationships and marriages will increase, in particular between Surinamese/Antilleans and indigenous Dutch people. The staffing and management of the institutions of civil society will gradually have to be changed to reflect the multi-ethnic nature of the population. The role of the ethnic minority organisations and institutions such as mosques will increase in importance. To what extent remigration will increase is hard to predict. However the remigration Act implemented in 2000, thereby creating greater opportunities for remigration, leads to remigration, but not on a large scale. Developments in information and communication technology such as new Internet applications and image telephony, ever improved reception of (satellite) television broadcasts of, for example, Turkish, Arab, Chinese and Indian broadcasting organisations, increasingly cheap telephone rates and travel, will very probably result in more intensive contact between immigrants and their country of origin. This will have consequences for the (cultural) orientation of all citizens in the Netherlands. The development of diasporic communities in the Netherlands is taking shape leading to multiple identity and transnational ties.

All in all, the evolution of national government policy on ethnic minorities from a welfare policy in the 1970s to a minorities policy in the 1980s and an integration policy in the 1990s focussed on the integration of newcomers (recent immigrants) and a policy focussed on shared citizenship and unity in the first years of the twenty first century has taken place against the backdrop of a cycle of economic growth, recession, further growth and economic slow down. The influx and changing composition of the immigrant population has also affected national government policy. Compared with other Western European countries, the Netherlands has pursued an intensive policy (certainly in financial terms). The only country other than the Netherlands to make specific provision for the appointment of members of ethnic minorities to government jobs and to formulate laws against employment discrimination is the United Kingdom. Moreover, the subsidisation of a substantial ethnic infrastructure occurs only in the Netherlands. This may possibly explain why there has not as yet been large-scale ethnic rioting in the Netherlands.

However in the twenty first century the integration policy in the Netherlands faces a turning point. The international terrorism and radicalization of some Muslim youngsters and growth of the Muslim population lead to a policy focussed on social cultural dimensions of integrating than the erstwhile focus on social economic aspects. Unity and shared citizenship instead of diversity and multicultural policy became the goals of the integration policy. But the predictions are that in the coming years the economy will grow and that will open opportunities for minorities in getting jobs, also become the indigenous population will be shrinking. Furthermore a large proportion of the indigenous population will retire from jobs in the next ten years. If the Dutch government and the Muslim community succeeds in preventing further radicalization and marginalization of the Muslim youngsters the Netherlands can become again a harmonious multicultural society. Last but not the least: if terrorists attacks and murders inspired by (religious) extremism will not take place again. In this sense multicultural societies in West the have become vulnerable. Effects of integration policy are also vulnerable in this respect. Nonetheless, there are still various minuses in the integration of ethnic minorities. Ethnic segregation and unemployment are still greater than, for example, in the United Kingdom.

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**Diagram: Analysis of evolution of central government policy for ethnic minorities 1975-2000**

	<b>economic development</b>	<b>Number of minorities and designation*</b>	<b>Designation of policy</b>	<b>Basic principle for residence</b>	<b>Policy documents, reports, organisations</b>
1975-1980	Economic growth/start of economic decline				
		300,000 'guestworkers immigrants from foreign parts of the Kingdom, Ambonese	Welfare policy for 'categories'	Temporary Residence	Policy documents of welfare groups.
				Ministers of CRM, BIZA and Education	Leading role of NCB ; 1979 WRR report on ethnic minorities 1979 establishment of ACOM 1981 Education policy plan for cultural minorities
1981-1989	Economic recession/restructuring	500,000 members of ethnic minorities, foreigners, foreign workers, Antilleans, Surinamese and Moluccans	Minorities policy general and by Category PCG policy	Permanent Residence Ministers of BIZA and WVC	1981 Draft minorities Report 1983 Minorities Report 1985 Establishment of LBR 1985 Establishment of LAO 1986 ACOM report A fair Chance 1987 ROA scheme
1989-1995	Economic recovery/growth of Employment	750,000 immigrants, fellow nationals, Mediterranean workers, Antilleans and Surinamese	Transition from Minorities policy to integration policy, mainly general policy, social Regeneration, Big Cities Policy	Immigration Country Ministers of BIZA and Wvc	1989 WRR report and immigrant policy 1992 public debate on integration/minorities 1994 'Cedars in the garden' education Report 1994 report on 'Investing in integration' 60,000 jobs plan 1994 Contours Report on integration policy 1994 WBEAA
1995-2002	Economic growth/ICT Shortages in certain areas of the labour Market	1- 1,5 million members of the minorities, classical Minorities new groups/persons entitled to asylum	Integration policy GSB policy Multicultural? Intercultural?	Immigration Country Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities	1996 Round Table Talks (RTG) 1997 CRIEM report 1997 WOM 1998 WIN 1998 OALT 1998 Report 'Getting chances, seizing chances' 1998 SAMEN Act 1999 Community relations reports 2000 Educational opportunities report 2000 Integration debate 2000 Remigration Act

2002	Economic recession Growth of unemployment of ethnic minorities	1,6 million ethnic minorities, distinction among classic groups and new ethnic groups	Integration policy New style Citizenship Banning of multi-culturalism Policy preventing Radicalisation of Islam	Restriction of Immigration Compulsory integration (inburgering) Minister of Immigration and Integration	2003 Repealing of SAMEN Act Banning of OALT Parliamentary report Blok Yearreport on integration
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**The terms used to designate the groups have changed over the years. Some terms are not official, but have become part of common parlance.**