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Designs and (Co)Incidents Cultures of Scholarship and Public Policy on Immigrants/Minorities in the Netherlands

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Abstract

This article sketches the dominant themes that have shaped Dutch discourse, policy and research on issues related to race, ethnicity, and immigration during the past 40 years. It will be shown that the paradigmatic foundations of Dutch minority research were laid in the 1980s and that mainstream research and discourse is largely *about* ethnic minorities; about their migration and their degree (or lack) of economic, social and political integration in the Netherlands. By (co)incident or design, ethnic minorities – invariably called *allochtonen*, a Dutch word for non-natives or *aliens*, irrespective of citizenship – are problematized, while mainstream research generally downplays the ramifications of the colonial history, and concomitant presuppositions of European (Dutch) cultural superiority. We present an extended discussion of the denial of racism and the de-legitimization of racism research. Common sense (notions of) racism profoundly shaped research interpretations and research agendas. Mainstream researchers and scholars are largely critical of anti-immigrant discourse, but with the silencing of race critical paradigms there are few concepts and frameworks left to analyze and contextualize which anti-immigrant sentiments and policies are historically rooted in the invention of race and the Other and which sentiments are fears, discomforts and insecurities resulting from the uncontrollable paradigms of globalization in a world that has become smaller.

Key words: ethnicity • immigration policy • racism

INTRODUCTION

This article attempts to sketch the dominant themes that have shaped Dutch discourse, policy and research on issues related to race, ethnicity, and immigration during the past 40 years. Thereby we are using a particular lens, one scrutinizing taken for granted knowledge and systems of dominance, while applying

tools, instruments and insights developed in Race Critical Theory. Critical work, in particular in sensitive areas like those pertaining to social injustices, generally tends to highlight characteristics of mainstream perspectives that often go unchallenged. The result is not a complete overview of all of the work that has been done, but a focus on ideological underpinnings. In the course of that exercise the following question is addressed as well: has there been space for Race Critical Theory in the Dutch arena and how did mainstream scholars respond to the contestation of dominant paradigms? Among other things Race Critical Theory exposes how taken for granted claims of race neutrality, color-blindness and the discourse of tolerance often hide from view the 'hidden, invisible, forms of racist expressions and well-established patterns of racist exclusion that remain, unaddressed and uncompensated, structurally marking opportunities and access, patterns of income and wealth, privilege and relative power' (Goldberg and Essed, 2002: 4).

We are writing in the wake of the van Gogh assassination in November 2004, which is generally considered a religiously inspired act of revenge against this film producer. Van Gogh was the second opinion-leader who got assassinated; intellectual and populist politician Pim Fortuyn was the first in the recent Dutch history in May 2002. It is not unlikely that both van Gogh and Fortuyn will be registered in the annals of Dutch history as staunch defenders of the principle of absolute freedom of speech. In doing so they also expressed themselves in ways that have been taken to be extremely offensive, if not racist, against Muslims in general and Islam in particular. Here we will not focus on the political events preceding or following the assassinations or on the designated figures themselves. But we do have a particular, reflective question in mind: what has been the general response of minority researchers, a concept to be explained later in more detail, to assimilationist, anti-immigrant and racist policies or political discourses?

As scholars who identify with critical research, our point of view has been shaped by a commitment to producing relevant knowledge to enhance understanding of (and in that sense counter) racism and related social injustices in global and European settings (Essed and Goldberg, 2002; Bulmer and Solomos, 2004). We hope to offer some transparency about the relation between policy, politics and scholarship in relation to race and ethnic relations in the Netherlands. Thereby the reader wants to bear in mind that as a country with only 16 million inhabitants and fewer than 20 (mostly state-funded) universities, Dutch policy and scholarly circuits are small. Functional overlap occurs often operating according to the *ons-kent-ons* principle, which is Dutch for 'like-knows-like'. This applies to mainstream as well as non-dominant circles, with the significant difference that mainstreamers are likely to draw more easily from the power of established institutional regimes. Fierce competition for increasingly scarce resources adds to making active networking and adaptation important tools for protecting personal and group interests in and outside of academia (Tilly, 1998).

The first government program in the Netherlands to regulate race and ethnic relations, as different from immigration, took shape less than 25 years ago. It is relevant to mention that the state answer to extreme physical violence has been at the cradle of Dutch policies in relation to ethnic minorities. The formal and systematic regulation of race and ethnic relations was in response to the Moluccan revolts of 1970s. The Moluccan communities were mostly separatists who refused to integrate when they accepted refuge in the Netherlands in the late 1950s, awaiting the liberation of the Moluccan Islands. With time elapsing they felt increasingly disappointed and disillusioned about their situation, accusing the Dutch government of having breached their promises. In order to put pressure on the Dutch government and to demand that the Indonesian government de-occupy the Moluccan Islands, a group of youngsters hijacked a Dutch train in 1977. This was the second ‘Moluccan’ train hijack within two years. Upon the request of the government, anthropologist André Köbben, highly respected scholar and co-chair of the 1976 Köbben-Mantouw Dutch-Moluccan Consultative Committee, aimed at improving Dutch-Moluccan relations in the Netherlands, mediated between the hijackers and the government. In vain; in the armed response that followed two of the hostages were killed together with six out of nine hijackers.

In the first part of this article, we sketch an outline of the Dutch policy context of research and discuss how the Moluccan revolt gave rise to the establishment of the Department of Minorities Affairs within the Ministry of Home Affairs, which in turn culminated in the publication of the *Minority Policy Note (Nota Minderhedenbeleid)* of 1983. Until the Moluccan uprising and the publication of the *Minority Policy Note* it was taken for granted by the dominant group that the Netherlands is a plural society anchored in the culture of tolerance for religious difference. This notion of pluralism was superseded by discourse on multiculturalism in the 1990s (Prins and Saharso, 1999). As we write now, the notion of multiculturalism is being questioned. The new policy language is about demanding that immigrants familiarize themselves with ‘Dutch ways’ (*Inburgeringswet* – Integration Act).

Moving between policy and research in the next section we describe, analyze and explain the proliferation of race, ethnic and immigrant studies and research in the Netherlands after the establishment of the Department of Minority Affairs within the Ministry of Home Affairs. The active role of the government in institutionalizing research to support the development of *Minority Policy* is expressed in the notion of *Minority Research* (read: research *on* minorities, *Minderhedenonderzoek*). Virtually all research on ethnic minorities is funded directly by government departments or, indirectly, via (state-funded) university-related institutes and professional NGOs. Two relevant academic organizations should be mentioned: NWO, the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research and KNAW, the Royal Dutch Academy of Science. Relevant professional organizations for research, information and/or advice in this

respect are the Verwey Jonker Institute (research on social issues with policy strategic relevance); LBR (National Bureau against Racial Discrimination); NCB (Netherlands Center for Foreigners); FORUM (information and advise on the multicultural society); and CGB (Equal Treatment Commission, an independent advisory body, members of which are appointed by the Minister of Justice). These professional organizations draw partly or substantially from state funding in the context of which they tap the ministries for funding for specific research projects, either conducted by in-house researchers or by university scholars they commission. With the process of Europeanization an increasing amount of funding comes from Brussels.

In the course of 25 years, Dutch researchers have been prolific in producing reports and publications on (policies in relation to) ethnic minorities and their cultures. Critical explorations of the historical and ideological underpinnings and ramification of Dutch constructions of 'race' and 'ethnicity' are less common. It is the institutionalization of the relation between ample funding and continuous production of publications on ethnic minorities we refer to as the *Dutch minority research industry*. For the purposes of this article, we have limited our focus foremost to research within Dutch universities.

A complete review of the Dutch minority research machinery would be a major study in itself. It will be seen that dynamic networking between policy-makers and minority research and its paradigms exist. Public and civil servants in charge of advising the government about minority policy become academic researchers in charge of conducting policy research while subsequently joining the pool of government advisors located at the various Dutch universities. Moreover, the extent of, and/or access to, formal state funding (structural or project based) has largely determined the context and content of migration and ethnic studies in the Netherlands. To quote one of the founding scholars of Dutch minority research:

Nowhere in Europe is social scientific research on issues of migration and minority formation as dependent on government funding and on direction by politics and policy as in the Netherlands. The establishment of minority policy brought with it amounts of research money in proportions that were unheard of before (at least in the social sciences). (. . .) The degree of intimacy between policy-makers, politics and science, and the ease by which government officials and university researchers would trade places was astonishing. (Bovenkerk, 1999: unpagged online version, authors' translation)

In addition we say something about a few other institutes, relevant either because they are quintessential creations of government policy and contributors to the minority research industry, or because they are small entities representing critical research paradigms. Examples of the latter are units for Women's/Gender Studies with firm emphasis on ethnicity and or cultural diversity. For the moment, suffice to say that the politics of research on race and ethnic relations in the Netherlands have been more or less similar to

developments in other (western) countries: competition between oppositional and mainstream paradigms, between *race critical research* (in this context focus on de- and neo-colonization, race, racism, intertwined systems of domination, transnationalism, diversity) and what has come to be called in the Netherlands *minority research* (in this context focus on ethnicity, migration, assimilation, integration, multiculturalism, transnationalism, diversity). The two directions are not completely mutually exclusive. There is some overlap where race critical paradigms meet the critical end of mainstream research, notably in the advocacy of transnationalism and (cultural) diversity.

The final part of the article is devoted to the evaluation of attempts being made or that have been made by major figures in the field of minority research to theorize or make sense of Dutch immigration issues, race and ethnic relations. We use the framework of Race Critical Theory in order to discuss works that have been *formative of the main paradigms* in Dutch race and ethnic relations research. We have reason to believe that the late 1980s have been crucial with respect to the paradigmatic foundations of Dutch minority research as mostly (but not always) problematizing ethnic minorities while generally downplaying the influence of racism, the ramifications of the colonial history, and concomitant presuppositions of European (Dutch) civil and cultural superiority. We present an extended discussion of the denial of racism and the de-legitimization of racism research. It will be seen how during the 1980s common sense (notions of) racism and its subsequent denial have profoundly shaped research interpretations and research agendas. The consequences of the relative exclusion of critical research and expertise in the area of racism are more serious than just the marginalization of one particular paradigm. Representatives and spokespeople of minority research, though rejecting extreme-right racism, generally denied the existence of, and thus lacked comprehensive knowledge about, systemic racism, its historical transmutations, its cultural expressions, its roots in the development of modernity of which Orientalism has been part and parcel. Here Stuart Hall's notion of historical amnesia could apply.

We are suggesting that Race Critical Research in the Netherlands is largely an individualized matter and has not become a school in itself due partly to lack of institutional support. There has been a brief period of institutional existence during the second half of the 1980s (Center for Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam). But while antiracism gained voice, majority researchers came up in arms against what was considered to be 'US and UK import' of the notion of racism; an insult to the 'uniquely Dutch character trait of tolerance'. In the 1990s racism research would be disqualified and labeled a product of 'political correctness'. Racism research and more generally antiracism have been subsequently more or less silenced. The reverse holds true for minority research. Assimilation and integration paradigms and their representatives have acquired all but complete monopoly with respect to the national research agenda and with respect to access to (government and European)

funding. Research is largely *about* ethnic minorities – invariably called *allochtonen*, a Dutch word for non-natives or *aliens*; about their migration and their degree (or lack) of economic, social and political integration in the Netherlands. This is reflected, for instance, in the paradigmatic emphasis of the key journal *Migrantenstudies* (Studies on Migrants) first issued in 1985. Minority research builds substantially on white native networks where policy, party politics, and research intertwine. In this respect, Charles Tilly's theory could apply that opportunity hoarding through exclusive networks sustains durable inequality (Tilly, 1998).

POLICY MODELS: PLURALISM, MULTICULTURALISM, DIVERSITY OR WHAT?

Until the early 1980s, studies on ethnic minorities or immigrants in the Netherlands were scattered and sporadic, mostly involving anthropologists and social geographers. Anthropologists generally conducted studies on the cultural backgrounds of the new migrants, whereas social geographers focused on the settlement patterns of the new immigrants in the Netherlands (Amersfoort, 1974; Berg-Eldering, 1979; Vermeulen, 1984). Common to researchers of both disciplines was their use of the *insider-outsider paradigm* – WE versus THEM – as their starting point.

At the broader level of generalization, the researchers considered themselves as insiders and their object of research, namely, the migrants and minorities, as outsiders. Not only were the studies generally descriptive, says researcher Jan Rath, they were also 'superficial in theory' and suffering from 'one-sidedness' in their conceptual framework. He contends that: 'minorities researchers often start from the same theoretical premises, so that their research is into more or less the same aspects and processes, and systematically fails to take others into consideration' (Rath, 2001: 2).

The studies were conducted against the backdrop of three general assumptions about the nature of race and ethnic relations. The first general assumption was that the migrant groups in question were temporary residents of the country and will return to their countries of birth at a given point in time (Theunis, 1979). This thinking was not different from the official thinking on the subject matter as reflected in the first official policy document on migrant workers, the *Nota Buitenlandse Werknemers*, also referred to as *Nota Roolvink*, produced by the then Minister of Social Affairs, Roolvink, in 1970. To reinforce the assumption that migrant workers are temporarily in the Netherlands Roolvink's report stated that: 'With all understanding of the human aspects, one cannot do otherwise but to establish that, our country needs labour power from other countries, but not new family settlements' (*Nota Roolvink*, 1970: 9, authors' translation).

At the time migrant workers were referred to as guestworkers (*gastarbeiders*). However, the Moluccan uprising of 1976 shattered some of the

assumptions of the temporariness. This is all the more so since the uprising was led by a new generation of Moluccans, namely, those born and raised in the Netherlands.

In response to the Moluccan revolt and the ensuing debate around the revolt, Henk Molleman, a Labour Party member of parliament, tabled a motion in which he pleaded for a coherent ethnic minorities policy. In his speech to parliament, Molleman noted that:

We need (. . .) to accept that Moluccans, like other ethnic minorities have the right to maintain their own identity without giving them the illusion that their culture will not change. As a point of departure, we can take cue from the [Labour Party's] Commission for Cultural Minorities' stand on this issue that is formulated as follows:

'The Netherlands society has become a multi-racial society where (members of) minorities, as group and individuals, must be able to participate and emancipate themselves without giving up their own cultural identity, and the reciprocal preparedness to dialogue'. (UCV, Tweede Kamer, 30 August 1978, pp. 3246, authors' translation)

Ministerial approval of the motion led to the establishment of the Department of Ethnic Minority Affairs within the Ministry of Home Affairs, which in turn set in motion the formation of a coherent ethnic minority policy program, to be generated in five phases.

In the first phase the Scientific Council of the Government (WRR – *Wetenschappelijke Raad voor de Regering*) conducted a survey to qualify the status and position of ethnic minorities in society. The WRR survey, chaired by a civil servant, Rinus Penninx (who would become a prominent figure in the minority research industry, see further below) led to the publication of a key report entitled *Ethnic Minorities* (1979). According to the abovementioned Molleman, it was deliberate for the concept of ethnic minorities not to be defined in that report (Molleman, 2003). Nevertheless it was recommended that policy should focus on Antilleans, Moroccans, Moluccans, Surinamese, Turks, and caravan-dwellers. The moral basis of the policy focus on these groups was that Antilleans, Moluccans and Surinamese were migrants from former (or current) Dutch colonies; that Moroccans and Turks had been invited to the Netherlands as guestworkers; and that caravan-dwellers are a marginalized group in society. Phase two of the policy process, in 1980, was a formal government response to the *Ethnic Minorities* report, in which the government accepted the contours of the report. Third, on the basis of the two documents (the scientific council and the government response), a report was produced by the Ethnic Minority Unit of the Ministry of Home Affairs in 1981 entitled *Draft Minority Policy*. The fourth phase, in 1982, was devoted to civil society responses to the *Draft Minority Policy*. More than 100 civil society organizations, including those working for ethnic minorities, were given the opportunity to provide a written response to the *Draft Minority Policy*. The responses were compiled in a three volume document called *Reactions to the Draft Minority Policy* (Reacties op de

Ontwerp-minderhedennota) (1982). Finally, on the basis of these reactions, the official *Minority Policy Note* was written, presented to the parliament and approved in 1983.

The main thrust of developing policy directed at ethnic minorities was now that the immigrants would indeed not return to their countries of birth so the government should pursue an active ethnic minority policy and develop instruments to facilitate the integration and emancipation of the target groups, namely, Antilleans, Moroccans, Moluccans, Surinamese, Turks, and caravan-dwellers.

The second general assumption was that ethnic minorities or migrants are demographically very small groups, hence their descriptive classification as ethnic minorities. However in the course of the 1980s there would appear an 'immigration surplus' partly due to family reunification of migrants in particular from so-called Third World countries.

Whether it was by accident or by design, in response to demographic changes and immigration pressures the 1983 *Minority Policy Note* was replaced in 1989 by another policy report entitled *Allochtonous Policy* ('*Allochtonenbeleid*', for which a new Dutch word was invented, *allochtonen* – 'allochtonous', non-native, the opposite of autochtonous, native). This policy report too was produced by the government scientific council on ethnic minorities affair (WRR – see above), but now chaired by Han Entzinger (who, like former chair Rinus Penninx, would become a 'patriarch' in the minority research industry, see further below). The *Allochtonous Policy* report questioned the ethnic minority policy's focus on six groups only while pleading for the inclusion of all Third World migrants into a new immigration policy. Whereas the *Minority Policy Report* of 1983 had emphasized integration and emancipation, hence suggesting, at least in principle, a two-way social process of change between ethnic minorities and ethnic majorities, the *Allochtonous Policy* report perceived only a one-way direction of change. It recommended intensification of the general policy line: education, including adult (language) education, as a way of better qualifying ethnic minority groups to compete for employment opportunities. In 1992 the *Allochtonous Policy* report was in turn replaced by the *Integration Policy Document* with emphasis on citizenship.

Finally, it was assumed that the Netherlands is a plural society, in particular in terms of religion. As Chris Mullard noted, in nearly all cases, the notion of plural society

appears to be a description, which accentuates a notion and existence of *ethnic and cultural diversity* in any given society and an explanation, which addresses the question of conflict management, stability, and the gradual change through the perpetuation of a dominant social and institutional order. In other words, one of the key references in pluralist thinking is always that of culture and ethnicity, a reference which allows for a kind of description, which emphasizes the significance of, for example, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other differences and diversities. (Mullard, 1986: 6-7)

It is probably helpful at this point to say something more general about Dutch politics and institutions, which operate according to what has come to be known as the *polder model*. Political legitimacy results from dialogue and consensus-seeking strategies with the purpose of pacifying past and current conflict of interest and to ensure the willful participation of all parties. Rejecting radical points of view, black or white positions, the *grey middle ground* based on compromise, tolerance and majority consensus, is perceived as the ideal bases from which to build. In academia, in the media and in politics, radical points of view are shunned and those taking radical positions tend to be ignored, avoided, excommunicated, ridiculed, or symbolically assassinated. By 'radical', we pertain to views that problematize essential features of society and social relations and hence advocate fundamental changes. The establishment often considers it below their level to engage in dialogue with radicals. These principles of Dutch social cohesion have been formative as well for the development of race and ethnic relations studies in the Netherlands. Dialogue ad infinitum in order to create consensus requires a certain degree of moderation in voice and discourse, as well as tolerance for (moderately) disagreeable statements, including 'common sense' racist or otherwise anti-immigrant points of view.

By the mid-1990s, pluralist thinking among the dominant group had been replaced by the discourse of multiculturalism and diversity to explain the position and status of migrants and ethnic minorities while positioning the Netherlands now as immigrant society (Meurs and Broeders, 2002). Here, a brief theoretical digression is relevant in view of our later discussion of the institutionalization of ethnic minority research in the Netherlands.

In our previous studies we identified four discourses on multiculturalism and diversity, thus introducing the theory of the 4-D models, namely, deficit, difference, discrimination, and diversity. We gave examples of particular studies and policy interventions that could be classified in these discursive models (Mullard et al., 1990; Mullard, 1991; Nimako, 1999). The deficit and difference approach have received by far more support than the discrimination and diversity approach, which will become evident shortly.

The *deficit model*, based on the notion of 'cultural deficit', assumes that the weak position and status of ethnic minority groups in society is a consequence of inappropriate cultural equipment. Cultural baggage carried over from the country of origin, such as language, religion, and work ethos, hinder ethnic minorities' progress in society. Policy and management instruments should be developed to compensate or eliminate such impediments.

The second model, the *difference model* is based on the notion of 'cultural difference' instead of cultural deficit. The central idea is that there are important differences among ethnic groups, language, religion, norms and values, requiring specific communication needs tuned to each and every culture. This model has positive as well as negative connotations. The negative dimension points at problems in intercultural communication and contacts, whereas the

positive dimension is associated with the enrichment of human relations and resources.

The third approach, the *discrimination model* questions unequal power relations. Supporters of (a comprehensive version of) this model (discrimination placed in a theory of race, gender and class) included the group around the former Center for Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam; a minority. This approach explains the position and status of ethnic minority groups in society as resulting from past and present discrimination by the dominant groups. The weakness of this model is that overemphasis on structural factors leaves less space for individual agency and the negotiation of cultural assets or constraints (Essed, 2001).

The first scholar to publish about institutional racial discrimination in the Netherlands was Frank Bovenkerk. His social experiments in the late 1970s, illustrating discrimination in applying for housing and jobs, made headlines (Bovenkerk, 1978). Bovenkerk, whose work is foremost empirical, has been consistent in rejecting the concept of systemic or institutional *racism* as relevant to understanding structural discrimination in the Netherlands. At the same time, his commitment to racial equality made him a strong advocate of diversity through positive action for the purpose of which he wrote a strongly endorsing policy report commissioned by the government (Bovenkerk, 1986). This introduces the final model.

The *diversity model*, internationally initiated in the US by Roosevelt Thomas, Taylor Cox and others, actually never gained grounds as a dominant discourse. It is a hybrid construction, combining all the positive aspects of the above models in constructing a new one. It takes society as a whole as its starting point and combines a collective mix of differences and similarities. The most thorough example we have come across is from Michàlle Mor Barak (2005). Dutch proponents include Lucy Kortram (former member of Parliament and Lector at the Hogeschool de Horst) and Ann Mannen (2005) – both women of Surinamese background. The downside of the diversity approach is that the optimistic flavor of the notion of ‘diversity’ makes it also vulnerable to abuse as a catchword and as a way of avoiding the problem of discrimination (Essed, 2002).

In relation to most of these approaches, in particular the deficit and difference ‘models’, the government has taken the initiative. Researchers could then respond by formulating action research projects to cash in on the funds allocated by the government in response to the research priorities areas laid down by the government. By accident or by design the formal establishment of an ethnic minorities unit within the Ministry of Home Affairs was followed by the proliferation of centers and institutes of ethnic and immigration studies within several universities, a subject we now turn to.

INSTITUTIONALIZATION OF MIGRATION AND ETHNIC STUDIES

It is probably safe to say that about 10 universities with major social science faculties conduct some studies on immigrants or ethnic minorities groups. However, the core of Dutch mainstream ethnic minority research is located in three institutions within three universities, namely, the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) at the University of Amsterdam (the successor of the Centre for Race and Ethnic Studies (CRES) at the same university); the European Research Centre on Migration and Ethnic Relations (ERCOMER) at Utrecht University; and the Institute for Sociological and Economic Research (ISEO), at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam. In terms of disciplinary orientations one can roughly identify IMES with the social anthropology and political science of ethnic minorities, their organizations and the ethnic political landscape; ERCOMER with the social psychology of ethnic relations and modes of exclusion; and ISEO with the sociology and economics of ethnic minority disadvantage, mobility and integration.

CRES: Center for Race and Ethnic Studies, 1984–91

Established in 1984 at the University of Amsterdam by Chris Mullard, a British citizen, and then Director of the Race Relations Policy and Practice Research Unit, University of London Institute of Education, CRES was the first major institution devoted to the study of race and ethnic relations in the Netherlands. Chris Mullard was not only the first Professor of Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam, but also one of the earliest, if not the first, black Professor of Ethnic Studies in Europe.

The mission of CRES was to develop critical research on race in relation to class, gender and other ordering principles. The staff, faculty and affiliates of CRES consisted of a mix of different racial, ethnic and majority populations, a degree of gender and race-ethnic integration that, to date, has not found its match in another university institute in the Netherlands.

As Professor of Education and Ethnic Studies, Chris Mullard located CRES in the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy. However, after the formal objections of the decision-makers of the Faculty of Education and Pedagogy to its location in the Faculty, CRES was closed down by university board decision in 1991. A year later a new center was established under the name of IMES, with more financial resources and an independent location, under a new director, native white, Rinus Penninx (until 2005 – his successor is Jan Rath, also native white). A former civil servant at the Ministry of Social Affairs and chairman of the first WRR (Scientific Council to the Government) report on minorities in the late 1970s, Penninx evolved as Professor of Ethnic Studies and Minority Questions at the Free University of Amsterdam in 1990 before he became Professor of Migration and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam in the early 1990s.

IMES: Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, 1994–present

On their official website¹ the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies is referred to as an interdisciplinary research institute of the University of Amsterdam which has existed since 1994. According to their website the research program promotes the polder model of encounter and – where possible – integration of different perspectives, and therefore co-operates with a range of other (University of Amsterdam) departments: Anthropology, Sociology, Communication Science, Political Science, Social Geography, Economic Geography, Econometrics, Administrative Law, Social and Economic History. The research program consists of the following themes: International migration; multiculturalism and integration in modern western societies including citizenship in multicultural democracies; history of immigration and immigrants in the Netherlands from a Western European perspective; immigrants and the urban economy; structural and socio-cultural integration of immigrants in welfare states.

The research program of IMES focuses on the Dutch case with specific attention given to the City of Amsterdam, but from an international and comparative perspective. Former IMES director Rinus Penninx is European co-chair of The International Metropolis Project, and chair of IMISCOE, European Network of Excellence in the domain of International Migration, Integration and Social Cohesion in Europe, a collaborative project with about 300 research institutes in the field of international migration and integration in Europe.

The IMES group hosted the Dutch journal *Migrantenstudies* (Migration Studies, established in 1985). In the period of over 10 years the institute has produced hundreds of (survey) reports, working papers, and book publications (see website), many, if not most, of which are co-authored by IMES members (so that there is also a substantial degree of double and triple quotation of the same publication on the website). Publications on structural racism and discrimination are rare. This holds also for the journal *Migrantenstudies*. An earlier title and abstract scan of the period 1994–2002 identified only two articles with a focus explicitly on racism (Essed, 2004). One article was on everyday racism in Belgium, authored by a Belgian scholar and the other originated from ERCOMER member Maikel Verkuyten, one of the very few researchers outside of CRES who has invested over the years in empirical research on ‘common sense’ racism in the Netherlands.

ERCOMER: European Research Center on Migration and Ethnic Relations, 1993–present

ERCOMER, at Utrecht University, aims to develop comparative research in the area of international migration and ethnic relations within a European context. Co-founder and first director, Briton Malcolm Cross left in 1998. Co-founder and successor, Han Entzinger moved to the Erasmus University in Rotterdam

in 2001. According to their website, current directors of ERCOMER are Henk Dekker (following Philip Muus who co-directed for the period of six months) and Louk Hagendoorn.

The original research program consisted of the following six areas of research:² racism, ethnic conflict and nationalism in Western and Eastern Europe; migration and asylum in Europe; migrants and minorities in European cities; comparative studies in multicultural education; migration, health and social integration; the governance of multi-ethnic states. Recent projects³ focus largely on nationalism, ethnic identity formation in a range of Western and Eastern European countries. A few cross-national comparative approaches to ethnic prejudice and a few projects on racism date from the period of 2000 and before. ERCOMER links include Etvös Loránd University, Department of Social Psychology (Budapest, Hungary), Trento University, Department of Sociology (Italy), the Malmö University IMER (Malmö, Sweden), the National Taurida Vernadsky University, Crimean Center for Conflict Research. There are also connections to the Stanford University Department of Political Science in the US.⁴

On a European level it is relevant to mention that ERCOMER hosts the Dutch correspondent for the OECD migration observatory (SOPEMI), and has coordinated the EC Thematic Network on Migrants and Minorities in European Cities. ERCOMER participates in the EC research project on the political economy of migration in an integrating Europe.⁵

ERCOMER institutional networks in the Netherlands indicate strong links with the Erasmus University Rotterdam (Han Entzinger, Justus Veenman, Godfried Engbersen) and Nijmegen University (Peer Scheepers). The focus of Peer Scheepers's work is prejudice, ethnocentrism, authoritarianism, religion, the extreme right and voting behavior. Godfried Engbersen (Erasmus University Rotterdam) focuses on international migration, undocumented immigrants, poverty, policy, urban elites, transnational identities, young Muslims. Justus Veenman has monitored extensively the social-economic dis/advantages of ethnic minorities, while Han Entzinger has covered social-economic and immigration policy issues (see also below).

ISEO: Institute for Sociological and Economic Research, 1986–present

Another institute that profits from state structural and project funding is the Institute for Sociological and Economic Research (ISEO), based at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. Led by Professor Justus Veenman, ISEO addresses questions of social inequality, a substantial part of which is about ethnic minorities, in particular in education and the labor market. ISEO specializes in (government) commissioned research: empirical and descriptive and policy relevant, for instance, the sequential *Minorities Yearbook (Jaarboek Minderheden)*, a monitor of the degree of integration of ethnic minorities in the diverse institutional

sectors of society including labor, education, housing, social security and health. The establishment of ISEO coincided with the first substantial longitudinal research project commissioned by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, in 1986, on Accessibility and Proportionality (*Toegankelijkheid en Evenredigheid*). Since then the institute has become one of the most important producers of publications about ethnic minorities and other vulnerable groups.⁶

As mentioned before, the minority research circle operates along the principles of the Polder model of 'like knows like': nurturing consensus through networking, joint projects and joint publications. Members of research and (government advisory) funding committees assess research proposals of experts they might work with in another functional setting. This is not to question a priori the integrity of any individual scholar, but to indicate that fairness in the face of the ideas of a competitor, openness to critique, and scholarly independence are challenged all the time in an academic climate of a small country and very few avenues for research funding outside of the state. For purposes of illustration we quote from a journalistic essay, called 'Minority Brokers' published in December 2002 in *De Volkskrant*, one of the main national quality newspapers (ideologically close to the Labour Party, PvdA).⁷ Pauline Meurs, chair of the Scientific Council to the Government (WRR) is quoted about the circuits of minority research as saying: 'You often get to meet the same people'; 'research and policy are really very close'; and 'The taboos prevalent in minority policy are echoed in research. There are a limited number of trendsetters in the debates [about minorities]; it is a normatively charged topic'. We further quote from the essay as follows:

Roughly put, two schools have more or less monopolized minority research. We are talking about the Rotterdammers with patriarch Han Entzinger (55 years old) [former chair of ERCOMER, the Utrecht school] and Rinus Penninx (54) Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies (IMES) affiliated to the University of Amsterdam. In both cases the intertwining of roles started already at the beginning of their careers. Both Penninx and Entzinger started off as research officers at the then Ministry of Culture, Recreation and Social Work (CRM), with guest workers and people from the colonies in their portfolios (. . .). From there on, both went to science while maintaining their contacts in the department. A quarter of a century later they still dominate the policy science discourse. (Authors' translation from Dutch)

The above sketch of the structure and organization of the core Dutch minority research industry indicates that the success or failure of migration and ethnic studies institutes depend on access to structural and project funding from the state.

Special Chairs

The Dutch systems is akin to the UK system where full professors enjoy much higher social status than, for instance, in the US and Canada. In order to compensate for the limited number of structural chairs, there is the possibility

of establishing special chairs financed by sources outside of the university. Special chairs are allocated to the study of particular issues or problems, rather than (mainly) in support of a particular discipline. These are often part-time positions, one day per week, with lower status than a structural chair (although this seems to be changing more recently). In exceptional cases, there is also the possibility of a personal chair financed by the university.

Since the 1990s, scholars have persuaded or been approached by semi-state institutions and foundations making available research funding on multiculturalism and diversity. In response to this, special chairs have been created in the Universities of Maastricht, Nijmegen, Tilburg and Twente. This explains the appointment of Ruben Gowricharn as Special Professor of Multicultural Cohesion and Transnational Affairs, University of Tilburg (2002). It was also against this backdrop that Erik Snel was appointed as a Special Professor of Intercultural Governance at the University of Twente at Enschede (2002). In the same vein, Paul Verweel became Special Professor of Organization and Management from a Multicultural Perspective (2000) and Arie de Ruyter Professor of Multicultural Studies (2001) at the University of Utrecht.

Critical Gender Institutes Taking on Board Race and Ethnicity

Gender as a relevant dimension of ethnic and racial relations has been included to a certain degree in ERCOMER research on family relations and ethnicity. With few exceptions (for instance, Lucassen), gender has been largely ignored, however, in IMES research programs and literature. Today, European funding requirements have become increasingly affirmative about gender equity. Whether IMES strategy or coincidence, only the recent European wide (and European funded) IMISCOE research program which IMES chairs, includes 'gender', as one of nine themes, in relation to 'family, age, and generational changes'.⁸

In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, feminists, in particular women of color around the world, have criticized Race and Ethnic Relations Studies for ignoring that race and ethnicity are constitutive of and constituted through notions of gender. In the Netherlands too, researchers pointed at gendered racism (Essed, 1991) and to the different implications of integration paradigms for women (Essed, 1982, 1996; Aerts and Saharso, 1994; Wekker and Braidotti, 1996; Botman et al., 2001). Thomas Spijkerboer, Professor of Migration Law at the Free University (2002) has been consistent in pointing at the gender dimensions of refugee law and its implications, in particular for women. Gloria Wekker, Special Professor of Gender and Ethnicity, Utrecht University (2002), discussed in her inaugural speech, *'Nesten bouwen op een winderige plek. Denken over gender en etniciteit in Nederland'* ('Building Nests in a Windy Place: Thinking about Gender and Ethnicity in the Netherlands') how white women and people of color have been constructed and positioned in science in relation

to masculinity. Where white masculinity is normalized and naturalized, to be a full professor and to be black become mutually exclusive categories, thus problematizing the phenomenon of black (women) professors. This has been Wekker's personal experience as well (Wekker, 2002).

In light of the above, we mention three Gender Studies centers which have taken on board cross-cutting ordering principles and cultural diversity issues: Belle van Zuylen Institute for Multicultural Women's Studies (1991–2004, director Selma Leydesdorff until 2003 and Frances Gouda until 2004); Center for Expertise on Gender, Ethnicity and Multiculturality (1996–present, director Rosi Braidotti until 1999, and Gloria Wekker as from 1999); Center for Gender and Diversity Studies (1998–present, director Maaïke Meijer). These small or peripheral centers work from critical gender (and race) points of view and are in that sense, arguably, not representative and certainly not central to the minority research industry. In 2004, the board of the University of Amsterdam closed the Belle van Zuylen Institute for Multicultural Gender Studies which has had funding problems, with the argument that gender studies has been sufficiently integrated into mainstream research and teaching.

Race Critical Research

Where Dutch Women's Studies consists almost invariably of (white) women, the area of minority research operates almost exclusively through white and male dominated networks. Thus Jan Rath, critically qualifying minority research as one-sided and operating in closed circles, reinforces in the same article gender and racial exclusion. Apart from an occasional exception, and maybe quite unconsciously so, he acknowledges only the works of white males when quoting Dutch minority researchers (Rath, 2001).

To date, there have been two race critical studies of the nature of Dutch ethnic and racial studies, both CRES products of the late 1980s and the early 1990s. *Academic Racism: Common Sense in the Social Sciences* (Essed, 1987) focused on the paradigmatic and ideological underpinnings of the field, while *Color-less Research* (Mullard et al., 1991) exposed the exclusion of researchers of color from the field.

The names most often identified (internationally) with the development of Race Critical Theory in the Netherlands are those who have published about Dutch racism as a systemic phenomenon: Chris Mullard (pluralism and ethnicism), Teun van Dijk (racism and discourse), Philomena Essed (everyday racism), Kwame Nimako and Glenn Willemsen (the 4-D model of minority policy) all of whom were affiliated to CRES, the Center for Race and Ethnic Studies at the University of Amsterdam (1984–91). More recently, there are a few others such as Dienke Hondius (Free University and Anne Frank Foundation) who investigates, among other things, the strange career of the concept and experience of 'ras' (race) in Dutch history (Hondius, 2005). Race Critical

Theories are rooted in the tradition of radical thinkers and movements against racial oppression and exploitation in the history of colonization and decolonization (Essed and Goldberg, 2002). Its very nature, radical critique, makes this paradigm hardly attainable in the Netherlands polder model society. This might (partly) explain why Essed's studies of everyday racism⁹ caused a national commotion (Prins, 2004). The concept of everyday racism challenged the Dutch self-image as the most tolerant country in the world, while claiming that racism was a structural feature in Dutch history and society. At the other side of the critical spectrum, Paul Scheffer's newspaper article, and essay called 'The Multicultural Drama' (2000) triggered some critique, but also unprecedented waves of positive response. While Scheffer blamed Dutch policy and society at large for indifference about ethnic minorities, who are 'lagging behind culturally and socially', words like discrimination or racism were shunned from his vocabulary.

THE MINORITY RESEARCH INDUSTRY

The institutes that were called into being or benefited most from the social cohesion and multiculturalism government funds in the course of the 1990s continued to support diversity, multicultural integration and transnational citizenship, but in the new millennium policy discourse has changed. Gradually, and probably accelerated by the murder of populist politician Pim Fortuyn and 11 September 2001, research focusing in particular on Islam and Muslim-related topics is growing. At the same time the notion of racism seems to be making a hesitant comeback in public discourse, but referring largely to the extreme right and to so called 'reverse discrimination', notably Islam fundamentalism (or Muslim cultures), as if to create a sense of 'two parties equally at fault'. How did we get there?

Three main features characterize the nature of the development of a minority research industry in the Netherlands:

- First, *opportunity hoarding* through overlapping and intertwined policy and research networks, where the same key figures wear different, sometimes ill compatible, hats in different constellations. We noted above that the structure and organization of the core Dutch minorities industry indicates that the success of migration and ethnic studies institutes depends substantially on access to structural and project funding from the state.
- Second, *limited perceptions of racism*, defined as character trait and ideology of white racial supremacy prevalent among (a small minority of) rightwing extremists only.
- Third, *the problematization of ethnic minorities*, their successes or failures (socially, culturally, economically, politically) to live up to Dutch norms and western democratic standards.

On Opportunity Hoarding

Given the fact that minority research funding comes largely from the government, it seems helpful to be well connected to the circles of Dutch and European policy-makers. Social capital, networks and links with policy-makers, unions, and employers (organizations) are vital for facilitating access to research funding in the Netherlands as well as on a European level.

As noted, ERCOMER, and in particular IMES are ever growing consortia, which must also be seen against the demands of globalization and the commercialization of universities and of research. In the course of the 1990s, new government requirements and cuts in funding for higher education led to the establishment of research schools and subsequent mergers into larger schools. The incentive of European funding has encouraged the establishment of (mega) transnational research networks and joint ventures among university institutes in the European Union states.

On Limited Perceptions or, the Denial of Racism¹⁰

In the course of the 1990s, Race Critical Research all but disappeared from Dutch research agendas. Moreover, only the more principled or should one say, independent, scholars continued to write about systemic racism in the Netherlands, against the grain of denial (for instance, Mok, 1999; van der Valk, 2002; Prins, 2004; Bal, 2005). In the following part we suggest that (many, but not all) representatives of the Dutch minority research industry lack a comprehensive understanding of racism. In order to shed more light on the issue of misunderstanding the nature of racism we focus on a particular period in the history of Dutch minority research. We have reason to believe that (anti-antiracism) research publications between 1980 and 1990 as well as the closure of the Center for Race and Ethnic Studies (1991) have been formative of today's mitigation of the problem, which was particularly evident in social scientists' use of common sense arguments in defense of a perspective that reinforces traditional folk beliefs in 'Dutch tolerance'.

We discuss five strategies of denial. The first four are illustrated with selected examples of key mainstream publications of the late 1980s, each of which has been widely and positively exposed in the main Dutch newspapers. Media support of particular scholarly products and points of view is, and has been, essential in shaping and legitimizing the denial of racism. These four strategies, though still active in recent publications, paved the way for the fifth, in our view, more contemporary and probably most essential strategy. While in late modern multiethnic societies clashes over cultural difference, criminality, aggressive (male) youngsters, fears, and a sense of relative deprivation among large parts of the population should not be underestimated (Young, 1999), there is also a strong overtone that *we (white Dutch) have become victims of our own goodness*. It is not unlikely that the idea of being victimized, captivated, and abused by

minorities, also gives some relief. It liberates the dominant group from accountability and responsibility for existing racial-ethnic marginalization, while licensing defense (if not offense), 'by all (legal) means possible'. It should be seen that the Netherlands is not a unique case, but one variant of a larger European (and western) problem of racism mitigation and denial in the mainstream social sciences (van Dijk, 1993; van der Valk, 2002).

The strategies of denial can be identified as follows:

- 1) Naturalizing hostility against foreigners.
- 2) Exceptionalism.
- 3) Resistance against using the term racism.
- 4) Defense of Dutch tolerance.
- 5) Self-victimization: prisoners of tolerance.

The reader wants to keep in mind that we are focusing on key publications of the 1980s likely to have been crucial in shaping the present skewed character of the body of research on issues of race and ethnic relations.

1) Coming to Terms with the 'Natural' Hostility against 'Foreigners'

In neighborhood study done in Utrecht, a city with a substantial ethnic minority population, mostly Turks and Moroccans, Bovenkerk et al. (1985) gathered among white Dutch residents a range of negative statements about ethnic groups. Established groups object to the different life style of these groups, and express fears for the survival of authentic 'Dutch' community life. The research followed the Chicago school approach of the 1960s to the ethnographic study of interethnic relations. Except for a token migrant family, black and migrant residents were not asked to present their opinions and experiences in the neighborhood. According to the researchers, none of the informants would or could ever be racist. Quite the contrary. The researchers explained that the Dutch residents used to be so 'benevolent' (p. 137) towards the 'foreigners', predominantly Turks and Moroccans, in their neighborhood, but that their attitude has changed. They have become disillusioned, indifferent, critical and aggressively dismissive of 'foreigners'. If only the Turks and Moroccans would have appreciated Dutch benevolence more by adapting to Dutch culture, there would have been more ethnic harmony in the neighborhood. In support of this positive self-presentation of the Dutch, the researchers argue that none of the informants expressed a belief in the natural superiority of the white race. Therefore, there is no question of racism.

In the 20 years to follow, Turks and Moroccans would come to be referred to more often as 'Muslims' in an increasingly negative discourse in which Muslim has come to equal problem, criminal, if not terrorist. In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, the Netherlands excelled in negative and aggressive reactions towards (perceived) Muslims, compared to most other European countries (Prins, 2002).

2) *Exceptionalism*

In defense of their point of view that racism hardly exists in the Netherlands (Elich and Maso, 1984), a generally used argument is that the Dutch situation is 'special' because the Dutch word '*ras*' cannot be understood as the exact equivalent of the English word 'race', and that therefore the term racism cannot be applied to the Dutch situation. It is interesting to note that, the English used to have their own arguments against applying the term racism to race and ethnic relations in their country. The following quotation from Dummett (1973: 14) about English self-perceptions, could just as well have been written in a Dutch variant:

English people are used to thinking of racism as a Bad Thing, but they are convinced that it is always happening somewhere else. It may go on in part of Africa or in the United States, but it is not an English phenomenon. (. . .) It is (. . .) generally agreed that even if there is any manifestation in England of racism, the situation in this country is so different from that in any other country you care to name that we have nothing to learn from the history of other countries, or from the most immediately contemporary happenings in them.

It has become convention among Dutch scholars to avoid the word '*ras*' (race) and to use '*etniciteit*' (ethnicity) instead (Bovenkerk, 1999). This, however, does not take away the presence of notions of race in Dutch common sense thinking. To use the words of critical scholar Dienke Hondius:

The dominant norm prescribes that skin color is 'unimportant' and that 'it does not matter' what skin color one has. At the same time, skin tone stratification is still a fact, and color is one of the most persistent, unchanging and obvious differences. In a situation where privileges of white skin are never mentioned, and darker skin tones only mentioned as not relevant, tensions around visibility, a crucial factor, are inevitable. (Hondius, 1999: 410)

3) *Resistance to the Interpretation of Statements as 'Prejudiced' or 'Racist'*

In an essay 'Judgement and Discrimination', first published in a supplement of the main quality Dutch newspaper, André Köbben, a nationally known anthropologist whom we mentioned earlier as mediator between the government and the train hijackers, defines prejudice as 'an opinion that does not correspond to the facts' (Köbben, 1985: 54). Köbben used the term 'prejudice', but not the explanatory notion of racism. This was remarkable when at that time this scholar respectively chaired and directed two major institutions that advised the government on 'ethnic issues', the ACOM and the COMT. ACOM stands for *Adviescommissie Onderzoek Minderheden* (Advisory Commission on Minority Research). COMT stands for *Centrum voor Onderzoek van Maatschappelijke tegenstellingen* (Center for Research on Social Conflicts).

The rationale behind such a definition of prejudice is to treat incorrect statements of both white Dutch as well as black and migrant persons about each other's group, as equal and similar: false, because they do not agree with the 'facts'. Köbben's positivistic search for 'facts' conceals the problem of who

determines what the facts are. One of the major problems is that his approach severed ethnic relations in the Netherlands from the historical context of white domination and from the structures of dominance in society.

The reluctance to use the term racism also distorted the conclusions of an inquiry into the opinions of union members about the race and ethnic policies of their union, the FNV. The report (de Jongh et al., 1984) quoted a range of implicitly racist statements made by the union members, expressing hostility against foreigners and rejecting union support for black and migrant equality claims. However, the researchers insisted upon classifying their findings as forms of 'stereotypical beliefs, prejudice and myths' (de Jongh et al., 1984: 222). They made it a point to emphasize that 'union members are not the only people with prejudice in the Netherlands' as if to protect them from stigmatization (de Jongh et al., 1984: 222).

The idea of protecting one's subjects against being singled out as prejudiced was not new. White policemen were similarly protected by their researchers (Luning, 1976; Aalberts and Kamminga, 1983). To save their respondents from being categorized as a particularly prejudiced group, the researchers emphasized that prejudice found in interviews with policemen did not differ significantly from prejudice found among other groups in the Dutch population. Because they did not subsequently draw the conclusion that 'prejudice' (they did not use the term 'racism') is apparently a structural problem, one is led to think that the researchers were trivializing their findings pointing at commonly occurring anti-Black and migrant attitudes.

The continual resistance against using the term racism has been discussed at length by critical scholar Baukje Prins (2002). Researchers rather write about 'stereotypes' or 'negative representations', which, conveniently, can be applied 'equally' to both parties: dominant group and ethnic minorities or refugees, or to use the mainstream concepts: 'autochtonen and allochtonen' (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2004).

4) Defense of Dutch 'Tolerance': 'Ethnic Minorities' are 'Subjective' and 'Anti-racists' are 'Inclined to Exaggeration'

As the above examples illustrate, scientific terminology and the definition of the problem are not neutral: they imply a political perspective. The implication of different definitions of 'the ethnic relations problem' is expressed clearly in the use of the concept of racism. With the view of the political implications of the definition of the concept of racism we turn to a study, commissioned by the government, in which the researchers (Elich and Maso, 1984) evaluated a range of international studies of prejudice, discrimination and racism and listed what they felt were important areas for research and policy with respect to the problem of racism.

Here is not the place to present a lengthy discussion of the report. We only show that the main critique includes similar points as those discussed earlier in

this article. The report pretended to give an 'objective' international overview of academic studies of prejudice, discrimination and racism with the aim of formulating subsequent research policies for the Dutch context. From the very beginning, the word racism was consistently placed between quotation marks. This strategy of mitigating the problem of racism was (and still is) also evident in the writing style of the national daily newspapers (van Dijk, 1983). Because of this common sense attitude towards the problem of racism, their main conclusions were predictable from the start, namely that racism should not be considered a social problem in the Netherlands. The Elich and Maso study pictured racism as a mere 'polemical' word (p. 11), while dismissing the experiences of blacks: black accounts of racism would provide 'subjective', and, therefore, invalid information (p. 61). In other words, the perspective of the victims of racism could not be trusted. It is recommended in the concluding chapters that black 'perspectives' be considered, if only to be seen as marginal additions to other (white) research (p. XXIII). This strategy was also reflected in the way the academic researchers shared a 'we-perspective' and opposed that to the view of ethnic minorities (p. 4), as if those who represent academic knowledge do not include blacks and migrants. A telling detail: the report's (international) bibliography consisted almost exclusively of publications by whites.

There was another key document at the time, based on a project commissioned by the National Bureau for Combating Racism (LBR). Here we only point at a few issues relating to the above discussions. The report focused on discrimination practices of Dutch employment agencies (den Uyl et al., 1986). The empirical results of the project are highly relevant, because it appeared that all (!) tested agencies routinely accept and process racist demands from employers, such as a preference for Dutch and for white employees. Nevertheless, this was not perceived as an instance of racism, but as 'discrimination', defined as 'the product of prejudice of individual desk clerks' or mediators (p. 19). Thus 'discrimination' was personalized and severed from the cultural context.

Like the Elich and Maso study, the Den Uyl et al. report problematized the involvement of blacks and migrants as reliable parties in the formulation of anti-discrimination policies. After suggesting that 'ethnic organizations' investigate specific cases of (claimed) discrimination, the report suddenly qualifies this recommendation with the suggestion that only 'methodologically accountable' research counts and that 'ethnic groups' (only) investigate cases of 'serious' allegations of discrimination (Den Uyl et al., 1986: 29). Just as in the Elich and Maso (1984) study, black and migrant organizations and their researchers were apparently not to be trusted. Was it assumed that they make careless conclusions, thereby 'falsely' accusing whites? The same bias against accounts of blacks and migrants was evident in other aspects of the recommendations. Except from the suggestion that they do 'methodologically accountable' research the recommendations do not support the need to involve black and

migrant groups in the formulation and implementation and, in particular, the supervision of anti-discrimination policies.

5) *Self-victimization: Prisoners of Tolerance Pleading Guilt*

The sentiment originating in the late 1980s, to protect innocent whites in poor neighborhoods, who express their real concerns about foreigners, against the label of racism, set the tone for the future. Moreover, a climate of aggression and intolerance has emerged against those who are critical of racism. We found that some researchers stopped using the term ‘racism’ altogether (Essed, 2004). Others disassociate themselves from antiracism by making confessions about how wrong they were. Take for instance the confession of Wilma Vollebergh, newly appointed full professor of Cross Cultural Pedagogy at Nijmegen University. The following quote from her inaugural speech (November 2002) expresses a largely shared sentiment among minority researchers, many of whom would like to see themselves as liberal in terms of tolerance for multiculturalism and/or center-left in terms of socio-economic politics:

The very moment the larger urban areas in the Netherlands changed color, and people (. . .) left their neighborhoods because more and more often they could not understand [the language of] neighbors and neighborhood dwellers anymore, we astutely registered in our research an upsurge of ethnocentric sentiments, in particular among youngsters. We were right (. . .) to be concerned. But we, academic researchers, were preaching from our comfortable homes and superior positions all too easy the need for tolerance (. . .) and intercultural coexistence. We failed to take sufficient notice of those daily tensions that go together with this situation, in particular for the economically disadvantaged. We were too easy about labeling the grievances they voiced ‘racism’. As a result we had limited perceptions of the reality of interethnic hostilities on both sides of the divide. (. . .) In research on criminality among alien [*allochtonen*] youngsters it was for a long time ‘not done’ to presume that it [criminal behavior] was indeed higher than among native [*autochtonen*] youngsters. There is still some inhibition in pointing at calculating manners of citizenship (. . .) [and] at hostility against Dutch society (. . .) as if we needed 11 September to realize that people from countries with structural poverty can hate us for the taken-for-granted way in which we claim our wealth. (Vollebergh, 2002: 4, author’s translation)¹¹

Notice that ‘people’ (line 2) are apparently white Dutch, and so are researchers and other members of the category indicated as ‘we’.

Meindert Fennema, Professor of Political Theory of Ethnic Relations at the University of Amsterdam addresses the quality of public debates and the way representatives of different opinions and paradigms position themselves in particular anti-immigrant and pro-multicultural society camps. In his inaugural speech (27 June 2003) entitled ‘*Over de kwaliteit van politieke elites*’ (‘About the Quality of Political Elites’),¹² Fennema argued that antiracism, which in his view used to represent the consensus among the European political elites, became a threat to the freedom of opinion and to open democratic debate. He suggests five rules for democratic public debate: refrain from instigation towards violence; do not propagate the exclusion of particular citizens from public debate;

acknowledge the humanity of your opponent – those who call homosexuals ‘worse than pigs’ (p. 31, this is probably a reference to one particular fundamentalist Imam) should be prosecuted by law; mutual respect; and accountability.

On Problematization of Ethnic Minorities

The problematization of ethnic minorities is not new. It underpins the *insider-outsider paradigm* we referred to in the first section and the cultural *deficit policy model* we alluded to in the second section. What appear to be new are the involvement and/or reflections of mainstream representatives of minority research in public discourse in recent years. Below we will continue to quote from other inaugural speeches. Inaugural speeches are interesting, because invariably presented in Dutch they represent popularized versions of academic arguments, and they are discussed in local and national newspapers.

Recently, the major impact by intellectuals on public discourse problematizing ethnic minorities has come from two figures, namely, Pim Fortuyn and Paul Scheffer. Ayaan Hirshi Ali, who is and has been influential as well, is not discussed here, because as a politician she represents a political party and not an academic point of view.

Pim Fortuyn started out as an academic and public intellectual who took a holistic approach and set out to attack the organization of society and politics at three levels, namely, regent/consensus political culture (i.e. polder model), bureaucracy (e.g. the waiting lists in hospitals), and Islam in relation to Moroccan Imams and young men. First, Fortuyn argued that the polder model constituted a democratic deficit because a small group of elites make decisions behind closed doors (*achterkamer politiek*). Second, he criticized the bureaucratization of the welfare state, which has led to, among other things, long waiting lists at hospitals. Finally, he advocated for a secular form of integration policy instead of multiculturalism that gives too much room for what he considered as some ‘backward’ forms of ‘Islamic culture’. But the political irony is that it was his critique of Islam that caught public and media attention. However, Fortuyn was not assassinated because of his views on Islam, but because of his views on animal husbandry and the environment.

Pim Fortuyn (a PhD holder in sociology) left academia to become a private consultant, columnist and politician. Paul Scheffer (MA holder in history) was a columnist who, whether by accident or by design, was invited into academia after his publication of an essay entitled ‘The Multicultural Drama’ (*Het multi-culturele drama*, 2000). Published in the main (conservative) quality newspaper, the *NRC*, usually read by politicians and policy-makers, the essay triggered heated debates. What both Fortuyn and Scheffer had in common is that they set out to break the politics of consensus. A difference however is that Fortuyn directed his critique to the way Dutch society and politics as a whole is organized and operates, whereas Scheffer critiqued the discourse of multiculturalism and the minority research industry that supports such discourse.

The central Scheffer argument is that multicultural discourse has given rise to a 'culture of anything goes' and has clouded a proper understanding of Dutch history. Scheffer claimed that multiculturalism had failed Dutch society as well as minorities. In the name of cultural relativism the autochthonous (native) majority, in particular the progressive elites, have become indifferent about the increasing segregation and isolation of '*allochtonen*' (non-natives) who are lagging behind socially, educationally and in the labor market (Prins, 2004). Scheffer's solution at the time: compulsory Dutch history lessons and assimilation into Dutch norms and values. Moreover, more national pride among the Dutch would offer '*allochtonen*' at least some reasons too to want to belong to that national unity. He also pleaded for a parliamentary inquiry of ethnic minorities policy.

'The Multicultural Drama' caused wide spread commotion because many reduced the article to its most controversial statements, Scheffer's call for more national pride ('a nationalist') and cultural assimilation ('who wants to abolish cultural difference'). Few acknowledged his (self-stated) motivation, outcry over moral indifference among cultural relativists about the growing gap between '*autochtonen*' and '*allochtonen*'. A critique of indifference underlying the ideal of multicultural tolerance was formulated earlier in the race critical paradigm (Mullard et al., 1990; Essed, 1996). But rather than writing about emancipation, antiracism and transformative change in society, Scheffer's solution was different: fix the ethnic minorities in order to enable them to live up to the culturally more advanced level of Dutch norms and values.

In 2003, Paul Scheffer was appointed a Special Professor in Metropolitan Affairs at the University of Amsterdam with particular focus on Amsterdam. This chair, financed by the municipality of Amsterdam, for one day per week, circulates every five years. As a journalist and public intellectual, Scheffer's main oeuvre was political journalism. One can wonder: did the University of Amsterdam grant him the highest scholarly reward (a chair) for his contribution to the Dutch discourse on ethnic relations?

In his inaugural speech (19 April 2002), Han Entzinger takes issue against the accusation that ethnic minorities are not willing to adapt to Dutch society, a view not only advocated by Paul Scheffer, but also by Prime Minister Balkenende. Entzinger contends that the rhetoric of forced assimilation and rejection of cultural roots does not work. A democratic society without immigrants and cultural diversity is simply unthinkable. He contends that immigrant groups are much more acculturated than is generally believed. For instance, they develop versions of Islam with a touch of western individualism. He advises that the government invest more in education and naturalization, an echo of his *Allochtonenbeleid* (1989) policy document we referred to earlier.

It is also in the context of multiculturalism that Wilma Vollebergh, Professor of Cross-Cultural Pedagogy at the University of Nijmegen gave her inaugural speech (1 November 2002) entitled '*Gemiste kansen. Culturele diversiteit en de*

jeudgzorg' ('Missed Opportunities. Cultural Diversity and Youth Welfare Work'). According to Vollebergh the majority of research on '*allochtonen*' youngsters focuses on criminality, marginalization and school disadvantages. She maintains that it is true that *allochtonen* youngsters have more psychological problems and engage more frequently in criminal behavior. But it is not sufficient to look for ethnic cultural explanations. It should be seen that the social context of discrimination and ethnic stereotypes against ethnic groups aggravates these problems. In addition the higher degree of problem behavior is not met with a higher degree of care and welfare work among ethnic youngsters. The government should increase funding rather than cut research and welfare work among ethnic youngsters.

On the other hand, Ruben Gowricharn, Special Professor of Multicultural Cohesion and Transnational Affairs at the University of Tilburg, prefers to place emphasis on what he considers to be successful immigrants. In his inaugural speech (15 November 2002) entitled '*Het omstreden paradijs. Over multiculturaliteit en social cohesie*' ('Contested Paradise. About Multiculturalism and Social Cohesion'), Gowricharn commented that 'given that the research programs of most of the universities focus on "problems and difficulties" it hardly makes any sense to adopt the same perspective.'¹³ Criticizing the one-sided media, policy and research focus on a minority of problematic youth among ethnic minorities, Gowricharn wants to highlight the successes of the emancipation of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands. He takes a stand against forced assimilation in favor of the recognition of cultural diversity. In addition, he emphasizes the need to use a transnational framework and to create space in research for the lived experiences of ethnic minorities.

This is also the context of the contribution of Erik Snel, Special Professor of Intercultural Governance at the University of Twente, to the discussion on multiculturalism. In his inaugural speech (15 May 2003) entitled '*De vermeende kloof tussen culturen*'¹⁴ ('The Alleged Gap between Cultures'), Snel argued that the public debate about minorities has become harsh with a one-sided focus on the most traditional ones among the immigrants. Those who have jobs and are integrated are overlooked. The idea of cultural incompatibility is misleading. The cultural gap paradigm – Dutch or western versus Islam culture – calls for only one solution: forced assimilation. The cultural gap construct is a form of essentialism that does not do justice to the fact that cultures change in contact, mutually adapt to each other. Cultural determinism denies choice and agency of individuals. An overemphasis on assimilation will only reinforce rigid ethnic identities and increase social tensions and conflict.

With the media hype in 2000 around the assimilationist approach of Paul Scheffer and, in 2001–2 the 'Islam = Backward' paradigm of Pim Fortuyn, the policy wind has changed. State repression of ethnic minorities and asylum seekers is tolerated if not accepted more and more.

This was also the context of the critique of Thomas Spijkerboer (2002), Professor of Migration Law at the Free University. Spijkerboer analyzed 250 cases where the *Raad van State* (Council of the State) has ruled in cases concerning aliens and asylum seekers. He came to the conclusion that the Council is increasingly less critical of the Minister of (Issues concerning) Aliens Affairs (*Minister van vreemdelingenzaken*), to the disadvantage of justice seeking aliens. By engaging in ‘juridical activism’¹⁵ the Council of the State undermines its own legal legitimacy.

It is important to note that Henk Molleman, the architect of the Netherlands Ethnic Minorities Policy, added his voice to the debate in an article entitled ‘*Het Minderhedenbeleid in Retrospectief*’ (‘Minorities Policy in Retrospect’) (2003). According to Molleman, the constant factor about the ethnic minorities policy debate is that it has failed. However, he states that this is not new because some people argued that it had failed before it was enacted back in 1983. He argued that apart from lack of support from certain political parties and successive governments, the policy was undermined by increased immigration. This is all the more so since one of the preconditions of the success of the policy was the restriction of immigration. What Molleman did not mention is one of the unanticipated consequences of the policy, namely, the proliferation of immigration and minorities research institutes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In our attempt to shed light on the cultures of scholarship and public policy on immigrants and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, we have not only tried to make visible that dynamic networking between policy-makers and minority research and its paradigms exist, but also we examined the proliferation of immigrants/minorities research institutes in response to public policy. Public and civil servants in charge of advising the government about minority policy become academic researchers in charge of conducting policy research. Flowing from this, the extent of, and/or access to, formal state funding (structural or project based) have largely determined the context and content of migration and ethnic studies in the Netherlands. Minority researchers continue to advise the government on migration and related issues as appointed members of Council bodies to the government or through specific assignments commissioned by the government. At the same time most minority researchers continue to rely on national or European funding for their research.

We also made reference to a few other institutes, relevant either because they are quintessential creations of government policy and contributors to the minority research industry or because they are small entities representing critical research paradigms. Examples of the latter are units for Women’s/ Gender Studies with firm emphasis on ethnicity and or cultural diversity. We also mentioned that the politics of research on race and ethnic relations in the

Netherlands have been more or less similar to developments in other (western) countries: competition between oppositional and mainstream paradigms, between *race critical research* and what has come to be called in the Netherlands *minority research*. The two directions are not completely mutually exclusive. There is some overlap where oppositional paradigms meet the critical end of mainstream research.

The mainstream or core institutions are being ‘challenged’, not through competing paradigms within the institutes, but through the creation of special chairs at other institutes. But these new chairs remain peripheral in relation to policy and media attention. However, whereas special chairs are increasing, the subjects to be studied in the core institutes are developing their institutional network by linking up with similar institutes within the expanding European Union.

As a result of this skewed research body, few if any scholars (or politicians and journalists for that matter) were equipped to engage in serious critical debate with the populist Pim Fortuyn. His anti-Islam discourse and advocacy of cultural assimilation, a mix of partial truths and over-generalizations, struck a chord in many angry and frustrated souls including members of ethnic minorities groups. Lacking comprehensive knowledge of racism, there were few if any scholarly counter voices equipped to distinguish in a nuanced way between the racist dimensions in Fortuyn’s populism and the value in a democratic society of critiquing injustices in both majority and ethnic minority communities (Essed, 2001). Note that we point at racist dimensions (statements, words, assumptions) and not at racism as a character trait of a particular individual. It would be simplistic to call Fortuyn ‘a racist’. However, many among the (academic) establishment could see Fortuyn only in moral terms (a racist, a bad guy) and reacted according to the polder model. ‘Nobody’ who considered him/herself ‘decent’ wanted to even debate with him, could not debate with him, because they felt caught between the devil and the deep blue sea: you either break a taboo by calling him ‘a racist’ or agree with him and risk being accused of collaboration with ‘a racist’. Below we will discuss how mainstream minority research has contributed to personalizing racism, rather than recognizing systemic exclusion and cultural humiliations as racist in their consequences.

Fortuyn was shunned by the intellectual elites, ridiculed, criminalized and finally literally assassinated – ironically, by an advocate of fundamental environmentalism. The Pim Fortuyn drama has caused a major shift in public discourse to one where ‘political correctness’ is blamed for the problems Dutch society is facing. Today, hostile language, offensive language, racist statements, and anti-immigrant policy propositions or real measures occur literally everyday in the news. Conversely, aggressive language and threats directed against politicians who are perceived to be at fault, for whatever reason, have spread as well.

Bashing, in particular, asylum seekers and Islam, has become normal and accepted in public discourse. This holds true as well for other European

countries. In a comparative study of parliamentary discourse in a handful of Western European countries (Italy, Spain, France, Austria, the Netherlands, and UK) it was found that:

Refugees are (. . .) primarily seen as a financial burden, and virtually never as an opportunity for the country. They tend to be associated with illegality, if not with crime, and in many other respects are represented in negative ways. Politicians, in their parliamentary speeches, will thus on the one hand present themselves as tolerant and understanding, but more often than not their speeches will more subtly or blatantly convey the idea that refugees are not welcome in Europe. The same is true for debates about residing minority groups within the country. Except from a few notable antiracist voices, the discourse of the political elites thus confirms and reformulates the broader anti-foreigner sentiments in the European Union. (Wodak and van Dijk, 2000: 10–11)

While researchers and scholars are largely critical of anti-immigrant discourse, with the silencing of race critical paradigms, there are few concepts and frameworks left to analyze and contextualize which anti-immigrant sentiments and policies are historically rooted in the invention of race and the Other and which sentiments are fears, discomforts and insecurities resulting from the uncontrollable paradigms of globalization in a world that has become smaller.

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NOTES

- 1 [<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/imes/>].
- 2 [http://www.mzes.uni-mannheim.de/eurodata/newsletter/no11/eu_migration.html], accessed April 2004.
- 3 [<http://www.ercomer.org/research/index.html>]; update 10 December 2003.
- 4 [<http://www.uu.nl/uupublish/onderzoek/onderzoekcentra/ercomer/24638main.html>], accessed 22 April 2004.
- 5 [<http://www.siswo.uva.nl/o%20en%20o/o%20en%20o%20documenten/siswodutch%20metropolis.html>].
- 6 [<http://www.iseo-eur.com/>].
- 7 Martin Sommer, 'Makelaars in minderheden', *Volkskrant* 28 December 2002 [www.volkskrant.nl/binnenland/1063948751109.html], accessed April 2004.
- 8 [<http://www.imiscoe.org/research.htm>].
- 9 In a recent study of the nature of Dutch public discourse on (ethnic) integration in the Netherlands, philosopher Baukje Prins (2004) deconstructs and analyzes the impact of the Dutch version of *Understanding Everyday Racism* (Essed, 1991, *Inzicht in alledaags racisme*) on Dutch self-perceptions in and outside of academia, among advocates of antiracism and among mainstream scholars.
- 10 Large sections of this part draw from CRES working paper no. 7: 'Academic Racism: Common Sense in the Social Sciences', P. Essed (1987).
- 11 'Missed Opportunities. Cultural Diversity and Youth Welfare Work', Wilma Vollebergh, Inaugural speech, November 2002, University of Nijmegen.

- 12 [<http://www2.fmg.uva.nl/imes/books/fennema-oratie.pdf>].
 13 [<http://www.forum.nl/pdf/oratie.pdf>], p. 36, authors' translation.
 14 [<http://www.utwente.nl/nieuws/wetenschapsnieuws/2003/snel.pdf>].
 15 [<http://www.parool.nl/1037944762613.html>], accessed April 2004.

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