

# **NETWORKING EUROPEAN CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

## **Rethinking Citizenship Education in European Migration Societies Political Strategies - Social Changes - Educational Concepts**

### **Conference Paper**

#### **Contribution**

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Migrants from every corner of the world have changed urban communities in Europe. Whatever their original intention, whatever ours, it has long since ceased to matter. The world has nestled into our neighbourhoods, a confusing and shocking experience. Shops, places of worship, schools and markets - everything and everybody is affected by the mass migration currently underway, the end of which is by no means in sight. Indeed, one gets the impression that the great mobility of people characterizes a new era that, in the absence of better words, we describe as an era of globalization.

We would be ill-advised to belittle or disregard these profound changes. The bromide “immigration is a timeless phenomenon” is therefore wasted on me. How often one comes across such extenuating phrases in official publications. The Municipality of Amsterdam writes, as if it were a routine statement, “Almost half of those living in Amsterdam do not originally come from the Netherlands. That is nothing new. As an immigration city, for centuries Amsterdam has welcomed people from different extractions and denominations: Portuguese Jews, French Huguenots and migrant workers from Germany”. In other words, people have always been on the move, and these times are therefore unexceptional.

But the old and new migrations differ considerably. Even if, according to historical criteria, there might be nothing new under the sun, we are nevertheless witnessing a radical shift in the composition of the population. The seventeenth century was, indeed, full of movement, but that does nothing to detract from the upheaval in big cities today. How can immigrant workers from Morocco or Turkey, who are changing our cities, possibly be cancelled out by the migrant workers from Germany who once arrived in these parts? It may be that Jews from Portugal fled this way to escape the Inquisition, but that does not mean that the arrival of refugees from Iran or Afghanistan, fleeing the religious tyranny of Islam, has simply become a matter of course.

#### **A History of Alienation**

How long can the significance of what happens to you be diminished by referring to the vicissitudes of the past? How long can a major experience be denied and dismissed as outside the norm? Not so very long, as the sense of losing something essential is intrusive and will not easily be stilled. What can no longer be ignored is that tolerance and freedom are under pressure. Not only in the Netherlands, but

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also in surrounding countries. This growing unease demands expression.

The migration we are now experiencing has so far failed to make our society more open. If we look at the traditional views many migrants bring with them, it would be more accurate to say that old issues regarding women's position have suddenly re-emerged and that freedom of speech is once again contested. Even though these views are sometimes familiar from our own past, it can hardly be seen as progress to be forced to repeat the emancipation that took place fifty years ago. The immigration of closed communities is putting the open society to the test.

Unfortunately, the receiving societies in Europe are facing that test with utmost insecurity. In countries such as Austria, France, Italy, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium, the success of populist parties is the visible sign of a buried unease. The mounting tension is tangible, as is the tendency to turn away from a threatening outside world.

It is uncertain, to say the least, whether the past few decades' migration constitutes an enrichment of society. In fact, repetitive use of that word is ill-chosen in view of the impoverished circumstances in which many migrants live. Their lack of education, in numerous cases their illiteracy, adds little to societies that are suddenly faced with the sum of these deprivations. In several European countries, the costs of migration are, for the time being, higher than its benefits.

This is not a question of guilt. Certainly many migrants could have done more to gain a place in their new country, and they should have rid themselves more quickly of the myth of return, the idea that their stay in Europe was only temporary. But the receiving societies have failed to fully comprehend that migration and the welfare state do not automatically mix. Plentiful facilities of social support have reasonably provided for many immigrants, but at the same time, have placed them in a situation of hopeless dependence.

In retrospect, all sides have made errors in evaluation. But that does not sum it up, by any means. It remains to be seen how a renewal of society as a whole can emerge from this clash. Today's impasse can be overcome: That belief is the driving force in the current search for a new vocabulary and fresh insight. If we succeed in that search, then we will justifiably be able to say that the arrival of so many migrants has, indeed, made society more open, while enriching it in numerous ways.

What we need is a more open-minded view of the frictions and clashes characteristic of any mass migration process. Many current researchers are rather restrained in their opinions, but luckily we can fall back on earlier generations of historians and sociologists who have studied migration. Oscar Handlin, for example, the most famous historian of immigration to America, wrote in a time when the moralization of migration was not yet a major issue and the conflict between newcomers and natives was not yet expressed in terms of good and bad.

In *The Uprooted: The Epic Story of the Great Migrations That Made the American People*, a book that won Handlin the Pulitzer Prize, he identified the causes and consequences of the migration of the large numbers of people who crossed the Atlantic from Europe to America. His story can be summarized in one phrase, the theme of everything that follows here: "The history of migration is the history of alienation and its consequences". Alienation and loss, those are the key concepts describing the arrival of migrants in a new environment.

Handlin first considers those who came to America - the migrants and their uprooting. Tens of millions were cast adrift by the consequences of industrialization and the enormous population explosion in the second half of the century. The disruption and poverty it caused in the countryside, in particular, translated into mass immigration from countries such as Ireland, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway and Poland.

With great empathy, Handlin describes the often-horrifying ocean voyage and arrival in the new land. Once there, the migrants had to find their way, more than once entirely destitute and without any idea of what awaited them:

A time came for many men when the slow glacial shift of economic and social forces suddenly broke loose in some major upheaval that cast loose the human beings from their age-old setting. In an extreme form this was the experience of the immigrants. It was also in some degree the experience of all modern men. They did not welcome the liberation, almost any of them. Its immediate form was always separation.<sup>1</sup>

Migration was, and is, primarily a tale of town and country; in addition to craftsmen, it was mostly farmers who sought refuge in America. Handlin describes their loss of status on arrival: "The loyal dutiful man,

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faithful to tradition, the man who was the son and grandson of substantial peasants, was reduced to the indignity of hired labour, while shrewd, selfish, unscrupulous upstarts thrived". Family life, in particular, was affected; the old extended families slowly disintegrated, old skills suddenly proved unprofitable. "Loneliness, separation from the community of the village, and despair at the insignificance of their own human abilities, these were the elements that, in America, colored the peasants' view of their world".

In these strange circumstances, many reverted to the security of tradition, particularly religious tradition: "In that sense all immigrants were conservatives, dissenters and peasants alike. All would seek to set their ideas within the fortifications of religious and cultural institutions that would keep them sound against the strange New World". What concerns me most is that conservatism - reverting back to old customs and habits in order to survive in an entirely new, often urban environment. The final result was often a feeling of no longer belonging anywhere, concluded Handlin: "They had thus completed their alienation from the culture to which they had come, as from that which they had left". That no-man's land also typifies the experience of many contemporary migrants, who seek handholds in a new society, but fail to find them.

It is not only the migrants who suffer from disorientation, but also those who already live in the land of arrival. After all, that land was not a blank canvas, but a country with a history of customs and habits, laws and institutions. The non-immigrant population, too, is thrown off balance and must try to regain its equilibrium. Handlin sees that side of the story all too well:

Everything in the neighbourhood was so nice, they would later say, until the others came. The others brought outlandish ways and unintelligible speech, foreign dress and curious foods, were poor, worked hard, and paid higher rents for inferior quarters.<sup>ii</sup>

Harking back to a certain view of the community as it was before everything changed is an understandable reaction: "We want our country back", or even stronger, "We want our goddamn future back", as someone said recently in an English television programme. Not only do we see that resistance throughout the entire history of American immigration; naturally we are all too familiar with it in our own time and place. The feeling among the natives that something of a familiar society is being lost should be acknowledged, just as we acknowledge the uprooted feelings of many newcomers.

The phrase "We've become strangers in our own country" should therefore not be dismissed out of hand as an expression by the common man, unaware that the world has changed. On the contrary, this loaded sentence acknowledges that migration has brought the whole world into the neighbourhood.

No wonder, therefore, that newcomers and natives share the same feeling of loss, for the cause of their restlessness is the same. First of all, naturally, migrants embody a world adrift but, partly due to their arrival, the natives are being swept along with these changes in their daily environment. As Handlin says, it is the shared condition of modern people. Everyone is undergoing a disorienting experience. Indeed: "The history of migration is the history of alienation and its consequences".

That also explains why this shared feeling of loss leads not to spontaneous rapprochement, but rather to a separation between newcomers and natives. The seclusion now in motion among both the minority and the majority is part of the history of immigration and also a reaction to a new phase of globalization. The literary critic Svetlana Boym illustrates that well, writing, "Nostalgia is paradoxical in the sense that longing can make us more empathetic toward fellow humans, yet the moment we try to repair longing with belonging, the apprehension of loss with a rediscovery of identity, we often part ways and put an end to mutual understanding".<sup>iii</sup> That is exactly what is happening now: The longing to find a handhold in a turbulent world drives newcomers and natives apart. That is what I described several years ago, to the dismay of many, as a "multicultural drama".

The rediscovery of identity has nothing to do with irrationality. It is a defence mechanism, for both majorities and minorities, which we need to understand. There is a risk of people entrenching themselves in a sense of loyalty to their own community. Self-images under pressure become ossified, while everyone knows you can only develop in constant interchange with an ever-changing environment. We must reach past nostalgia and internalize the fact that migration is changing our societies irreversibly.

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## Conflict in Migrant Families

Migration generally stems from necessity, but the talent to make a virtue of that necessity is not given to everyone. Too often we see the romanticized image of the immigrant as the embodiment of a world increasingly in motion. The migrant is described as a forerunner, a kind of reluctant advance guard. An experience that usually has traumatic aspects has been translated into an added value. There are many examples of that attempt to turn a necessity into a virtue. Some writers, entrepreneurs, sports heroes and politicians succeed in acquiring prominent positions in their new countries. There are also innumerable teachers, shopkeepers, policemen and nurses who have made a success of migration, but it doesn't always come easy.

Keeping your balance on the slack rope strung between the land of origin and the land of arrival demands immense effort. Not many are blessed with the ability to master that difficult balancing act. Often, the temptation is great either to break with everything left behind or to cling to memories and resist the new environment. In any event, the loss cannot be denied, even if the added value of migration is emphasized.

It does not help to relativize the effort of migrating. Despite the successful efforts of many to drag themselves out of the quagmire, we should not forget that the effort all too often begins in a quagmire. Migration has been referred to as a brutal bargain: You lose something precious and, at the same time, gain access to another culture. In other words, acquiring a place in a new country often means compromising, or even betraying, family traditions. Learning a new language estranges many migrants little by little from their parental homes. That struggle between the culture of the land of origin and the land of arrival embroils many migrant families.

This social reality carries more weight than do abstract models of integration. In countries such as Great Britain and France, much emphasis is placed on the individual traditions of integration; the migration experience and consequent ethnic tensions in the two countries, and elsewhere in Europe, however, are reasonably comparable. We must look beyond the discussion of models, which functions as a way of immunizing countries against experiences over the border ("the crisis of the French model" or "the failure of the Dutch model", means, in other words, "it's not a British problem"). Then we discover that the experiences of migrants and natives in Bradford, Lyon, Malmö, Rotterdam and Antwerp are not all that different.

Let us look more closely at the degree to which relocation is an uprooting experience. There is nothing harmonious or easy about this experience, certainly in view of many migrants' rural backgrounds. Imagine the voyage in time, from a small village community in the Rif Mountains or Anatolia to the teeming urban environment of Amsterdam, Birmingham, Lyon or Frankfurt. The saying in the Morocco is: "going to the airport on a donkey". It is not surprising that all kinds of confrontations arise in this situation; it would be more likely to raise questions if there were none.

Had we known our classics, we would have been able to anticipate the problems immigration provokes. Read what the founder of the famous Chicago School of sociology, Robert E. Park, wrote as far back as 1925 on the basis of his observations in Chicago's migrant milieu, in the ghettos that developed so spectacularly there. The fact that Little Italy was also referred to as "Little Hell", with fifteen thousand uneducated farmers from Sicily and their families packed together in wretched conditions, leaves little to the imagination.

Migrants' lives are marked not only by poverty, but also by a difficult cultural transition, Park wrote in the 1920s: "We are living in such a period of individualization and social disorganization. Society is, apparently, not much more than a congeries and constellation of social atoms". In such an individualized society, it is hard for community-based migrants to find their way:

Energies that were formerly controlled by custom and tradition are released. The individual is free for new adventures, but he is more or less without direction and control. The result is a cultural hybrid, a man on the margin of two cultures and two societies, which are never completely interpenetrated and fused.<sup>iv</sup>

Even at the beginning of the last century it was recognized that the main issue was the clash between individualization and community spirit.

Disorientation in a society where so many rural people find themselves in an urban environment

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is therefore not surprising; it can be seen in the lands of origin. Migrants from the Moroccan and Turkish countryside already have difficulty adjusting in Casablanca and Istanbul. The culture shock is even more severe when, on top of this difficult transition in their own country from a village community to an anonymous city, they also must transition from a religious culture to an overwhelmingly secular society. In fact, two steps are taken in one journey, making the transition from tradition to modernity very abrupt indeed.

This unsettling quest can be found in numerous places, but first within the family, where the distance from and proximity to the new society are felt most strongly. Farah Karimi, a Dutch member of parliament originally from Iran, wrote, "There is certainly a multicultural drama being played out here. In the living rooms of minority families, in particular".<sup>v</sup> This is a fierce conflict between traditional and modern views of relations between men and women, parents and children, believers and nonbelievers.

For those involved, much is at stake: It is more than a question of give and take. A compromise is not easy between one culture based on destiny and another that tries to give priority to individual freedom. In the first case, everything is virtually predetermined: The social position, caste, faith and gender into which you are born is the mould into which the rest of your life is poured. There is virtually no chance of escape. In the other culture, life is seen as an invitation to self-development. The idea that you must take "fate" into your own hands also leads to high, even excessive expectations, but the point of departure is quite different from that of a traditional culture, which places all emphasis on community, leaving little or no room for the individual.

The distorted relationship of migrant parents and their children is one of the most painful consequences of migration, as the relative isolation of many increases their alienation from sons and daughters, who are neither willing nor able to keep such distance from the society they live in daily. There is nothing strange or unexpected about a generational conflict, but in many migrant families the distance between the generations is extreme. Many parents miss the opportunity to prepare their children for life in a society where they are unfamiliar with not only the language but also the customs and habits. Their resignation is all too visible, the feeling that everything has been taken away from them.

In his novel *Judith and Jamal*, Fouad Laroui typifies the father and son relationship: "Abal-Khail loved his son, but did not know how to put it into words. He was concerned for him, there in that country of which he understood so little. It was his fault that Jamal was growing up in that land of infidels. He had wanted to protect him from all dangers, against the temptations, the pitfalls". The mother is, if possible, even further removed from her surroundings. Is it possible to live somewhere and yet not be there, Laroui wonders?

Years later that question was answered when I saw Mina lying asleep one day on a couch, worn out. The answer is a tragic yes. Early in the morning, swathed in an outlandish *jellaba*, she hurries through the streets of Paris, but what is she actually making of her life? Everywhere, she is excluded, irrevocably excluded....<sup>vi</sup>

The parents' impotence is painfully obvious. As someone said, "It's not that they don't want to give us any support; they just can't. You can't give away something you haven't got". Many immigrant parents are so distanced from the surrounding society that they know nothing about their children's life outside the house. The children grow up in separate worlds: at home, at school and on the street. The norms that prevail at home have little to do with those in the world outside. For many parents and children, the distances that must be bridged day after day are simply too great.

The frequent arranged marriages betray a clear view of the role of women, a view that increasingly conflicts with a society that has just seen forty years of emancipation. Fatima, a Moroccan student, had this to say, "Like my father, my mother thinks I should stop studying and ought to get on and get married. Education is not that important in our family. As a woman, you don't have much use for an education; after all, you're going to get married and become a housewife, so working for qualifications is a waste of time". Cultural preferences thus have far-reaching social consequences, a connection that, for many years, has been rather frenetically denied.

The families of Caribbean migrants from Jamaica or Surinam - who differ in many respects from Muslim families from Morocco and Turkey - also suffer a generation gap. The parents try to remain as invisible as possible, while the children stand up for themselves far more. Mike and Trevor Phillips

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illustrate that beautifully in their oral history of these migrants and their children, who make themselves more felt in British society:

The experience opened up a gap between the generations which was all the more disturbing because it was so unfamiliar within the cultures from which the migrants came, but it was the experience which was to define the future of the Caribbean migrant community.<sup>vii</sup>

The problem is not only the cultural divide between the generations; it is also the transfer of deprivation in education. If you look at the children of migrant families, the so-called second generation, it is immediately striking that the often-explicit expectations of a rapid rise in society have, in many cases, not been realized. The whole idea that integration is only a question of time and that we should patiently await the generational change turns out, on closer examination, to be facile. The statistics for education, work and crime speak for themselves. The overrepresentation of children from migrant families at the bottom of the social ladder is unmistakable.

This has raised a new social issue. Although the differences between and within ethnic groups are considerable, the general situation seems troubling. On average, children from migrant families have an appreciable disadvantage in cognitive development and language skills, barring them from the better jobs. According to researchers, there is a “considerable talent reserve”.<sup>viii</sup> Yet the gap between native and immigrant children remains great.

It should be clearly stated that there is, on the other hand, a growing middle class of migrants and their children. Innumerable successful migrants have acquired an intrinsic stake in our societies. That is important as, although they feel an affinity with their land of origin, their identification with the land of arrival is marked. Also, the place they can attain in society determines the degree to which they see this land as their own. A society that offers talented migrants too little opportunity will pay a high price.

We are seeing a polarization within migrant communities between those who are doing well and the considerable group that is not. Half the Turkish and Moroccan children in a country like the Netherlands may leave school with insufficient qualifications, but between one quarter and one third of the children from these families do quite well at school. It has long been impossible to lump the life path of children from these families under the common denominator of “deprivation”. And that is hopeful. What remains is the large group that has failed in the current educational system and has little chance in the labour market. What will happen to them in our cities? What will their lives be like, what outlet will their frustration find in an environment of seemingly unlimited opportunities? The tensions they will cause cannot be cancelled out by the success stories, although these exist, and should be told.

## Old and New Migrations

Much of the current immigration can be understood in the light of history. Here and now in the big cities of Europe, we face many of the problems Polish or Italian immigrants experienced in early-twentieth-century America. The distance between parents and children is classic. Moreover, most of those early-wave migrants were fairly poor, with little education when they began their journey. Finally, there is nothing new about migrants attributing special significance to their faith; how often have they prioritized the rebuilding of their places of worship in the land of arrival, in order to retain something from their land of origin? In a certain sense, today's migrants are simply repeating an old exercise.

Could it then be true that there is nothing new in today's migration? No, the old and the new migrations have plenty in common, but there are also substantial differences. Something new is really afoot. Religion has always played a major role in the migration process, but Islam is an entirely new phenomenon in the Western world. And not only here, but also in the history of Islam itself: The presence of Muslim minorities in a liberal, secular society is unique. The fact that, before too long, some 20 million Muslims will be living in the countries of the European Union and soon, perhaps, after Turkey joins the Union, even more, is a challenge in every respect. Not only for religious Muslims, but also for the receiving societies that seek a way to deal with a religion that, until now, has always been in a majority. It does not help that, since 11 September, Islam has become so controversial in the West.

Religion, culture and politics are woven into the tradition of Islam, certainly where it is predominant, as in the Arabic world. In a modern society, however, those domains are separated. The image of cohesion is highly distorted here, which the fundamentalist Muslim thinker Sayyid Qutb referred

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to as “the hideous schizophrenia of modern life”.<sup>ix</sup> Serious obstacles must be overcome if we are to achieve a more or less natural integration of Islam and if religion is, indeed, to be emancipated from the culture of the land of origin, even if only to prevent specific customs and traditions acquiring a sacred aura. It is not about a departure from Islam as a spiritual tradition, but a question of how to live as a religious minority in a democratic environment. Too often the mosque is the place where resentment of other beliefs or of nonbelievers is preached.

For the receiving societies, the arrival of a new religion should be an incentive to reconsider the issue of religious freedom. Migration has generated religious conflicts in the past, too. Catholic immigrants in Protestant America in the nineteenth century, for example, were opposed by a major populist movement, the Know Nothings. If you ask Muslims to acknowledge freedom of religion you must be prepared to do likewise. Only on that basis is a new social contract possible; the secularization of governmental institutions must be complete.

In another aspect, too, the old and new migrations differ. That migrants are often poor is nothing new, but the high level of unemployment among migrants in Western Europe, in particular, is new. One of the reasons for that poor outcome is a generous social security system. Mass immigration into the welfare state is unique; there are no other examples in history. The consequences are visible: Large groups of migrants find themselves in a dependent situation without any prospects. What should be a dynamic element in society - immigrants are by definition risk-takers and survivors - has become one of the population's most immobile segments.

The subsidized isolation of those migrant families has proved an enormous impediment for them, their children and society as a whole. In a city such as Amsterdam, 60 percent of Moroccan and Turkish men over the age of forty are unemployed or occupationally disabled.<sup>x</sup> From a comparison of the position of first- and second-generation migrants in education and the labour market, the American researcher John Mollenkopf concludes that Amsterdam scores considerably worse in both areas than New York.<sup>xi</sup>

When extensive migration must be justified by the contribution these newcomers make to society, long-term unemployment makes that justification very difficult. It cannot be denied that the welfare state in many Western European countries has contributed considerably to these enormous differences. The first generation, no longer considered necessary after the economic crisis of 1973, ended up living en masse on benefits. This demonstrates that the welfare state in its present form creates dependence and takes away responsibility.

Finally, there is a third major change in the pattern of integration. First-generation migrants often still feel involved in their lands of origin, a phenomenon seen in all migrations. The Irish in America have always been very concerned with the fight for the independence of their former country and, later, with the undeclared civil war in Northern Ireland. The same applies to Germans in America, who were preoccupied by events in their country and experienced direct consequences of both world wars there.

Nothing new so far. Due to modern communications and low-cost travel, however, migrants' bonds with the land of origin are now far stronger than in the past, so that today, ethnic groups are often described as “transnational communities”, groups of people present in more than one society at once. Taking no part in public life, too many migrants are tuned into another reality by satellite dish. In the past, immigration meant saying goodbye for good, but now people travel constantly back and forth to their countries of origin, even if only psychologically. Immigration in the age of constant communication is a unique phenomenon.

Tighter bonds between migrant communities and their lands of origin contribute to their becoming increasingly a diaspora; migrants describe themselves with an eye to the past and have not yet entirely given up the illusion of returning home. How often does one hear that their bags are packed, often with the argument that the receiving society has become so inhospitable that there's no chance of succeeding here? This perception is confirmed by the fact that three-quarters of young Turkish and Moroccan people born in the Netherlands marry someone from their parents' country, in which pressure and force on the part of the parents play a dominant role.<sup>xii</sup>

The outcome of these changing circumstances of migration is great uncertainty whether integration will take no more than three generations. To clarify this likely delay, the second generation is now being referred to as a “one-and-a-halfth” generation - in other words, someone who is born here marries someone from the land of origin, so their children grow up in a family that does not speak the language of the land of arrival. The most important advisory body in the Dutch government itself is hesitant about an automatic improvement from generation to generation:

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The question is whether the cycle can be completed, with a third and following generation of all the population categories living in the Netherlands being integrated entirely into the society, if the second generation has realised too little advancement.<sup>xiii</sup>

## Without An “Us”, It Won't Work

In the 1920s, Robert Park described the “race relations cycle” that progressed from “isolation through competition, conflict and accommodation to assimilation”.<sup>xiv</sup> The underlying philosophy is familiar: Arriving migrants tend to isolate themselves, partly due to the standoffish reaction of the surrounding society. Later, migrants and their children try to win a place for themselves in the land of arrival, which leads to friction and conflict. The newcomers and natives then seek a compromise and, if that progresses, the surrounding society assimilates the migrants and their descendants.

That is a hopeful cycle, in which one can recognize the model of the three generations. The first generation stands for isolation and avoidance; the migrants’ children refuse to accept that and claim their rights, inevitably coming into conflict with established citizens, prompting a need for compromise. Finally, the grandchildren in the third generation have the opportunity to assimilate without too much difficulty, participating in the society without too much friction.

Naturally, this is only schematic: reality cannot be divided so neatly. There is also much to debate about the assumed final point, “assimilation”, whose definition is very controversial. What concerns me here, however, is that the integration of any sizeable migration movement inevitably entails conflict. Many European countries are currently embroiled in that stage.

It is obvious that we have passed through the avoidance phase. “Multiculturalism” is the model for that episode, for it tried to find terms for the peaceful coexistence of cultural communities existing next to each other without much contact. Now, we have inescapably entered the throes of a period of conflict that must find a new accommodation. That conflict is necessary and can be extremely productive, if we succeed in keeping violence at bay.

It is difficult to say how long and turbulent this period will be. We still know too little about the generational dynamics of integration for the simple reason that so far we in Europe have seen too little of the third generations, and it is unclear how their changed circumstances will affect the integration process. What is clear is that every integration process entails conflicts, frictions and clashes. That was so in America, and it is repeating itself in Europe today.

Far closer involvement is needed; that must rest upon a clear idea of integration. The half-heartedness of the reluctant immigration land is eminently demonstrated in the way we treat citizenship. For too long, naturalization has been approached too casually. For a long time, the philosophy was that quick, easy naturalization aided integration, but setting requirements for obtaining nationality actually demands an effort. The undervaluation of citizenship is not a good idea. If someone chooses to adopt a new nationality, in addition to gaining rights, that ought to entail the acceptance of obligations.

Professor of law and author of Iranian origin Afshin Ellian describes his disillusionment:

I received the most important decision concerning my life, namely my Dutch nationality, by post. It was no more than an administrative letter, signed by the director of the Immigration and Naturalization Department. A deep sense of embarrassment and disappointment tempered my joy. The moment of citizenship should be ritualized, out of respect for both the new citizen and the constitution.<sup>xv</sup>

You do no favour for migrants who wish to obtain the nationality of the land of arrival by demanding nothing of them. Not asking a single question makes clear that nobody cares much about an answer. The veiled message is: “You will never be part of this society, anyway. We don't expect you to have any influence on anything. Just stay where you are, don't move outside your own circle and, in particular, cherish your own identity”.

That way, no obligations are entered into, because we know full well that, when a society makes demands of newcomers, it also undertakes an obligation. If you are striving for integration you must clarify the fundamentals of your own society; if you want to promote respect for the legal order, you

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yourself must know what those rules entail. If you want to transfer cultural heritage, you must have an idea of what your own history contains. Requirements set for immigrants inevitably backfire on those who set them.

So now we come to the fundamental rule of all integration: *The natives should never ask anything of newcomers that they are not prepared to do themselves.* The demand for integration hits back hard at those who make that demand. As European natives are not sure of the degree to which we ourselves still feel part of the larger entity, we don't know what we can and cannot ask of newcomers. In other words, integration demands self-examination and there has not been much enthusiasm for that. We are so tolerant that, above all, we don't want to make things difficult for ourselves.

Over the past few years, it has become clear, not only in the Netherlands, that the arrival of so many migrants and their difficult integration into the land of arrival has provoked a real citizenship crisis. All the well-meaning jubilation over diversity could provide no answer, because the question was unavoidable: What do we have in common, taking into account all the differences? What holds society together in a time of mass migration, particularly in the urban areas where most migrants settle?

The attitude often met these days in immigrant circles is a mixture of "What do you actually want of us?" and "For heaven's sake leave us alone". The tone is all too often aggrieved - but if you aim to make the gaps narrower than they are, you must be able to answer those questions convincingly. At the moment, we seem to have no answers. A sense of "This is our country now, too" or, even better, of "my country", can only ultimately be generated out of a free choice, which migrants are invited and challenged to make, by a society that itself has a strong culture of citizenship.

But that tradition has been neglected. There is no clear idea of a new "us" encompassing more than the old "us". Is any effort being made to keep the collection of individuals and groups together with a modern concept of nation? That search is part of a wider re-evaluation, which is about finding a new balance between rights and obligations, between individual development and mutual dependency, between privacy and public order. We need a richer idea of what citizenship could be in this day and age.

Multiculturalism supplied a noncommittal answer: There is no longer such a thing as an "us". What then remains of citizenship is entirely unclear. Without an "us" it won't work; without critical involvement, society crumbles. That "us" need not necessarily refer to a shared pride; it could just as well be an expression of vicarious shame. For example, it has to be progress when a spokesperson from a Turkish organization says, "We failed in Srebrenica".<sup>xvi</sup> Surely the answer to that statement cannot be, "But there is no such thing as 'us'. You aren't responsible for the decision to send troops to a so-called safe enclave, and neither am I". We quickly see that an "us" implies a shared responsibility.

We began this search for a new citizenship by establishing a sense of alienation and loss, on the part of both migrant and native. Once we succeed in deriving a renewal from the shock of the unfamiliar, we will be further than we are now. Immigration doesn't have to lead to a loss of strength; on the contrary, once we succeed in internalizing migration it will make our societies more universal, and therefore more competitive, in a globalizing world.

We are far too overcome by the confrontation with militant Islam, which obscures our view of a change we should welcome. The ascent of the Asian world can release an energy that could help us out of our oppression. Through competition, Europe has already taken steps towards integration; we need that external push from Asia. The same applies to the forces released by the arrival of immigrants. The strain of allowing people from all over the world to become part of our urban societies is causing us to reconsider - not by betraying Europe's contributions to the idea of an open society, but by striving to be truer to that idea.

The fact that the shock of immigration has been harshly worded above perhaps helps make clear the urgency of renewal. Anyone wishing to trivialize migration by continually pointing out that there is nothing new about it not only misses an important experience being gained in the big cities of Europe today - but also, most importantly, fails to see that the new migration offers a unique opportunity for introspection and self-improvement. The recent immigration forces us to reach above ourselves, to rise above our inhibitions. That may be asking a lot, but if you don't ask a lot in this world you will fail miserably.

Let me give a couple of examples. A new religion in our midst could lead to a truly secular society that lives up to the ideal of religious freedom. The unemployment of so many migrants could be the beginning of a re-evaluation of the welfare state, to eliminate unintentional obstacles to social mobility.

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Shortcomings in the preparation of many children from immigrant families could lead to an educational system that devotes serious attention to language, history and legal culture. The arrival of people from former colonies could expand our self-image, which must encompass the dark side of the colonial past, starting with slavery. The harrowing exclusion of many Muslim women could lead us to realize that equal treatment is a recent acquisition that should be defended all the more fiercely. And there is so much more that would be possible if we were to examine our own shortcomings committedly.

Almost a century ago, the American sociologist Henry Pratt Fairchild already knew that. Much of what he wrote is now dated, but he was capable of seeing that the degree to which migrants are able to feel part of the land of arrival does not depend solely on them: "Before laying tardy assimilation too readily at the door of the immigrant we should thoughtfully consider whether our own house does not need to be set in order". In other words, we can only discuss integration if we are willing to improve our society. In Fairchild's words,

If the immigrant is to love America he must first have the opportunity to experience America, and having experienced it he must find it lovable. No amount of lecturing, legislating, and threatening can make the alien love America if he does not find it lovable, and no amount of strangeness and unfamiliarity can keep him from loving it if in the final event he finds it worthy of his love.<sup>xvii</sup>

We have to break with the years of avoidance. Perhaps integration was, indeed, successful in past years, and newcomers have simply adjusted to the nonchalance of the natives - in a land to which, in many respects, you would not want to belong. This is why the impasse in which we currently find ourselves demonstrates so many shortcomings of our society. It is time for some major maintenance - in our case, a thorough reconstruction. We must not lose sight of the distance that separates us from our ideals. After all, an open society thrives on self-criticism. We must be willing to become what we say we are.

## Accommodating Islam

Let me finally illustrate what I mean by "to become what we say we are" by discussing Islam's incorporation into the liberal democracies of Europe. The current impasse is partly caused by our inability to find a more or less stable way of dealing with Islam as a new religion in our society. That "our" refers expressly to the Muslims, too. A number of clear choices are unavoidable. These will be acceptable, however, only if based on the principle of equal treatment. Nothing feeds mistrust like the impression of a double standard.

Three concrete questions are involved. First, to what extent is the separation of church and state, which forms the basis of religious freedom, observed in Europe? On that basis we can then ask Muslims whether, in addition to the right to religious freedom, they are also willing to accept the duty to defend that same freedom for other beliefs and unbeliefs. What's more, Muslims must also be asked whether they are willing to grant the freedom they claim as a group to all members of their own community.

Let's examine these issues more closely. How could we deal with Islam on the basis of the idea of equal treatment? It begins with the separation of church and state, which is the basis of religious freedom. There are plenty of misconceptions of that separation. Many people think the Netherlands achieved religious tolerance at an early stage. But history teaches us that, according to current criteria, there was no separation of church and state in the Republic. The seventeenth century saw a struggle between the principle of freedom of conscience on one hand, embraced early on, and, on the other, the idea of the Reformed Church as the public church, which was privileged by the government.

From that era we can also learn that the separation of church and state must not only safeguard the state from improper pressure from the church but, equally and sometimes even more, protect the church against intervention by the state. Even now, it seems to me that too often the separation of church and state is only practiced with a view to protecting the state. Certainly with respect to Islam it must be reiterated that, in principle, nothing should stand in the way of Muslims freely practicing their belief. Mosques belong here on principle. The state should adopt a reserved attitude.

When we emphasize this principle of equal treatment, we must ask ourselves whether we in

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Europe actually live up to that idea. Innumerable countries have regulations that are at odds with the separation of church and state. Consider, for example the church tax Germans are obliged to pay, the official position of the Anglican Church in Great Britain, the state-subsidized religious schools in the Netherlands and elsewhere, or the crucifixes in Italian classrooms and law courts. If you ask Muslims to acknowledge religious freedom, you must be prepared to do likewise. Only on the basis of a separation of church and state is a new social compromise possible: The secularization of institutions must be complete.

It is on that basis of equal treatment of religions that limits can and should be set. We can only combat political Islam effectively once we scrupulously observe the principle of religious freedom. Then, an imperative question can be posed to Muslims: Does not the exercise of that right to religious freedom entail an irrevocable duty to defend that same freedom for other beliefs and for unbelievers? The duty to defend religious freedom is what political Islam contests, not only in words but also with threats and violence.

That radical Islamic interpretation was not created in a vacuum. Far too often, Muslims divide the world into two, us and them. When religious freedom is used to spread contempt for non-Muslims, the right that Muslims invoke is undermined. Then, sooner or later, comes the moment when Muslims make it impossible for themselves to live in a democracy with religious diversity. The right to religious freedom goes hand-in-hand with the duty to respect the freedom of others. That applies to everyone and therefore also to the Muslim community. If they are not prepared to accept this, Muslims will stigmatize and marginalize themselves.

Earlier this year, I was invited to take part in an inter-religious discussion. As a nonbeliever, I joined an imam, a bishop and a rabbi. Every discussion demands a couple of common principles, and a discussion among religions certainly demands the acceptance of religious freedom as a point of departure. The imam, however, wasn't having any of that: Yes, that was what the law of the Netherlands stipulated, but it could be different elsewhere; higher authorities had to pass judgement on that. We can think about it pragmatically - the imam ultimately accepted religious freedom in the Netherlands - but that is the route of least resistance. Especially when talking about equal treatment, one should be able to expect a little more consistency in principle.

The integration of Islam into democracy will therefore demand major adjustments. Due to migration, a unique situation has come about: For the first time in their history, Muslims constitute a minority in a liberal, secular society. It is therefore premature to judge that democratic principles and Islam as practiced here can never be combined. It is an open question whether the accommodation of Islam in Europe will succeed; with no guarantees, clarity concerning a number of principles is crucial.

As a result, the principle of equal treatment has another inevitable consequence. If you claim religious freedom as a group, you must be prepared to grant that same freedom to the members of your group. As it stands now, however, other movements within Islam are often ostracized. Think of the way more liberal groups such as the Alevi and the Ahmaddiya movements are excluded. Claiming religious freedom should at least entail an acceptance of pluralism within the claimant's own circle. Most are not prepared to comply with that principle even within the environment of Islam itself. What we have, then is not a Muslim community, but an extremely divided collection of believers with little in common.

Muslims already find it difficult to acknowledge differences within their own circle, but the subject of apostasy is even more taboo; to confess openly that you no longer believe is tantamount to social exclusion or worse. Here, too, though, if a group claims the right as a group to freely practice religion, it cannot do otherwise than to acknowledge that same right for members of the same religious community, for religion is freely practiced or rejected. That is nothing like the case now.

Religious freedom does not exclude religious criticism. On the contrary, the price of an open society includes criticism of religious traditions as part of an open debate. A little subtlety may be expected of critics, but, nevertheless, speaking freely about what, for others, is sacred can still sometimes be deeply offensive. That's just the way it is. If Muslims want to live here with the idea that the Koran or the prophet is above criticism and may never be the subject of satire, they are going down a dead-end street. The cartoon affair taught us that religious freedom and the freedom to criticize religion are inseparable.

I reiterated this argument in an American television programme, which generated an exceptionally revealing reaction from a Muslim organization in the US. In a public statement they wrote, "We as an American Muslim community claim the human right to self-definition".<sup>xviii</sup> Since when has "self-

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definition” been a human right? Since when have only believers been allowed to comment on their holy books? Such remarkable assertions do not belong in a democracy; every belief belongs to everybody, in the sense that we can all have opinions and freely express them.

The attempts of the Dutch and British governments to reintroduce blasphemy as an offense are therefore unwise, to say the least. Why should insulting the gods actually be worse than insulting our fellow human beings? Anyone defending the principle of equal treatment cannot do otherwise than to see religious and secular philosophies as equal in law. There are certainly limits to the freedom of speech, but these do not preclude the criticism or derision of a belief. Otherwise we can start burning at the stake Erasmus' *In Praise of Folly*, with chapters such as “Even More Folly in the Bible”. Tolerance cannot be based on fear.

Equal treatment does not mean that everyone must suddenly embrace liberal ideas. Like other traditional believers, conservative Muslims can reject an institution such as homosexual marriage, as long as they accept that the majority has decided otherwise for the present. And, vice versa, those who criticize religion on principle must be prepared to defend religious freedom, as duress in matters of belief is an assault on democracy. Diplomatic avoidance does not help in dealing with Islam; honesty regarding the shared principles of religious freedom does.

For the moment, we are entangled in a conflict with a politicized Islam, the end of which is not yet in sight. That international climate casts a shadow on attempts to accommodate Muslim minorities in Europe. Nevertheless, when we succeed in that task and find a place for Islam in secular and liberal societies, we will have become more universal. When we succeed in remaining true to the idea of religious freedom and in peacefully incorporating many millions of Muslim migrants and their children into our societies, we will have attained a privileged position in the world.

Since 1989 Europe has had the opportunity to unite in a peaceful manner, not only by overcoming old differences, but also by giving migrants a new place. There is no compelling reason why the Old World should not be able to reinvent itself. Because plenty of things in Europe deserve to be cherished, not brutally modernized, a certain reticence is quite understandable. Still, the shock of migration and integration should be seen as an invitation to live up to the idea of an open society.

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  3. Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (New York: Basic Books, 2001), p. xv.
  4. Robert E. Park and Ernest W. Burgess, *The City: Suggestions for Investigation of Human Behavior in the Urban Environment* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), p. 107.
  5. Farah Karimi, quoted in a Dutch newspaper article.
  6. Fouad Laroui, *Judith en Jamal* (Amsterdam: Van Oorschot, 2001), p. 63.
  7. Mike Phillips and Trevor Phillips, *Windrush: The Irresistible Rise of Multi-racial Britain* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p. 203.
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10. Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau (SCP), *Jaarrapport Integratie 2005* (Den Haag, 2005), Hoofdstuk 6, p. 81 ev.
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12. Leen Sterkx and Carolien Bouw, *Liefde op maat. Partnerkeuze van Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren* (Amsterdam: Het Spinhuis, 2005), p. 13.
13. Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het regeringsbeleid (WRR), *Nederland als immigratiesamenleving* (Den Haag: Sdu uitgevers, 2001), pp. 162-63.
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15. Speech by Afshin Ellian.
16. Haci Karacaer, then director of Milli Gorus.
17. Henry Pratt Fairchild, *Immigration: A World Movement and Its American Significance* (rev. ed.) (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1925), p. 425.
18. Press statement by the Muslim Public Affairs Council (15 March 2005).