Europe is undergoing its own version of the present-day "global con­
junction of belonging." No wonder that here as well, the term autochthony has acquired new momentum. Here too, however, its presence is a highly fragmented one, and the reference in the term to "the soil" is quite different from those of ancient Greece and present-day Africa. A rapid overview of western Europe shows that since the 1970s the term allochtoon and thus its inevitable counterpart autochtoon became ever more current in the Netherlands and Flanders (the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium) and dominated the debate about the "immigration problem." It is striking how quickly both terms, clearly Fremdkörper in the Dutch language, acquired a heavy emotional appeal. Meanwhile Umberto Bossi, a prominent leader of the New Right in Italy, seems recently inclined to adopt this terminology. Apparently he is trying to trigger a switch from the notion of "Padania" as a nation of true northerners, defined against the lazy and corrupt southern Italians, to a somewhat broader vision of true Italian "autochthons" against (Arab) immigrants. However, as yet his use of this term seems have little resonance in Italy.

Elsewhere in western Europe the terms themselves are less current, but the discourse of belonging is very much present, particularly for expressing both the feeling that new immigrants should adapt themselves to the culture of the national groups that do belong and the rising fear that especially the "second generation" of immigrants will refuse to do so.
Language variations in addressing this issue relate to broader differences among the various countries, while at the same time the terms used affect the ways in which people look for solutions.

In France, Le Pen and his National Front seem to avoid the term *allogène*—so current in Francophone Africa—mainly because its counterpart, *autochtone*, has highly ironic overtones in French: using this label for the group the Front wants to see as the bearer of the nation would open one to the risk of ridicule. Therefore Le Pen and his followers rather speak of an opposition between *immigrés* and *Français*, which implies a denial of the universalistic notion of *citoyenneté* as the very basis on which the French nation-state is built. Le Pen’s view is that some *citoyens*—for instance, the second generation of Arab and African immigrants—are not “really” citizens since they cannot be considered to be true *Français*. However, here again apparently self-evident concepts like *immigré* or *Français* exhibit tricky fuzziness when they have to be delineated. While *citoyen* had at least some juridical basis, these other concepts turn out to be very hard to define. It seems that in the 1980s Le Pen floated the idea of defining “real” Frenchmen—Français de souche—as those citoyens who could claim four grandparents born in France. Yet, this idea was rapidly abandoned, since in practice it would have meant excluding a majority of the *hexagone*’s inhabitants. Indeed, a surprisingly large number of people who considered themselves true Frenchmen turned out to have at least one grandparent of immigrant stock. Since then, Le Pen and his followers have simply wielded these vague concepts without attempting to further define them.

As far as terminology is concerned, Germany is a particularly interesting case, since its struggle with its recent past plays a complicating role in this respect as well. Several German colleagues have assured me that the term *autochthony* has no clear equivalent in German. They suggested that the language of belonging is condensed in the notion of *Heimat*. This is striking since this term, often formally translated as “fatherland” or *patrie*, has much more diffuse contours: it commonly refers not to the nation-state but rather to region or even village, denoting the place where one belongs in a vague but highly localized way. Clearly, the specific histories of nationalism within Europe—in this case the relatively recent unification of Germany as a nation-state—still affect the ways in which present-day immigration problems are being discussed.

Despite the insistence of my German colleagues on the absence of the notion from German, the term *autochthony* has turned up in German
debates, but at a quite unexpected spot: with the towering figure of Martin Heidegger. In his writings from the 1920s and 1930s, Heidegger cited with emphatic approval the old Athenian ideas on autochthonia and proposed as a translation the term Bodenständigkeit, already current in agrarian studies (lit. “stemming from or even rooted in the ground”). Bodenständigkeit/autochthony is seen by Heidegger as the solution to give German nationalism a particular, more communitarian coherence. He proposed it as an antidote to “the Anglo-French model of nationalism and the whole Western Enlightenment definition of freedom, equality, individuality.” This idea led him for some time to sympathize with National Socialist ideas, as expressed in the slogan “Blut und Boden” (blood and soil). This is certainly not the place to discuss the highly complex aspects of Heidegger’s philosophy on this point. Yet noting his 1930s views may show how powerful the notion of being rooted in the soil is and how prone to create confusion at the same time.

Yet Heidegger’s defense of autochthony/Bodenständigkeit is complicated by the German emphasis on ius sanguinis (right of blood/descent) rather than ius soli (right of soil) as the basis for citizenship—this in contrast to most western European nation-states. The reference to soil (Boden) in the term autochthony is for Heidegger (as for the Nazis) very closely intertwined with Blut; one could even say that in this context “soil” has more or less disappeared behind “blood.” For instance, the continuing emphasis on ius sanguinis meant that, still in the 1990s, people of German descent, no matter how far back in history their descent claims were—for instance, Baptists who had lived for centuries in Siberia and who, after the collapse of the Iron Curtain, had the possibility to return—could acquire German citizenship without any problem, while for Turkish persons who had lived in Germany for generations this remained almost impossible. This corresponded with the idea, maintained much longer in Germany (at least formally) than elsewhere in Europe, that Gastarbeiter (guest workers) would return to their country of origin. Only in the course of the 1990s did all this begin to change. Ius sanguinis is no longer all-determining for citizenship, which now can be given to inhabitants of non-German descent as well. Yet the intertwining of “soil” and “blood” in this context still has special effects.

In the European context it was especially the Flemish and the Dutch who—apparently for quite accidental reasons—adopted the classical notion of autochthony and gave it new momentum in their struggle with the immigration issue. Here the notion was put in a precarious relation with
"integration," an equally confusing notion. An additional reason to focus on the Dutch case is the abrupt reversal that took place in this country in the first years of the twenty-first century with the notion of autochthony—and especially the question as to how give it more substance—as a central issue. A rapid series of events, some of them quite dramatic, showed that abrupt explosions of popular preoccupations with belonging and exclusion are not limited to the poorer countries of the world. Until well into the 1990s the Netherlands saw itself—and was seen by others—as a gidsland (guide country) in the world for realizing a tolerant “multicultural” solution to the migration problem: in those days the dominant opinion was that the inclusion of immigrants in Dutch society had to be implemented with due respect for their own culture \(\text{met behoud van eigen cultuur}\). In only two years all this changed completely. Now, many Dutch see their country as a gidsland for attaining a forceful integration of immigrants with proper respect for the principles of Dutch culture (even though there is considerable uncertainty about what this is exactly). Indeed, several outside observers have noted a rising tide of xenophobia and a sudden switch in official immigration policies to a new approach that seemed to be increasingly attuned to an assimilationist model—all the more striking in view of the country’s reputation for tolerance and openness. Equally noteworthy were the ambiguities of the autochthony notion in this context. It was introduced in the Netherlands quite abruptly and in a somewhat artificial way. Yet it soon acquired a self-evident appearance, as in the African examples above. Again, this was accompanied with considerable vagueness: a central issue became how to give more substance to this notion, self-evident as it might seem. If the allochtoon had to integrate, an obvious question was how to define into what she or he had to integrate. However, defining this turned out to be not an easy job.

Central questions for this chapter are, therefore, how the autochthony terminology became implanted in the Dutch context and why it gained such resonance. Further, I will trace the special implications the terms acquired in this context—what did the reference to the soil implied in the term come to mean in this context? Clearly the link with the soil is quite different for many Dutch people compared to what it is for most Ivorians or Cameroonians. How could the autochthony notion nevertheless acquire such a mobilizing impact in the Netherlands as well? A rapid overview of recent developments in the Netherlands will help to set the stage for yet another performance of the autochthony notion—this time a European one.
The Dutch Switch: From Multiculturalism to Cultural Integration

It was especially two shocking events in recent Dutch history that drew a lot of attention abroad: the murder of populist politician Pim Fortuyn, who had made a rocket start in national politics, by a radical ecologist in 2002, and the even bloodier murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh, after he made the film Submission with Ayaan Hirsi Ali, by an Islamic fundamentalist in 2004. Surprisingly, however, an event that was at least as shocking got much less international attention: the death of eleven "illegal" immigrants who, in 2005, burned alive when their provisionally erected prison near Schiphol Airport caught fire. The new policy of Minister Rita Verdonk, who in 2003 promised to arrange for the forceful extradition of no fewer than twenty-six thousand "illegals" within two years, required drastic interventions. Before the disaster in the Schiphol prison, some of the victims had been locked up already for six months or more, waiting for their extradition, under what an official investigation would later call completely "unsatisfactory" circumstances. The government treated the calamity as an unfortunate accident. To others it was the inevitable consequence of the new policy, which in haste to reach a final solution to the immigration problem overstretched the capacity of official institutions, leading to this unacceptable treatment of persons. Indeed, on several occasions, the European court in Strasbourg had criticized the new Dutch policy. What was new as well was that this hardly seemed to disturb the Dutch government.

To many people in the Netherlands, these three events marked an abrupt switch. Political murders were seen as highly "un-Dutch." That eleven people perished in a Dutch jail was equally unheard of. Yet within the country there was only a relatively limited political reaction to this last disaster. In Parliament only Groen Links (the Green-Left party) really attacked the minister for her handling of the disastrous affair. Other opposition parties clearly realized that Minister Verdonk's extradition policies had the full support not only of the cabinet but also of a large part of the population.7

The suddenness of the Dutch switch was directly related to the unexpected success of Pim Fortuyn, who had showed how much voting support could be gained by raising the immigration issue as a major shortcoming of government policies. Fortuyn had been a complete newcomer to the Dutch political stage. In 2002 he founded his own party, which he named after himself—again something unheard of in the Netherlands. Nonetheless, within only a few months, polls predicted that in the coming elec-
tions more than 40 percent of the national vote would go to him. In those days Fortuyn never tired of saying that of course he would be the next prime minister. Fortuyn had special talents: he was a gifted debater, very direct and with his own brand of humor. This was one explanation of the fact that he got away with behavior that Dutch voters would certainly not accept from other politicians: ostentatious snobbism, pseudo-aristocratic airs (he had, for instance, his own butler), and a flaunting of his homosexual practices that was clearly meant to shock. However, the main reason his supporters forgave him for all this was his unrelenting pouncing on issues that until then had always been discussed with much more sensitivity—at least in public: the popular fear of criminality and rising Islamic fundamentalism, notably among second-generation allochtonen.

In order to understand the novelty of Fortuyn's approach—several of my friends who see themselves as progressive deemed him "refreshing," especially in the beginning of his political ascension—it is important to grasp how heavily national satisfaction with the Netherlands as a paragon of antiracism and tolerance had weighed in preceding years. The Anne Frank house was supposed to stand model for the nation, and any remark with discriminatory implications was quickly condemned as racist. Fortuyn's secret was that he knew how to tap the pent-up popular resentment about ever more numerous immigrants that had been stifled by this national self-image.

Other politicians learned his lesson very quickly. Already in 2002, the new cabinet, elected only a few weeks after the murder of Fortuyn (and in which his party played a tumultuous but secondary role), immediately announced a complete change, especially regarding treatment of immigrants: drastic curtailing of immigration, speedy extradition of "illegal" immigrants, and a new policy toward remaining allochtonen aiming at their forceful integratie, especially in a cultural sense. It was not their socioeconomic marginalization but rather their "refusal" to be culturally integrated that was now seen to be at the heart of immigrants' problems. Characteristic of the new configuration was that the main opposition parties—the Labor Party (PvdA) and the Socialist Party (SP)—were extremely wary of attacking the cabinet precisely on this point. Fortuyn had made it amply clear that opposing the new approach to the immigration issue might easily bring a loss of voter support. As said, popular discontent over this issue—and others—had been building up for a long period. Fortuyn's explosive presence made this issue break through quite suddenly in the formal political arena. After the 2002 elections, politicians of all feathers were quick to denounce their own "arrogance" for not listening to the people.
Fortuyn's impact in politics may have caused a landslide. For an insight into the substance of what was at stake, a series of articles by Paul Scheffer, published in 2000 in the leading Dutch newspaper, *NRC/Handelsblad*, may be more revealing than the more than thirty books Fortuyn prided himself on having written. In these articles, Scheffer—describing himself as a "publicist" and as "still" a member of the Labor Party—proclaimed the complete failure of preceding governments' policies on immigration. In his view, the capital mistake had been focusing only on the immigrants' socioeconomic integration while allowing—or even encouraging—they to retain their own cultural identity. This soft "multiculturalism" was the cause of increasing segregation, as many migrants had withdrawn into their own culture. The only solution would be a self-assured policy of cultural integration—that is, an integration of the immigrants into Dutch culture. In retrospect Scheffer's positions were not at all that new; it is even highly debatable whether the government's policies of the 1990s could be characterized as inspired by "multiculturalism." Yet Scheffer's articles—which preceded Fortuyn's emergence on the political stage—caused quite a stir. There were critical reactions. But in general, his attack on what he saw as the political correctness of multiculturalism is still seen by many as a milestone; so is his plea for switching the attention from socioeconomic marginalization to lack of cultural integration as the major problem, and even more, his insistence that if necessary, such cultural integration had to be enforced.

In October 2007, Scheffer published his long-awaited book on the same issues—a very voluminous study (almost five hundred pages) bringing together a wide array of themes and authors. Clearly, his confrontation with all this literature and also his intensive meetings with people from different layers of society—notably with immigrants and their representatives—has helped to deepen and nuance his viewpoints. However, it remains to be seen whether the more nuanced viewpoints in this big book will acquire equal impact in society and politics as his more blunt 2000 articles, which went off like a bombshell, especially the first years after they were published. So it is still useful to follow the texts of these earlier articles. The development of his views evidenced in his book will be discussed later.

In his first 2000 article, with the telling title "The Multicultural Drama," Scheffer started with detailed demographic figures showing a threatening increase of "allochthonous" groups. Next he enumerated equally worrying indications of increasing segregation and avoidance behavior among these groups—notably a growing gap between "white" and "black" schools, and second-generation immigrants' conscious turn away from Dutch society. For him these were signs that "the multicultural society's
house of cards is collapsing” (2000a:5). The current policy of integration met behoud van eigen cultuur (lit. "retaining the own culture") was typically based on the “cosmopolitan illusion” among many Dutch and their tendency that “national confidence” was “disposable.” For Scheffer it was high time for a drastic change: the Dutch “should take their own language, culture, and history much more seriously” (2000a:6). Scheffer looked back with some nostalgia on the period when the political elite still felt it had a “civilizing mission” (2000a:9). The current Dutch bashfulness about their cultural heritage would be an obstacle to real integration. “If the Netherlands finally recognizes that it is an ‘immigration country’ it should at last do what any immigration country did—that is, emphasize the transfer of language, historical consciousness, and law-culture” (2000b:3).

Scheffer called urgently for increased reflection on how to give shape to a “modern citizenship” that could be shared by immigrants. A better knowledge of the landmarks of Dutch history, would be a first prerequisite to provide a common basis for this shared citizenship. One solution would be the formulation of a “canon”—that is “a core of historical and literary basic texts” (and apparently Scheffer had then only Dutch texts in mind)—that would provide “general points of reference” (Scheffer 2006:31). This canon would need to be central in schools so that immigrants’ children could internalize it in their youth. But it should also provide a basis for the inburgeringscursussen (lit., courses to “citizenize”) that immigrants-to-be, and also immigrants who were already in the country, must attend. In 2000, these courses already existed, but Scheffer urged that they be given much more weight; people should be forced to attend, if necessary.

A striking aspect of Scheffer’s earlier interpretations is his tendency—like Fortuyn or, for instance, van den Brink (2006)—to explain the problems with immigrants in the Netherlands as a logical outcome of unfortunate policy choices of Dutch governments and, thus, as a typical Dutch way of mismanaging the issue. One almost gets the impression that this is a special problem for the Netherlands. It might be useful, therefore, to briefly situate here the Dutch experience with increasing immigration in its broader European context.

Overview: How the Netherlands Became an “Immigration Country”

Immigration into the Netherlands after World War II followed roughly the same trajectory as in other countries of northwestern Europe. The
1950s were dominated by the return of *repatrianten* (repatriates) from former colonies—in the Dutch case, Indonesia. In the 1960s, with the unforeseen expansion of the economy, recruitment of *gastarbeiders* (guest workers), or in more correct terms, *buitenlandse werknemers* (foreign employees), increased rapidly, first from countries like Spain, Italy, and Yugoslavia, later notably from Turkey and Morocco. In the 1970s it became gradually clear that large groups of the “guest laborers” were not at all inclined to return to their country of origin, despite economic stagnation and increasing unemployment. Moreover, with the approaching independence of Suriname (1975), a growing number of Surinamese used the last chance to immigrate to the former mother country without needing any special permission. The government reacted by trying to block further immigration. However, in these years “family reunion” was still an important factor in the further influx of people from Morocco and Turkey. In the 1980s, despite further government restrictions, “family formation” (younger and second-generation immigrants marrying a wife from the region of origin) led to a further increase. In those years the number of asylum seekers increased rapidly as well.\(^4\)

The very fact that the growing concern about immigrants in the Netherlands corresponds to the general pattern in northwest Europe suggests that this should be seen first of all as a global problem that can hardly be explained by the mismanagement of earlier Dutch governments or a typically Dutch neglect of national culture and history. There certainly are unique Dutch variations, but in a truly historical perspective they may be somewhat different from the specificities emphasized by Schieffer and Fortuyn. One distinctive aspect is the striking official insistence, until well into the 1970s, that the Netherlands was an emigration country and not an

| TABLE I. “Non-Western allochthons” in the Netherlands, 1972–2007 |
|------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Total (x1000)    | 162   | 320   | 475   | 631   | 774   | 986   | 1,171 | 1,408 | 1,668 | 1,738 |
| Turkey           | 30    | 67    | 112   | 150   | 178   | 234   | 271   | 308   | 351   | 368   |
| Morocco          | 21    | 38    | 68    | 105   | 139   | 189   | 225   | 262   | 306   | 329   |
| D. Antilles      | 22    | 29    | 40    | 51    | 66    | 84    | 86    | 107   | 130   | 129   |
| Suriname         | 53    | 124   | 157   | 191   | 219   | 251   | 280   | 302   | 325   | 368   |
| Total pop. (x1000)| 13,270| 13,733| 14,091| 14,394| 14,714| 15,129| 15,272| 15,864| 16,258| 16,385|

Source: Figures from CBS (Centraal Bureau voor Statistiek), Voorburg/Heerlen, www.CBS.nl (statline).
immigration country. Indeed, until about 1960 there was a constant flow of Dutch people emigrating, mainly to Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, in numbers that still exceeded numbers of immigrants (even with the substantial influx of “repatriates” from the Dutch Indies). The general assumptions in those days were that Holland (the western part of the country) was far too densely populated; that the economy, destroyed by the war, could not sustain further population growth; and that, therefore, emigration was necessary in order to ward off the danger of continuing unemployment—else the country would risk sliding into a dip similar to the 1930s crisis, when unemployment had been particularly serious and prolonged in this country. A dogged fear of immigration played a decisive role in the strangely evasive and shifting terminology used to refer to incoming groups. Another special trait of Dutch policy was that during the 1970s—a crucial phase, when notably Surinamese, Moroccan, and Turkish groups were consolidating themselves in the country through family reunion—the government made access to the budding welfare state relatively easy. During the 1990s this was followed by increasingly determined measures to restrict such access.

Until 2001, major confrontations with youngsters from “allochthonous” groups—of the kind that took place in Britain (Brixton, Leicester), France (the banlieues), Germany (especially after the reunification), and even Belgium—failed to occur in the Netherlands. Yet since then, shocking events like 9/11 and the murder of van Gogh in 2004 led in the Netherlands to a particularly violent backlash against mosques and other Islamic meeting places. Moreover, ever since the 1970s, people have increasingly associated young men of the immigrant groups with crime and aggression. It is noteworthy, however, that stereotypes of the various groups shifted over time, even quite rapidly. Until the early 1990s it was mostly Surinamese boys who were feared as potentially criminal and aggressive. Only in the 1990s did Moroccan and Antillean youngsters come to be seen as the main problem groups. The Surinamese are now often cited as an example of relatively successful integration.

National Consensus and Its History—the Dutch Way

Another historical trait that is even more distinctive to Dutch society—and in a different way also Flanders—is a heritage of “pillarization” that still marks present-day debates about “integration” and the supposedly
ambivalent attitude of the Dutch toward their own identity. Until well into the 1960s, Dutch society was divided among four competing “pillars”—Protestant, Catholic, liberal, and socialist—which exercised true hegemony over people’s life: family, school, work, social and cultural activities, old people’s homes, everything was fitted in the grid of this pillarization. Scheffer (2000a:3) does mention the pillarized past, but he quotes Dutch American political scientist Arend Lijphart (1968) to show that it was a time when ideological differences were contained by one common history and commonly accepted values. Scheffer insists that precisely on this point there is a glaring contrast with the society that multiculturalism has created.

However, there are good reasons to emphasize that the national consensus of the days of pillarization was a very special one. Precisely because this appeal to an earlier consensus is so central to Scheffer’s argument, it might be worthwhile to note that (also in his 2007 book) he offers a version of Lijphart’s views that is quite skewed. Lijphart has become the authority on Dutch pillarization and the ways in which this determined the twentieth-century history of the country. He indeed used terms like pacification and consensus, but it is important to stress that he did so in a very special way. For him, “consensus” was a consensus among the elites of the various pillars and definitely not among the population at large. He stressed that in early twentieth-century Netherlands, four “pillars”—the Catholics, the Protestants, the Socialists, and the Liberals—were about equal in size, so that none of them could be ignored. Lijphardt gives even more emphasis to the ideological rifts between these pillars; basic to his interpretation is that these rifts were so deep that the only way to save the “existing political system” was through negotiations between the elites. Confronted with an imminent breakdown of the state because of these internal tensions, these elites were willing to settle on a compromise: this was the famous “Pacification” of 1917, which was to determine the framework for Dutch policy for the next fifty years (Lijphart 1968:108, 117; 1986:111). There is a kind of paradox here: precisely because the coherence within each pillar was so strong, people were prepared to give their leaders enough scope for reaching a compromise. Lijphart also emphasized the flip side of this: such trust depended on the rift that separated each pillar from the others. For Lijphart, a “consensual democracy,” as in the Netherlands, works because of the sharp border lines between the pillars, which he characterized as “mutually isolated blocs” (1986:78). The only consensus reached was a compromise about practical “rules of the
game"—of which an important one concerned the necessary degree of secrecy surrounding the negotiations among the elites (1986:122, 131). In his view, this consensual democracy broke down in the 1960s, when the boundaries between the pillars started to evaporate (1968:11-13). Moreover, he emphasized (chap. 5) that history was a very sensitive aspect in the relation between the pillars—because it clearly opposed, on the one hand, Protestants as those who waged the nation's sixteenth-century liberation war against the Catholic king of Spain, and, on the other, Catholics, whose allegiance to the new nation remained suspect for a long time. In this view, national solidarity depended much more on pragmatic negotiations among elites who had their hands free than on a national consensus about values and history. 

The curious lack of zelfbesef (pride in one's own) among the Dutch—the lack of identification with the Dutch past which Scheffer so deplores—might indeed be directly linked to the pillarized past, yet not as a loss of former coherence but rather as a consequence of older difference. In the heyday of pillarization, Dutch zelfbesef was linked first to the pillar and only secondly to the nation. The pillars were the true sites of emotional belonging; they may have been coupled with national symbols, but many people's identification was primarily—and often quite passionately—with their pillar. Scheffer's sketch of pillarized Dutch society as "pillars under one roof" (2000a:10) underrates a long history of fierce confrontations and deep distrust. Such tensions went from the top to the bottom of society.

For instance, a recent collection of articles in De Gids, a leading Dutch journal, includes a witty remembrance by Elsbeth Etty of her youth in the 1950s in a village close to The Hague which vividly illustrates this extremely segregated vision of society. As a child from a well-to-do liberal family, she learned to associate Catholics with "stupidity" and Protestants with "uncivilized dogmatism." Of course, this did not stop her from playing with Protestant and Catholic children; sometimes she "even" felt jealous of the many, many Catholic children living in cozy proximity in small houses in the poorer parts of the village. But the splits were deep, and it was clear that these children would lead other lives. Her recollections are still quite friendly. I can go further back, to my youth in the 1940s, and I rather remember being beaten up—and a feeling of having to run for my life—every
time I had to pass the public school next to our house (public = liberal + socialist) on my way to the Protestant school.

The feelings of belonging internalized by members of the pillarized society were deep and highly exclusionist. It is too easy to remember it now as a safe haven of mutual respect. This might caution those who, complaining of present-day indifference to Dutch history and culture, hope for a “return” to the national élan of former days. During the greater part of the twentieth century, people in leading roles in the pillarized society—and also many of their followers—certainly had no hesitant attitude toward their own identity, but this identity rested on a strong identification with their pillar much more than with the nation. In practice, it often entailed a deep disapproval of the way of life of people around the corner.

Precisely because the appeal to a more homogenous past is such a recurrent element in recent debates on “integration” in the Netherlands, it might be useful to get a sharper picture of the country’s pillarized past. Below I will take up other aspects of history and culture that play a central role in this debate, as in Scheffer's approach. The above may already have shown that, in view of certain special traits of Dutch history, the plea for a return to some sort of national élan buoyed by a common framework of reference may not be realized so easily.\(^{19}\) Another question is whether such recourse to a well-defined common cultural core is indeed a means to reach a better integration.

**Alternative Solutions**

A few years after Scheffer’s 2000 articles, an interesting collection with the polemic title *Kiezen voor de Kudde* (lit., Choosing for the Flock)—clearly written in reaction to Scheffer’s challenging argumentation—proposed a radically different view. The editors (and main authors), Jan Willem Duyvendak and Menno Hurenkamp (2004:218), signaled rather a growing consensus among various groups in Dutch society concerning many apparently superficial aspects of everyday behavior. Instead of an increasing individualization since the liberation from a pillarized society, they observe increasing conformity in everyday life. For them it is precisely this kind of “community lite”—conformity in styles of dress,
consumer preferences, career planning, and so on—that might serve as a framework for the further integration of immigrants. Such integration could become a problem, not because of over-the-top multiculturalism or the Dutch lack of national pride that Scheffer bemoaned so much, but rather because of the rise of a new and quite pompously “decked-out” Dutch identity. In important respects, the “increasing monoculturalist character of dominant Dutch cultural values” of the postpillarization period, propagating principles like the freedom and basic equality of the individual, is less tolerant of cultural differences. In practice this must sharpen the gap that seems to separate the Dutch from many immigrants (Duyvendak and Hurenkamp 2004:218). Instead of the more usual version of a community united around certain principles (as Scheffer seems to have in mind), Duyvendak and Hurenkamp therefore stress the idea of a “community lite”: a light association around common consumer preferences, emotions, and fashions but allowing for difference—they refer also to Maffesoli’s notion of “neo-tribes” of “skilled consumers”—as a more promising context for integration. Indeed, the studies bundled in their collection suggest that such an integration is already taking place.

In an earlier reaction to Scheffer’s first article, Anil Ramdas (2000)—an eloquent journalist of Surinamese-Indian background, well known for his challenging interventions in debates on immigration—voices a question that is similar but, as is usual with him, hidden in an argument that at first seems to lead in the other direction. Ramdas starts by emphasizing how strongly he agrees with Scheffer. He has always been amazed at Dutch squeamishness about their own identity. How then can they expect others to be interested in participating in this identity? However, the main part of his article recounts how Ramdas visits a sophisticated party of young allochtonen who clearly know how to use the opportunities to get ahead in their new surroundings. For Ramdas, this example points apparently in a very different direction. Clearly these youngsters are hardly interested in basic values of Dutch life, whatever they may be. They feel integrated—that is, they “behave”—because they participate to the full in modern cosmopolitan life. The question for Ramdas is whether common national values are indeed so important for realizing “integration.”

The same question is raised by an intriguing confusion in the references by Scheffer and other advocates of enforced cultural integration (cf., for instance, van den Brink 2006:21, 301) to models from elsewhere. As said, there was initially a strong tendency—also, for instance, in Fortuyn’s highly influential speeches—to depict the immigration problem
as just an unfortunate result of bad management by earlier governments in the Netherlands and not as a general European problem. Interestingly, when parallels abroad were mentioned, they nearly always concerned the United States, as an example of a better handling of immigration (Scheffer 2000a:7; van den Brink 2006: 21, 301). The old idea of the United States as a “melting pot” still seemed to play a role. However, more recent developments in that country hardly conform to Scheffer’s (and van den Brink’s) plea for more forceful cultural integration. In the U.S. context, economic pressure seems to be much more important for integration than a purposeful cultural policy.\(^{22}\) Linguistic pluriformity becomes increasingly marked, in the country’s centers (even in the Upper West Side and other posh parts of Manhattan it has become easier to shop in Spanish than in English) and elsewhere.\(^{23}\) The strong emphasis of Scheffer and others on cultural integration seems to conform much more to the French model, which, indeed, left little scope—at least officially—for the “preservation” of the immigrants’ own identity; all immigrants were made to rapidly learn the language.\(^{24}\) This implicit leaning toward the French model is striking because this model is generally seen as radically alien to Dutch society, where pillarization taught people to live with differences rather than conforming themselves to one national culture.\(^{25}\) Indeed, neither in Scheffer’s texts nor in Fortuyn’s reflections is France ever mentioned explicitly as an example to follow. This confusion of models from abroad can indicate that, in his earlier publications at least, Scheffer seems to be asking for a very complicated turnaround. Behind his version of the American model there looms instead a French assimilation model; but if the old assimilationist ideal has become increasingly precarious even in France, how could one ever hope to realize it in the Netherlands?\(^{26}\)

**A More Forceful Integration**

However, despite such criticisms and considerable unclarity as to how “cultural integration” was to be effected, Scheffer’s plea in his 2000 articles for a complete turnabout—supported as they seemed to be by Fortuyn’s philippics—had concrete effect. After the 2002 elections, which brought a dramatic shift in the Dutch political landscape (it might have been even more dramatic if Fortuyn had not been murdered two weeks before), a new center-right cabinet made forceful integration and restriction of immigration into one of the cornerstones of its policy. The new
minister of immigration and integration, former prison director Rita Verdonk, launched her drastic program, already mentioned, for the extradition of illegal immigrants (among whom were many asylum seekers whose asylum request had been denied). As noted earlier, the sheer size of the operation—twenty-six thousand persons to be extradited within two years—put the capacity of Dutch services concerned to a severe test. And, indeed, at the end of the cabinet’s term, the target was still far from being reached. However, it did result—as had been predicted—in the internment of an increasing number of people for long periods in provisional prisons of the kind that led to the tragic deaths of eleven persons near Schiphol Airport. An unknown number of persons—up to eight hundred at one point—remain locked up on so-called bajesboten (prison boats) in the harbor of Rotterdam and Dordrecht; these have been depicted by journalists of highly different backgrounds as nightmarish and should have been closed down as ordered by the mayors of these cities. However, at the moment of writing they are still in use due to the central services’ delaying tactics.

Another set of measures that directly coincided with Scheffer’s exhortations were the inburgerinscursussen mentioned above (courses to “citizenize”), which were accompanied by ever heavier sanctions. Minister Verdonk waged trench warfare against judicial authorities concerning the question whether immigrants who had already acquired citizenship could still be forced to take such a course and incur the same heavy fine if they fail the inburgerings final exam. Would-be immigrants had to prepare for the exam in the country of origin; a special procedure was created to administer their exam by telephone and computer. Despite strongly expressed doubts about the technical validity of this procedure—the computer has to test, for instance, the candidate’s ability to speak Dutch—Parliament approved the proposal. Politicians had learned their lesson from Fortuyn’s spectacular success at winning votes.27

More recently, the pendulum seems to be swinging back again. Especially since the summer of 2007, other voices are in ascendance, pleading for an opener approach to immigrants and more room for differences in integration policies. The 2007 elections were clearly crucial to these switches. At the 2006, the Balkenende III cabinet (a center-right coalition of Christian Democrats and Liberals) fell in the wake of the very complicated affair of Minister Verdonk’s withdrawal of the passport of “her friend” Hirsi Ali.28 The new elections brought another cabinet under Prime Minister Jan-Peter Balkenende, but now his Christian Democrats
had to govern with the socialists. In the meantime, Parliament had (with only minimal majority) passed a general amnesty for “illegal” immigrants who could prove that they had spent more than seven years in the Netherlands. The new “secretary of state” for immigration, Nebahat Albeyrak (socialist and born in Turkey), seems to opt also for an opener policy. The new minister for integration, Ella Vogelaar, even openly criticized the policies of her predecessor, Verdonk. The latter, now back in Parliament, staged several couplike efforts to become the leader of the Liberal Party, but without success; in the end she had to leave the party. At the time of this writing, she was trying to launch her own “movement,” called Trots Op Nederland (TON, Proud of the Netherlands).

Moreover, there have been various significant initiatives in the broader society. The WRR (scientific advisory board for the government) produced a report, Identificatie met Nederland (Identification with the Netherlands), which typically replaced “identity” by “identification,” pleading for an opener approach in trying to outline a Dutch identity, with room for input from groups with a different cultural background. Princess Maxima, the very popular wife of the crown prince, was courageous enough to express doubts about the existence of “the” Dutch identity—which brought upon her quite vicious attacks from a number of opinion leaders. Former prime minister Ruud Lubbers published a book, De Vrees Voorbij: Een Hartekreet (Beyond Fear: A Heartfelt Cry), expressing his worries about growing xenophobia. The queen, in her annual Christmas address, emphasized that there were “no simple formulas for integration” and pleaded for tolerance instead of a worrying tendency to “sharpen contradictions” (this earned her a direct attack from Geert Wilders, the leader of the main New Right party in Parliament, who protested against such “multicultural claptrap”). And while in the first post-Fortuyn years “the voter is always right” had become the mantra of Dutch politics, at least some politicians now dare to say that their task is not only to follow the voter but maybe also to try to lead him or her.

Yet this thaw is only very partial. Toward the end of 2007, both Verdonk and Wilders emerged from the polls as the most popular politicians of the year. Verdonk’s TON “movement” would, according to recent polls, obtain more than twenty Parliament seats.29 If she would accept a fusion with Wilders’s party, together they might make up the biggest party in Parliament. The main hope is, therefore, that the schismatic tendencies that haunt the New Right all over Europe—whether in France, Germany, Italy, or the Netherlands, New Right leaders seem to be true champions of fission—will prevent such a fusion.
Scheffer’s 2007 book seems to fit with this partial thaw (the new minister of integration, Vogelaar, is clearly inspired by it). Many of the principles from his earlier publications are still present: the emphasis on cultural integration as a more pressing issue than socioeconomic marginalization, the need for a more forceful approach in order to realize such integration, and the appeal to a common history and cultural consensus as beacons for all this. But the title, *Land van Aankomst* (Land of Arrival), itself indicates that Scheffer has become more sensitive to the need to offer immigrants at least some opportunities to feel at home in the Netherlands. Possibly because of his many meetings and conversations with migrants, which are recounted throughout the book—and maybe also in response to the wide reading he has done—he now places more emphasis on the need to accommodate different elements. The “common stories” that he emphasized so strongly in 2000 are now seen as stories that can accommodate difference; they are not just Dutch stories but open up to new elements. He relates history now to “a society that emerges from the interaction between different groups” (2007:438). Especially toward the end of the book there is a strong emphasis on migration as a positive force that can “innovate society” (433). Even Islam is now given its place in the Netherlands. “In certain respects we are all newcomers to a past that we must assume” (437; all translations are mine). Below I will further explore how these new accents compare to Scheffer’s earlier, fairly monolithic conceptions of culture and history, viewed as essential to integration.

**Allochtonen: A New Term on the Dutch Scene**

How do these fairly dramatic and confusing developments affect autochthony terminology, the central theme of this book? A first question is, of course, how this terminology actually emerged on the Dutch scene. Its entrée there was quite unexpected; terms like *autochtoon* and *allochtoon* were not at all current in the Dutch language. How then, did they come to play such a central role in the debates in the Dutch context and also in Flanders? It is striking how quickly these *Fremdwörter*—introduced precisely because they were not current but had a cool, more or less scientific aura—acquired a highly emotional charge in everyday language.

In the Dutch case, the term *allochtoon* seems to have preceded the spread of *autochtoon*. Elsewhere—for instance in the African cases examined earlier and in classical Athens—the claim to autochthony as a primal form of belonging seemed to have come first, while the various terms
for denoting the others, the *allogènes* or allochthons, followed from it. In the Netherlands the order was the reverse: the need to find a neutral common term for various groups of immigrants led to the adoption of the term *allochtonen*. However, in reaction to this, the Dutch had to define themselves as *autochtonen*—which, as said, proved to be anything but easy.

The first documented use I have found of the term *allochtonen* was in a collection of articles edited by Hilda Verwey-Jonkers in 1971. This collection, published by the Ministry of Culture, Recreation, and Social Work, was the result of a first official effort to gain an overview of the various groups that had recently immigrated to the Netherlands. The various contributions concerned *Repatrianten* (repatriates) from the former Dutch Indies, Surinamese, Dutch Antilleans, Chinese, “foreign laborers,” and refugees. The term *allochtroon* figured in the very title of the book and in several of the texts (but interestingly not in the text by van der Staay on the “foreign laborers”—that is, the group that later would become the quintessential *allochtonen*). Yet there was no discussion in any of the texts of why this term was adopted. The choice of the term had apparently been quite an abrupt one, which makes it strange that there was no explanation of the reasons behind it.

In early 2007 I had a brief but most interesting interview with Hans van Amersfoort, a colleague in geography at the University of Amsterdam, who had written three chapters in that volume. He remembered quite vividly how the choice of this new term was made. One of the problems in editing the volume had been that there was no ready-made term to cover all the groups concerned. The obvious terms were, of course, *migrants* and *immigrants*. However, in those days the official line was still that the Netherlands was definitely not to be considered an immigration country. As noted earlier, for several decades after World War II immigration was seen as a threat: the Netherlands was viewed as severely overpopulated (indeed, official reports emphasized that it was the most densely populated country in the world); after the destruction of the war, the economy would not be able to sustain an influx of new laborers; and therefore, until far into the 1960s, emigration rather than immigration was propagated, since this seemed to be the obvious remedy for population pressure. The inflow of a considerable number of loyal subjects from the former Dutch Indies after the end of colonial rule was seen as a particularly serious threat. Of course, it was difficult to refuse them access, but there were several semiofficial initiatives to encourage them to try to settle elsewhere (notably in a “true” immigration country like Australia,
South Africa, or the United States; van Praag 1971:21; see also Ellemers and Vaillant 1985). Under these conditions the term *immigrant*, and even the more neutral *migrant*, remained anathema in official parlance.\(^{31}\) For the refugees from Indonesia, the term *repatrianten* was specially coined (even though this was somewhat misleading: many of them had never been in the Netherlands, so there was no question of a return). But of course this term could not be used for the other groups that were discussed in the Verwey-Jonkers collection.

Searching for an alternative term that could not offend anybody, Hans van Amersfoort, as a geographer, proposed a term from physical geography: *allochtoon*, used, for instance, in expressions like *allochthonous sediments*.\(^{32}\) Precisely because of its neutral, scientific flavor, the term was adopted by Verwey-Jonkers as the editor of the volume and by several other members. However, at first the term did not strike root.\(^{33}\) During the 1970s, it was rather *ethnic minorities* that came into use in official discourse.\(^{34}\) Yet this term turned out to have its own disadvantages, while the need for a general term became all the more pressing.\(^{35}\)

In the meantime the rapid growth of the group of “foreign laborers” (*buitenlandse werknemers*) made the official fiction of the Netherlands as an emigration country rather than an immigration country less and less tenable. Already in 1955 an official Dutch delegation had been involved in the recruitment of laborers in Italy (even though the responsible minister, Ko Suurhoff, emphasized that this was only a “temporary emergency measure”; Schuster 1999:165). Clearly the economic recovery after the war went much more quickly than had been foreseen, and unorthodox interventions became necessary in order to cope with a rapidly growing labor shortage. Especially in the 1960s, workers were recruited on an ever larger scale—first in Spain, Italy, Portugal, and Yugoslavia, and later more and more in Turkey and Morocco. In popular parlance this rapidly growing group became labeled “guest workers” (*gastarbeiders*). But apart from considerations of political correctness, this term became practically untenable, because it implied that these people’s stay in the Netherlands would be only temporary. Already in 1970, official figures indicated that at least 25 percent of this group planned to stay permanently.\(^{36}\) And this number would rise rapidly in subsequent decades.

Against this background, the notion of *allochtonen* finally took root, since it seemed to be a neutral term that could cover all the various groups of immigrants. In 1989, the WRR chose the title *Allochtonenbeleid* (lit., Policy on Allochthons) for its report on the immigration issue. The board
made a conscious choice of this term: it argued that this term was more satisfactory than alternatives like *migrant* (which still was seen as having the unfortunate implication that a permanent migration was at stake) or *stranger* (WRR 1989:61). Moreover, *allochtonen* had the great advantage of being a "neutral" notion (25). The board actually specified its own definition of the term—and a very challenging one at that. It decided that the term should apply even in the third generation, as long as people "identify to a certain degree with the provenance of their (grand-)parents." The board emphasized that the term would apply also to children from marriages of an allochthon with an autochthon. In practice, this would mean that even a person with one "allochthonous" grandparent (out of four) was to count as an allochthon. Of crucial importance was that the CBS (the national Central Office for Statistics) decided to adopt the new term and its quite audacious definition by the WWR. On only one point was the CBS somewhat more nuanced: in practice it counts only through the second generation as allochthon. But the "one-parent" criterion was strictly maintained in official statistics. Thus, the WWR Board's launching of the term was to have far-reaching consequences: it became central to official statistics and demographic prognoses, with severely contested implications.

These terminological vicissitudes reflect the country's uneasiness with the whole immigration issue. Clearly the Dutch government was particularly reluctant to recognize that the Netherlands, like other West European countries, had to redefine itself as an "immigration" rather than as an "emigration" country. This might explain why official language was to be determinant for the popular language on this issue. The consecutive and more or less artificial choices of names and terms in official reports, committees, and decrees were quickly adopted in everyday language. However, in this process the terminology acquired a life of its own, and problematic implications of the terms were to emerge at unexpected moments.

One unexpected consequence was that the term *allochtoon*, meant as an umbrella word for all groups that had recently immigrated into the country, was increasingly restricted to the main groups that had earlier been called "foreign laborers" (or "guest workers"): the Moroccans and the Turkish, which were also the two main Muslim groups. The term is now used less and less for persons from Suriname, who, after having been strongly stereotyped in the 1980s and early 1990s as being potentially "dangerous," are now increasingly seen as examples of quite successful
integration. And even for people from the Dutch Antilles—though the young men from this group are still seen as a problem group—the term is now less current. Moreover, while the term was originally chosen for its “neutral” and “coolly scientific” implications, it rapidly acquired highly emotional and stigmatizing implications, because of its increasing limitation to the two main Muslim groups.

A concomitant problem was the quite confusing division in official statistics of the *allochtonen* notion into “Western” and “non-Western.” This meant that, for instance, people born in Japan and Indonesia are seen as “Western” (apparently people from Indonesia are still equated with the *repatrianten* of the days of decolonization), while Turks are as a matter of course classified as “non-Western” (see Bovenkerk 2002). Coupled with the broad interpretation of the *allochtonen* notion as such (the second-generation criterion and the one-parent rule), such muddying helped to give demographic figures alarmist implications. To give just an example: on January 8, 2007, the country’s most respected newspaper, *NRC/Handelsblad*, announced in an article on the first page that recent CBS figures indicated that in 2050 the country’s population would consist of 29 percent *allochtonen* (compared to 19 percent at that moment). Due to the unclearness of this term, many people associated the figures immediately with Muslim immigrants. It is true that the article concerned (like the CBS report on which it was based) does offer some clues as to how to further unpack the key notion of *allochtonen*: the accompanying graphs show that almost half of these *allochtonen* will consist of “Western *allochthons*.” But such nuances are easily forgotten in subsequent debates. Clearly, the notion of *allochtoon*, originally intended to be neutral and cool, had become a very explosive and confusing one. Already in 1989, Bovenkerk had warned in a column in *De Volkskrant* (at the time still a newspaper with leftist leanings) that the notion as such seemed to work to create distance and to oppose “them” to “us.”

The most contested aspect of the way the term would be used in statistics—at least for experts—is the calculation of the number of *allochthonen* on the basis of the “one-parent” criterion, so that mixed marriages, in themselves a possible sign of integration, increase rather than decrease the number of *allochthons*. In practice it is quite difficult to find out to which degree this affects the official figures. It is especially this last implication that made van Amersfoort, in my recent interview with him, complain that he wished he had never launched the term. Yet one might wonder whether another term would have done better. The complexities
of the immigration issue and the impossibility of controlling it in the present-day global context will make any terminology potentially explosive. However, it is clear that especially the heavy implications of the second part of the term, *chtonos*, that links “belonging” to the soil, were to leave their mark on the development of the Dutch debate on the migration issue.

The current use of the term *allochtoon* in the Dutch setting inevitably implies a certain blurring of the notion of citizenship, which used to be considered the cornerstone of any state that claims to be modern. In this respect the Dutch use of the term clashes significantly with the classical Athenian use. In Athens a citizen had to be an autochthone; foreign descent (stemming from “another soil”) excluded citizenship at least formally: *ius sanguinis* and *ius soli* had to coincide (again: at least in principle). In the Netherlands, however, many “allochtonten” are citizens, either since they have been “naturalized” or by the simple fact of being born on Dutch soil; in Dutch law, *ius soli* in principle prevails over *ius sanguinis*. However, maintaining the *allochtoon-autochtoon* opposition for the second—and (who knows?) possibly for a third—generation seems to return *ius sanguinis* through the backdoor and thus introduces a split within the citizenry. I will come back to the precariousness of, on the one hand, using the opposition between autochthone and allochthone as given and, on the other, proclaiming the need for allochtonten to “integrate.” If even people who have been born on Dutch soil are still to be called allochtonten, this throws some doubt upon their being “really” Dutch citizens: indeed, can an *allochtoon* ever become an *autochtoon*?

Recently, there has been a growing consciousness of the anomaly of applying a term like *allochtoon* to people who were born on Dutch soil. Several spokespersons of the “second generation” of Moroccans have protested against this denial of their birthright and proposed the term *Nieuwe Nederlanders* (New Dutchmen). In 2006, Paul Scheffer himself acknowledged the problematic implications of the term he had used so much; he even called for a certain reserve in using it in public debates (although he still defended its use in official statistics – apparently for pragmatic reasons, yet without signaling that the use of the term in official statistics has had complicated effects). However, in his 2007 book he takes the logical step of consistently avoiding these terms, using “migrants” or “children of migrants” instead (Scheffer 2007:427). Already in 2005, even Minister Verdonk, the powerful advocate for limiting the number of immigrants and of enforced integration, advised her civil servants
to avoid the use of the term *allochtoon* as much as possible because of its stigmatizing implications. But until now her intervention has had little effect. Clearly, the term has become deeply rooted and will not disappear so easily, neither from popular nor from official parlance.

It is striking that the Dutch—whether the experts who use the term or people at large—do not seem to be conscious of its powerful “chthonic” root. As said earlier, autochthony with its direct reference to the soil was some sort of negative choice. In the Dutch case, the term *allochtoon* came first, and it was only in reaction to it that the Dutch had to define themselves as *autochtonen*. However, it is clear that the terminology, originally meant as “cool” and “neutral,” introduced highly charged issues regarding who belongs and who does not. In this sense it is like an iceberg, having an invisible depth that proves to have consequences of its own. The Dutch, neglecting the original meaning of the notion, may have used it originally as an almost empty signifier. This did not stop it from rapidly acquiring highly emotional overtones, but these remained quite diffuse. In the Dutch case the term lacked the clear substance the appeal to the soil had in the African cases and in classical Athens. This may explain the current uncertainty as to how give it a firmer expression.

**Elusive Autochthony**

In the Dutch language *allochtoon* was much more of a *Fremdkörper* than *autochtoon*, which was already in use (albeit with an archaic slant) in the sense of “original” and “authentic” to a certain area. The way in which it was now coupled to the first notion was to give it a more specific meaning, which soon acquired the kind of natural self-evidence that seems to cling to this term in all the different settings where it emerged. The exact delimitation of the *allochtonen* category might have been open to debate in the Netherlands, but everybody seemed to know who was to be qualified as *autochtoon*. For instance, in 1993 Joop de Beer, former director of CBS (the Central Office for Statistics mentioned before as a key player in the application of these notions in the Netherlands) proposed defining *allochtoon* in relation to its opposite, *autochtoon*, since in his view it was much clearer who fell under the latter category.

It is all the more striking, then, that in practice the term proved, quite paradoxically, to have the same elusive, receding quality as elsewhere. Despite its apparent self-evidence, it became increasingly difficult to make
out what was “truly” autochthonous. Indeed, the more prominent the notion became in the immigration debate and the more ardent therefore the attempts to grasp it, the more evanescent it turned out to be. In France, Le Pen and his National Front may have had difficulties in defining his notion of Français de souche (Frenchmen “of the trunk”). In the Dutch case, the problem became rather how to define the Dutch culture that was supposed to carry the common identity of the autochtonen. Especially after 2000, when opinion leaders like Paul Scheffer and Pim Fortuyn started to propagate forcible cultural integration as the only solution to the immigrant problem, it became quite urgent to define more clearly into what immigrants needed to integrate. With this, the apparent unity of the autochtonen category proved again to be quite elusive.

In the late 1990s, some historians and authors started to explore what was “typically” Dutch, seeking some sort of counterweight against a multiculturalism that was already then seen as too relativizing. Journalists like Herman Vuijsje and Jos van der Lans (1999) tried to do this in a somewhat folkloristic way by composing a vademecum—a kind of dictionary—of all sorts of things that could be considered “typically Dutch.” Historian Herman Pleij (2004) published on an emerging Dutch identity in the history of the Lowlands.

However, after the turn of the millennium, with the increased attention to forcible cultural integration, the tone hardened. In Scheffer’s pioneering 2000 articles the term cultural integration is used time and again without being given much substance. Some politicians tried to be more concrete. Thus, Balkenende—who, in the gap left by Fortuyn’s dramatic eclipse, emerged somewhat surprisingly as the prime minister for the next decade—launched his plea, repeated time and again, for a Herstel van Normen en Waarden (redressing of norms and values), but had little impact. Other politicians ended in a sort of split in their search for Dutch values. Wilders—for many voters on the right the successor to Fortuyn—surprised his constituents with a sudden celebration of Christian values. Wilders had belonged to the Liberal Party (which, in the Dutch context, means anticonfessional in politics), but in 2004, he made a dramatic exit from that party. As leader of his own new party, he began to call for a recognition of Christian values as basic to the Dutch culture, even advocating that the teaching of these values be made a central part of the curricula of all schools at all levels. This about-face did bring him considerable electoral success (nine seats in Parliament in 2007). Yet it was also a clear demonstration of a quite desperate search for a fixed footing in the elusive Dutch culture.
History and Culture

Culture and history thus became central themes not only in Scheffer's articles but also in the Dutch debate on integration in general. However, both were invoked as more or less self-evident notions, without further specification or consciousness of their highly complex character. The danger is that thus they will be used as a kind of black box that is expected to provide a solution in an almost magical way. Precisely because these notions are so central in the debate, it might be helpful to try to unpack them a bit.

A certain naiveté can be detected in the call for the formulation of a "canon," which became a central issue in the Netherlands as in several other European countries after 2000. The idea was that a succinct catechism of the national culture should be drawn up and would serve as a beacon for immigrants' cultural integration, so shockingly neglected by earlier governments. Scheffer, in his 2000 articles, called for such an initiative, saying that it would provide a better knowledge of central events in Dutch history. Being acquainted with this history would be an absolute condition for the successful integration of immigrants; on the other hand, the Dutch lack of pride in national history—which he saw as typical for the Netherlands—would be one of the main reasons for a lack of cultural integration, and therefore of commitment, among immigrants. Scheffer was also quite outspoken on what such a canon should contain: "access to common stories" that would provide common points of reference and thus promote cultural integration. To him, criticisms of such attempts to fix a national heritage were signs of the squeamishness characteristic of the Dutch when culture and history are at stake (2006:30-31).

In these early texts Scheffer seems to take the idea of "culture," as a well-outlined totality, for granted. He apparently saw no problem with basing his argumentation on a fairly simplistic opposition between "traditional" and "modern" culture—in which, as usual, the "traditional" pole turned out to be in all respect the negation of the qualities of the "modern" one (2006:23-24, 30). He seemed completely oblivious of all the problems such binary oppositions have raised in, for instance, anthropological explorations of culture. In his 2007 book, Scheffer emphasizes, in contrast, that he will "draw freely on anthropological literature" (48). Unfortunately, he seems to have stopped at the anthropological debate on "cultural relativism" of the middle of the last century. For his appeal to culture as a condition for integration, the lively 1980s and 1990s debate in anthropology on the very notion of culture would be much more
A brief digression on this debate might be useful here in order to highlight the dangers of the culture notion that so suddenly became central in the debate on integration in the Netherlands and elsewhere in the West.

Central in this debate was a protest against an “essentialist” notion of culture which older anthropologists had adopted quite uncritically and propagated outside the discipline. The success of this older notion of culture—Ruth Benedict’s *Patterns of Culture* (1934) is often cited as a characteristic example—worried many younger anthropologists. To them, the notion was becoming increasingly untenable amid intensifying globalization and cultural mingling. In the older “essentialist” vision, each culture was seen as a closed totality, centered in its own essence. Thus culture became a static notion, and cultural dynamics and interaction with other cultures were seen as an anomaly. A logical implication of this view was that cultural mixing can only be superficial and that intensive culture contact inevitably leads to a painful “bend or break” situation. Some of Benedict’s reflections were highly suggestive in this sense; consider her quote from an old chief of a group of Native Americans in California: “In the beginning God gave to every people a cup, a cup of clay, and from this cup they drank their life... but their cups were different. Our cup is broken now. It has passed away” (Benedict 1934/1953:19).

In the 1980s James Clifford and anthropologists like Arjun Appadurai (cf. his 1996 book) began to warn that this culture concept risked making anthropologists blind to the powerful dynamics of local cultures in articulation with increasing processes of globalization. They emphasized that, culturally, globalization does not simply bring increasing homogenization, in the sense of a worldwide dominance of Coca-Cola or McDonald’s culture. To the contrary, the globalizing world seems to be marked by increasing emphasis on cultural difference, with modern elements acquiring different shapes and expressions across the globe and older cultural elements exhibiting new dynamics in interaction with globalization. Clifford warned that the essentialist view of culture is a very dangerous concept in this context: it pictures “other” people as locked in their stubborn cultural convictions, and it denies all the creativity with which people take up cultural elements to deal with new challenges. In his 1988 book he even warned anthropologists that it might be better to stop using the notion of culture altogether (Clifford 1988:9). Yet apparently he realized that there was little chance that the notion would disappear—anthropology
has been too successful in propagating it in the broader society. Therefore, he pleaded for using it in a new sense: a “Caribbean concept of culture,” in which culture is seen as a continuous process of emergent hybridization. Culture contact should not be seen as exceptional but as vital for cultural reproduction (Clifford 1988:64). In other words, people use their cultural heritage creatively in finding “their own path” through the modern world. Such creativity is certainly not always positive. But seeing the other as captured in a rigid cultural heritage—or trying to condense Dutch culture and history in a simple formula—blocks comprehension of what is going on.49

Clifford’s plea for a transition from an “essentialist” to a “Caribbean” concept of culture might be highly relevant for the debates on integration in the Netherlands and in immigration countries in general. Already Scheffer—to return to him as one of the most outspoken advocates of increased attention to culture in the Dutch debate—seems to have gone through a transition of this kind between his 2000 articles and his 2007 book. In the earlier articles, the emphasis seems to be mainly on “fixing” Dutch culture: it has to be condensed in a canon and a certain set of principles, and thus the choice left to immigrants seems to be indeed something like “bend or break.”50 In the 2007 book, especially toward the end, a more open view of culture seems to prevail: integration still must be achieved through common stories, but now there is at least the suggestion that these stories must address difference; symbols have to be shared between immigrants and Dutch people, and this is possible only when they are verbindend (linking; Scheffer 2007:438). The anthropological debate on how to achieve a more open view of culture and exchange might be highly relevant to such a process.

* * *

A similar constriction seems to take place in the appeal to history—at least as complex a notion as culture—and, again, a certain shift between Scheffer’s earlier viewpoints and his more nuanced position of his last book may be symptomatic here. There is some tension in Scheffer’s 2000 articles between, on the one hand, his heavy emphasis that there used to be a national consensus even in the heyday of pillarization and, on the other, his recurrent reproach that the Dutch do not have enough respect for their own history and national heritage (2000a:6). On both points some nuancing might be necessary in a more long-term view. People of my generation
vividly remember how, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, we were taught a whole series of highly nationalistic songs in primary school: “Wien Neerlands Bloed door de Ad‘ten Vloeit” (For Whom Dutch Blood Flows through the Veins), “Hollands Vlag Je Bent Mijn Glorie” (Dutch Flag, You Are My Glory), “Op de Blanke Top der Duinen” (On the White Top of the Dunes), and so on. Especially in the first decade after the German occupation during World War II, nationalist feelings were intense among many Dutch people. Yet it is not clear whether these strong appeals to history created a broader consensus. As said, history is as layered as culture: it can unite, but it can certainly also divide.

Indeed the nationalist fervor of my youth was strongly linked to the “pillar” that even in the last days of pillarization deeply marked people’s commitment to a national past. In the songs I learned at a Protestant school, it was the proud history of a Protestant nation that was idealized. “Wien Neerlands Bloed” (from 1815 till 1932 the official national hymn) and “Wilhelmus van Nassauwe” (the hymn of the royal house, which subsequently replaced “Neerlands Bloed” as the national hymn) both celebrate in fact the victory of the Protestant Dutch over Spain. For Dutch Catholics, that victory meant that for a long time they had to hold their religious services in hiding—not only because they adhered to the wrong religion but also because they were seen as potential collaborators with the enemy and therefore not entitled to full citizenship. Even in the early 1960s, the vaderlandse geschiedenis (history of the Fatherland) taught in the Protestant Free University in Amsterdam differed markedly from the version taught at the Catholic University of Nijmegen—or from the socialist version taught at the University of Amsterdam, in those days the bulwark of secularization and socialism.

It is true that already in the 1960s these nationalistic songs of my primary-school days were remembered only with great irony or even ridicule. Yet it is debatable whether this was a sign of a declining nationalism. In the 1970s, the unexpected successes of Dutch soccer teams at the European and world championships—something completely unprecedented for the Dutch public—led to new climaxes of nationalist fervor. The growing irony surrounding nationalist symbols of the past was in the Dutch case closely intertwined with the implosion of the pillars. Characteristically for Dutch society, true emotional involvement used to be with the pillar and only through it with the nation. As noted, history is not necessarily a unifying force. Yet the call, by Scheffer and many others, for a historical canon as crucial for enforcing the cultural integration of newcomers seemed to assume that history has this magical power.
In this context, it might have been wise to listen to historians who can be credited with some experience of what history can or cannot do (just as anthropologists have some familiarity with the ambiguities of culture). Of special interest in relation to the idea of a canon is the debate, mentioned earlier, on memory and history that preoccupied historians in the 1980s and 1990s. As said in chapter 1, in this debate “memory” stands for emotional and even spontaneous identification with the past; “history” rather refers to academic history as practiced by professional historians. The first can be defined as “simplifying... impatient with ambiguities... expressing some eternal or essential truth about the group whose memory it is”; in contrast, the latter focuses on “complexity,... multiple perspectives,... ambiguities” (Novick 1999:3–4; Pandey 2001:8; see also Halbwachs 1950). Pierre Nora gave new vigor to the debate with his well-known collections *Les Lieux de mémoire* (1992). His quite special reason for emphasizing this distinction was that he felt that our times—at least in France—witnessed the implosion of the last effort to unite the two, mémoire-histoire, around the nation. This precarious unification gave way to a history that annihilates memory. Concretely, the professional attitude of academic historians trained in dissecting the past, bringing in multiple views and radical uncertainties, would increasingly undermine the power of nationalist memory. However, the recent demand for national canons in various European countries seems to reflect a determined effort by dominant groups to reverse this trend. This may relate not only to rising worries about the nonintegration of immigrants but also to the fear of a loss of identity with ongoing European unification. Indeed, it was striking that it was two smaller countries that took the lead in this. Denmark was the first to publish its canon, in January 2006, and the Dutch followed in the spring of the same year. In both cases the government launched the project with expectations similar to those Scheffer had in mind in his articles. The Dutch minister of education, culture, and science, Maria van der Hoeven, explicitly asked the committee in her installation letter for a canon that would promote integration and burgerschapsvorming (citizen education) especially among the younger generations (Canon van Nederland 2006:96).

However, the committee, in which historians played an important role—the chairman, Frits van Oostrom, is a prominent expert of medieval literature—was much more cautious in its final report. It warned against unrealistic expectations: a canon could certainly not be imposed; if coupled with national pride it could easily constrain people’s knowledge; therefore it should certainly not be equated with Dutch identity (Canon
The committee even expressed doubts concerning the notion of a “national identity” as such. A canon might be associated with *inburgering* (learning to be a citizen), but even here the committee was prudent: this should certainly not be seen as the main motive behind its canon (24). Its main aim had rather been to formulate a canon “of the country in which we live together... offering society a common framework of reference for mutual communication and for operating as a Dutch person in the world. Thus, the canon for Bouhahrouz and Beatrix.” Clearly, the committee was very conscious of the risk that identifying a canon might imply the fixing of something (culture?) that is always in flux. It proposed a quite original solution for this by constructing its canon from a series of “windows” rather than from specific events or facts. Each of its fifty “windows” opens up to a branching set of stories and links with related topics and aspects. With this the committee hoped to provide a common but open framework for the teaching of history, one that could constantly be adapted to changing circumstances.

The reactions were, of course, highly diverse. Public figures who had advocated such a canon were disappointed. No wonder. To put it simply, they had called for “memory”—the minister’s assignment to the committee to produce a canon that would “promote integration and citizenship education” clearly asked for this. But she had assigned the task to professional historians. Thus the result was “history”—pluralistic and with due attention to ambiguities. This was not what many people had hoped for.

The most critical reactions came from the press that is usually equated with the right. For instance, in the weekly *Elsevier* (October 21, 2006, 14) Robert Stiphout reproached the committee for having missed its chance, for not daring to couple history to national identity in a time when there is a dire need for this in view of the general individualization and adaptation problems of immigrants. Laudatory comments, however, came from the leftist press: Hubert Smeets praised the committee in *De Groene Amsterdammer* (October 20, 2006, 12) for refusing to link history and national identity. But even *NRC/Handelsblad* (middle-of-the-road to rightist) complimented the committee for not having followed the minister’s instructions to link the canon directly to the integration issue (October 16, 2006, 1).

The Dutch committee had succeeded in maintaining a prudent distance from the political aims behind its installation. The idea of taking “windows” as building blocks showed a keen sense of the fluidity of culture and history, which would make any use of them in the service of clear-cut political aims quite difficult—much more so than many protagonists in the Dutch immigration debate seemed to realize.
With a prudence that was probably wise, the committee seemed intent on avoiding taking a clear stand on two major issues. First, not one of the fifty windows refers explicitly to the historical heritage that immigrants brought along when settling in the Netherlands.\textsuperscript{55} This leaves open the question to what extent a canon should provide space for groups that insist on their rights to “differ” (not only immigrants but also groups that claim some other kind of minority status). A second and related point concerns the question, raised above, whether a common core of values and historical knowledge is indeed a precondition for living together in one country. The committee seems to have hesitated here. It clearly hoped that its fifty windows would provide a common framework of knowledge that could strengthen citizenship. But it was also clearly concerned that a canon might serve efforts to fix and impose a core identity—which in practice might rather reinforce divisions. The overall lesson of this nuanced effort to launch a common canon seems to be that the Dutch identity, so easily assumed by \textit{autochtonen} when they oppose themselves to \textit{allochtonen}, is much less self-evident when it has to be given more concrete form.

Similar defusing effects marked the other mainstay of the new policy for forceful cultural integration of immigrants, announced with considerable fanfare: Minister Verdonk’s promise to further enforce the \textit{inburgeringscursussen} (training for citizenship)—notably by complementing it with an exam with the necessary sanctions. Here again, the main issue soon became how to define into what the immigrants-to-be needed to be initiated. A good example is the confrontations and partial misunderstandings that arose around a film, \textit{Naar Nederland} (To the Netherlands), which was to play a central role in the information campaign for persons who were considering emigration to the Netherlands. The official idea was that the film would give immigrants-to-be a realistic idea of what to expect in the country of their choice; however, critical voices soon commented that the aim seemed to be deterrence rather than providing information.

Early in 2005 the ministry launched a first version of the film, showing it only behind close doors. Yet soon rumors were circulating about it, especially two moments in it: a shot of two men passionately kissing each other after they had been officially married by the mayor of their municipality, and a longer shot of young women sunbathing topless on a beach. Fierce protests ensued. Some people commented that the aim of the film was clearly to deter Muslim immigrants, to whom such scenes were expected to be particularly shocking. However, a much stronger protest was voiced by those who thought it was a shame to characterize Dutch society by such
scenes. And, indeed, to a considerable number of Dutch “autochthons” topless sunbathing and same-sex marriage, especially if the latter leads to two males passionately kissing each other in public, are almost as shocking as they would be to many Muslims. Apparently the minister reacted by ordering that these scenes be taken out of the film. But this led to further loud protests, this time from gay action groups: the Netherlands had been the first country in the world to officially recognize same-sex marriage; deleting this scene from the film would mean that the minister was covering over a Dutch reality and giving in to Muslim prejudices.

In the end the film became part of the package immigrants have to study for their *burgerschapsexamen* (the exam includes questions based on the film). However, Dutch embassies in several countries warned that they would be in difficulties if they circulated what would be seen locally as pornography. So now two versions of the film are offered: one that includes the controversial scenes and another one without them. The vicissitudes of the project show again the evanescent quality of Dutch culture. Like autochthony, it seems to be quite clear at first, yet the harder one tries to formalize it, the more elusive it becomes.

**Comparisons**

It is tempting to take a quick look across the Netherlands’ southern border, since the *allochtoon/autochtoon* terminology fed into equally explosive confrontations among the Belgians. Apparently the terminology itself was borrowed from the Dutch, but in Belgium it acquired a high profile much more rapidly, especially in the Flemish part of the country, because of the electoral upsurge of the neo-right Vlaams Blok party. In other respects as well, the trajectory of these terms—notably the way they introduced notions of culture into politics—was to be quite different here. An obvious reason was that the Belgian configuration is characterized by a deep split between two language groups: the Francophone Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemings. This split gained new momentum with a dramatic reversal in the relation between the two groups. After World War II, Flanders became the richer region—it is now one of the most prosperous areas of Europe—which further eroded the former cultural dominance of the Walloon group. It is, indeed, striking how deeply here the new discourse on autochthony, as menaced by an invasion of allochthons, became enmeshed in the older struggle between the two language groups.
over rights to language and belonging. In the propaganda of the Vlaams Blok, autochthony is marked by uncertainty about who the “Other” is. Bambi Ceuppens (2006) shows that in the party’s statements there is a constant switching back and forth from one “Other” to another: from the Arab allochtoon to the Francophone (in a certain sense seen also as an allochthon who does not belong on Flemish soil) and back again.

In other respects as well, developments in Belgium take unexpected turns (see Ceuppens 2006). For instance, the language of autochthony is employed much more in the Flemish part—and notably in Antwerp—although the main concentrations of allochthons are in Wallonia and Brussels. The adoption of this language suited the Vlaams Blok party, since it offered a new terminology to relate to older Nazi currents among some parts of the Flemish population. Strikingly, however, the currency of the autochtoon/allochtoon terminology did not lead, as in the Netherlands, to an uncomfortable search for a proper Flemish cultural identity. Apparently, the long-standing confrontation with a most present Other, the Francophone Walloons, had made people less uncertain about this identity.

A concomitant effect was that such cultural issues were far less allowed to penetrate into policy making. The cordon sanitaire that the older parties imposed around the Vlaams Blok—especially after it became the largest party in Antwerp in 1991 and the third largest in Flanders as a whole in 1999—limited the effect its ideology could have on government measures. More generally, the particularities of the Belgian setting may have made people more conscious of the dangers of trying to manipulate culture or language. Indeed, in 2005 when Minister Verdonk in the Netherlands, with her own kind of fervor, proposed that people should be obliged to speak Dutch in public spaces—all those foreign (read: Arabic) sounds in shops and streets might frighten people—many Belgians reacted with deep amazement: did this minister realize what she was saying?

Yet elsewhere in Europe there are clear parallels to the Dutch effort for defining a cultural core to serve as a beacon for more forceful integration policies—again, with similar confusing consequences. In 2005, for instance, Germany launched its own citizenship exams, with explicit reference to the Dutch precedent. Here, however, the exam was given form not at the national level but rather by the Land (the semiautonomous province in the German federation). The consequence was that criteria for accepting someone as a German citizen were strikingly different, even between neighboring Länder. A target of much ironic comments became, for instance, the glaring contrast between the exams in Hessen (more
conservative) and in neighboring Baden-Württemberg (more progressive). In Hessen the candidate citizen had to show considerable knowledge of German history and national symbols (what is the first line of the national hymn? mention three German philosophers; etc.), while in Baden-Württemberg, citizens-to-be were tested, for instance, on how they would react if their son told them he was a homosexual and wanted to live with another man. Thus formulating a common cultural core proved to be highly complicated in Germany as well. Moreover, a standard reaction to the question about the homosexual son was that a large number of homegrown German citizens would surely lose their own citizenship if required to answer such a question.58

In France, Nicolas Sarkozy’s initiative to create a ministry for immigration et identité nationale immediately after he was elected as president (2007), brought furious reactions from historians. Eleven prominent historians decided not only to step down from the national board for the history of immigration (Cité Nationale de l’Histoire de l’Immigration, CNHI) but also to found a Comité de Vigilance aux Usages Public de l’Histoire (CVUH)—that is, a “Committee for Vigilance against Official Abuse of History”! Further, they organized a petition that within a short time had been signed by more than ten thousand historians and others from all over the world. Clearly the mixing of memory and history makes an explosive cocktail.

One of the spokespersons of the group, prominent historian Gérard Noiriel, explains in a recent publication why these historians saw the bringing together of immigration and national identity as so dangerous (Noiriel 2007). In his view, Sarkozy’s strategy of putting the issue of identité nationale at the center of campaign debates (thus marginalizing the social issues his opponent Segolène Royal tried to put forward) was crucial for his election victory. The notion of national identity as such was not new—in any case less new than Sarkozy made it out to be—but the way he linked it to the immigration issue turned out to be decisive: the message was that French national identity was under direct threat from new types of migrants who clearly refused to integrate. To drive home this message, Sarkozy made ample use of history, but—and this is why French historians felt attacked on their own turf—this amounted time and again to a distortion of history.

To highlight all the ambiguities behind Sarkozy’s apparently self-evident position, Noiriel briefly traces the vicissitudes of the notion of national identity and its precursors in France.59 Ever since the end of the nineteenth century, such notions have always related to issues of immigra-
tion, but mostly in a very different sense than in Sarkozy’s use. Central to Noiriel’s analysis is the fact that already in the nineteenth century—that is, the period in which the idea of a nation took concrete shape—France was an immigration country. This was further reinforced by the industrial revolution, which triggered a rapidly increasing demand for labor (Noiriel 2007:21). Only then did elites become preoccupied with turning immigrants into Frenchmen. In Noiriel’s view, this is one of the reasons that France adhered strictly to the *ius soli* for determining nationality while Germany and Italy, at the time both emigration countries, rather favored the *ius sanguinis*. At the time, then, French national identity was highly inclusive. However, there was an opposing conservative current of which, since the end of the nineteenth century, Maurice Barrès was an oft-quoted spokesman. In the latter’s view the immigrants were becoming ever more an internal threat; therefore it was urgent to distinguish the *vrais Français* (the real Frenchmen) among the mass of citizens. For Barrès the *personnalité nationale* had to be constructed on the axis of *la terre et les morts* (the soil and the deceased). In this view, there is apparently a crucial distinction within French citizenship: immigrants may become citizens, but they can never become *de vrais Français* (or, as Le Pen would put it, *des Français de souche*). In Noiriel’s view, Sarkozy, himself the son of Polish immigrants, owes his success to giving this old conservative view a new twist: his discourse on immigration seems to be based on a distinction between older generations of immigrants that did integrate and newer groups that refuse to do so and therefore form a threat. This is why his linking of *identité nationale* to *immigration*, construed as a basic danger, is so vicious. Noiriel calls on historians to be *vigilants* against such “entrepreneurs of memory” (2007:8)—a powerful expression—who use history for creating a memory that suits them.

The current fierce debates on history in France—the debate started by the *comité de vigilance* is just one of them—show that even in that country, often seen as the classical locus of nationalism, it is not easy to frame history and culture in the service of a national consensus. Even here, the very notion of national identity seems to be relatively young and constantly contested. The fierce involvement of many historians in these debates shows that, indeed, history can divide as much as unify.

* * *

Despite these parallels in other European countries where immigration likewise became the dominant issue in the 1990s, the rapidity of the Dutch
switch from being a *gidsland* (guide country) of tolerance to placing an impatient emphasis on forceful cultural integration is quite striking. This switch seems to be a strong example of Appadurai’s reflections (2006), quoted before, on how identities can become “predatory”—that is, can start cannibalizing other identities instead of accepting a pluralist configuration. The Dutch government’s new measures to force immigrants to integrate, the emphasis on cultural rather than on socioeconomic integration, and the insistence in Scheffer’s earlier texts and by other opinion leaders that such cultural integration will necessarily be a wrenching process—a “painful” loss of earlier attachments (Scheffer 2000a:7; van den Brink 2006:27, 301)—smack, indeed, of a “predatory” approach. So does the clear impatience of many politicians with the “soft” pluralism defended by proponents of the earlier “multi-culti” approach. The idea seems to be, indeed, that Dutch identity must “cannibalize” other identities in order to turn immigrants into reliable citizens. All the more surprising that the overall profile of this identity—the vagueness of its contours and the great problems in giving it a more concrete shape—is hardly what one would expect from a “predatory identity.” What will become of an identity that hardly knows itself yet refuses to leave space for other identities?

The Dutch case is equally difficult to place in Gerd Bauman’s typology, also cited above, of different grammars of identity and belonging (Bauman 2004). As said, Bauman tries to move beyond the basic truth that a Self (or “identity”) logically needs an Other (or “alterity”) to define itself. Therefore he distinguishes different ways (“grammars”) to relate to the Other, each with its own implications. The earlier “multi-culti” approach is easy to fit into this typology as a clear example of “encompassment”: an effort to include different identities within a wider whole. But the subsequent switch to forcible cultural integration is more difficult to place. Bauman emphasizes that there always must be room for “alterity”—for some sort of a relation to the Other—in order to keep the specificity of a group’s own identity alive. The problem is, again, that in the policies called for by Scheffer (at least in his earlier articles) and Verdonk—to cite just two advocates of this direction—Dutch identity, vague as it might be, is suddenly supposed to claim all the space. Or as Mbembe summarizes it so powerfully: autochthony is basically an impossible vision, since it conjures up an “Otherless universe.”

The basic tension between the two terms, *autochthonous* and *integration*, that loom so large in the recent Dutch approach to the immigration
issue may well be more than just a terminological quibble. As said be­
fore, in principle autochthony rules out integration of “strangers.” In the
African examples, even someone who has lived most of his or her life
elsewhere remains an autochthon—as becomes clear, in most unfortunate
forms, by the key role young urbanites have played in the upsurge of vio­
ience in Ivory Coast now that they feel forced to return to “their” village
to claim their rights. In classical Athens, the mere suspicion that a citizen
was hiding descent from elsewhere could make him lose his citizenship.
The Dutch seem to deploy a watered-down version of this rigid defini­
tion of belonging: with them allochthons can become citizens but on the
condition that they culturally integrate. Yet by relating integration to an
“essentialist” culture concept—the Dutch culture, at least in the concep­
tion of Verdonk, Wilders, and others, is supposed to have its own essence,
and the immigrants have to choose between this and their own culture—
the heavier interpretation of the autochthon concept is smuggled back in.
One might wonder, indeed, whether integration is at all possible with such
an approach.

The central question raised by the Dutch experience, and by develop­
ments elsewhere in Europe, is whether giving greater substance to the
national culture—especially if it is done in such contrived ways as in
the Dutch examples above—makes integration of immigrants easier. In
practice, this seems rather to work toward a deepening of the divide and
make integration all the more difficult. “Culture” in these contexts re­
minds one of “witchcraft” in Mary Douglas’s famous characterization of
it as a “clumsy and double-edged weapon” (Douglas 1963:126). It seems
to be a useful tool, but it can easily turn against the one who tries to use
it. The insistence on the need to outline a fixed cultural core as a precon­
dition for the integration of newcomers comes from authors who seem
to have surprisingly little experience in studying what culture can do and
how it works.

All the more reason to take alternative approaches more seriously,
like the one outlined for the Netherlands by Duyvendak and Hurenkamp
(2004), who rather put their faith in an emerging “community lite” of sim­
ilar lifestyles and everyday behavior (see above). The increasing confor­
mity they note in everyday practices might seem quite superficial, but it
could still be a more realistic means of achieving integration than a cul­
tural offensive enforced from above—notably if this acquires such artifi­
cial overtones as it does in the Dutch case. Of course, a certain consen­sus is necessary—Scheffer and others are certainly right to insist on this.
But it is questionable whether it necessarily must be a consensus on basic values. The great originality of Lijphart’s analysis of Dutch pillarization is that he shows such consensus to have been highly limited in a key period in Dutch history. More important might be that any form of consensus—as in Lijphart’s version of pillarization—must leave room for difference.

In his 2007 book Scheffer seems to be more conscious that “the Land of Arrival” has to offer openings for the migrant to feel at home. In his explorations on how cosmopolitanism and identity can be combined, Kwame Anthony Appiah emphasizes, like Scheffer, the importance of “common stories,” but he adds most importantly that stories of identity risk deepening gaps between different groups in society, unless they assume the character of “conversations” that respect difference: “What makes such conversations possible is not always shared ‘culture,’ not even, as the older humanists imagined, universal principles... it is the capacity to conjure a world” (Appiah 2005:245, 258). Culture is a useful notion in debates on how to live with immigration only if it includes difference rather than excluding it.
CHAPTER SIX

Cameroon:
Nation-Building and Autochthony as Processes of Subjectivation

The African cases and the Dutch trajectory of the autochthony notion, as discussed in the previous chapters, raise the challenge of how to understand its emotional force in such widely different settings. Clearly, the self-evidence that the notion acquires, despite all these differences, has to be placed in specific historical contexts. But as emphasized in chapter 1, such historicizing is only one step. Another challenge, and probably a more difficult one, is to understand that even if autochthony, again like other forms of belonging, is historically constructed—and can even be "debunked" as blatantly incorrect—it still takes on a "naturalness" that gives its considerable emotional power and concomitant mobilizing force. For instance, we saw that it seemed to apply as easily in present-day Europe as in Africa. To protagonists of autochthony claims, it seems of little concern whether these claims rest on a highly special interpretation of history or even a downright distortion: its emotional persuasiveness seems to be no less—at least in some situations. However, it is important to emphasize that this does not always "work" to the same degree—in this respect as well there are considerable differences. In the Dutch case, it proved to be much more difficult to give substance to the autochthony idea. The appeal to the soil remains quite empty here, and autochthony rituals remain hesitant and open (consider the citizenship exams and the canon). Still, even in this context, the notion seems to acquire an emotional charge, though with the sense of a much more diffuse belonging to the soil.