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1979-2004: Developments in Dutch Integration- and  
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Selbstgenügsamkeit 1979-2004: Entwicklungen in der  
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Leen d'Haenens /Joyce Koeman

## **From Freedom of Obligation to Self-Sufficiency**

**1979-2004: Developments in Dutch  
Integration- and Media Policy**

## **Von der Freiheit der Verpflichtung zur Selbstgenügsamkeit**

**1979-2004: Entwicklungen in der  
Niederländischen Integrations- und  
Medienpolitik**

### **Abstract**

This article provides an overview of the current integration policy of the Dutch government based on recent developments during the last three decades. In Dutch integration policy a number of important shifts in emphasis occurred which could be attributed to a social shift to the right and a general toughening of the social climate. Hence the freedom from obligation of the integration policy of the early 1980s has made way for key words like “self-sufficiency” and “personal responsibility” in the 1990s. Furthermore the relationship between the media and government will be looked at more closely and their responsibilities regarding integration will be highlighted. The socio-economic and socio-cultural participation of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands is examined.

In the government's media and cultural policy, one is immediately struck by the continuing and unsurprising focus of attention on the “old” media (radio, TV and print media). The emphasis is explicitly on television and the public broadcasting service. More than other media channels, public broadcasting services on radio and TV are expected to have an eye for the different needs and preferences of the public, without structurally excluding any group. Nevertheless, the Dutch print and broadcast media have hardly managed to chart the need for and use of the media by ethnic minorities and therefore have failed in their function as a meeting place. Consequently, ethnic minorities do not recognise themselves sufficiently in the Dutch media: they do not experience the negative one-sided image they perceive as being presented in the media as a proper reflection of Dutch multicultural society. The Dutch government also supports various projects for the benefit of ethnic minorities and ICT even though the budgets involved are limited.

*Dieser Artikel gibt einen Überblick über die gegenwärtige Integrationspolitik der niederländischen Regierung basierend auf jüngsten Entwicklungen in den vergangenen drei Jahrzehnten. In der niederländischen Integrationspolitik haben sich eine Reihe von wichtigen Verschiebungen in der Gewichtung ergeben, die einer sozialen Verlagerung nach rechts und einer generellen Verhärtung des sozialen Klimas zugeschrieben werden können. Daher hat die Freiheit der Verpflichung in der Integrationspolitik der frühen 1980er Jahre Schlüsselbegriffen wie „Selbstgenügsamkeit“ und „persönliche Verantwortung“ in den 1990er Jahren Platz gemacht. Weiterhin wird die Beziehung zwischen den Medien und der Regierung im Detail betrachtet und ihre Verantwortlichkeiten in Bezug auf Integration herausgestellt. Die sozioökonomische und soziokulturelle Teilnahme ethnischer Minderheiten in den Niederlanden wird untersucht.*

*In der Medien- und Kulturpolitik der Regierung ist der anhaltende und nicht überraschende Fokus der Aufmerksamkeit auf den „alten“ Medien (Radio, Fernsehen und Print) augenfällig. Der Schwerpunkt liegt insbesondere auf den Bereichen Fernsehen und den öffentlichen Rundfunkdiensten. Mehr als von anderen Kanälen wird von den öffentlichen Radio- und Fernsehsendern erwartet, dass sie die verschiedenen Bedürfnisse und Vorlieben der Bevölkerung im Blick haben, ohne eine Gruppe strukturell auszuschließen. Dennoch ist es den niederländischen Print- und Rundfunkmedien kaum gelungen, die Bedürfnisse und Mediennutzung ethnischer Minderheiten auszuwerten; sie haben daher ihre Funktion als ein Treffpunkt verfehlt. Folglich erkennen ethnische Minderheiten sich nicht in ausreichendem Maße in den niederländischen Medien wieder: Das negative, einseitige Bild, das ihnen dort präsentiert wird, erleben sie nicht als angemessene Reflektion der niederländischen multikulturellen Gesellschaft. Die niederländische Regierung unterstützt außerdem verschiedene Projekte zu Gunsten ethnischer Minderheiten und ICT, jedoch die finanziellen Mittel hierfür sind begrenzt.*

\* \* \*

## **1 “New” Citizens, New Media and New Policy?**

This article examines the Dutch government's policy regarding increasing social pluriformity. This is a comprehensive subject which includes an overview of the current integration policy of the Dutch government based on recent historical developments as well as focuses on the Dutch government's media- and cultural policy for ethnic minorities both as media content and as media users.

A good example in this context is certainly the fact that the Netherlands only admitted to being an immigration society in 1979. It was only from this time that the Dutch government implemented an active immigration policy (later known as integration policy). This policy will probably continue to be a current focal point on political and public

agendas since the contribution by and diversity of immigrants in Dutch society will only increase over the next decade (CBS 2003).

Continuing immigration is only one of many developments facing Dutch society. Developments within the policy have also been inspired by globalisation and economic recession. Nowadays a government's responsibility is no longer limited to the national territory but also extends far beyond it; moreover, its citizens are gradually widening their horizons and becoming "world citizens". This has made the relationship between government and citizen more complex, and it becomes even more so during periods of economic recession and cutbacks.

Moreover, the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September, and more recently those of 11<sup>th</sup> March, have had a detrimental effect on citizens' level of tolerance. Tolerance towards Islam has greatly diminished in western society. Islam is readily associated with the repression of women, lack of separation between church and state, lack of democratic values, and old-fashioned morals and customs. Seen from this perspective, western society is regarded as the "civilised" norm, and Muslims need to adapt to "western" culture (Rijkschroeff/Duyvendak/Pels 2003).

The word "integration" can be interpreted in many ways, but it is unthinkable without the following two components: the acknowledgement of diversity and the pursuit of equality. In Dutch integration policy we see a number of important shifts in emphasis which could be attributed to a social shift to the right and a general toughening of the social climate. For instance, we can see that the freedom from obligation of the integration policy of the early 1980s has made way for key words like "self-sufficiency" and "personal responsibility" in the 1990s.

Of course we have no intention of describing all these complex social developments, as it would be impossible to do so within the scope of this article and it does not fit in with our objectives. We will merely use some aspects of the complexity of society and focus most of our attention on the triangle formed by government, ethnic minorities and the media. To this end we shall look for developments in integration- and media policies. Please note that we shall only be looking at legal immigrants in the Netherlands. Although asylum seekers, refugees and "illegal immigrants" do fall under the government's integration policy, we have decided not to include these groups here.

The welfare state forms the context of the policy implemented in the Netherlands and is therefore relevant here, to put integration policy into its proper perspective. The media (old and new) may form an important link in the relationship between citizens and the government. Politi-

cal and public debates influence each other through the media which, in this respect, can be seen as “agenda-setters”. The media prescribe which topics politicians and the public consider important and largely determine public opinion on these subjects. Moreover, it is also the media that bring the “country of origin” into the immigrant’s living room via satellite dish, the airwaves or the Internet. Consequently, within the scope of this article we shall also examine the relationship between the media and government more closely and highlight their responsibilities regarding integration.

## **2 Integration Policy in the Netherlands in a Recent Historical Perspective**

### **2.1 Dutch Integration Policy 1979-2004**

After the Second World War the need to regulate the residence of immigrants became stronger. At that time the welfare state was only responsible for its “own” citizens, but the amalgamation of administration and territory and the dominating role of the government in all kinds of services made it impossible to avoid accepting responsibility for the immigrants in the country. More or less permanent (legal) immigrants were considered increasingly as people with rights. They did not have all political rights, but they did have civil and social rights. Their rights and claims were extended (medical care could not be denied to anyone) for ideological reasons and in part due to pragmatic considerations: indeed the government had to maintain legitimacy for “non-Dutch citizens”. Over time, facilities like education, housing and healthcare were available to anyone who had settled in the country (Van Amersfoort 2001).

“1977 was a pivotal year for the Netherlands. There were a few attacks by the Moluccans, which was a signal for a number of political parties to start implementing a real minorities policy. Added to this was the fact that the Dutch Liberals and the Christian Democrats were doing everything possible to steal the far right’s thunder. The notion of integration became a focal point in discussions. The advantage here was that many different political actors could include this concept in their own discourse without having to deny their former ideas. The left could keep on about the importance of democratic principles, i.e. the right to vote, and the right could continue to state that a certain amount of political uniformity or assimilation was essential, in addition to which the local right to vote would however serve as a means of acculturation.” Jacobs (2001)

Due to increasing numbers of immigrants and in the light of the eventual recognition of the Netherlands as an immigration country, it was not until 1979 that the Dutch government realized the need for a structural integration policy. This is why our overview of integration policy starts at this point. According to the Council for Social Development (RMO 1998), the policy at that time was directed at the integration of immigrants already living in the Netherlands. A restrictive admission policy was implemented at the same time (a visa became compulsory for Surinamese, Moroccans and Turks). In the 1980s the aim was more specifically to remove economic discrimination and combat discrimination against immigrants. During the 1990s, immigration policy reappeared on the agenda due to an increase in the number of asylum seekers. In view of the high rate of unemployment among immigrants, the minorities policy was considered to be unsuccessful. (Language) teaching and naturalisation were ascribed a key position to eliminate the backlog. The cabinet at the time put the immigrants' and the native citizens' own responsibility first. The unity of society was pursued according to so-called "shared citizen-ship". Here the central issue was not the differences between the native citizens and the immigrants but the similarities (Lower House, 2003).

1979	– Advisory Committee on Research into Minorities (ACOM) and the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR) publish the first policy advice regarding immigrants in the Netherlands. The Netherlands are recognised as an immigration country.
1983	– Minority report, which strives for "integration with the preservation of identity".
1983-1989	– Results are achieved in the fight against discrimination against immigrants by improving their legal position. Possibilities include granting an active and passive right to vote, as well as attaching stricter penalties to discrimination and making naturalisation easier.
1989	– WRR-report on "Immigrant policy". The immigrants' individual responsibilities and obligations play a central role in this report. The experience and development of one's own culture is one's own responsibility, the government's task is to limit marginalisation with regard to work and education, and to organise centres for newcomers.
1994	– "Contours Report on Integration Policy for Ethnic Minorities". A change of course based on academic recommendations. A broadening of the social and political discussion due to rapid growth of immigration. – Proposal to implement new naturalisation pathways for newcomers based on the recommendations of the "Debate on Minorities subsequent to Policy" (Van der Zwan/Entzinger, 1994).

1997	– “Annual report on integration policy for ethnic minorities 1997”. Here the government states its plan to introduce greater differentiation in the execution of the policy by paying more attention to group-oriented factors.
1998	– Newcomers Integration Act (WIN) and Employment of Minorities Promotion Act (SAMEN) are implemented.
1999	– Switch from minority policy to diversity policy in the four major cities. (Utrecht, Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam). – Policy Document on Culture in which a request is made for the establishment of a promotion fund for cultural diversity.
2000	– Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations (BZK) orders research to be done in the form of an annual Integration Monitor.
2001	– Continuation of the SAMEN Act 2001-2003 on the recommendation of the Social and Economic Council (SER).
2003	– The current viewpoints of Minister Verdonk’s cabinet are aimed at shared citizenship and individual responsibility.
2004	– SAMEN Act abolished. Integration report by the Blok Committee.

The Verwey-Jonker Institute mentions four shifts of emphasis in the history of Dutch integration policy (Keune/Van Horssen 2002). First of all, the Institute determines a shift from the curative policy of the 1980s to the preventive policy of the 1990s. Whereas the government first gave priority to eliminating immigrants’ disadvantages, it later gave greater priority to stopping disadvantages arising. Consequently, support for the development of identity and group emancipation also disappeared after the second half of the 1980s. Secondly, the government was concentrating on a more cohesive policy, with proposals for cooperation between policy sectors, various levels of government and ministers themselves. Thirdly, they notice a decentralisation of government. In 1991 the desired relationships between the various departments were characterised by the term “complementary responsibility”. In 1994 this took shape in a policy model in the Social Welfare Act, where local authorities were responsible for the executive work, the county councils for support during the executive work, and the State for the national perspective. A fourth shift is to be found in the policy areas which were considered most important by the government. The government focused more and more on education and employment and associated sub-programs. This mainly yielded policy measures regarding pre-school and early childhood education, extramural activities during school periods, and support for parents (Keune/Van Horssen 2002).

At the end of 2003, The Verwey-Jonker Institute was strongly criticised because it was responsible for recommendations to the government regarding integration policies as well as investigating and reporting on

these very same policies later on. One of the Verwey-Jonker Institute's directors cast doubt on the objectivity of this report because of his political activities. The Blok Committee's integration report ("*Building Bridges*") in January 2004 also attracted a great deal of attention and criticism. The Verwey-Jonker Institute and the Blok Committee have both examined the Dutch government's integration policy from the 1970s onwards and both agree on a similar historic development; we have used the most relevant details (in the context of this article) in the box above. Most of the criticism of the Blok Committee's report was not directed at the objectivity of the researchers, but at the generality of the conclusions, which offer too little on which to base any concrete measures. The conclusion of the report "that the integration of many immigrants has been wholly or partly successful"<sup>1</sup>, has caused a great deal of discussion on the extent to which, and where the integration policy has been successful. The committee itself quotes the following conditions for successful integration:

- A knowledge of language such as to enable participation in society;
- Everyone must respect the values and norms established in the law;
- In the private domain there is room for differentiation and one's own interpretation within the framework of the law;
- Newcomers must be acquainted with the unwritten rules that make functioning in society easier;
- Newcomers are expected to be willing to integrate and Dutch society must make this integration possible.

Blok Committee (19<sup>th</sup> January 2004)

## 2.2 Concrete Measures by the Dutch Government

We can see that the freedom from obligation of integration policy during the early 1980s has made way for self-sufficiency and personal responsibility in the new millennium. As a central point in the integration policy "the preservation of one's identity" has now been replaced with "assimilation". This means that adaptation and personal responsibility are con-

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1 For (the presentation of) the Blok Committee's final report (in Dutch) go to: [[www.tweedekamer.nl/organisatie/voorlichting/commissies/eindrapport\\_integratiebeleid.jsp](http://www.tweedekamer.nl/organisatie/voorlichting/commissies/eindrapport_integratiebeleid.jsp)]



sidered more important to active citizenship than the preservation of one's own identity and culture. There is a growing emphasis on the independence and self-sufficiency of the individual. Government measures are aimed at equipping immigrants with the knowledge and skills that will promote their independence and self-sufficiency.

In concrete terms, this means that immigrants in the Netherlands will be confronted with the Newcomers Integration Act (WIN). Moreover, until the end of 2003 the Employment of Minorities Promotion Act (SAMEN Act 1998, formerly WBEAA) was one of the most important integration Acts. They are both closely associated with education and employment, but the SAMEN Act (1998) also indirectly promoted the presence of more "colour" in the media and consequently had more impact on the immigrants' cultural rights.

- The Newcomers Integration Act (WIN) became effective in 1998. The Act stipulates that every newcomer is obliged to report for a naturalisation check, which may enforce participation in a naturalisation programme. The programme includes Dutch language lessons, social familiarisation, and familiarisation with employment. Social support and pathway support are also part of the programme. After a maximum of one year, participants are tested on their degree of naturalisation (Verheggen/Spangenberg, 2001).
- The SAMEN Act (1998-2004) was meant to help individual enterprises enforce a multicultural staff policy and was therefore a part of the policy aimed at improving the position of 'new Dutch citizens' on the labour market. The SAMEN act made it compulsory for employers with enterprises that employed at least 35 people to maintain a separate staff registration and to draw up an annual report. With the staff registration it would be possible to establish to what extent there was proportional employment participation by ethnic minorities. In the annual report, the employer would also formulate measures for better proportional employment participation. The employees' representation or the Works Council judged the report. The SAMEN Act was supervised by the Labour Inspectorate (also see [www.wetsamen.nl](http://www.wetsamen.nl)).

The SAMEN Act was abolished on 31st December 2003, which meant it was no longer compulsory to present an annual report. However, the government wished to continue encouraging employers to base their staff policies on the diversity of the labour market and so published a brochure to this end in January about registration according to ethnicity; the Ministry of Social Services and Employment will also establish a national Centre for Diversity Management in mid-2004 (see [www.wetsamen.nl](http://www.wetsamen.nl)).

The government has received more requests than ever before to publish the results yielded by integration policy. Consequently, Roger van Boxtel, former Minister for Urban Policy and Integration of Ethnic Minorities, has decided to establish a new information system. It includes the integration monitor. The integration monitor (Martinez/Groeneveld/Kruisbergen 2002) deals with several items also found on the political agenda. The monitor only gauges integration based on immigrants' achievements favourable to the Dutch economic climate, such as language proficiency, study results, participation in the labour market and political participation. Apparently there is an improvement in the socio-economic dimension of integration. The difference between the ethnic minorities' poor education levels and that of the native population seems to be getting smaller. The position of ethnic minorities on the labour market has also improved, although the unemployment rate among ethnic minorities who are well educated as well as those with a low educational level is still three times higher compared to the native population.

### 2.3 Evaluation of Dutch Integration Policy

The settlement of Islamic immigrants in Western Europe is generally viewed with reserve due to the fact that they form part of a large-scale transnational tradition that is experienced as being competitive or even mildly hostile towards native cultural tradition(s). Despite this reserve there are a number of different ideological visions that play a determining role in the implementation of government policy on immigrants, including Muslims. Stephen Castles and Mark Miller (1993) have drawn up three models comprising the different ideologies. These models are the so-called *Exclusion Model*, the *Republican Model* and the *Multicultural Model*.

- In the *Exclusion Model* or *Model of Differential Exclusion*, the country is reserved in its acceptance of the presence of immigrants and does not see itself as an immigration country. In these countries there is only a very limited degree of naturalisation.
- In contrast to this we have the *Republican Model* or *Model of Inclusion*, also known as the model of assimilation. According to this model all persons who settle permanently in this country are allowed to acquire the nationality of the country and thus soon acquire rights that are equal to those of the indigenous population. There are different terms indicating this ideology. Inclusion cre-

ates the expectation that immigrants adapt to the culture of the majority. In this way the culture is ascribed a form of superiority.

- As in the preceding model, the *Multicultural/Pluralistic Model* is based on the admission of immigrants into society (inclusion), but with one fundamental difference: the immigrants are not expected to adapt to the dominant culture, but to promote the cultural diversity of the country. The immigrants are only expected to accept and adopt the political values of the country concerned.

(Castles/Miller 1993)

It is also due to the activities of the present Minister of Integration and Immigration (Verdonk) that one could describe Dutch integration policy as following Castles and Miller's inclusion model. This has not always been the case however and the shift in emphasis in integration policy indicates a fundamental change of ideological views. Before the 1970s the Netherlands did not consider itself an immigration society and was reserved in its admittance of immigrants; consequently its integration policy at that time resembled that of the exclusion model. However, when it became clear that the Netherlands was an immigration society this perspective was modified and became more multicultural. From the 1990s onwards Dutch society increasingly developed towards the inclusion model: the idea of multicultural diversity disappeared and adaptation became the new motto. Over the last thirty years the view of immigration in the Netherlands has developed from exclusion, through multiculturalism, to inclusion.

### **3 Participation as a Basic Principle of Integration**

Within the welfare state there are generally three categories of legislation concerning immigration. These rules are related to the arrival, stay and participation (in the labour market) (Van Amersfoort 2001). The rules for entering and staying in a country are not relevant to this article since our attention is directed towards the children of legal immigrants who have already settled in the Netherlands. Asylum seekers, refugees and illegal immigrants are relevant groups of immigrants however, and the government does bear responsibility for them.

“Within the concept of social integration a distinction is often made between structural and social-cultural participation, otherwise known as formal and informal participation. Structural participation involves the so-called hard sectors, such as labour, income,

education and housing. Socio-cultural participation concerns the participation of institutions such as clubs and political parties and the networks of which one is a member.” RMO (Council for Social Development 1998, 58-59)

Our interest is mainly directed at social-cultural participation since this also includes the sphere of activity of the media and is subject to relatively little attention elsewhere. Moreover, in periods of economic recession socio-cultural aspects tend to disappear into the background and economic aspects dominate the political and public agendas.

### **3.1 Formal Participation: Socio-Economic**

As participation in the job market is closely associated with the use of social security in welfare states, one of the most important concerns regarding ethnic minorities in Europe is their participation on the labour market (WRR 2001). Participation in employment is of crucial importance in the social constitutional state (particularly in integration processes) so that matters such as the mastery of language, naturalisation and education are given high priority in the integration policy.

In the Netherlands there appears to be a general improvement in the socio-economic position of ethnic minorities. We see this for example in participation in education and on the labour market. The low educational standard of ethnic minorities compared to the indigenous population in the Netherlands is nevertheless improving, even if only to a modest degree. Moreover, there are huge differences between the different migrant groups. Despite better performance, the level of education of Turkish and Moroccan youths in particular is lower than that of the indigenous youth population (Martinez/Groeneveld/Kruisbergen 2002). In the field of the Dutch language especially, Turkish and Moroccan children lag far behind their indigenous peers at the end of primary school (Dagevos/Gijsberts/Van Praag 2003).

The position of ethnic minorities on the job market in the Netherlands has improved over the last decade. Nevertheless the rate of unemployment is still three times higher among ethnic minorities than the indigenous population and it also tends to be more permanent. As far as the position of the Turkish and Moroccan working population on the job market is concerned, here too they appear to lag behind other ethnic minorities and indigenous groups (Martinez, Groeneveld, Kruisbergen 2002). In addition to this, the Social and Cultural Planning Office (Dagevos/Gijsberts/Van Praag 2003) also notes a disturbing rise in youth

unemployment amongst ethnic minorities. Consequently, the position of ethnic minorities on the job market will now have to be given the provisional public and political consideration it requires.

Ethnic minorities' use of social facilities in welfare states differs from that of the indigenous population. Although the position of ethnic minorities on the labour market is improving, it remains very difficult for non-western groups to acquire an independent position in society. Education and schooling play a key role in this process of integration. It provides access to active participation on the labour market as well as offering the prospect of improving social status. Moreover, knowledge and specific skills are necessary for active participation in society. This knowledge and these skills are mainly acquired in education. The Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy therefore offers the following recommendations to the Dutch government:

“In order to preserve the solidarity of a wide and liberal system of social security, the government will have to make demands on newcomers and maintain a restrictive admission policy. At the same time it will have to invest in making education and the labour market accessible to newcomers in order to promote their active participation.” (WRR 2001, 126)

Here the government is clearly made responsible for preparing ethnic minorities; in other words, they must be offered the opportunity to participate actively both socially and economically. However, this burden of responsibility will continue to increase during periods of recession and cutbacks which put social security in the Dutch welfare state under pressure.

### **3.2 Informal Participation: Socio-Cultural**

Like the Council for Social Development (RMO 1998), we also distinguish three other dimensions of social integration in addition to the position in the domains of labour and education. These are: participation in institutional contexts for the protection of interests and influencing the environment, relationships and social networks, and thirdly independence and the ability to manage one's own personal life.

*Participation in institutional contexts for the protection of interests and influencing the environment.*

If we look at the protection of interests by way of religious institutions, we see that as a religion Islam does not have a comprehensive organisa-

tion in Europe. Islamic institutions can be typically religious or else socio-cultural institutions with a religious character and are often associated with the nationality of the “country of origin”. Consequently, it is difficult for Muslims to select a representative body which spans different nationalities. Because of this Islam is not really politicised, even though this would promote social participation by Muslims (WRR 2001). The protection of interests and influencing the environment usually occurs through immigrant organisations (self-help or otherwise). These non-governmental organisations are also referred to as NGOs, and form an important link between immigrant groups and the government. The NGOs act as a mouthpiece, and in this way could contribute towards changing public opinion on immigrant groups as well as contributing towards improved policy measures (European Commission 2003). A number of Dutch examples in the field of the multicultural society are Mira Media, Forum and Palet<sup>2</sup>.

Political participation by immigrants is generally less than that of non-immigrants. A Dutch study of municipal elections in five cities (Martinez/Groeneveld/Kruisbergen 2002) reveals that there are important differences in election turnout percentages with regard to immigrant groups and cities. Generally speaking election turnout among immigrants appears to be lower than among non-immigrants; however, the turnout in the Turkish community is equal to or even higher than that of non-immigrants. Not only do the Turks surpass all other migrant groups in election turnout, but they also participate more actively in local councils and occupy the highest number of immigrant seats. Our conclusion therefore is that of all the immigrant groups in the Netherlands the Turks are most closely integrated into local politics (Martinez/Groeneveld/ Kruisbergen 2002).

#### *Personal relationships and social networks*

The building up and development of social networks often involve processes of inclusion and exclusion. These processes occur in different domains of the welfare state; the domain with which immigrants come into contact most directly in their environment is that of inclusion or exclusion. It is mainly the social contact between immigrants and non-immigrant members of the population that is decisive for the inclusion of

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2 Mira Media: link with the multicultural society; Forum: institution for multicultural development, and Palet: centre for multicultural development in the province of North Brabant.

immigrants in their environment. It appears that immigrants are often expected to mix and 'merge' with the neighbourhood (WRR 2001).

"The dimension of social networks involves having personal relationships and a social network that can provide a person with emotional and material support. Social networks can consist of family relationships (private domain), contact with a third party within the group and contact with a third party outside the group." (RMO 1998, 83)

Statistics from the Netherlands Interdisciplinary Demographic Institute (NIDI, 2001, in Martinez/Groeneveld/Kruisbergen 2002) show a gradual increase in the acceptance of immigrants into Dutch society. The same study shows that one in five of all Dutch citizens has no contact at all with a foreigner. A study of young people in Rotterdam indicates that slightly more than half of Turkish and Moroccan youths only have contact with immigrant friends (Phalet/Vanlotringen/Entzinger 2000). Most contacts and social relationships among Turks and Moroccans are limited to their own groups (RMO 1998).

It should be noted that immigrant communities not only manifest themselves locally. Increasingly they appear to have different types of contact with communities outside the Netherlands. Consequently, one could describe Turkish and Moroccan communities as "transnational communities". The main reason for this development is increasing prosperity, which facilitates more short holiday visits abroad or to the "country of origin". Another explanation could be the increased possibilities of means of communication and the international supply of mass media.

#### *Independence and the ability to cope in private life*

Independence and the ability to cope are generally closely related to the aforementioned dimension of socio-economic participation. People who have a good income (which often depends on education and employment status) are generally able to survive better in society than people who lag behind economically speaking. Moreover, social networks and contacts often act as a social safety net and this increases the individual's ability to cope.

The individual's independence and ability to cope also depends largely on his state of health. There is very little information on the health situation among immigrants in the Netherlands. However, it is known that among elderly Turks health is relatively poor and that infant mortality in the first year of life is higher in immigrant groups than to non-immigrants. However, the Council for Social Development is unable

to comment on the care dependency of immigrants in the Netherlands (RMO 1998).

#### 4 Media Policy in Puriform Societies

The media and cultural identity are inextricably linked. In the case of ethnic minorities a number of cultural identities are involved simultaneously: they live between two cultures, and the media often form a bridge between the two. We particularly see this mixture of cultural manifestations among immigrant youths. Due to an increase in means of communication, it is assumed that the situation in which the second generation of non-western immigrants find themselves is different from that of the first. Links with family and friends in the country of origin are more easily maintained and cultural, and political organisations also make use of these cross-border means of communication.

However, the various means of communication such as the telephone, mobile phone, e-mail and the Internet make it easier for non-immigrants to travel abroad and widen their own cultural identity (Keune/Van Horssen 2002). Consequently, both immigrant and non-immigrant youths are increasingly becoming “citizens of the world” and members of “transnational communities”. This transnationalisation is expressed in telephone companies and the installation of dish antennas which makes it possible for them to receive television broadcasters from the “country of origin” or related broadcasting stations (WRR 2001).

Cultural developments like this lead to a more diverse use of the media. The media themselves are also responsible for this. A good example is the reporting on the war in Iraq in the Netherlands. As they did not have any reporters of their own in areas of war, many news broadcasters in the west were forced to rely on images put out by the Arab media such as Al Jazeera and Abu Dhabi TV. Moreover, because current events programs on the public broadcasting network refused to broadcast live images of the war, there was an increased demand for other images, such as those from Al Jazeera (Mira Media 2003).

“The media report on the world that is also inhabited by immigrants. They give meaning to it and in many instances also contribute towards the construction of this world. The importance of the media to the emancipation of immigrant groups lies in these very functions. Making immigrants more visible in the media makes the immigrant environment more familiar (Sterk *et al.*, 2000). This applies especially to television. News readers, presenters, quizmasters and actors can radiate the same aura as successful sportsmen or



people in show business. They offer possibilities for identification, act as role models and through their existence spread the reassuring message that social promotion is also possible for immigrants.” (WRR 2001, 195)

This “mirror function” is closely linked to two of the four basic values the Social Development Council (2003) attributes to the public function of the media. These basic values are: freedom of expression, pluriformity in the media, independence and the public responsibility of the media. Through pluriformity the media can advance views with which different movements can identify: “the relevant social trends and groups must be represented in the public domain” (Kleinnijenhuis in RMO 2003, 16). The media’s public responsibility also includes the exchange of ideas and views of immigrant groups in society. It is up to the government to ensure that basic values are safeguarded. However, the question remains which mechanisms (such as regulation or self-regulation based on the profession) the government can use to direct the media supply and image-building in the media with regard to immigrants.

The visitation report by the Rinnooy Kan Commission (2004) also indicates the public responsibility of the media, and considers it the task of the public broadcasting system to make programs in which all the relevant social groups, including immigrants, are able to recognise themselves and can identify with. In recent years however, broadcasting has hardly managed to chart the need for and use of the media by ethnic minorities and therefore has failed in its function as a meeting place. In this context the visitation commission regrets the limited outreach of the public broadcasting system, which could play a more important role in the process of integrating immigrants. The first publication of the Mira Media Viewing Panel goes some way to meeting the concerns of the visitation report before it was published. The aim of the Viewing Panel is to bring about interaction between media professionals and their public. In this way media makers receive feedback from critical media users and the public is offered more insight into the way in which the media operate. In the Viewing Panel a group of media users evaluate a program genre by means of a testing instrument developed by Mira Media to assess programs on their “multiculturality”. The aim is for a viewing panel to evaluate a different program genre each year. It is hoped that in this way the public will enter the discussion on media supply and the media’s influence on the public. The 2003 New and Current Events Viewing Panel is the first of a series and should be seen as a pilot.

#### 4.1 Reluctantly Moving Towards New Media

Research (including d'Haenens/Beentjes/Bink 2000) has shown that ethnic minorities do not recognise themselves sufficiently in the Dutch media; they do not experience the negative one-sided image they perceive as being presented in the media as a proper reflection of Dutch multicultural society. Between 20<sup>th</sup> October and 16<sup>th</sup> November 2003 the Mira Media Viewing Panel (2004) analysed items from four news and current events programs: NOS News (8:00 p.m.), RTL4 News, NOVA and Barend/Van Dorp. The analysis included 80 items, 30 of which were directly related to the multicultural society (such as the start of the Ramadan). The first viewing panel comprised a group of 21 young people with an above average level of education, socially involved, critical and between the ages of 19 and 31. Different immigrant groups were represented. The images were evaluated as being one-sided/biased: in many of the items on the multicultural society, Moroccans are the only visible ethnic group. They appear with other groups to a lesser extent. In this way, being an immigrant appears to be synonymous with being Moroccan. The image the items give of multicultural society is one-sided and negative. The association of Moroccans and Muslims with insecurity, crime, religious fundamentalism and a general backwardness are particularly worrying. On the one hand, this is of course partly the result of the news and current affairs genre which is always looking for what is deviant and problematic. On the other hand, the one-sidedness is also due to a lack of different immigrant groups and knowledge about them. The choice of guest speakers is limited. Very few experts from these groups come forward to say their piece and the same people are nearly always involved. The selection of news is also mainly based on the assumed knowledge of the dominant group. Although certain subjects may be news to non-immigrants, they are old news within the immigrant community, so that the news value of certain items can be wanting. It is especially the lack of variation in the choice of discussion partners from immigrant groups that reduces the chance of viewers seeing these people as individuals rather than as bearers of group characteristics (often unflattering).

This one-sided negative image-building is precisely why ethnic minorities need media from “the country of origin” even though there is often criticism aimed at these media (close association with the government, inadequate freedom of the press). Ethnic minorities appear to be critical users of the media who are able to compare the media in the Netherlands with that in the “country of origin”. This helps them to develop a broad view of the news and they generally have a varied appetite

for information which is not satisfied by the Dutch media alone. The Internet is experienced as an interactive medium with good possibilities for attracting an immigrant public and providing them with information on the “country of origin” as well as the Netherlands.

In the government’s media and cultural policy, however, one is immediately struck by the continuing and unsurprising focus of attention on the “old” media (radio, TV and print media). The emphasis is explicitly on television and the public broadcasting service. More than other media channels, public broadcasting services on radio and TV are expected to have an eye for the different needs and preferences of the public, without structurally excluding any group.

In accordance with the Media Act, in recent years cultural diversity has been given considerable encouragement on radio and television (also see Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, “More Colour in the Media”, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2002). This cultural diversity is expressed in the program provision as well as in the composition of the staff behind the scenes. In this way regulations that fall under the Concession Act (2000) encourage public broadcasting services to make more programs for ethnic minorities as target groups. The Concession Act is the first time the social and cultural role of the public broadcasting service has been laid down by law. In its task of serving as a model, the Netherlands Programme Foundation (NPS) has to devote no less than 20 percent of television broadcasting time and 25 percent of radio broadcasting time to multicultural subjects. The idea behind these regulations is that ethnic minorities no longer have to resort to satellite channels from the “country of origin” for a media menu that appeals to them, but that they are able to find something to suit their taste in the Dutch public broadcasting channels. As far as media content is concerned, this has resulted, for example, in the public broadcasting services developing a broader program supply for ethnic minorities as target groups.

In addition to greater cultural diversity in the media supply, the Dutch government also encourages more cultural diversity in the workplace at the public broadcasters and media organisations. As far as the employment of ethnic minorities is concerned, in 1995 national and regional public broadcasters and the World Service signed a declaration of intent, striving for equal participation by ethnic minorities in all functions and at all levels. This resulted in the “More Colour in the Media” project implemented by the STOA (*Stichting Omroep Allochtonen*, known as Mira Media since June 2002). Towards the end of the ‘More Colour in the Media’ project the *Stimulerende Arbeidsdeelnamen Minderheden*

(Stimulating Labour Participation of Minorities) Act (SAMEN Act) came into force as a successor to the Act promoting equal employment for immigrant groups (WBEAA), which however terminated in December 2003.

Since 2002 the public broadcasters' Office for Diversity (formerly the Department of Portrayal), has worked on implementing the Media Act for improving the visibility of ethnic employees within public broadcasting both on and off screen. Mira Media projects such as "Perslink" and "Multiple Choice" are linked to this aim by acquiring information on immigrant opinion-leaders and their networks and then approaching them and by training immigrants to become media professionals.

As far as policy in the field of ethnic minorities and new media is concerned, there is a concrete incentive initiative by the government that has been delegated to the Netherlands Press Fund. The policy initiative is one of the few promotional initiatives by the Dutch government that focuses on ICT and immigrant groups and involves a temporary subsidy (duration three years, evaluation after two years). The subsidy may be paid to publishers for the benefit of newspapers focusing on the stimulation of journalistic information product that use the Internet. This initiative is aimed at a new journalistic information product which is offered interactively and differs from what is already available in its content, import, manner of exploitation or design, and in this way increases the variety of information and public opinion, thus making an innovative contribution towards the provision of journalistic information by way of the Internet. In addition to regulations concerning a varied program range, the Concession Act also offers more legal possibilities to public broadcasting for developing new online services. The government has made means for this available. A number of cultural funds, including the Promotional Fund for Dutch Cultural Broadcasting Productions, have extended their sphere of activities so that in the future they will be able to meet the demand for innovative, interdisciplinary multimedia projects.

Other initiatives that are focused on the use of new media include the digital breeding grounds based on the Major Cities Policy, Social Quality Matters (SQM), KIEM (Knowledge Net Integration Ethnic Minorities), the Virtual Integration Office, and an Incentives Policy for Digital Pioneers. The future of these projects and others like them which are focused on new media and ethnic minorities is still uncertain. The present cabinet has been forced to radically cut costs and this very probably means that less money will be made available for digitising media and culture.

## 5 Conclusions

In the future, continuing immigration in the Netherlands will demand more attention from the government than has been the case so far. In a climate of economic recession, cuts and the fear of terrorism there has been a social shift to the right which has expressed itself for example in a less tolerant attitude towards “newcomers” in the Netherlands. The foreign and integration policies of the Dutch government are aimed at many different groups of “newcomers” (asylum seekers, refugees, gypsies, etc., from different parts of the world).

Looking at the history of foreign and integration policies in the Netherlands, we see that the Dutch government has gradually realized that the Netherlands is an immigration country. During this process the policy has developed from one of exclusion in the 1970s to one of inclusion as from the 1990s. This means that the presence of immigrant groups can no longer be denied, but they can acquire the nationality and rights of the country if they adapt to the dominant culture. This change-over is not made immediately; in the 1980s the aim was to realise a more multicultural ideal in which immigrant groups were expected to promote the cultural diversity of the country by preserving their own identity within the current political values of the country (Castles/Miller 1993).

The core of the minorities’ policy, despite the ideology that may underlie it, is the integration of immigrant groups into society. Integration cannot take place without the acknowledgement of diversity combined with the pursuit of equality. The participation of immigrant groups clearly plays a key role in this. In this article we distinguish between two types of participation: structural (formal) and social-cultural (informal) participation. Structural participation is often the focus of most government attention, certainly in times of economic recession: we only have to think of the high unemployment rate among immigrants which has to be reduced by way of schooling. However, here we would also like to focus attention on socio-cultural participation among immigrants, which also includes the field of activity of the media.

Social participation includes participation in institutional contexts for the promotion of interests, having personal relationships and social networks and the independence and ability to cope in the personal sphere (RMO 1998). The promotion of immigrants’ interests generally takes place through self-help organisations (NGOs) which form an important link between immigrant groups and governments. These NGOs will be

facing a difficult task; the turnout at political elections, cultural events and sport activities is still low among immigrants.

As far as the social contacts of immigrants in the Netherlands are concerned, we see that they generally remain limited to within the group itself (also in the “country of origin”) and that there is very little contact with non-immigrants (RMO 1998). The closed attitude of other immigrant communities with regard to one’s own community is often regarded as the cause of difficult intercultural contacts, in other words between non-immigrants and immigrants as well as among immigrant groups. Immigrant self-help organisations are therefore also faced with the task of improving intercultural contacts.

The individual’s ability to do things independently therefore greatly depends on his own socio-economic status (such as education and income), as well as, for example, his physical health. Unfortunately, little is known in the Netherlands about the state of health of immigrant groups in society.

Through the advent of new media and the means of communication associated with them, it is becoming increasingly easy to maintain contact with different cultures. Both immigrant and non-immigrant youths can broaden their horizons by way of satellite dishes, foreign television channels and the Internet, and become “world citizens”. Television has acquired an especially prominent position in reporting on the multicultural world and can contribute towards the emancipation of immigrants by showing role models. However, so far ethnic minorities do not see the image spread by the Dutch media as a proper reflection of the multicultural society and therefore turn to the media in their “country of origin”.

In short, the Dutch government directs its media policy mainly at the public broadcasting systems (radio and television) and the print media. Through the Media Act and the Concession Act it encourages a more varied media supply as well as greater cultural diversity in the workplace at the public broadcasting services and media organisations (“More Colour in the Media” and later in the SAMEN Act). In addition to this, the government subsidises journalistic information products which extend information and public opinion through the Internet. The Dutch government also supports various projects for the benefit of ethnic minorities and ICT even though the budgets involved are limited.

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