Challenging Multiculturalism

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Introduction

The Dutch case has been widely considered an almost ideal-typical example of multiculturalist policies. This applies both to national and international literature as well as in public discourse in the Netherlands. The so-called Dutch multicultural model has been widely used as an example of how to develop immigrant integration policies in other European countries. The basic premise of this national multicultural model is that the recognition and institutionalization of cultural pluralism is an important condition for the emancipation and integration of immigrant groups into Dutch society. Moreover, the multicultural model would match the very specific Dutch history of pillarism (Lijphart 1976) that extended into the 1950s and 1960s, when many facets of everyday social life in the Netherlands were institutionalized in distinct Protestant, Catholic, Socialist and Liberal pillars. In this respect, immigration meant that the Dutch social structure of pillars for national minorities was simply extended to incorporate ethnic minorities too.

Today this Dutch multicultural model is broadly disowned as a failure in public as well as in political debate. Public intellectual Paul Scheffer (2000) even refers to the Dutch multicultural ‘tragedy’. Critics claim that, under the banner of benevolent multiculturalism, many integration problems have been ignored, such as urban segregation, criminality, radicalization and alienation of significant groups within Dutch society. Populist politicians who have risen on the Dutch political stage since 2002 blame the multiculturalist beliefs of the past for the failure of immigrant integration in the Netherlands. In the realm of social scientific research, too, the Dutch multicultural model has become contested. Sociologists like Koopmans and Statham, and Sniderman and Hagendoorn have drawn attention to the discontents of Dutch multiculturalist policies.
(Sniderman and Hagendoorn 2007; Koopmans et al. 2005). In particular, the critique points to how the recognition of cultural groups has reified ethno-cultural cleavages in society and contributed to the alienation of these groups.

Others have contended that there has never really been a multicultural model in the Netherlands, or at least that the role of multiculturalism in Dutch policies has been very limited (Duyvendak and Scholten 2011). The era in which Dutch policies resembled the ideal-typical multicultural model was confined largely to the 1980s; since then, the Dutch have framed immigrant integration policies in very different ways (see Scholten 2011). However, in spite of the assimilationist turn in national policies, on the local level there are more resilient practices in accommodating cultural differences, such as coopting and cooperating with migrant organizations (Uitermark et al. 2005). Rather than being driven by multiculturalist policy beliefs, these local practices are derived more from policy routines and pragmatic ways of coping with problems (see Poppelaars and Scholten 2008). Furthermore, the Dutch multicultural model remains vivid in Dutch political and media discourse (Roggeband and Vliegenthart 2007), revealing it may serve as a counter-discourse against which current policy developments are juxtaposed.

This chapter critically examines the Dutch multicultural model that has become nationally and internationally famous – and infamous. First of all, I locate the multicultural model in Dutch policies as well as in public and academic discourse. Resisting the tendency to construct Dutch policies ex-post as multiculturalist, the key objective is to pin down the specific elements of Dutch policies that are or at least have been multiculturalist. Second, I deconstruct the Dutch multicultural model by studying shifts in policy discourse, media discourse and public attitudes. Finally, I assess the implications that the rise and fall of multiculturalism has had, both for policies and for actual integration trajectories.

The rise and fall of multiculturalism in the Netherlands

Let me begin by defining multiculturalism in the Netherlands. It is important to distinguish between what can be labelled as multiculturalist based on an ideal type of multiculturalism derived from the literature, and what is identified as multiculturalist in societal discourses. Analyzing the latter is important for pinning down multiculturalism as a mode of discourse in the Netherlands, but it
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does not resolve the extent to which there has actually been a Dutch multicultural model. Therefore, I adopt an ideal type of multiculturalism deduced from the social scientific literature, focusing in particular on: (1) how ideal-type multiculturalism names and frames immigrant integration; (2) how it socially constructs the involved target groups; (3) what causal theory it assumes or communicates to explain integration problems; and (4) what normative perspective it employs for interpreting the implications of migration for society at large (Scholten 2011). Subsequently, I confront this ideal type with evidence from Dutch policy discourses over the past decades to establish what elements of Dutch policies have actually been multicultural.

As an ideal type, multiculturalism is generally posited as the opposite of assimilationism, as it stresses cultural pluralism and a more culturally neutral, open form of citizenship (Koopmans and Statham 2000). However, an important point of convergence between assimilationism and multiculturalism lies in their focus on the nation state. In multiculturalist theory, the nation state is redefined in terms of the recognition of being a multiculturalist state (Vertovec 2001). Multiculturalism describes immigrant integration in terms of cultural diversity and the need for emancipation of groups of varying cultural backgrounds. Where adaptation involves finding commonalities between individuals in society, multiculturalism searches for compatibilities between groups and for tolerance of those facets of social life that groups do not have in common. Groups are socially constructed based on their cultural, ethnic, religious or racial traits, to name a few.

Political theorists Kymlicka (1995) and Parekh (2002) have argued that accommodation of cultural differences between groups may even require the diversification of social and political rights for distinct groups. The causal theory underlying multiculturalist thinking is that the only way to accommodate cultural pluralism is to recognize cultural diversity and to differentiate policies for particular cultural groups (Taylor and Gutman 1992). As an example, group-specific policies have to be developed in various spheres, including general policy spheres such as education and labour. Finally, multiculturalism contains a normative perspective that cultural diversity is a value in itself – a facet of the ongoing process of modernization – and that government interference with cultures should be limited (that is, tolerance should be the rule) as it will determine the identities of members of cultural groups.
The rise of multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s

Until well into the 1970s, a firm belief that the Netherlands was not and should not be a country of immigration voided the need for an immigrant integration policy. The migration that had taken place in the 1960s and 1970s was seen as an inadvertent consequence of economic and political developments, and most immigrants were expected to eventually return to their home countries. Policies developed in this period rarely corresponded to what has been described as a differentialist model (Koopmans and Statham 2005). So-called ‘two-track’ policies were developed: they implied that although migrants were to be active in the socio-economic sphere, in other respects they were to be differentiated from Dutch society. This approach was manifest in policy and political discourse, summarized in the slogan ‘integration with retention of identity’ (integriering met behoud van eigen identiteit).

Initially, this slogan referred only to the social and economic integration of migrants during their stay in the Netherlands. Migrant groups were not ‘named and framed’ as a single category but described in terms of their different foreign origins – Surinamese, Antilleans, Moluccans, foreign workers. Emphasis was placed on the fact that they were not from the Netherlands. A key premise of this policy was that policies aimed at permanent integration could hamper return to the home countries: to facilitate return migration, migrants would have to be able to preserve as well as possible their cultural identities and internal group structures.

This differentialist image of migrants’ position in Dutch society started to change in the late 1970s. A series of developments had occurred that challenged the prevailing policy beliefs: the oil crises of the 1970s that brought labour recruitment to a halt; the decolonization of Surinam in 1975 that caused large immigration flows; ethnic riots in Rotterdam and Schiedeman in 1972 and 1976; and a series of terrorist acts carried out during the 1970s by Moluccan migrants. Simultaneously, the emergence of several anti-immigrant parties in city councils in the early 1970s caused great concern. In response to these developments, various actors claimed a growing ‘tension between norm and fact’, of being or not being a country of immigration (Entzinger 1975). These developments revealed what can happen if government does not actively support the integration of immigrants who intend to settle permanently.

The first official immigrant integration policy in the Netherlands
was developed in the early 1980s with the draft Minorities Memorandum in 1981 and its final version in 1983. This new policy was based on the ‘assumption that ethnic minorities will remain permanently in the Netherlands [. . .] thereby distancing itself from the idea that their presence would have been of temporary order’. Migrants were also ‘named and framed’ as permanent settlers, or as ‘cultural’ or ‘ethnic minorities’ within Dutch society.

Assimilationism and differentialism as policies to manage diversity were explicitly rejected. Assimilationism would be at odds with the freedom of minorities to experience their own cultures, and differentialism would have served as an excuse for government not to create a policy on integration. This Ethnic Minorities Policy was a mixture of elements that match the multiculturalist ideal-type, together with elements from a more liberal-egalitarianist (or ‘universalist’) approach. On the one hand, policy discourse stressed ‘mutual adaptation’ in the context of the Netherlands as a ‘multi-ethnic’ or ‘multicultural’ society. On the other, this mutual adaptation not only involved social-cultural emancipation of minorities and measures to combat discrimination, but also enhanced the socio-economic participation of members of minorities. The mixture also reflected combining group and individualistic features in the official policy aim: ‘to achieve a society in which the members of minority groups that reside in the Netherlands can, each individually as well as group-wise, enjoy an equal position and full opportunities for development’.

The strong focus on ‘ethnic minorities’ in all policy documents since 1979 represents a more multiculturalist trait of the Ethnic Minorities Policy. Migrant groups were no longer categorized according to foreign origin but as permanent populations within Dutch society. The notion of ethnic minorities also introduced a common frame of reference for the migrant groups that had thus far been treated separately. Government, however, did not provide a definition of ‘ethnic minorities’ but instead selected a number of ‘minorities’ for which it felt a special and historic responsibility: Moluccans, Surinamese, Antilleans, foreign workers, gypsies, caravan dwellers and refugees.

A central premise of the Ethnic Minorities Policy was that social-cultural emancipation of minority groups would also favour socio-economic participation of individual members of these groups. For instance, it was believed that by maintaining group-specific facilities for Immigrant Minority Language and Culture classes, the
social-cultural emancipation of these groups could be furthered, expanding individual participation. Mother-tongue learning, according to this logic, would support identity development amongst minorities and would as such contribute to multicultural richness. In addition, the democratic voice of migrants would be strengthened by developing consultative structures between the national government and immigrant self-organizations. Thus, liberal-egalitarian features emerge in this emphasis on the accessibility of institutions and on proportionality governing socio-economic participation.

Finally, the Ethnic Minorities Policy expressed the vision that Dutch society at large had become a multi-ethnic or multicultural society, even though the word ‘multicultural’ is only used a few times in the 1983 Minorities Memorandum. This did not, however, involve strong cultural relativism; the slogan ‘integration with retention of identity’ was now abandoned, at least in official policy discourse, in favour of a more dynamic conception of immigrant cultures. This shift was also manifest in the stress on mutual adaptation. Because of the asymmetrical relationship between minorities and the majority, the integration of minorities would inevitably require some degree of adaptation to Dutch society. This followed ‘When the values and norms that minorities embrace in their culture of origin clash with the established norms of our own plural society, considered fundamental to Dutch society’.6

The liberal turn in Dutch immigrant integration policies

Rarely recognized by contemporary Dutch politicians is the fact that the Ethnic Minorities Policy of the 1980s changed substantively long before 2001. Already in the late 1980s, the Dutch government began to express concerns about progress in integration, especially in material domains such as housing, education and labour.7 A government-commissioned report by the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR 1989) called for a more socially, economically and individually focused policy approach. It argued that ‘the institutionalization of ethnic pluralism must not be regarded as an independent policy objective’ (ibid.: 61), and that labelling migrant groups in terms of an accumulation of socio-economic deprivation and social-cultural differences would have made minorities too dependent on the state (ibid.: 9).

Furthermore, in 1991–2 the climate changed significantly when the issue of immigrant integration emerged on the political agenda.
The leader of the main opposition party in this period, Frits Bolkestein of the Liberal Party, triggered a first broad national debate in politics and the media when he called for a stricter and more ‘courageous’ approach toward immigrant integration that would have to be founded on the basic principles of a liberal society, such as the separation of church and state, freedom of expression, tolerance and non-discrimination. It is here, according to Bolkestein, that ‘the multicultural society meets its limits, that is, when above-mentioned political principles come into play’. An important policy shift took place in the years following the 1989 WRR report and the 1991 National Minorities Debate. This involved an important change in policy discourse from the ‘Minorities Policy’ to the ‘Integration Policy’, and the emergence of the ‘citizenship’ concept. The focus on integration instead of emancipation (Fermin 1997: 211) had put immigrant integration into the framework of participation in central societal institutions (education, labour, welfare state, politics). Instead of group emancipation, individual immigrants now became the unit of integration into Dutch society. This more liberal-egalitarianist (or universalist) character of the Integration Policy is best illustrated by the social categorization of migrants as ‘citizens’. The ‘primary goal’ was formulated as ‘real active citizenship of persons from ethnic minorities’. This means that the rights as well as the duties of members of minorities became more central as they were reframed as citizens.

The view of the Netherlands as a multi-ethnic or multicultural society now moved into the background. Government no longer regarded the active promotion of such a society as integral to public policy. This perspective was articulated in terms of ‘the changing role of the government’, and recognition that ‘more parties than just government are responsible for the dilemmas of the multicultural society’. Instead, government policy was to be restricted to the sphere of socio-economic participation, also because of rising concerns about the viability of the welfare state given the scale of immigration. ‘A deteriorated economic climate and the permanent immigration of new immigrants and too little attention for the problems of native citizens in a position of socio-economic deprivation has made mutual adaptation and the support for an integration policy less obvious’.
The assimilationist turn in Dutch policies

The focus of government policy shifted significantly once more with the turn of the millennium. In 2000, a second national minorities debate emerged – the so-called Scheffer debate – which focused attention on an alleged ‘multicultural tragedy’. A series of events widely discussed in Dutch politics and the media drew further attention to the supposed ‘clash of civilizations’. This included violence that involved immigrants, as well as moral events that focused attention on the dilemmas of cultural and religious diversity: imams made radical statements about homosexuals, or refused to cooperate with the female Minister for Integration. Especially path-breaking was ‘the long year of 2002’ when the populist politician Pim Fortuyn made immigrant integration the centre of public and political attention. He called for ‘zero-immigration’ as the Netherlands was ‘full’, and called for a ‘cold war against Islam’, dismissing Islam as ‘an idiotic culture’. While campaigning in the 2002 parliamentary elections, Fortuyn was assassinated by an animal rights activist on the very day that polls indicated his party would come out first in the elections.

The ‘long year of 2002’ set the stage for a third turning point in Dutch immigrant integration policies. In 2003 a parliamentary investigative committee was established to examine why the integration policy had been so unsuccessful. In addition, the centre-right governments from 2002 on carried through strong political leadership in the domain of immigrant integration. In particular the Minister of Immigration and Integration from 2002 to 2007, Rita Verdonk, was a key policy entrepreneur for a more assimilationist policy approach. In one of her first policy memoranda, Minister Verdonk described the contours of a so-called ‘Integration Policy New Style’. Whereas the Integration Policy had focused primarily on socio-economic participation, the emphasis now shifted towards the social and cultural distance between minorities and Dutch society.

In order to support ‘the continuity of society’, concern was directed at bridging differences rather than ‘the cultivation of their own cultural identities’. Cultural differences were now framed as problematic cultural distances. It was argued that ‘too large a proportion of minority groups live at too great a distance from Dutch society’. In this context, the goal became to ‘diminish the distance between minorities and the native population in social, cultural and economic respects’.
Under this new policy, all newcomers as well as long-term resident migrants – so-called ‘oldcomers’ – were to be target groups of the integration policy. All newcomers were obliged to follow ‘civic integration programmes’ after their arrival in the Netherlands. Citizenship remained the primary means for categorizing minorities, but the focus shifted from ‘active’ citizenship to ‘common’ or ‘shared’ citizenship, with a more assimilationist meaning. Common citizenship involves a sort of citizenship based on common values and norms; it involves ‘speaking Dutch and complying with basic Dutch norms, [such as] doing your best to support yourself and observing laws and regulations’. It brings with it a willingness to ‘take care of the social environment, respect the physical integrity of others, including within marriage, accept everyone’s right to express their opinion, accept the sexual preferences of others and the equality of man and woman’. Also, it retains some of its liberal-egalitarian premises that citizens are individually responsible for their participation in society.

Rather than social-cultural emancipation being a condition for socio-economic participation (as in the Minorities Policy) or socio-economic participation being a condition for social-cultural emancipation (as in the Integration Policy), the new causal story was that social-cultural differences could form an obstacle to socio-economic participation. Diminishing the social and cultural distance between migrants and natives would support the participation of migrants in society and would eliminate problems such as criminality and rising social tensions in neighbourhoods with high concentrations of immigrants. Just as with the Integration Policy, the individual migrant remained the main unit of analysis. Much would depend on the efforts made by immigrants themselves.\textsuperscript{18}

This ‘assimilationist turn’ in Dutch integration policies seemed to be on its way back with the new government coming to power in 2006. Rather than ‘Integration Policy New Style’, immigrant integration now became connected to Urban Policy and Neighbourhood Policies, that is, removed from the more symbolic facets of national integration policies and issues of national identity. However, the centre-right coalition led by Prime Minister Rutte that came to power in 2010 returned discursively to the ideas of assimilation, national unity and ‘Dutchness’. It did not actually pursue corresponding policies in these areas, predictably given the political composition of this coalition (with key support for it extended by the anti-immigrant Freedom Party).
Indeed, this government seemed reticent to pursue integration policies and preferred to focus on limiting immigration. For instance, pre- and post-admission integration tests now create a nexus between migration and integration, and integration into society is primarily considered the individual responsibility of migrants. In short, government policies seem to have drifted further away from a multicultural ‘model’ with which Dutch policies have been and sometimes continue to be associated.

Accordingly, this analysis of Dutch policy discourse reveals that rather than there being one Dutch multicultural model, Dutch integration policies have been characterized by the rise and fall of various ‘models’. They are characterized by strong discontinuity over the past four decades (see the summary in Figure 5.1); at least once every decade or so, a new policy ‘model’ has emerged while another one is declared a ‘failure.’ Furthermore, this discontinuity also seems to involve strong inconsistencies in policies conducted in various periods, especially on the social-cultural dimension (see Figure 5.1; also Duyvendak and Scholten 2011). Whereas the Ethnic Minorities Policy of the 1980s clearly assumed a positive relationship between socio-cultural emancipation and integration, this relationship is nowadays framed more negatively. Under Integration Policy New Style, socio-cultural distinctiveness is assumed to be primarily an obstacle to integration.

**Deconstructing the Dutch multicultural model**

Policy is not the only sphere in which multiculturalism can be situated. This section looks at multiculturalism in several other spheres, including political and media discourses (which are distinguishable from formal policy discourses), academic discourses and actual everyday policy practices in which formal policies are often not only implemented but also tend to be translated to a ‘street-bureaucrat’ level.

**The multicultural model as a counter-discourse in media and politics**

The image of a Dutch multicultural model appears to have been most persistent in political and media discourses. Though the Ethnic Minorities Policy of the 1980s contained many elements that resembled the multiculturalist ideal type as deduced from the migration
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<td>Social classification</td>
<td>Immigrant groups defined by national origin and framed as temporary guests</td>
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<td>Social-cultural differences as obstacle to integration</td>
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<td>Normative perspective</td>
<td>The Netherlands should not be a country of immigration</td>
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<td>Civic participation in a de facto multicultural society</td>
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**Figure 5.1** Policy frames in Dutch immigrant integration policy since the 1970s (adapted from Scholten 2011)
literature, in formal policy documents little reference was made to ‘multiculturalism’. In contrast, political and media discourses used the concept of ‘multiculturalism’ more frequently. It seems that the image of Dutch multiculturalism originates more from these broader public discourses than from actual policy discourses.

Why did this image remain so powerful even after multiculturalism was largely removed from formal policies? An important factor was the role of the Dutch multicultural model as a counter-discourse. Counter-discourses can play an important role in the formation of discursive coalitions by articulating a new mode of discourse. Such counter-discourse then involves a definition (often ex-post) of a specific problem area, or a specific policy approach, that must convince actors not to adopt that definition or approach.

Focusing on the early 1990s, Dutch social scientist Baukje Prins (1997) observed how the multiculturalist elements of Dutch policies were over-emphasized in order to signal the need for a different approach (and tone) toward immigrant integration. In that period, a different ‘tone’ was set in discourses on immigrant integration, not just with studies like the 1989 WRR report but also in political discourse making up the first National Minorities Debate in 1991 and 1992. It was triggered by public statements from opposition leader Frederik Bolkestein who was sceptical about the relationship between Islam and integration. He described the rise of a new mode of discourse, which he defined as ‘new realism’. New realist discourses sought to address immigrant integration problems ‘head on’, and called upon immigrants to live up to their civic responsibilities.

This new realist discourse established multiculturalism as a counter-discourse, for instance by associating multiculturalism with political correctness, taboos and being ‘too soft’ on migrants. This discourse played an important role in the policy shift from the Ethnic Minorities Policy to the (more liberal-egalitarian) Integration Policy of the 1990s. However, the discourse of a Dutch multicultural model persisted well beyond the early 1990s. Indeed, a defining moment ushering in more recent policy changes was the second national minorities debate triggered in 2000 by Paul Scheffer’s article entitled ‘The Multicultural Tragedy’. In this article, the author referred to Dutch multicultural policies as being responsible for the failure to address pressing integration problems, such as weakening cohesion, an eroding sense of national belonging and criminality. He constructed an image of a ‘multicultural house of cards’ that would now be collapsing. Populist politicians like Fortuyn and Wilders also
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depicted Dutch policies as being too multiculturalist. Wilders coined the term ‘multiculti-nonsense’, and sought to pin the multicultural label on his opponents.

A key argument used by the critics of multiculturalism has been that under its banner the ‘voice on the street’ has been ignored. Immigrant integration became a powerful issue for populist politicians to use against the established political elite: it came to symbolize the technocratic and elitist character of the consensual Dutch type of policymaking.

In response to the steady rise in support for these populist parties in national elections since 2002, the incumbent government’s immigrant integration policies became more responsive to public opinion. Duyvendak et al. (2004: 201) cited an emergent ‘articulation logic’ in Dutch politics: politics was engaged in naming the problems and feelings of society and articulating them so as to ensure that the ‘voice on the street’ was taken seriously. Prins described this process as a ‘hyperrealism’ in which politics aims to eradicate taboos and speak freely about problems of integration, but ‘in which the courage of speaking freely about specific problems and solutions became simply the courage to speak freely in itself’ (Prins 2002: 252). Hyperrealism wished to replace the old ‘political correctness’ with a new political correctness where ‘saying something positive about the integration of immigrants would be naïve and would mean ignoring the problems’.19

Political and media discourses on immigrant integration have, therefore, been characterized by multiplicity. Beyond the dominant discourse or ‘model’ of the 1980s, there are now various discourses competing for political and media attention. Dutch mass communications scholar Rens Vliegenthart has delved deeper into this multiplicity of frames, in the spheres of both media and politics (Vliegenthart 2007; see also Roggeband and Vliegenthart 2007). His analysis shows that already in the 1990s, the multicultural frame was just one among several, including one that stressed emancipation of migrants (in particular migrant women); another that underscored the need for limiting migration; a frame that viewed migrants as victims; and one that focused primarily on Islam as a threat to Dutch society (ibid.: 13).

It is noteworthy that in media debates, the ‘Islam as a threat’ frame came into use much earlier than it did in parliamentary debate (ibid.: 21). Roggeband and Vliegenthart explained this delayed effect by pointing to the formation of more centre-right governments after
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2002 (though one was briefly in coalition with the Labour party, which maintained a silence on issues relating to immigrant integration) (ibid.: 14). Also remarkable is that the multiculturalist frame today appears more frequently in both parliamentary and media debates than it did a decade ago. This lends support to the thesis that the multicultural 'model' of integration is becoming more important as a counter-discourse against which new policy developments are to be juxtaposed.

THE MULTICULTURAL MODEL IN ACADEMIC DISCOURSE

The idea of a Dutch multicultural model has also persisted in academic discourse. Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, social scientists played a key role in formulating the Ethnic Minorities Policy. Rath (2001) described the strong technocratic symbiosis on the national level between researchers and policymakers. When minority policy was challenged in the late 1980s and early 1990s, established researchers, particularly from the strategically positioned Advisory Committee on Minorities Research (ACOM), denounced such challenges as unscientific and potentially damaging to migrants. However, as with political discourses, the idea of a Dutch multicultural model persisted well beyond this period. For example, a study by Sniderman and Hagendoorn (2007), *When Ways of Life Collide: Multiculturalism and its Discontents in the Netherlands*, still described the Dutch approach in terms of a multiculturalist model. The authors argued that the labelling of collective identities inadvertently deepened social-cultural cleavages in society. In addition, they rooted the Dutch approach in the history of pillarization: ‘The Netherlands has always been a country of minorities thanks to the power of religion to divide as well as unite’ (2007: 13). This pillarist legacy was tenacious because the ‘collective trauma of World War II where the Dutch failed to resist the massive deportation of Jews would have contributed to the fact that immigrant minorities have been seen in the light of the Holocaust [. . .] or that critical views of immigrants are labelled racist and xenophobic’. Accordingly, well after the demise of multiculturalism in formal policy discourses, academics still invoked it, often to blame multiculturalist policies for the alleged failure of immigrant integration in the Netherlands. Dutch sociologist Ruud Koopmans (2006: 5) also drew attention to the discontents of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. He too directly linked Dutch multiculturalism to pillarism and argued
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that pillarist policies were unsuitable for application to immigrant integration.

These scholars assumed a direct link between pillarism, Ethnic Minorities Policies and integration policies. However, Maussen (2009) and Duyvendak and Scholten (2011) *inter alia* have called into question the assumed direct link between minorities policies and the history of pillarization. First of all, Dutch society had been de-pillarizing in many sectors as early as the 1960s and particularly in the 1970s. Pillarization was considered as belonging to the past. Yet Dutch governments responded to the arrival of newcomers with what Vink (2007) has called a ‘pillarization reflex’: Dutch policy makers resorted to the traditional frame of pillarization for providing meaning to the new issue of immigrant integration.

Others have contended that it was not so much integration policy itself that was inspired by pillarization (Maussen 2009). Rather, it was the influence of more generic institutions that were still to some extent pillarized, such as the Dutch tradition of state-sponsored special (religious) education, a pillarized broadcasting system and a health service. Integration policy itself has never explicitly constructed minority groups as pillars. Minorities never achieved the level of organization (and separation) that national minorities had achieved in the early twentieth century. According to Rath et al. (1999: 59): ‘in terms of institutional arrangements, there is no question of an Islamic pillar in the Netherlands, or at least one that is in any way comparable to the Roman Catholic or Protestant pillars in the past’. Indeed, Duyvendak and Scholten (2009) have emphasized how neither pillarization nor multiculturalism were ever embraced as normative ideals; multiculturalist assertions refer only in a descriptive way to an increase of diversity in society.

MULTICULTURAL PATH-DEPENDENCY IN POLICY PRACTICES

A final key argument found in Dutch debates on multiculturalism today is that even though multiculturalism has been abandoned in formal policies, it has survived in policy practices, especially at the local level. Beyond the Dutch case, a thesis has emerged in migration studies that local policies are generally more accommodative towards ethnic differences and group-specific measures than national policies. Local opportunity structures are more open for migrant groups than national opportunity structures, for example, because policymaking takes place primarily ‘behind closed doors’ (Guiraudon 1997),

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relatively insulated from broader (national) public and political debates. It is also in greater proximity to local governments and local migrant organizations.

Given the rise of assimilationist or citizenship-oriented (‘colour-blind’) policies throughout Europe, De Zwart (2005) drew attention to replacement strategies on the local level. Traditional target group constructions and group-specific policies that characterized earlier (multiculturalist) policies are formally abandoned, but they re-emerge in actual policy practices where the selection of formal target groups is carried out through other means with the same result – the same groups are targeted without being mentioned explicitly. For instance, the shift in Dutch policies from integration policies to urban or neighbourhood policies are interpreted as such replacement policies since the selected neighbourhoods are generally populated by the same target groups as before. Furthermore, various scholars (Poppelaars and Scholten 2008; Vermeulen and Stotijn 2010; Uitermark 2010) found that many local governments, in spite of their formal colour-blind discourses, still tend to cooperate with migrant organizations, often for pragmatic reasons.

Koopmans, therefore, referred to the strong tendency to path-dependency in Dutch integration policies at the local level, as well as to many change-resistant policy measures on the national level. Although formal policy as well as public discourse appear to have changed, Koopmans argued that in their actual way of dealing with ethno-cultural diversity the Dutch have remained accommodative: ‘Outside the limited world of op-eds in highbrow newspapers, the relation between Dutch society and its immigrants is still firmly rooted in its tradition of pillarization’ (2007: 4). Indeed, there seem to be many instances of pragmatic accommodation on the local level in cities such as Amsterdam and Rotterdam. De Zwart and Poppelaars (2007) found that Amsterdam’s city government as well as many district governments continued to cooperate with migrant organizations or to accommodate ethno-cultural differences for various pragmatic reasons. For street-level bureaucrats, cooperation with these groups was a primary way of staying in touch with policy target groups, gaining information about them and eliciting their assistance. Similarly, Vermeulen and Stotijn (2010) found that local policies aimed at reducing unemployment amongst immigrant youth still took the ethno-cultural factor into account in street-level bureaucratic processes.

For Uitermark and his co-authors (2005), accordingly, whereas
Amsterdam’s diversity policy was post-multiculturalist in seeking to negate ethnic differences, paradoxically the ethnic factor continued to play a central role in local political discourse. Social problems such as criminality, radicalization, social isolation, lack of respect for women’s rights and school dropout rates, are often directly associated with specific migrant groups. Amsterdam alderman Rob Oudkerk was unwittingly caught by a TV camera in 2002 complaining he was fed up with the problems of *kut-marokkaanen* (a difficult-to-translate insult to Moroccans along the lines of ‘damned Moroccans’). Or, in response to migrant delinquency and ‘street-terror’ linked to Moroccan youth, a Moroccan neighbourhood fathers’ project was conceived under which Moroccan fathers would patrol the streets to enforce control of Moroccan youngsters. The city of Rotterdam has adopted more assimilationist policies which are not directed at specific groups, but it does associate social problems with specific groups: ‘the colour is not the problem, but the problem has a colour’ (Uitermark and Duyvendak 2008).

Such policies should not be mistaken for normatively driven multiculturalist policies. Instead, Poppelaars and Scholten (2008) argue, based primarily on the Rotterdam case, that these measures are meant to address concrete integration problems that local governments face. They are forms of coping with problems pragmatically, especially by street-level bureaucrats, rather than instances of group accommodation. In such pragmatic problem-coping practices, the need to acquire information as well as cooperation from members of immigrant groups played an important role, and adopting bureaucratic routines from past policies provide elaborate networks of contacts with migrant organizations.

**Conclusions: implications of the rise and fall of the Dutch cultural model**

This chapter has exposed the myth of the famous, or infamous, Dutch multicultural model, in at least two different ways. First, it has shown that Dutch policies have been dynamic and fluid over the past four decades. Rather than being characterized by a singular, consistent and coherent national multicultural model, a new policy discourse has emerged about once in every decade. Some scholars even question whether there has been a multicultural model at all. Besides this national-level pattern, some experts have pointed at resilient multiculturalist practices existing on the local level. Indeed,
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path-dependency seems to involve policy routines that, in spite of formal policy changes on the national level, still persist in local policy practices, in particular through the pragmatic accommodation of ethnic differences and cooperation with migrant organizations. These practices cannot simply be regarded as consequences of multiculturalist policy beliefs: instead of being normatively driven, they are shaped more by routines and pragmatic concerns produced by reaching out to relevant target groups.

The second mythic aspect of Dutch multiculturalism is exposed by distinguishing multiculturalist discourse that has persisted over the past decades (though increasingly the term ‘multiculturalism’ has become politically incorrect) from the multiculturalist counter-discourse that is mobilized primarily by the critics and opponents of multiculturalism. This counter-discourse is employed to juxtapose the new, more assimilationist policy discourse with the so-called Dutch multicultural past or, as Scheffer put it, ‘multicultural tragedy’. This multiculturalist counter-discourse seems primarily an ex-post construction of Dutch policies. Perhaps more importantly, counter-discourse may explain why the image of a single Dutch multicultural model persists.

What are the implications of the rise and fall of multiculturalism in the Netherlands, both for immigrant integration and for Dutch politics and society? First, various scholars (Prins 2002: Entzinger 2010) have drawn attention to the performative effects of the tougher tone on immigrant integration and of rejection of multiculturalism on the integration trajectories of individual migrants. On the one hand, public attitudes toward the presence of migrants in Dutch society have worsened since the turn of the millennium (Gijsberts and Lubbers 2009: 284). Natives have become more negative towards the presence of migrants, in particular in social-cultural and religious terms, and they feel more threatened by their presence. On the other hand, migrants feel less accepted (ibid.: 285), and their subjective perception of their degree of integration has also declined (Entzinger 2010). The tough tone on immigrant integration seems to have contributed to self-perceptions of less integration.

This performative effect has contributed to what has been described as ‘the integration paradox’ (Entzinger 2010). The subjective self-perception of degree of integration has been declining even as, at the same time, integration has deepened on a number of ‘objective’ indicators. Thus, Duyvendak et al. (2004) concluded that the position of migrants improved significantly in the sphere
of education, which is considered a strong predictor of successful integration for this and subsequent generations. In terms of labour market participation, language proficiency and housing, signs of progress can be found. However, the culturalization of discourses on immigrant integration, in terms of both multiculturalism and assimilationism, has diverted attention away from indicators of integration successes.

A second consequence of the changed status of Dutch multiculturalism lies in the important consequences it has had for developments in Dutch society and politics at large, especially after 9/11 and major events in the Netherlands. The rise of the populist parties of Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders reflected how immigrant integration had become one of the most salient political topics of the time. Populists turned immigrant integration into a key symbol to evoke not just anti-immigrant sentiments but also broader public resentment against the technocratic and elitist policymaking style of Dutch national politics. Immigrant integration policies became a symbol for how the voice on the street had been ignored.

In response to the populist challenge, Dutch politicians have developed an exceptionally broad consensus that a new approach to immigrant integration is required. It reflects Duyvendak et al.’s (2004) notion of the ‘articulation function’ of Dutch politics in which the articulation of public sentiments concerning multiculturalism and immigration plays a central role in government policymaking. Some writers believe that the logic of immigrant integration policymaking became increasingly divorced from the actual concerns and objective indicators of integration (Scholten 2011), or that immigrant integration was increasingly transformed into an issue of symbolic politics (Entzinger 2003). These arguments may explain the paradox regarding why integration policies are broadly discarded as a failure at the same time as many indicators are showing that integration is progressing slowly but steadily.

Notes

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5. Ibid.: 12.
17. Ibid.: 7.

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