

6 How broad? A close look at counterterrorism and radicalisation policy

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In its fight against radicalisation¹ and terrorism,² the Dutch government prefers the comprehensive approach. This approach is aimed not only at small groups about to commit violent acts but also at much broader groups of people among whom radical ideology is present in principle. In this way, Dutch authorities are trying to nip radicalisation in the bud. These are people who do not use violence and do not even threaten to use it, but who think about whether the use of violence might be necessary for achieving their own – political – objectives. Radicalisation and terrorism are thus seen as one coherent continuum. The policy aimed at tackling it not only involves repressive anti-terrorism measures, but it also "puts an equal emphasis on prevention," according to the Deputy National Coordinator for Counterterrorism Lidewijde Ongering in a session of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs in the summer of 2007.³ What this means, she says, is that the government must assume a pro-active position in determining whether individuals are isolating themselves from (Dutch) society or are turning against it.⁴ In the words of the former director of the democratic rule of law of the General Intelligence and Security Service (Algemene Inlichtingen- en Veiligheidsdienst; AIVD) E.S.M. Akerboom, who was recently appointed National Co-ordinator for Counterterrorism, combating radicalism and terrorism should therefore involve the use of "a varied set of instruments that comprise political, financial, penal and disruptive means which must be deployed individually or in combination."⁵ This approach is often characterised as soft because it avoids hard confrontation. On the other hand, by using this approach the government casts its nets far out over society, and one might wonder whether this way of operating is really so much softer than a much more specified policy that focuses on a relatively small part of the population.

¹ Here the term "radicalisation" is being used in the sense employed by the National Coordinator for Counterterrorism (NCTB): "A process of increasing willingness to use non-democratic instruments in order to impose political or religious views on others."

² There are many definitions of terrorism. Because the policy of the Dutch government is central here, use will be made of the NCTB definition: "Committing or threatening to commit violence aimed at human lives, or causing serious material damage that is socially disruptive. The goal is to bring about social change or to influence political decision-making."

³ Ongering statement. Also see E. van de Linde et al., *Quick scan of post 9/11 national counter-terrorism policymaking and implementation in selected European countries*. Leiden: RAND Europe 2002, p. 83 and p. 87. Besides the Netherlands, the United Kingdom is also noted for its early intervention to prevent radicalisation, R. Neve et al., *Eerste inventarisatie van het contraterrorebeleid* (First inventory of counterterrorism policy). The Hague: Ministerie van Justitie, Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek- en Documentatiecentrum 2006, p. 89.

⁴ Statement of Lidewijde Ongering before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, 27 June 2007.

⁵ E.S.M. Akerboom, "Contraterrore in Nederland" (Counterterrorism in the Netherlands), <<http://www.minbzk.nl/onderwerpen/veiligheid/algemeen/publicaties/?ActImltd-1419>> (4 September 2008).

6.1 A question of ethics

What follows is a summary of a number of the dilemmas that accompany the broad approach. But first it should be noted that a broad approach like this seems logical for several quite different reasons. Terrorism can cause enormous damage. Not only is there the immediate damage and suffering caused by an attack but there is also the residual anxiety resulting from it, which by itself can inflict profound social damage such as the polarisation of society. Of course we want to eliminate terrorists from our midst, and if that is not possible we want to minimise the size of that group. For if the group of potential terrorists becomes very large and we want to keep them under constant observation, we must decide whether we want to put so many surveillance officers and teams of pursuers and observers on the street that we end up with a police state, or whether we ought to take conscious risks by temporarily losing sight of some potential terrorists. This question is currently being discussed in the United Kingdom, where the government is working with a basic list of two thousand people who could perpetrate an attack at any moment.⁶ The dilemma indicates that there are political and ethical aspects to the question of the effectiveness of counterterrorism and counter-radicalisation policy. Effectiveness at any price does not exist in a democratic constitutional state.

One important question in this regard is how terrorism is viewed, since terrorism has many different definitions.⁷ How this phenomenon is defined is relevant to the kind of policy that is chosen. If terrorism is seen as a form of warfare, then obviously the armed forces should be deployed. If it is seen as a crime, then action by the police and the courts seems more logical. If terrorism is primarily defined as a threat to the democratic rule of law or to national security, then the work goes to intelligence and security services. And if it is seen rather as a social problem, then housing, educational and employment policies are the proper instruments. There are even more possibilities in addition to these, such as security measures, financial investigations and psychological warfare. So each definition speaks to different policy instruments and government organs. In practice, counter-radicalisation and counterterrorism policies will comprise a combination of approaches. The fact that this mix does not always has a happy outcome is of no further relevance here.

What we can confirm in any case is that in comparison with the situation about 35 years ago in the Netherlands, when South Moluccan and left-wing ideological terrorism were particularly evident, today the intelligence and security services have been assigned a major role. Back then the central task was allotted mainly to the police.⁸ The difference

⁶ "Secret report: terror threat worst since 9/11," *Sunday Telegraph* 25 February 2007; "British PM says 2,000 terrorists presently living in UK," 18 June 2007, <<http://news.oneindia.mobi/2008/06/18/645136.html>> "MI5 watch 2,000 terror suspects," BBC News, 2 May 2007.

⁷ For an overview, see A.P. Schmid and A.J. Jongman, *Political terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories and literature*. Amsterdam 1988: Transaction Publishers, rev. ed. 2005.

⁸ For overviews of the fight against terrorism in the Netherlands in the seventies, see: P. Abels, "'Je wilt niet geloven dat zoiets in Nederland kan!' Het Nederlandse contraterrorismebeleid sinds 1973" ('You don't want to believe that something like this can happen in the Netherlands!' Dutch counterterrorism policy since 1973), I. Duyvesteyn and B. de Graaf (eds.), *Terroristen en hun bestrijders vroeger en nu* (Terrorists and their opponents, then and now). Amsterdam: Boom 2007, pp. 121-128; S. Eikelenboom, *Niet bang om te sterven. Dertig jaar terrorisme in Nederland* (Not afraid to die: Thirty years of terrorism in the

has to do with the greater seriousness of possible attacks today. Many attacks in the seventies were bombings with only property damage, attacks on government functionaries (diplomats, British military) or hijackings and kidnappings with demands that could be negotiated. Especially since the attacks in the United States on 11 September 2001 there has been fear of an attack on large masses of people with hundreds or thousands of fatalities. Actually, in the past decade the number of victims has been much lower than it was in the 1970s: back then a dozen people were killed as a result of terrorist actions, while in the past decade there was only one or, if a broader definition of terrorism is used, two. Nevertheless, in the present situation people have a much stronger feeling that by the time the police and the courts enter the picture it is already too late. That is why counterterrorism today has set aside a central role for intelligence and security services, whose main responsibility is that of issuing an "early warning." The general public expects this of such services, as attested by the many voices heard after the murder of Theo van Gogh, insisting that the AIVD should have prevented the attack by keeping a closer watch on Mohammed B.⁹ This explains the tremendous personnel expansion that the Dutch intelligence and security services have gone through in recent years, and, since 2004, the creation of a National Coordinator of Counterterrorism, whose organisation entails just under one hundred people and who stands in direct contact with the government.

That call from the public for an almost all-knowing and all-seeing secret service is a remarkable historical turnaround, by the way. Not so long ago the generally accepted idea was that a secret service should know as little as possible.¹⁰ In the perception of the public at large, intelligence services develop from a necessary evil to a necessary good. The need to have the government observe and intervene at an early stage is not only reserved for combating political radicalisation. We have observed a need for prevention in many other areas, from the question of whether young people are going off the rails (soon every infant in the Netherlands will have an electronic child dossier in which 1,185 questions will have to be filled in over time) to whether they have had any breakfast in the morning before leaving for school. There is a great desire for intervention among ordinary Dutch people, even those from political movements in which such an attitude would have not have been expected up until recently.¹¹ It is

Netherlands). Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam 2007; P. Klerks, *Terreurbestrijding in Nederland 1970-1988* (Counterterrorism in the Netherlands 1970-1988). Amsterdam: Nieuw Amsterdam 1989.

⁹ For example, see "AIVD blunderde in opsporing Mohammed B." (AIVD blundered in tracking Mohammed B.), 1 September 2005, <http://ayaanhirsiali.web-log.nl/ayaanhirsiali/mohammed_b/index.html> "Nieuw onderzoek rol AIVD rond moord op Van Gogh" (New investigation of the role of the AIVD in the murder of Van Gogh), *Algemeen Dagblad*, 18 January 2007. There are even suggestions that the AIVD had called Mohammed B. in as an informant: "Vrienden Theo van Gogh maken TV-programma over imaginaire rechtszaak" (Friends of Theo van Gogh making TV programme on imaginary court case), *NRC Handelsblad* 16 March 2007; "Mohammed B. legt verklaringen af" (Mohammed B. makes a statement), *de Volkskrant* 6 December 2005.

¹⁰ For an expression of that mentality, see R. van Meurs, *De BVD. Samenzwering tegen ambtenaren, studenten, journalisten, dominees, en andere democraten* (The BVD – National Security Service –: Conspiracy against civil servants, students, journalists, Protestant ministers and other democrats). Amsterdam: Van Gennep 1978.

¹¹ For example, see B. de Koning, *Alles onder controle. De overheid houdt u in de gaten* (Everything under control: The government has its eye on you). Amsterdam: Balans 2008; D.J. Nieuwboer, "Revolutie achter de voordeur" (Revolution in the living room), *De Pers* 27 August 2008; A. W. Duthier and H. Dupuis, "Je hebt één jaar borstvoeding gehad, begrijp ik? Gegevens in het elektronisch kinddossier schenden de

curious to observe that, after the idea of social engineering had been laid off in the late 1970s, a very central role has now been assigned to the government as a kind of therapist with regard to its citizens. These citizens are constantly under observation; their electronic dossiers are opened one by one and linked to all the other files that the government already has at its disposal in its administered world.¹² We are not far removed from interventions in the womb that are not purely medical, or the idea that for the sake of healthy growth into accepted citizenship, parents must be altered and perfected.

6.2 How far do we want to go?

And this brings us to the first dilemma I wanted to focus on in the matter of spotting radicalisation at an early stage. It was always assumed that people who were prepared to use violence for political ends were mainly between the ages of eighteen and thirty. Today we are seeing that more and more such people are outside this age category, including very young people from twelve to fourteen.¹³ If we want to undertake intelligence campaigns – by using an informer, for example – that person will also have to be about the same age. We cannot simply use an informer of eighteen to operate in a group of twelve or thirteen-year-olds. The question, however, is how ethical is it to entrust very young children with such tasks, and how ethical is it to use special investigative resources against the very young? We have a juvenile justice system in the Netherlands, but for intelligence work we have never agreed on a minimum age. Do we eliminate the phrase "sin of one's youth" from the dictionary when it comes to radicalisation? In any case, it is a radical break with a time in the not very distant past in the Netherlands when certain kinds of experimentation were accepted during the student years and were generally dismissed as mischief, or "boys will be boys." Speaking of mischief: uttering the name of, say, a politician (while under the influence or not) and at the same time making a throat-slitting gesture with the finger can now get someone into big trouble. Anyone who thinks that such matters cannot get out of hand easily is advised to read the book *De Colombo Tragedie* (The Colombo Tragedy) by J.C. Bijkerk, published in 1991. It is the story of three Dutch war pilots who, after the fall of the Dutch East Indies in 1942, were stationed in Australia. In 1943 they were convicted by a naval court martial to life imprisonment or twenty years because, while drunk, they had fantasised out loud about flying back to the East Indies to satisfy the obsessive longing one of them had to see his family again, who were imprisoned there. The plan

privacy van kinderen die bovendien niets mankeren" (You breastfed for one year, I see? Data in the electronic child dossier violate the privacy of children who don't have anything wrong with them), *NRC Handelsblad* 22 September 2008.

¹² The concept of "therapeutic state" is, originally with a more limited meaning, used by T. Sasz, "The therapeutic state: the tyranny of pharmacy," *The Independent Review* 2001, pp. 485-521. The expression "administered world" can be found in: S. Žižek, *Welcome to the desert of the real! Five essays on September 11 and related dates*. London/New York: Verso 2002, p. 96.

¹³ For example, see E. Umar, "'Natuurlijk ben ik geen Nederlander'" ("Of course I'm not Dutch"), *de Volkskrant* 10 May 2005; "12-jarige strottennijder op video" (12-year-old throat-cutter on video), *de Telegraaf* 24 April 2007; R. Abels, "Radicalisering op het schoolplein" (Radicalisation on the playground), *Trouw* 28 October 2006; "Marokkaanse leerlingen antiwesterners" (Moroccan pupils are anti-Western), *NRC Handelsblad* 17 June 2005; P. Wierenga, "'Incidenten' op basisschool. Vooral pubers radicaliseren" ("Incidents" at primary school: Adolescents especially keen to radicalise), *De Pers* 25 April 2007.

was demonstrably unworkable since their plane could not fly the distance between Australia and the East Indies. Only in 1950 were they pardoned; by then the three men were broken for life. No matter how irresponsible it is to call the national emergency number (112) and suggest that a plane is going to be hijacked in order to keep your lover from taking the flight,¹⁴ we see here how the risk arises of an overreaction by the police or the courts in a particular social context.

The nets can easily be cast too wide, and the reason for this is that government agencies, for the sake of clarity, make use of socio-scientific templates. This happens when things like pyramid models for radicalisation are used by police and intelligence services.¹⁵ According to such models, which often resemble a pyramid lying on its side, people from a broad base area can end up in the narrowed top – where they actually do use violence – by passing through a series of phases. The fact that the graphic representation of the model becomes increasingly narrow indicates that there obviously are opportunities to get out or withdraw, and that not every case of incipient radicalisation has to result in the use of violence. The question, then, is this: how justifiable is it to focus attention on people in the "base area phase," where there is only a certain religious disposition or a strong sense of exclusion, most of whom will never "develop" into people who commit acts of violence? How do we prevent the government, in its need to prevent anything worse from happening, from assuming the role of thought police?

6.3 Lacking distinguishing capacity

Also important in these kinds of models are the radicalisation indicators that are used. Are they really appropriate; how strong is their distinguishing capacity? In other words: do not the criteria that are applied to radicalisation processes also apply to people who, in common parlance, cannot be described as radical, such as strong religious zeal, a disparaging attitude towards women, separation from a society regarded as sinful, et cetera? A case in point is the report *Radical dawa in verandering, de opkomst van islamitisch neoradicalisme in Nederland* (Radical dawa in flux: the emergence of Islamic neo-radicalism in the Netherlands) from the AIVD, published in the autumn of 2007. Here we read that the so-called neo-radicals, estimated at approximately 2,500 of the 850,000 Muslims in the Netherlands, supposedly attired in traditional Arabic clothing; if they did not do so and wore Western clothes instead, their clothes were regarded as camouflage. It is an impossible situation that gives rise to an enemy stereotype which those involved can do nothing about. In fact, because the average Dutch person cannot follow the subtle distinction that the AIVD seems to be able to make between neo-radicals and other Muslims, this enemy stereotype is extended over the entire Muslim population – even though we keep emphasising that the struggle against radicalisation and terrorism is all about winning people's hearts and minds.

But where exactly does the correct distinction lie? What does not make things any easier is that as the process of integration progresses, the perception of the remaining gap gets

¹⁴ *NRC Handelsblad* 29 August 2008. <http://www.nrc.nl/binnenland/article1966574.ece/Kaping_moest_liefje_in_Nederland_houden> (22 September 2008).

¹⁵ Cf. F.J. Buijs, F. Demant & A. Hamdi, *Strijders van eigen bodem: radicale en democratische moslims in Nederland* (Homegrown warriors: radical and democratic Muslims in the Netherlands). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2006, p. 240.

stronger and stronger, so the chance of radicalisation becomes correspondingly greater. This is called the integration paradox.¹⁶ People who do their very best by taking classes, getting jobs, et cetera, "in order to belong," often keep coming up against a glass ceiling that holds them back from one-hundred-percent-Dutch identity; they will never be "real" members of the club.¹⁷ That feeling of unattainable inclusion can lead to serious radicalisation. And partly because we know that, we keep using the term *allochtoon* (non-native ethnic minority).¹⁸ It is a vicious circle, and as a result people in the Netherlands still talk about third-generation Moroccans, et cetera, while in other countries the native - non-native distinction never even comes up.

And if something does go wrong, not only in the case of the murder of Theo van Gogh but also for example in the case of a fireworks disaster or a fire in a café, there is a strong inclination to point to the responsible governing authority. As a result, authorities aspire to an almost godlike infallibility, and they let their fantasies run away with them. Owing to the use of cameras, telephone taps and the registration of financial, telephone, travel and many other kinds of data, and to the practice of mining all that data, innocent citizens end up in the government dragnets. And as the British sociologist Frank Furedi writes, ultimately every citizen is a suspect in principle until the opposite can be proven.¹⁹ Philip B. Heymann, professor of law at Harvard University, warns of the emergence of "a culture of prevention" in which people become anxious about exhibiting unconventional behaviour.²⁰ Who dares to still pre-order a halal meal on a trans-Atlantic flight? And that's just the beginning. People may start deciding not to borrow certain books or not to purchase certain CDs by way of the internet, because Big Brother is watching you. Combine this with your fondness for reading Arabic poetry on the internet, and the two flights you took to Pakistan not so long ago, and you're just asking for trouble. Before too long, unmanned planes will start flying over Great Britain, following the example of what the Israeli government does over Palestinian territory to gather a continuous stream of images of what is happening on the ground below.²¹ And Big Brother is not just watching – he is listening, too. One method is by means of planes that circle the air space of the United States and the United Kingdom over certain cities. We really are not so very far from the "intelligence state" that Professor Heymann warns about.²²

The outcome of all this attention to possible risks is that in the long run many citizens will not feel any safer; they may even feel unsafe. It's a well-known problem that for many citizens, more police on the street increases their anxiety instead of allaying it. In this way harm is done to the public's social resilience.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 201-213.

¹⁷ This is not purely a Dutch phenomenon, by the way, but something that occurs in many of the countries of Western Europe. For a good description, see C. Power, "Breaking Through," *Time* 30 January 2008.

¹⁸ An appeal by Minister of Justice E. Hirsch Ballin to scrap the terms *allochtoon* and *autochtoon* (native Dutch) was met with resistance. "Hirsch Ballin wil term allochtoon schrappen" (Hirsch Ballin wants to scrap the term "allochtoon"), *Elsevier* 25 February 2008.

¹⁹ F. Furedi, *Invitation to terror: The expanding empire of the unknown*. London/New York: Continuum 2007, xiv, p. 5 and 77.

²⁰ P.B. Heymann, *Terrorism, freedom and security: Winning without war*. Cambridge, MA/London: The MIT Press 2003, pp. 135-139.

²¹ K. Sengupta, "Unmanned spy planes to police Britain," *The Independent* 6 August 2008.

²² P. B. Heymann, *Terrorism*, pp. 135-139.

In addition, it turns out that scanning data files of large groups of people for unconventional patterns or characteristics does not work. German authorities noticed this back in the 1970s when their *profiling* conducted against the Red Army Fraction proved unsuccessful. Recent experiences of MI5, the British intelligence service, show that profile recognition does not work because radical persons look more and more like ordinary people.²³ A new and more recent German attempt at *profiling* was not successful either and even led the German constitutional court to impose a ban on these kinds of "fishing expeditions."²⁴

For that matter, the citizen does not make it any easier for the government to form a clear idea of privacy and the protection of people's private lives. The same citizen who refuses to allow the government to have access to certain information is willing to let it all hang out on the internet, and allows that information, outdated or not, to lie around for years. It is entirely understandable when representatives of government agencies say all they do is act like supermarkets with discount cards. And yet under a rule of law this is not supposed to be something the government wants. Its *modus operandi* is different. But the main thing is that the legal consequences of actions by the government can be much more far-reaching than those of a grocer.

If the attempts at profile recognition and so forth do not work – because a certain terrorist does not order a halal meal on board, for example, but an innocent believer or a young wise guy does – what is the effect of such indicators and the subsequent actions? Probably a considerable amount of irritation regarding the actions taken by the government, feelings of discrimination and exclusion.²⁵ It is a recipe for radicalisation. Radicalisation does not necessarily have to do with Islamism alone, but that need hardly be mentioned in the context of this Monitor. Local authorities say they have to deal much more frequently with right-wing extremism. This is not the last word on this matter, because local authorities often have an incorrect understanding of the radicalisation problem in their midst. Radicalisation in the right-wing extremist sense is often dismissed as a problem of young people and their nightlife behaviour.²⁶ When it comes to Islamic radicalisation, local authorities are often surprised when it is pointed out to them, since "It is been going so well recently, hasn't it? They do not break into cars any more and they're back in school."

Nor is it easy to grasp the Islamic body of ideas from which radicalisation seems to emerge. It is about Salafism, a religious school of thought that is strongly promoted in, but not only, Saudi Arabia and that advocates a return to the religious practices from the

²³ A. Travis, "MI5 report challenges views on terrorism in Britain," *The Guardian* 21 August 2008; S. Knapp & D. Gardham, "MI5: Terrorists not frustrated religious loners," *Telegraph* 21 August 2008. Also see M. Nance, "How (not) to spot a terrorist," *Foreign Policy* (2008) 166, pp. 74-76.

²⁴ P. Schaar, *Das Ende der Privatsphäre: der Weg in die Überwachungsgesellschaft*. Munich: Bertelsmann 2007, pp. 128-131.

²⁵ Cf. J. Goldschmidt and P. R. Rodrigues, "Het gebruik van etnische of religieuze profielen bij het voorkomen en opsporen van strafbare feiten die een bedreiging vormen voor de openbare orde en veiligheid" (The use of ethnic or religious profiles in the prevention and detection of punishable offences that form a threat to the public order and safety), in: J. van Donselaar and P. R. Rodrigues, *Monitor Racisme & Extremisme; zevende rapportage* (Racism & Extremism Monitor: seventh report). Amsterdam: Anne Frank House / Leiden University 2006, pp. 40-67.

²⁶ Cf. J. van Donselaar (ed.), *Monitor Racisme & Extremisme, Het Lonsdalevraagstuk* (Racism & Extremism Monitor: The Lonsdale problem). Amsterdam: Anne Frank House / Leiden University 2005, pp. 67-71.

time of the prophet Mohammed. In Salafism there is a distinction between political and non-political Salafists. Among the political Salafists, there are those who do support armed struggle to spread their religion and those who do not. And among these so-called jihadist Salafists a distinction can be made between those who only want to defend the traditionally Islamic territories and those who believe that the struggle should also be fought in the West.²⁷ Salafism develops into a kind of lifestyle among some young people, like the Lonsdale clothing range among others. Salafism is "cool" in certain circles, but it is difficult to gauge how deep that attitude is. Is it just for show? Will it fade away in time, like so many other rages? Or is the lifestyle one step closer to a deeper mindset? And even if it is only about a lifestyle, does not the group that submits to it contain what Trotsky called "useful idiots"²⁸ who are put to work as dogsbodies by the more clever boys and girls? Add to this the fact that some Salafists have one socially accepted message for one place and another secret one for another – the well-known frontstage-backstage problem – and it does not get any easier. And add to *that* the fact that the AIVD draws attention to one new development per report (the last time it was the "neo-radicals;" what will it be the next time, post-neo-radicals?) and it becomes clear that we are dealing with a very complex religious content, some forms of which seem to be acceptable to the government and some not. If the government gets involved in that debate, it runs the risk of taking part in religious hair-splitting. And since government intervention never ends up being neutral, it will favour some parties to the detriment of others, but not necessarily in the way it had imagined. Whenever the government starts making use of what it sees as moderate Muslims, those persons soon become known as "collaborators" and "traitors" by groups that are susceptible to radicalisation. In addition, the government also runs the risk of irritating the non-Muslims in a polarised society by embracing certain representatives of Islam.²⁹

6.4 Effects

One point of concern that the AIVD also expressed in its report is the possibility that while anti-integration tendencies among radical Muslims do not necessarily lead to violence, they do lead to the creation of enclaves in which the so-called horizontal basic rights are pushed aside. In those enclaves, radical Muslims might impose their religious views on others, or women might be deprived of certain rights, not to mention homosexuals. It is a troublesome story in a society that, up until forty years ago, maintained a "pillar" system (a compartmentalised society divided along religious and political lines) imbued with forms of segregation, where people would only patronise the Catholic butcher or the Calvinist greengrocer, and where housing corporations built entire districts that were restricted to one confession. It is also a difficult story because in other cases, ethnic groups were sometimes expressly invited to live and be seen in separate districts, as in Chinatown in Amsterdam or the Hindus in The Hague. How can

²⁷ Cf. F.J. Buijs, F. Demant & A. Hamdi, *Strijders van eigen bodem* (Homegrown warriors). Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press 2006, p. 240.

²⁸ This term, which is often attributed to Lenin, actually comes from Trotsky, who used it in his *Literature and revolution*, among other places. For a discussion of the use and origin of the term, see: M. De Coster, "Nuttige idioten" (Useful idiots), 18 August 2008, <<http://marcdecoster.blogspot.com/2008/08/nuttige-idioten.html>>

²⁹ Google the term "troetelturk" (pet Turk), for example.

something that is applauded as colourful on the one hand be repudiated as threatening on the other?

It would be helpful if the various authorities would try to reach more agreement on this point. And not just on this point. The relation between church and state is slowly beginning to get very muddled. Everyone comes out with his own idea of the concept of "separation of church and state." According to one person, an Iftar meal can be held in a building owned by the local district, while others disagree. In a characteristic move, a memo has now been issued by the mayor of Amsterdam about the relation between church (mosque) and state.³⁰ This testifies to a failure of the national government. It should also be possible to provide better guidance to teachers and youth workers in the task of identifying radicalisation tendencies. What can and cannot be expected from them in this regard? And does this square with the job requirements of their profession? What is ethically sound here, and what is not?³¹

On top of all this, the effects of the counter-radicalisation policies are not clear. For example, policy that is aimed at integration and better opportunities at school and work is naturally a very useful, emancipatory policy, but it would be incorrect to suppose that such a policy reduces the chances of radicalisation. Above we discussed the integration paradox. It may be that emancipation results in a (temporary) upturn in radicalisation tendencies. Moreover, the national policy cannot prevent internet messages from abroad from reaching people who, as a result, become further radicalised.³²

One important consequence of broad interest in radicalisation processes is the possibility that the government agencies involved will be exposed to an information overload. In the case against the AIVD interpreter who provided secret documents to persons who were the subject of the investigation, it was revealed that there are enormous backlogs at the AIVD, one of them being in the area of translation.³³

So even when it comes to fighting radicalisation, it is worthwhile to think about whether the government would not be better off keeping it lean and mean rather than maintaining a bureaucracy equipped with a panoply of powers that enable it, under the guise of a soft approach, to reach into the capillaries of society and penetrate into the living rooms of far too many groups of citizens in search of half-baked radical fantasies.

6.5 Conclusion

Usually, after a terrorist attack people are prepared to surrender many of their civil freedoms. In time the pendulum swings back.³⁴ There are indications that since the end

³⁰ "Notitie scheiding kerk en staat" (Memorandum on the separation of church and state), <<http://www.cda-amsterdam.nl/upload/Notitie%20Scheiding%20Kerk%20en%20Staat%20def.doc>> (4 September 2008).

³¹ Cf. *Eindrapportage Amsterdams Onderwijsadviespunt Radicalisering* (Final report of Amsterdam school advisory point on radicalisation). Amsterdam: Gemeente Amsterdam, DMO 2007; M. Zannoni, *De rol van eerstelijns werkers bij het tegengaan van polarisatie en radicalisering* (The role of frontline workers in fighting polarisation and radicalisation). Den Haag: COT 2008.

³² A literature study on foreign influences on so-called homegrown radicalisation is now taking place at the Centre for Terrorism and Counterterrorism at the Hague Campus of Leiden University.

³³ J. Meeus and J. Schoorl, "AIVD slordig met bewijs terrorisme," (AIVD careless with terrorism evidence), *de Volkskrant* 8/9 January 2005.

³⁴ R. Matthew & G. Shambaugh, "The pendulum effect: Explaining shifts in the democratic response to terrorism," *Analyses of Social Issues and Public Policy* 2005, pp. 223-233.

of 2007, the reaction of the Dutch population to the terrorist attacks of 9/11 and the murder of Theo van Gogh has ebbed away to a significant extent. The House of Representatives passed a motion, for example, in which the government was invited to consider ways in which an investigation of the Dutch counterterrorism policy could best be formulated, a call to discuss the effectiveness of that legislation.³⁵ The prime minister and his party took a position that was more sharp-edged than in past year against MP Wilders and his negative statements about Islam. The film *Fitna*, produced by the same MP in March 2008, which links terrorist practices with Islamic religious beliefs, did not cause the commotion that had been expected. The subject of "privacy," which had been taboo for years, re-emerged in the social debate, a sign that the population no longer has the feeling that it only wants to be protected by the government, but also that it wants to be protected *from* the government.

Without new attacks that are of immediate relevance to Dutch society, it is to be expected that – for the time being – no new counterterrorism legislation will be approved. This does not alter the fact that follow-up steps can be taken within the existing legal framework, however. Even without that legal framework, the government is gathering a large amount of data on citizens, particularly by electronic means.³⁶ Within the framework of that broad approach, the government is pursuing its attempts at early detection. Generally speaking, in these kinds of processes, the failure of profile or pattern recognition does not lead to the abandonment of those methods but to the idea that next time, if the data is new and more plentiful, they will succeed. As a result, the government stealthily penetrates further and further into the private lives of its citizens because radicalisation processes must be discovered that are not (or not only) outwardly perceptible, not even in terms of their ideas. This opens the way to people with an extremely keen and highly advanced distinguishing capacity who think they know what is good and what is not and who are enabled by the government to sharpen their knives and test them. Two examples by way of illustration: one from Amsterdam and one from Zeeland.

The Amsterdam example is taken from *Het Parool*.

"A Moroccan student returns after a holiday sporting a beard. He refuses to shake hands with his female teacher. The Koran won't allow it, he says. Is this student being radicalised?

'No,' says educator Abdelilah Boulal [director of the ICP Advies intercultural pedagogical advisory bureau], who gives courses to Amsterdam teachers on how to prevent radicalisation among students. 'He may also be searching for his identity, like so many other adolescents.'

During the lessons or in the schoolyard, the same student then shouts that Osama bin Laden is a great warrior. Moroccan fellow students who do not share his admiration are not real Muslims in his eyes. He also comments on students who do shake hands with the teacher, and he intimidates them.

³⁵ *Kamerstukken II* (Official Reports of the House of Representatives of the States General) 2007/2008, 31 200, VI, no. 79.

³⁶ *Data voor daadkracht. Gegevensbestanden voor veiligheid: observaties en analyse. Rapport van de Adviescommissie Informatiestromen Veiligheid* (Data for effectiveness. Data files for security: observation and analysis. Report of the Advisory Commission on Security Information Flows). Den Haag 2007.

'Now it is time to step in,' says Boula (...). The student is clearly becoming radicalised."³⁷

In Zeeland anyone who refused to shake hands would have run into problems much earlier on. In that province in early 2008, hundreds of civil servants were trained in spotting the signs of radicalisation that might end in terrorism. An example from the course: someone who regularly comes to the Social Services department in a particular town suddenly starts wearing traditional Arabic/Islamic attire and refuses to shake the hands of female civil servants. As the civil servants learn, anyone who notices this must report it to the police.³⁸

It is time we did more than simply mark time by accepting measures against radicalisation and terrorism whose usefulness is yet to be proven. It's also time we decided whether we want a society in which we are constantly searching out each other's deepest feelings, radical or not, setting up mental security gates and calling in the police for every form of non-conformism. If we do not do it soon, we could live to regret it.

³⁷ M. Couzy, "Herken de radicaliserende leerling" (Recognise radicalisation in your students), *Het Parool* 4 September 2008.

³⁸ M. Modde, "Ambtenaren getraind in de strijd tegen terrorisme" (Civil servants trained in the fight against terrorism), *Provinciale Zeeuwse Courant* 7 February 2008.