

# POLICY, PEOPLE, AND THE NEW PROFESSIONAL

De-professionalisation and  
Re-professionalisation in Care and  
Welfare

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# Table of Contents

|  |            |
|--|------------|
| <b>1. Policy, People, and the New Professional</b>   | <b>7</b>   |
| An Introduction<br><i>Jan Willem Duyvendak, Trudie Knijn and Monique Kremer</i>  |            |
| <b>PART I POLICY</b>   |            |
| <b>2. The Rise of Contractualisation in Public Services</b>  | <b>19</b>  |
| <i>Trudie Knijn and Peter Selten</i>   |            |
| <b>3. Evidence-Based Policy</b>  | <b>34</b>  |
| From Answer to Question<br><i>Giel Hutschemaekers and Bea Tiemens</i>  |            |
| <b>4. Societal Neurosis in Health Care</b>   | <b>48</b>  |
| <i>Margo Trappenburg</i>   |            |
| <b>5. When Ideologies Bounce Back</b>  | <b>64</b>  |
| The Problematic Translation of Post-Multicultural Ideologies<br>and Policies into Professional Practices<br><i>Jan Willem Duyvendak and Justus Uitermark</i> |            |
| <b>PART II PEOPLE</b>  |            |
| <b>6. Safe Neighbourhoods</b>  | <b>81</b>  |
| <i>Sophie Body-Gendrot</i>   |            |
| <b>7. When Diversity Matters</b>   | <b>97</b>  |
| <i>Marleen van der Haar</i>  |            |
| <b>8. From Residents to Neighbours</b>   | <b>109</b> |
| The Making of Active Citizens in Antwerp, Belgium<br><i>Maarten Loopmans</i>   |            |
| <b>9. Authority, Trust, Knowledge and the Public Good in Disarray</b>  | <b>122</b> |
| <i>Monique Kremer and Evelien Tonkens</i>  |            |
| <b>PART III PROFESSIONALS</b>  |            |
| <b>10. Heroes of Health Care?</b>  | <b>137</b> |
| Replacing the Medical Profession in the Policy Process<br>in the UK<br><i>Celia Davies</i>   |            |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| <b>11. Tensions in Medical Work between Patients' Interests and Administrative and Organisational Constraints</b> | 152 |
| <i>Werner Vogd</i>  |     |
| <b>12. Empowerment of Social Services Professionals</b>   | 164 |
| Strategies for Professionalisation and Knowledge Development  |     |
| <i>Jeroen Gradener and Marcel Spierts</i>   |     |
| <b>13. Professional Management of Professionals</b>   | 181 |
| Hybrid Organisations and Professional Management in Care and Welfare  |     |
| <i>Mirko Noordegraaf</i>  |     |
| <b>About the contributors</b>   | 194 |
| <b>References</b>   | 197 |
| <b>Index</b>  | 217 |

# When Ideologies Bounce Back

## The Problematic Translation of Post-Multicultural Ideologies and Policies into Professional Practices

*Jan Willem Duyvendak and Justus Uitermark*

Since the days (1917) that Calvinists and Catholics were allowed to manage their own schools with full funding by the central government, Dutch society has valued the relative autonomy of ethnic and religious groups. The accommodation of immigrant cultures and religions fits with this picture, so it is not surprising that many commentators have labelled the Netherlands a multicultural society (Favell 1998; Joppke 2004; Koopmans & Statham 2000; Koopmans et al. 2005; Soysal 1994; De Zwart 2005). However, developments in recent years have cast doubts upon this image of the Netherlands as a ‘multicultural paradise’ (Duyvendak et al. 2005; Uitermark 2005). It seems increasingly problematic to label Dutch policies as multicultural, but it would also be misleading to define them as assimilationist. Recent policies seem to combine the two extremes: The push for assimilation is probably stronger in the Netherlands than in many other countries, but at the same time it is clear that policies take into account migrant identities to quite a high degree. In order to solve this paradox, we need to unpack the notion of ‘multicultural society’.

In the Dutch debate about the multicultural society, it is striking that little distinction is made between the ethnic-cultural diversity in society as it is in practice, ‘multicultural’ government policy and multiculturalism as an ideal. Leading critics assume a strong link between the ideal of multiculturalism, the integration policy pursued until recently with respect to migrants, and actual practices at the local level (Scheffer 2000, Schnabel 2000, Van den Brink 2004). On the basis of their observations of unacceptable forms of segregation in cities and institutions, they quickly draw the conclusion that the ideal of cultural diversity is no longer satisfactory and should be replaced by alternative ideals such as ‘shared citizenship’ and ‘national cohesion’.

Historical research (Duyvendak & Rijkschroeff 2004; Fermin 1997; Prins 2000 [2004]; Rijkschroeff, Duyvendak & Pels 2004) has demonstrated that over the last decades, much of the integration policymaking has been driven by pragmatic considerations rather than principles. Moreover, one and the same policy instrument seems to have been applied over time for different reasons, either pragmatic or principle-related (Lucassen & Köbben 1992). To put it another way, policy does not

have a one-to-one relationship with ideals; it is based on a variety of motives and justifications as well as principles, and cannot be reduced simply to the implementation of an ideal. An idea that commonly crops up in the public and political debates is that the ideal of a multicultural society permeates all phases of policymaking, including the results, but the literature reveals serious doubts about whether there is a direct relationship between ideas and the actual results of policies (Lipsky 1980; Wilson 1989; Pressman & Wildavsky 1984).

In many studies on multiculturalism, the 'black box' of public administration and how policies are executed remains closed. People assume that there is a close link between the policy pursued and what professionals do in practice. In the Netherlands, policies were multicultural in the sense that they recognised the right of ethnic self-organisation, and due to the religiously 'pillarised' past there was a legal framework that provided rights to minorities (and to other citizens) to follow their own cultural and religious identities. Whether this indeed led to a lot of multicultural practices is an entirely different question – one we want to answer in this chapter on professional practices.

Due to space considerations, however, we cannot investigate the complex relationship between ideals, policies, and practices in detail. What we can do is shed some light on how recent shifts in public debates and the political climate have affected professional practices by briefly discussing two cases.<sup>1</sup> The first concerns the Neighbourhood Alliance, an organisation that shares many of the criticisms that are now often made against multiculturalism. We show that this organisation attempts to translate an ideological critique of multiculturalism into a concrete program. At the same time, we see that there are powerful forces at play on a local level that make it difficult to effectively implement this program. The second case concerns recent reforms of Rotterdam's local right-wing government in which the party of the late Pim Fortuyn is quite hegemonic. This government's mission was to create and implement policies that departed radically from those of the left-wing governments that had ruled Rotterdam for decades. In this case too, we find that the translation of an anti-multicultural ideal into policy practice is not straightforward. Both cases highlight that there are many obstacles that frustrate the translation of ideals into policy and the implementation of policies into practice. These obstacles play their part even when the ideals themselves are hegemonic in the public debate.

The notion that ideals and policies on the one hand and professional practices on the other are closely linked is also a fundamental assumption in the debate on (de) professionalisation: new neo-liberal policies are blamed for limiting the manoeuvring space of professionals (see the many examples in this book). By reconstructing the empirical effects of an ideological shift – and the debate on the integration of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands provides a rather strong example of such a

shift – we want to criticise those who suggest a direct relation between policy shifts and professional practices.

## A Multicultural Tragedy

It is difficult to overestimate the intensity and scope of the integration debate in the Netherlands. The Dutch have a long and uneasy history with ethnic diversity (Vuijsje 1997). Here we shall only discuss the shifts and developments in the debate since 2000, when Paul Scheffer published his essay on the ‘multicultural tragedy’. A quick look at Scheffer’s article immediately identifies it as the kind of presentation that became typical of the integration debate. Scheffer uses dramatic and dramaturgical metaphors, saying, for instance, that a multicultural tragedy is unfolding in the big cities in the Netherlands. He also pinpoints the guilty party:

We are now living with the third generation of immigrants and the problems have only gotten larger. Whether the successful immigrants will play their envisaged role of pioneers remains uncertain, as they usually want to cut loose from their supposed supporters. It is not a sign of open-mindedness to put these observations aside with an easy plea for a multicultural society. All those apologists of diversity do not care what is taking place in the big cities in the Netherlands. (Scheffer 2000)

The heroes in this story are the people who have the courage to break the taboo and talk about the problems of the multicultural society.<sup>2</sup> Scheffer suggested that the Dutch have avoided any serious discussion of the problems associated with migration and the growing ethnic diversity that comes along with it. He warned of the possible formation of an underclass, an ethnic sub-proletariat that lacked both cognitive and economic relations with Dutch society. Arguing that a misplaced sense of political correctness had resulted in the gratuitous embrace of a relativist, multiculturalist ideal, he wanted the Dutch elite to change its attitude. Ethnic minorities should not be encouraged to cultivate their values in their own separate institutions but should instead integrate into society with the full awareness that, in this process, they would lose some of their cultural particularities. Scheffer’s argument revolves around the central idea that a diverse and cohesive society can only exist if groups integrate with each other on the basis of widely shared Dutch values. Whereas according to Scheffer policies in the past had been based on the cultivation and separation of ethnic groups (the multiculturalist ideal), he wanted to see the promotion of both ethnic mixing and Dutch values.

This particular discourse on mixing and values was much more widely and strongly held than Scheffer realised when he presented his

argument, and this became even more so after his article was published (Prins 2004). Although the debate is extremely complex and wide-ranging, it is not difficult to see that one view is shared by most of the participants: the various ethnic groups had been living too far apart from each other and should now integrate (Entzinger 2003; Ireland 2004; Uitermark & Duyvendak 2004). However, differences arise as soon as the reasons for this situation are discussed. Some blame the intolerance of the Dutch population; others argue that some cultures or religious groups are just not inclined to integrate into any modern society. The first viewpoint is popular among some groups of immigrants (such as the Arabic European League) but it is not very often expressed in public. The latter viewpoint is supported by some of the best-known participants in the debate (like Ayaan Hirsi Ali and Afshin Ellian), but is certainly not hegemonic. The most popular argument is that segregation has been caused by the multicultural ideal of the politically correct elite, an ideal that was not aimed at mixing but at cultivating cultural identities. Overall, we observe a consensus on four points:

1. The government has relied too much and for too long on spokespersons of the various ethnic groups. Since these groups are internally heterogeneous, the legitimacy and usefulness of such spokespersons is by definition questionable;
2. A culture of political correctness among the elite, and in particular integration experts and professionals working with immigrants, has for too long cultivated ethnic differences and made it impossible to discuss the problems of ethnic diversity;
3. Interethnic dialogue is crucial for creating the cognitive and social cohesion that is necessary for collective action and shared responsibility;
4. Migrants in particular, and Dutch citizens in general, can and should develop responsibility for the public good (defined as an ethnically diverse society with basic Dutch values), which is possible if their initiatives are not mothballed by those mentioned under (1) and (2). Showing this responsibility implies that they develop a Dutch identity; double (national) identities are considered an expression of defective loyalty to the host society.

## Case 1: The Neighbourhood Alliance

The Neighbourhood Alliance, an Amsterdam-based organisation with local branches, has as its statutory mission to '(further) strengthen liveability in multicultural neighbourhoods and areas'. Its main tool for achieving this goal is creating and supporting 'neighbourhood panels', i. e., 'intercultural resident networks' that develop 'citizen initiatives related to intercultural liveability' (SWA 2004: 21). Such panels are considered important in solving 'a problem in Dutch society: we are living se-

parate lives in isolation from each other, as individuals and as (ethnic groups' (Ibid: 7). Using the concepts coined by Putnam, the Neighbourhood Alliance argues that there is 'not enough bonding within groups or bridging between groups' (Ibid: 7; compare Putnam 2000). Because of this, the 'public space is at risk of turning into a no-man's land', which will lead to 'a negative spiral' (Ibid.: 7). However, the Neighbourhood Alliance feels that there is an 'immense willingness' to be more involved with each other, on the part of 'both the new and the old Dutch'. The organisation wants to cultivate initiatives that stimulate intercultural communication. 'The use of the word "intercultural" is deliberate. The goal is not a more or less peaceful coexistence of different cultures (known as multiculturalism). Between all residents – including people from different countries – positive social interaction should be created on the basis of a universal Dutch, cosmopolitan identity' (Ibid: 7).

The idea that 'Dutch norms and values' should be promoted through interventions is recent, but it is not unique to the Neighbourhood Alliance. The first Balkenende government (a coalition of the Christian Democratic CDA, the VVD conservative liberals and the LPF, which had become the second largest party even though its leader, Pim Fortuyn, had been assassinated just before the elections) had started a discussion on the nature and significance of social norms in the public sphere and collectively or individually held moral values (see WRR 2003)<sup>3</sup>. The present government, Balkenende II (a coalition of the CDA, the VVD and the social liberals of D66), continues to promote this public discussion. The importance attributed to norms and values has resulted in several policy adjustments and initiatives. For instance, citizenship courses for immigrants no longer contain only practical information and language lessons but also explain to immigrants that the Dutch uphold the separation of Church and state, the acceptance of homosexuality and equality between adults and children of both sexes. Curricula for both elementary and high schools are also being amended to teach pupils the history and importance of Dutch institutions.

The Neighbourhood Alliance – small as it is with an office in Amsterdam where some six professionals work along with dozens of volunteers in urban neighbourhoods – presents itself as an institutional extension of a citizens' movement. Quoting research commissioned by the Neighbourhood Alliance, the organisation suggests that both ethnic Dutch and ethnic minorities are concerned about ethnic segregation and yearn for friendly contacts with neighbours; both ethnic Dutch and ethnic minorities want shared norms and values in their neighbourhoods; more than 75% of the respondents feel that more people should do something and about 50% are conditionally prepared to participate in all kinds of neighbourhood activities (SWA 2004: 16). For the Neighbourhood Alliance, this research raises two questions: Why are there still so many multicultural tensions in neighbourhoods? Why has so little come of these desires and ideals? Their answer is as follows:

1. The countless initiatives on a local level operate in isolation. They emerge, blossom... and fade when the momentum is gone. This makes it a huge burden to participate...;
2. The government mothballs spontaneous initiatives because it has stringent requirements regarding representativity and accountability...;
3. The government and welfare professionals have a blind spot for the optimism of residents about intercultural co-operation... They focus on problems and appropriate initiatives and thereby fail to appeal to residents' capacity for self-organisation;
4. There is no 'ideology' for neighbourhood residents... Residents (who want) to contribute to their living environment lack a platform that supports them and protects their interests... (SWA 2004: 16)

This is how the Neighbourhood Alliance defines its position: in opposition to those who frustrate the 'countless' spontaneous initiatives and in support of residents who are prepared to commit to intercultural co-operation. Anti-professionalism and ethnic diversity play a key role here.

The discourse of the Neighbourhood Alliance concerning ethnicity and citizenship is as complex and ambivalent as the integration debate itself. On the one hand, there is a general idea that all citizens should share a common frame of reference and adhere to certain basic values (values which are variously labelled as Dutch, universal, or cosmopolitan – the words are used interchangeably). Cultivating ethnic identities is considered detrimental to social cohesion in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the organisation regularly deplores the neighbourhood councils for minority organisations, like those in the Transvaal neighbourhood in Amsterdam, where the Neighbourhood Alliance is also active. The Neighbourhood Alliance wants to recruit members to its panel who do not speak on behalf of a specific ethnic group. On the other hand, ethnicity is a constant cause of concern and the growth of ethnic diversity resulting from immigration is considered to be the main problem of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. This makes it very difficult to think of residents simply as inhabitants of a neighbourhood and not also as members of an ethnic group. The solution to this problem, on a discursive level, is to create supra-ethnic identities, to find people who are able to bridge divisions between different ethnic groups and individuals. The discourse of the Neighbourhood Alliance is emblematic of a wider trend towards what we may call post-multicultural policy philosophies (Uitermark et al. 2005). These are regarded as an alternative to the assimilationism promoted in France or Germany. In contrast to assimilationism, post-multicultural policies explicitly take ethnic identities into account. Ethnic identities are constantly evoked and problematised, not neglected or denied.<sup>4</sup> The Neighbourhood Alliance does not seek to give a voice or specific rights to groups, it seeks to negate and negotiate rather than confirm or reproduce group identities.

While dissatisfaction with multicultural policies is now widespread, the Neighbourhood Alliance is one of the few organisations that have translated these criticisms against multiculturalism into a concrete program for social interventions. It should be emphasised that this is quite exceptional in itself. Professional organisations are not often guided by a philosophy but instead operate according to an organisational logic, using professional routines to reach short-term goals. Normally, reorganisations are inspired more by financial considerations or bureaucratic politics than by a reconsideration of policy philosophies or ideologies. The Neighbourhood Alliance is at least a partial exception as it actively draws inspiration from the public debate and tries to turn the debate into practice. It seems to support the idea that there is a direct relation between philosophies and professional practices. But does this policy translate into practice?

## When discourse meets practice

We can answer this question by analysing how two different aspects of the Neighbourhood Alliance's discourse play out in the institutional reality of some of the neighbourhoods where it is active: spontaneity versus planning, and ideology versus interest.

### *Spontaneity versus planning*

A feature that is increasingly typical of the contemporary organisations involved in social interventions is the desire to 'help people help themselves', i.e., to undertake one strong intervention in the hope of generating a process of self-organisation. The Neighbourhood Alliance is no exception, since it presents itself as the result of a widely felt desire among residents to participate in the public life of the neighbourhood and to help cultivate positive inter-ethnic relationships through useful and enjoyable activities. This is also the title of a newspaper article on a national meeting organised by the Neighbourhood Alliance for its volunteers: 'The magic of a good neighbourhood lies in spontaneity.' The reality in the neighbourhoods we studied is that citizen initiatives are far from spontaneous and that enduring professional support seems to be a necessary (but not sufficient) condition for achieving sustained activity.

Neighbourhood 8 in Geuzenveld, for which we have the most detailed data, presents a sort of worst-case scenario in the sense that in the end, extended efforts did not result in the establishment of a permanent panel – a stable group of citizens from different ethnic backgrounds that would organise all kinds of activities in the neighbourhood, targeting all residents. Perhaps this case is not typical but it does illustrate the difficulty of organising 'spontaneous' participation. The involvement of the Neighbourhood Alliance in Geuzenveld started in December 2001,

when the organisation contacted some neighbourhood agencies and residents. From December 2001 to April 2002, one community worker of the Neighbourhood Alliance worked part-time to organise a meeting to set up the panel. The method was very intensive: she approached people in the street and went door to door. The community workers of the government-funded *Buurtbelangen* (Community Interests Committee) supported her in her efforts. Roughly 40 people attended the meeting, which took place on 8 April 2002.

The first meeting of the panel was held on 23 April and attended by eight residents, the consultant of the Neighbourhood Alliance and a community worker from *Buurtbelangen*. A group of Moroccan girls and young women formed the core of the panel. At least one consultant from the Neighbourhood Alliance was always present at the meetings. Other professionals in the neighbourhood, in particular youth workers, also attended subsequent meetings. Debated topics included language courses, a neighbourhood party, the design of (defensible) public space, a self-help group for Moroccan and Dutch women, a party for girls, the maintenance of a playground and a Moroccan fashion show. Some of these activities were carried out successfully but others were not. Here we are not so concerned with the success or scope of the activities but only with the input of professionals. Our research shows that this was very high and that resident participation was low. Professionals were present at all meetings and were sometimes in the majority. Both the Neighbourhood Alliance and the local authorities invested large amounts of professional energy in order to get the panel started. The professionals who were involved with the panel, both on the part of the Neighbourhood Alliance and the local authorities, did attempt for a long time to keep the panel alive, but to no avail. This does not mean that the panel was entirely unsuccessful – it did organise activities, and some of the first residents to get involved in the panel have taken up other tasks in the neighbourhood.

However, all those involved agree that professional input was high throughout the period but that residents only occasionally developed minimal levels of self-organisation. The constant investment of professional energy is strongly at variance with idea that, after initial help with the start-up, residents would be able to self-organise. Anti-professionalism, a core of the Neighbourhoods Alliance's ideology, could not be translated into practice at all.

### *Ideology versus interest*

Even if it is possible to recruit people into an organisation, actually making sure that they do what they are supposed to do is quite another thing. This is especially problematic for an organisation that has a strong ideology, like the Neighbourhood Alliance, but does not want to serve any particular interests or groups. In fact, the organisation wants to bring

together people with very different interests. This creates a situation that is intrinsically difficult to maintain for at least three reasons.

Firstly, any group that claims to serve the general interest is bound to have conflicts with other organisations that have a similar claim and share the same working area. In the case of the Neighbourhood Alliance, these are residents' committees, government agencies, housing corporations, and other organisations. Residents' organisations tend to be dominated by older native Dutch residents. One panel member of Moroccan descent observes that it was a

missed opportunity. It is a shame since people from so many cultures were involved in the panel... a group of older native Dutch residents felt threatened by the youth. They are still living in the 1960s. They immediately felt they were in conflict with the panel because of the other cultures... They had a 'meetings culture', unlike the minorities who do not know anything about minutes, mailings and so on... They are united in a so-called multicultural residents' group, but in reality it is only native Dutch people who are the ears and eyes of the neighbourhood council.

Conflicts like these often arise as soon as two or more organisations operate on the same turf. The government usually enters as a third party since it has resources, status and influence to allocate. The employees and the director of the Neighbourhood Alliance are normally directly involved in these conflicts and try to protect the interests of the panel. As a consequence, the panel easily becomes a vehicle in a conflict between the Neighbourhood Alliance and a local institutional actor that does not appreciate or acknowledge the role of the panel. Needless to say, these conflicts and competitions for status and resources are not very motivating for members of the panel and tend to have a destabilising effect.

Secondly, co-operation between the Neighbourhood Alliance and local institutional actors may proceed smoothly, as in the case we discussed above, where professionals from the panel and the neighbourhood worked side-by-side. Such a situation may persist for some time but in the long run it is likely that the relationships among different parties will undermine the autonomy of the panel. Since members of the panel ideally share only good qualities (active, open, independent) and lack any clear group membership, they are an asset for any other organisation or group of people who wants to organise activities in the neighbourhood. The girls who formed the core of the panel in Geuzenveld, for example, have now become active in other organisations. There is thus a strong 'pull factor' and there is very little that binds the members of the panel together, since they are selected on the basis of not having strong and durable loyalties.

Thirdly, it must be said that most of the panel members were not directly aware of the ideology of the neighbourhood panel. Sometimes it is explained that the Neighbourhood Alliance does not support activities that do not conform to Dutch standards, like a dance night exclusively for

Moroccan girls (which was then arranged through another organisation). The contact person for the Neighbourhood Alliance is also likely to have some idea of what the organisation stands for. But at a further remove, awareness about the ideology is low. Especially after the initial period of intensive supervision, members are likely to go to other organisations, leave the panel or, if they are not aware of the ideology, support activities that run counter to the principles of the organisation. This was most apparent in The Hague, where members of the Moerwijk neighbourhood panel are presently setting up a special society for Turkish men and another for Turkish women. This goes completely against the philosophy of the Neighbourhood Alliance, but for the members of the panel it is simply one more way to organise activities in the neighbourhood. Since residents who want to get involved in the neighbourhood do not usually support coherent ideologies, they instead pragmatically adjust to whatever circumstances may arise. And since the Neighbourhood Alliance cannot control those circumstances, especially after the period of intense supervision, it is quite likely that the panel ends up merging with other organisations or that its ideology gets watered down.

What can we conclude from this discussion of the Neighbourhood Alliance? The most important observation is simply that there is a world of difference between the national debate and the reality of policymaking in neighbourhoods. The concerns of local actors are not necessarily the same as those expressed in the public sphere. While commentators who participate in the national debate may be concerned about Dutch norms and values or the (lack of) compatibility between Islamic and Western civilisations, most organisations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods simply want to reach their target groups in order to develop and maintain policy interventions. As a consequence, they sometimes end up acting against the very beliefs that are promoted in the public sphere. This is most apparent with the issue of political and administrative organisation along ethnic lines. In the Dutch case, such a constellation is normally not defended on ideological grounds ('each ethnic group should have a seat at the table!') but on pragmatic grounds ('we can only reach immigrants through immigrant organisations'). In a sense, then, examining the exceptional position of the Neighbourhood Alliance helps us understand that most of the time ideology does not find its way into professional practice. When an organisation like the Neighbourhood Alliance explicitly scrutinises professional practices from an ideological viewpoint, it becomes apparent that almost all professional practices fall short of addressing public concerns (as manifested by the public sphere). Interestingly, this is also the case for the Neighbourhood Alliance itself: on the basis of the research we have carried out so far, we conclude that only under very specific conditions (high involvement of headquarters with the panel, high level of professional support, co-operative attitude of other local stakeholders) does its program actually translate somewhat into practice.

## Case 2: Rotterdam

Rotterdam is the city in the Netherlands with the most severe urban problems, and it is the only municipality where the populist politician Fortuyn ran for (and won) local elections and where his party became part of the local coalition government. While we can see experiments with post-multiculturalist policies in every major city in the Netherlands, and indeed in Europe, we focus on Rotterdam because this case might show us in an undisguised form the kinds of policies that result when one treats urban ethnic minorities as a new 'dangerous class' (Morris 1994). The discourse on the city by the current local government betrays a strong distrust towards the present residents and a desire to reinstate middle-class norms and values. In line with these new beliefs, numerous policy measures have been implemented in order to make sure that potentially dangerous groups are carefully monitored and disciplined. Zero-tolerance policing is now commonplace and high demands are put on new immigrants to the city; they not only have to learn the Dutch language but are also expected to learn Dutch norms and values. While it was not very difficult to formulate new policy measures, existing professional routines turned out to be remarkably resilient. We illustrate this through a discussion of Rotterdam's social policies, where new ideals slightly altered policies but hardly affected the professional practices at all.

The first example is the so-called 'street etiquette'. The idea for this program was first raised in 1999 by a GroenLinks (Green Left) aldermen who was responding to a growing concern about the manners and behaviour of youths in parts of disadvantaged neighbourhoods. During a city debate, some active residents suggested that the program should be developed for all age groups. The original formulation of the project does not mention ethnicity or crime (Diekstra et al. 2002), it emphasises that street etiquette may reinforce 'liveability'. Citizens needed to become more aware of the consequences of their actions and that the government needed to involve citizens at the neighbourhood level. Street etiquette basically means that residents of a street meet and discuss what they think is 'normal' public behaviour. As a consequence, street etiquette has become a device that is increasingly employed to regulate or test relationships between different groups in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The current mayor, however, now frames street etiquette as part of a strategy that helps prevent undesirable behaviour – the ambition of creating a positive atmosphere and promoting friendliness seems to have been dropped. At the same time, the agenda is more ambitious since it now appears that street etiquette might even help prevent serious crimes like stabbings:

The main problems of the city concern safety and filth. The political party programs and the election results show this. These are problems that Rotter-

dammers inflict upon each other. Someone is throwing garbage on the street, someone is walking their dog and someone is holding the knife. The most important question in this city is how we deal with each other. Whether we want to take each other into account, whether we agree on rules of communication and conduct. (Opstelten cited in Diekstra et al. 2002: 5)

Thus, the call for a discussion on norms and values is now translated into a call for promoting those kinds of social projects that reduce the levels of insecurity. While the goals here are defined more narrowly and reveal a mistrust of certain groups, the means remain largely the same.

A second example concerns Opzoomeren. This was originally part of the social renewal policy that was formulated in Rotterdam and then transformed into national policy. The basic goal of social renewal was to increase the quality of social relations in disadvantaged neighbourhoods and to promote citizens' initiatives in the voluntary sector. Opzoomeren is perhaps the most famous part of this program: Citizens were mobilised to clean their streets, organise youth and sport activities, and have street barbecues in order to come into contact with each other (Duyvendak & Van der Graaf 2001). Opzoomeren fits in with a more general tendency to empower citizens in order to make them govern themselves and each other. As such, it tends to look for solutions at the community or individual levels rather than the society level. However, at least in its original formulation, it also tried to capitalise on latent citizen qualities: it valued the people living in these neighbourhoods. Opzoomeren, along with a range of other programs, constitutes the cement that needs to bind the different ethnic communities, socio-economic classes and age groups together into a territorial community that has some significance for its members. Thus, while initially the policy was chiefly intended to show some tangible social results for the coalition Christian Democrats, Labour and the Green-Left city government, it is now used in a far more instrumental way for a more specific purpose:

People do not feel safe and do not feel connected to each other and their environment. There is no longer a broad sense of 'us'. There is often distrust among each other and, consequently, in the government. This is indeed the social clash: a contemporary social question. We are confronted with an extraordinary challenge of social integration. (Gemeente Rotterdam 2003: 3)

The new government clearly feels that Opzoomeren can play a pivotal role in meeting this challenge. It has set itself as a target of increasing the number of participating streets from the current 900 to 1,600 in 2006 (that is about half of Rotterdam's streets). It has become part of the new city government's *Mensen Maken de Stad* (People make the city), a program, which not only encourages residents to undertake activities but also stimulates them to make informal rules as part of street etiquette and to develop an agenda for their own streets: how can the

current social situation be improved? This program had been implemented by some 60 to 70 streets at the time of writing (October 2005).

We carried out exploratory research in two of Rotterdam's neighbourhoods (Hoogvliet and Spangen) which revealed that, on the ground, changes were not that significant. In some instances, professionals reluctantly co-operated, but in most cases they considered the new program to be an unwelcome government intrusion. Some professionals even boldly declared that, as far as they were concerned, the city government shouldn't mingle in their business to start with. Most strikingly, was the fact that some of the professionals did not even know there had been a shift in policy. The net result of the policy change is first and foremost an administrative affair, since in many cases, professionals simply continued the same activities as before (Radstaeke 2005).

In conclusion, it is important to note that many policy measures promoting contacts, citizen participation and political inclusion that have already been in place for a long time continue to be supported by the new government. In fact, these programs seem to enjoy even more political support than they did under the previous, social democratic government. In practice, it has been proven very difficult to develop new programs that are a direct response to the call for tougher policies, or even to redesign existing social programs.

## Conclusion

Many professionals are concerned that the emergence of anti-professional ideologies constitutes a serious threat to their own practices. For instance, critics of neo-liberalism fear that a belief in the market system undermines their professional discretion. We would suggest that all ideologies are intrinsically difficult to translate into practices.

The difficulty of implementing new philosophies was confirmed by the two cases we examined. In the first, that of the Neighbourhood Alliance, a rather dramatic shift in discourse indeed produced strong but quite unexpected changes in professional practices. Only under very specific conditions (a high level of involvement by the headquarters with the panel, a high level of professional support, a co-operative local stakeholder attitude) was its program somewhat translated into practice. But this comes at a price. While the spontaneity of citizens' initiatives formed a constitutive part of the Neighbourhood Alliance's post-multiculturalist and intrinsically anti-professional philosophy, paradoxically its aims could only be realised in a highly professionalised context (and even then, just partially). The second case, that of Opzoomeren, exhibited an even wider gap between public philosophy and professional practice. Community workers in Rotterdam either resisted, considered the policy change as an administrative burden, or were totally unaware that they were supposed to alter their practices.

In any event, ideology bounced back in both cases. In the first case, residents of neighbourhoods obstructed a direct translation of policies into practices; therefore professionals were forced to adopt the very (dominant) role they abhorred theoretically. Professionals knew what they wanted, but the level of inertia and the complexity of professional practices precluded any direct translation of ideals into reality. In the second case, professionals were either intentionally non-co-operative since they disagreed with the new government, or were unaware of policy shifts – let alone their translation into actual practices in the neighbourhood. This latter form of non-co-operation is quite a surprising result, considering our expectation that the heated public and political debate in Rotterdam would influence professionals, even without direct orders from politicians.

We suspect that what happened (and what did not) in these two cases in a post-multiculturalist Netherlands also applies in other contexts. We obtained interesting insights by looking at the (lack of) professional translation of post-multiculturalist policies into practices, even though the new public philosophy was so overwhelmingly present. If, in this case, policymakers were already experiencing so many hurdles, is it not be plausible to expect an even wider gap between public philosophies and professional practices in situations where public philosophies are more ambivalent or conscious? If so, is this not enough reason to reconsider the general claim in the debate on professionalism that new philosophies and policies are the primary causes of the erosion of professional practices?

## Notes

1. The case studies are drawn from Uitermark & Duyvendak 2005a and 2005b, respectively.
2. Fortuyn also presented himself as a rebel who gave politics back to the people by disturbing the political correctness of the governing elites. We can only begin to understand his emergence if we take into account the high profile of the integration issue in the Netherlands and the nature of the political environment (Duyvendak, 2004).
3. Even a superficial discussion on the origins and evolution of the debate on Dutch values and norms would require much more space than is available here. See Duyvendak et al. (2005).
4. The diversity policy is also not an example of old (multiculturalist) wine in new bottles. In contrast to the minority policy previously adopted in the Netherlands, the diversity policy stresses that identities are highly complex and contentious, constantly changing and vary from one individual to another.