Spheres of integration:
Towards a differentiated and reflexive ethnic minority policy

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1. Introduction

In the early part of 2000 Dutch journalist Paul Scheffer published a much talked-about essay entitled ‘The Multicultural Drama’ in NRC-Handelsblad, a Dutch quality paper. In this essay Scheffer advanced the thesis that the integration of immigrants and ethnic minorities in the Netherlands is a human drama. He pointed to the high unemployment figures among established and new immigrants, the emergence of black schools with high dropout rates, and the concentration of poverty in strongly segregated districts in the large cities. In his opinion the poor integration of ethnic minorities is the result of a detached and permissive Dutch policy in respect of minorities that does not confront ethnic minorities sufficiently with the Dutch language, culture and history.

Before discussing this line of reasoning, I would like to draw attention to the new imagery that is being used. Whereas Dutch policy in respect of minorities used to be characterized by water metaphors (‘the ferry can’t take any more passengers’, ‘streams of migrants’, ‘stemming the tide of migrants’, ‘building dikes to preserve Dutch culture against a tide of foreign influences’), the metaphor of drama is now becoming popular (cf. also Engbersen and Engbersen 1991). Scheffer’s analysis seems to relate to two branches of drama. First of all, tragedy, in which the unavoidable destiny of underprivileged immigrants is the central theme. The other branch of drama that plays a role in his analysis is that of absurdist drama. Dutch institutions (read: educational, social security, and asylum institutions) would treat migrants in an indifferent and quasi-tolerant way. Furthermore, many of the migrants would have lost their mooring, as old cultural anchors are not replaced by new Dutch ones. The result would be an anonymous and indifferent multicultural
society in which marginal immigrants do not observe rules and regulations any longer, and which prefers negotiation to punishment.

Scheffer’s article led to a heated debate. For months the correspondence page of *NRC-Handelsblad* featured contributions from Dutch intellectuals and citizens who either agreed or disagreed with Scheffer. Scheffer had certainly hit a nerve, particularly because he placed a strong emphasis on the importance of Dutch culture and language. Two years later the Dutch were confronted with the late populist politician Pim Fortuyn, who came to prominence when his party made a strong showing in the local elections of Rotterdam. Fortuyn, who was brutally murdered on the eve of the national elections, called for the Netherlands’ borders to be closed (‘This is a full country’, he said. ‘I think 16 million Dutchmen are about enough’) and pleaded for the assimilation of ethnic minorities. According to Fortuyn, Islam was a ‘backward religion’.

On empirical grounds, much can be said against Scheffer’s pessimistic analysis and Fortuyn’s statements. A growing proportion of the new generation of minorities have found their way in the Dutch educational system and a growing number of minorities have built up an existence in self-employment. In the last decade we have also witnessed a strongly decreasing unemployment rate among ethnic minorities (SCP, 2001a and 2001b). In this contribution, however, I would like to limit myself to the assumption that thorough acquaintance with the Dutch language and culture is the most important prerequisite for integration. In this respect the left-wing intellectual Scheffer and the populist Fortuyn are not as original as some might be inclined to think. After all, since the mid-nineties of the previous century, the Dutch government has been focussing its policy more and more at the so-called ‘inburgering’ *(einsburgerung)* of vulnerable groups of ethnic minorities through compulsory instruction in the Dutch language and culture (WRR, 2001).

In this chapter, I would like to discuss the Dutch minorities and integration policy, and the various ways in which the notion of ‘integration’ has been interpreted. I will then formulate a critique and present an alternative integration model containing various dimensions and spheres of integration. First of all, however, I would like to discuss the controversial notion of ‘integration’.

### 2. Dimensions of integration

The Dutch literature on social integration often features dichotomies. The intellectual origin of these dichotomies can be traced back to the study by Gordon (1964) on processes of assimilation in American society. For example, some authors distinguish between *structural integration* and *socio-cultural integration*. The former is described as ‘full participation in social institutions’ and the latter as ‘the social contacts that members and organizations of minorities maintain with society as a whole, and the cultural adaptations to that society’ (Vermeulen and Penninx, 1994: 3, cf. also Dagevos, 2001). On the other hand, Veenman (1995) distinguishes between two aspects of integration. Firstly, *formal participation* in sectors such as education and the labour market and *informal participation* with
ethnic minorities in the sphere of leisure activities. Secondly, the attitudes of ethnic minorities towards the significance of participation in the receiving society. Veenman adds that ‘informal participation’ together with ‘orientation towards the receiving society’ are indicators of the ‘ethnic-cultural integration’ of ethnic minorities, while ‘formal participation’ is an indicator of ‘socio-economic integration’.

The question that crops up in all elaborations of these classifications is to what extent clinging to the ethnic cultural repertoire is detrimental to achieving an established social position. This question is particularly related to the integration of guest workers and their offspring and more recently to the integration of asylees and refugees. Conversely, the question is to what extent ‘structural integration’ leads to erosion of the ethnic cultural identity. At present no convincing empirical answers have been found to these two questions. There does seem to be a growing consensus – of which Scheffer is a leading exponent – that migrants who have not been socialized in the Dutch language and culture have difficulties achieving a fulfilling social position (cf. Dagevos, 2001).

Dichotomization of the integration process is an improvement on those integration theories that unilaterally put the emphasis on integration through the labour market or the cultural adaptations of ethnic minorities. The distinction between structural and cultural integration, however, is not accurate enough. Following Bernard Peters (1993, pp. 96-143), I will therefore distinguish between three inextricably linked dimensions of social integration: the functional dimension, the moral dimension, and the expressive dimension. The functional dimension involves, in my operationalization, the extent to which citizens are able to participate in the major institutions of a society (especially through work and education). The moral dimension involves the extent to which citizens are able to participate fully and equally in society without any risk to their physical and personal integrity (citizenship dimension). It also involves the extent to which citizens conform and are able to adapt themselves to current social and legal standards. Finally, the expressive dimension involves the extent to which citizens are able to develop their individual and shared identities. If an individual or group is not recognized, the result may be an identity crisis or alienation. The figure below sums up the three dimensions of social integration and their possible negative expressions (cf. Peters, 1993, p. 105).

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1 There are others who distinguish between social emancipation (achieving an established social, economic and political position) and cultural affirmation (clinging to the cultural practices of the country of origin). This distinction corresponds to some extent with the distinction between the public and private spheres (Van Doorn, 1989).
Figure 1. Dimensions of integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Functional</th>
<th>Moral</th>
<th>Expressive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problem</td>
<td>Social position (labour, education)</td>
<td>Social norms</td>
<td>Cultural expressions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Policy objective</td>
<td>Equality and Equity</td>
<td>Rule of law Citizenship Social cohesion</td>
<td>Development of individual and shared identities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>Social and spatial exclusion</td>
<td>Anomie Disintegration</td>
<td>Alienation Identity crisis</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Source: Peters 1993, Engbersen and Gabriëls 1995*

With some juggling, the aforementioned dichotomies of integration can also be integrated into this ‘three-dimensional’ table. The structural dimension corresponds largely with the functional and moral dimensions. The cultural dimension encompasses particularly the expressive dimension. Nonetheless, Peters’ integration triad offers a more sophisticated conceptual framework, particularly because it offers the possibility to understand the various ‘in built tensions’ that are inherent to a multicultural society.

3. **Spheres of integration**

Apart from the various dimensions of integration it is important to distinguish several ‘spheres of integration’. I agree with Michael Walzer that modern society is characterized by various social spheres with different distribution criterion. However, I prefer to point to ‘spheres of integration’ rather than ‘spheres of justice’. This may seem trivial, but it is not. Anyone who analyses the Dutch policy on minorities of the past forty years will notice that in each differentiated phase different aspects were emphasized. In the first phase of the Dutch policy regarding minorities (1960s and 1970s) the emphasis was on *self-organization, social work* and, partly, *education* (remember the debate on education in the minorities’ own language and relating to their culture). In addition, special provisions for minorities were realized. The policy on minorities aimed at ‘mutual adaptation in a multicultural society with equal opportunities for Dutch people and ethnic minorities (WRR, 1979). The central idea of ‘integration while preserving ethnic identity’ was soon criticized because it would strengthen the isolated position of minorities.

Next (1980s and 1990s), the emphasis was on reducing social disadvantages, especially through improving *labour market participation*. Integration is interpreted as ‘equal participation in the major social institutions and sectors’ (WRR, 1989). A minorities policy with special provisions was no longer desirable.
Selective provisions for ethnic minorities were only justifiable when they contribute to the reduction of socio-economic disadvantages and, more particularly, of unemployment and dependency on benefits.

The mid-nineties brought another change in tone and idiom (third phase). The no-nonsense idiom of the eighties was replaced by an idiom of *citizenship*. Politicians no longer spoke of a ‘minorities policy’ but used the universal term ‘integration policy’. The main goal is now on active citizenship with a strong emphasis on the social obligations of citizens. What is new is that more attention is paid to the moral dimension of integration. On the one hand, the problem of the minorities is related to issues such as crime and peaceful co-existence of citizens in multicultural areas. On the other hand, the Dutch government adopted an integration policy that makes it obligatory for vulnerable groups (particularly those of benefit-dependent people) to take courses in the Dutch language and culture.

The policy shifts from social work, self-organization to labour market participation and to the social obligations of citizenship, demonstrate - in my view - that a broad integration strategy is needed. It should be acknowledged that the spheres of work, culture, housing, education, politics and law are all of crucial importance for the social integration of migrants. These spheres do, of course, differ in terms of scope. For example, the sphere of law determines in particular the entry regulations, the residence status, and who gets access to the labour market and political and social rights (and to what extent). It is also clear that the government’s possibilities of intervention are primarily found in the fields of labour policy, education and housing. Political and cultural participation cannot be enforced, but can be facilitated and encouraged. The crucial question is to what extent ethnic minorities have been integrated into each of the mentioned spheres. The extent to which ethnic minorities have been integrated into various spheres and the way in which this has been done are indicative of the social integration of ethnic minorities into Dutch society. I will now briefly discuss the various spheres.

The sphere of law determines the admission policy and the residence status of policy categories (Andreas and Snyder, 2000; Guiraudon and Joppke, 2001). As far as the latter is concerned, there is a wide spectrum of possibilities, ranging from an inviolable residence status to no residence status at all. Exclusion in the sphere of law leads to a culmination of inequalities in the other spheres. Compare, for example, the position of so-called ‘undocumented’ or ‘illegal’ immigrants. Illegal immigrants have no right whatsoever to reside in the Netherlands and have no access to public provisions. Some exceptions are made for adult illegal immigrants in the event of acute medical emergencies and for their children who should have access to primary education. For asylum seekers, the situation is more complicated. The pluralization and irregularization of immigration flows has led to a complex system of legal differentiations that has serious consequences for the integration of EU-citizens, temporary labour migrants, asylum seekers, regular immigrants and illegal immigrants into the spheres of labour, housing and education. The increased plurality and complexity of migration flows in combination with the restrictive and selective migration policy has thus led to an *ethnic stratification based on residence statuses*. Firstly, there are citizens and immigrants with full rights of
citizenship; secondly, immigrants with practically full social rights and certain political rights (denizenship); and thirdly, there are the categories that have very limited or no social rights (especially asylum seekers and illegal immigrants).

The second sphere is that of politics. In a democracy, full citizens are given the opportunity to control their own destinies to some extent through politics. In other words, the citizens themselves create the laws they have to obey. There are two important indicators of the political integration of ethnic minorities. The first consists of the political rights they possess. In the Netherlands ethnic minorities have active and passive voting rights at the local level. Dutch municipalities grant foreign residents the right to vote as well as to run for office after 5 years residing in the Netherlands. However, if you do not have the Dutch nationality you are not allowed to participate actively or passively at the general, national election. The second indicator of political integration of ethnic minorities is, of course, the extent to which they (can) actually make use of their legal rights to participate in the sphere of politics. Only a small but growing proportion of the new generation of minorities have found their way in the Dutch political system. One important question is whether there is a connection between the integration into the sphere of politics and the integration into other spheres. Is political integration a necessary prerequisite for ethnic minorities to integrate fully into other spheres?

The third sphere is the sphere of work. In the literature on migration and integration, work is considered a crucial instrument for integration. The American sociologist Gans (1991) stated in this respect that semi- and unskilled immigrants first integrated into American society through the labour market and that subsequently (when there was social mobility across one or two generations) further integration of their children was achieved through education. Gans therefore came to the conclusion that integration policies should first of all be geared to the labour market. Educational policies come second. Gans (1991, p. 232) uses the ‘take off’ metaphor to illustrate this. It is only when a more or less strong position has been achieved through work that parents and their children begin to explore the possibilities of getting ahead through education. Unfortunately, employment can also be a disintegrating factor when ethnic minorities can rely only on a ghettoised labour market. In that case, work can lead to social isolation instead of social integration. However, the major social problem of today is the high unemployment among ethnic minorities. In the last ten years – even though the number of unemployed ethnic minorities is substantially decreasing – the unemployment figures for ethnic minorities are two to four times higher than those for Dutch people. This raises the question as to what is the integration capacity of the sphere of work.

The income realized through employment has consequences for the sphere of housing. In the Netherlands, the increase in wealth of the majority of the population goes hand in hand with a concentration of relative social deprivation among a large minority consisting of ethnic minorities. In the years to come, these groups will make up the majority in the central districts of the large cities. At present, the Dutch government is neither willing nor able to curb the suburbanization of the Dutch population and the concentration of ethnic minorities (SCP, 1998). This spatial segregation may thwart the social integration of ethnic
minorities. On the other hand, some also point out that ethnic neighbourhoods can be a seedbed for the development of ethnic economic activities and thus may lay the foundation for social improvement (Burgers and Snel, 2000).

The fifth sphere is that of education. In the past ten to twenty years, the educational position of many groups of migrants has improved considerably. Nevertheless, the paradox of progress and decline manifests itself again and again, particularly in education. The educational position of ethnic minorities is improving, but that of the Dutch population is also improving, and perhaps even faster. By the way, this is no new phenomenon, but merely a persistent mechanism that has been described in detail in the literature on the chances of improvement for working-class children (Boudon, 1974; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977). We know how long it took for Dutch society to become more open. Perhaps we should be more patient with groups that are more difficult to integrate. It should be noted that the persistent inequality might cause some disenchantment and demoralization. This can eventually lead to a situation in which more and more young people drop out of school (Bourdieu et al., 1999). There is a real risk for young ethnic minorities when their efforts at school do not yield the desired results, while they grow up in an environment in which many people are unemployed and had the same demoralizing experiences. This pessimistic view on the significance of education policy may be counterbalanced by the experiences of ethnic minorities who did benefit from the educational system.

The sixth relevant sphere is the sphere of culture. It was Gowricharn (1993) who, in the Netherlands, repeatedly drew attention to the cultural factor. In his opinion, integration problems and integration possibilities arise partly from the ethnic minorities cultural baggage colliding with the Dutch culture. Gowricharn also speaks of the ‘ethnic factor’. He is also of the opinion that integration is a cultural process, in which the dominant society uses ‘cultural normative images’ that may hinder the integration of ethnic minorities into the spheres of labour, education and housing. Ethnic minorities who do not measure up to these normative images have less chance of getting a job, a house or a positive recommendation at school with regard to further study. In addition to this debate on the existence of excluding cultural normative images, a new debate arose as to the significance of transnational networks and loyalties. This debate points to the limited nature of the discussion about whether migrants should stay or return. Many ‘established’ migrants still maintain close links with their country of origin, especially economically and in the cultural sense. Acknowledgement of the significance of these ‘transnational societies’ and corresponding ‘transnational identities’ puts into perspective the presupposition that social integration in the Netherlands can only be successful if the ethnic minorities are willing to give up specific cultural identity and loyalties (Glick Schiller et al., 1995; Portes et al., 1999).

The seventh relevant sphere is that of religion. Durkheim and Weber pointed to the social integrative function of the sphere of religion. In the Netherlands, the religious ‘pillars’ played an important role in the simultaneous integration and emancipation of groups of citizens. Not surprisingly, in the debate on the integration of ethnic minorities, some pointed to the possible significance of the
pillarization model, particularly with respect to Islam. The number of Muslims in
the Netherlands is increasing. The significance of Islam is reflected in the building
of mosques, the existence of national Islamic broadcast organizations, Islamic
shops, and Islamic primary schools. Nevertheless, the degree of organization of
Islam is limited. There are no Islamic political parties or trade unions, no Islamic
housing corporations or hospitals, and the participation of Muslims in the
provisions of the welfare state does not involve a religious intermediary structure.
Nevertheless, the question as to the significance of the sphere of religion for the
integration of ethnic minorities keeps cropping up. In the recent past attempts to
self-organisation were viewed rather positively as a possible channel of
emancipation (compare the pillarization model), nowadays - especially after the
tragic event of September 11th and the rise of populist political movements in
Europe - Islamic institution building is viewed with anger and fear.

There are, of course, still other ‘spheres of integration’, for example, health
care. And one should also not forget that there are ‘informal spheres’ of
integration. In the next section I will give a brief description of the relevance of
these informal spheres of integration.

4. Bastard spheres

Informal spheres of integration form a sort of shadow cabinet of the spheres that I
have discussed here. For example, Peters (1993) states that each society has
spheres with ‘undersides’ that are not visible to many of us, such as illegal types of
trade and social organizations. Behind their official facade, legitimate institutions
and social systems conceal an unofficial and informal hidden character (Scott,
1990). With regard to the informal side of formal spheres, Everett Hughes (one of
the founding fathers of the Chicago School in sociology) introduced the term
bastard institutions in the fifties. Bastard institutions are illegal distributors of
legitimate goods and services, but they also cater for needs that cannot be
considered legitimate such as irregular lotteries, prostitution, black markets (of
labour, goods, people, organs, etc.), organized crime, and also illegal forms of
settling conflicts and providing credit facilities. Hughes says: ‘All take on
organized forms not unlike those of other institutions. (...) These bastard
institutions should be studied not merely as pathological departures from what is
good and right, but as part of the total complex of human activities and enterprises.
In addition, they should be looked at as orders of things in which we can see the
processes going on, the same social processes perhaps, that are to be found in the
legitimate institutions.’ (Hughes, 1994, pp. 193, 194)

These bastard institutions, or to stick to my terminology, these bastard spheres
are particularly important to people whose residence status is not very clear, such
as illegal aliens. The better the Dutch territory and the access to formal labour
market and collective provisions are guarded, the more the informal institutions
gain significance for immigrants who do not have a valid residence permit. One
may think in this respect of smuggling networks, the informal housing sector, the
informal economy, and the sphere of crime (Engbersen, 2001a, Engbersen and Van
These bastard institutions play a role in the transport and stay of illegal migrants. Smuggling networks offer illegal migrants an illegitimate way to enter the country, while the informal spheres of labour and housing offer them an alternative to the formal labour market and housing market, particularly now that these markets have become less accessible for illegal immigrants as a result of various measures. In addition, the sphere of crime offers an alternative source of income.

A second important factor is the informal practices of public or semi-public institutions. They play a key role in the passive and active toleration of illegal immigrants (Cornelius et al., 1994). There is a great discrepancy between the restrictive legislation concerning illegal immigrants and the policy practice. The policy freedom that institutions in the fields of the control of aliens, education, housing and healthcare claim for themselves - on the basis of capacity problems, control problems and for humanitarian reasons - also leads to a situation in which illegal migrants can become semi-integrated into Dutch society without being formally part of the political community. Walzer speaks of the existence of an intermediate class of illegal immigrants: ‘We have our own resident aliens, who live within the political community, but are not part of it...’ (Walzer, 1994, pp. 181, 182). What makes this intermediate class so interesting is that they are integrated in some of the spheres (for example the informal labour market), but not in a legal sense.

Informal institutions can also be of interest to legal immigrants, particularly the informal economy and the sphere of crime (Engbersen, 2001b). The informal sphere of labour offers unemployed migrants an alternative to the formal labour market. There are indications that immigrants engage in informal, economic activities on a large scale in western cities (Portes et al. Mingione, 1991; Sassen, 1991). It involves to some extent the invisible and informal activities that are not, or hardly, perceived in official policy, or tolerated passively or actively. The American literature on this subject showed that crime offers an opportunity for social improvement and integration. For example, Bell (1960) stated that ethnic participation in crime is closely related to migration processes. Through crime, newcomers acquire a place in society, and their old positions on the bottom rung are subsequently taken up by new migrants. It is more common, however, to regard participation in the sphere of crime as an indicator of social disintegration.

5. Tensions within and between spheres of integration

The question is how the dimensions and spheres of integration relate to each other. A central question is to what extent these dimensions are not in harmony with each other. The differences between the three dimensions of social integration make it possible to clarify the internal tensions within a sphere. This is possible when, within one sphere, the principle of one dimension is not in harmony with the principle from another dimension. Let me give you three simple examples relating to the spheres of employment, education and religion.
With regard to the sphere of employment, one may ask whether the moral and functional dimensions in this sphere are compatible. Or is there an insoluble tension between the social right to a decent legal minimum wage (moral dimension) and the functional demand for an efficient labour market? In the sphere of employment, wage reduction may have a positive influence on the employment chances of semi- and unskilled ethnic minorities, but the consequences in terms of income will be such (poverty!) that they will not be able to participate fully in society. We stumble here on the question of the possible incompatibility between the ‘functional’ dimension and ‘moral’ dimension of integration.

The debate on education in the migrants’ own language on the other hand points towards a possible incompatibility between the functional dimension and the expressive dimension of integration. There are many people who think that instruction in the Dutch language is more important than paying attention to the identity-reinforcing and culturally enriching functions of the ethnic minorities own language (van Doorn, 1989). Others disagree and argue that education on culture, together with support in their own language is essential to reach higher educational levels. (cf. SCP, 2002).

A third example comes from the sphere of religion. It involves the circumcision of girls from Somalia (a growing group in the Netherlands), which is usually done secretly. This ritual is prohibited in the Netherlands. The parents’ right to religious freedom (expressive dimension) is limited by the child’s right to physical integrity as elaborated in the provisions of the Dutch penal code (moral dimension). It should be mentioned here that the right to clitoridectomy is not advocated in public by anyone. A related example are the recurrent ‘headscarf cases’ in Western-European countries. Sometimes employers refuse to employ Muslim women wearing headscarves. Their dress code for employees who work in visible places in their organizations does not allow them to wear headscarves. Some argue that it is unlawful (moral dimension) to refuse employment to women for wearing a headscarf as a sign of being a Muslim woman (expressive dimension).

Of course, these social tensions within one sphere are obviously apparent within bastard spheres like the informal economy, the informal housing sector or crime. These parallel institutions are built on the tension between the moral dimension and the functional dimension of integration.

In addition to these recurrent tensions between different dimensions of integration within one sphere, there are also incompatibilities between the different social spheres. One example of this can be derived from the current European debate on illegal immigration. In the sphere of politics, there is a strong tendency to develop a more restrictive policy to reduce the number of illegal aliens and to

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2 Another example of incompatibility between the functional dimension and the moral dimension within the sphere of politics can be derived from the debate on the number of refugees that the Netherlands would accept. On the grounds of international agreements and driven by the functional demand of an efficient control of the flow of refugees, the politicians did not want to accept more refugees than agreed upon. However, many citizens objected to this attitude and criticized the politicians on the grounds of moral principles such as internal solidarity and the protection of the personal integrity of people.
prevent unwanted immigrants from coming in. Politicians refer to the principle that nation states and the European Union decide for themselves who they allow to live on their territory and who may get access to the labour market and public provisions (Bolkestein, 1995, pp. 205, 206). They also point out that an excessive flow of illegal aliens would endanger the social integration and labour market position of legal immigrants. However, many employers are not in favour of a restrictive policy towards illegal migrants, because they regard these illegal migrants as cheap labour, which could make an important contribution to crucial sectors in the European and Dutch economy (e.g. in agriculture and market gardening). They refer to the liberal, economic principles of free movement of people and goods for a free market. Thus, economic cross-border principles are diametrically opposed to national, political principles.\(^3\)

Another example of possible incompatibility between spheres involves the current segregation tendencies in the large cities of the Netherlands. Spatial segregation in the sphere of housing has serious consequences for the sphere of education and also for the sphere of labour. Segregation stimulates the further growth of ‘black’ schools and can eventually lead to problems in the sphere of employment (due to the territorial stigma attached to certain neighbourhoods). Furthermore, policy instruments that are used in one sphere may be detrimental to the other. Thus, on the one hand, an intensive educational policy has been developed to create equal chances and promote the social and geographical mobility of young ethnic minorities, while, on the other hand, the neo-liberalization in the housing sector, i.e. the limitation of the public housing sector, leads to more segregated, low-income districts with black schools. It goes without saying that this has serious consequences. In other words, policy in one sphere can have unintended negative effects on another sphere.

This analysis shows that a multicultural society experiences ‘in built’ tensions that are connected with the various dimensions and spheres of integration (Engbersen and Gabriëls, 1995). It is also clear that particularly the moral dimension is of crucial importance in a multicultural society. The moral dimension determines which social standards – which bind each of us – enable the integration of citizens into a multicultural society. These social standards therefore limit the ways in which groups can express their identity and also lay down the conditions for the integration of ethnic minorities. In other words, some things are allowed, and some are forbidden (e.g. circumcision of girls from Somalia, and paying wages

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\(^3\) Saskia Sassen (1999, p. 4) writes in this respect: ‘Today we see a combination of drives to create border-free economic spaces and drives for renewed border control to keep immigrants and refugees out. The contexts in which today’s efforts to stop immigration assume their distinct meaning for me is the current transnationalization of flows of capital, goods, information, and culture. Governments and economic actors in highly developed countries are increasingly seeking to reduce the role of national borders in such flows, to create transnational spaces. Current immigration policy in developed countries is increasingly at odds with other major policy frameworks in the international system and with the growth of global economic integration.’
that are too low). Maintenance of these social standards (regarding freedom, equality, separation of church and state, physical integrity, justice, solidarity, etc.) should be enforced, and individuals should be given the opportunities to integrate functionally. In many cases, this will cause migrants to adopt important parts of the Dutch culture, and also enable them to express their own cultural values, orientations and practices (cf. Dagevos, 2001). Thus, they will influence the cultural landscape of the Netherlands. Dutch culture can use a bit of extra drama. However, the dominance of the secular Western pattern, with its emphasis on individual development, has not fundamentally changed in the Netherlands, and in the public domain one can scarcely speak of multiculturalism (SCP, 1998).

6. A differentiated and reflexive policy in respect of ethnic minorities

The integration of ethnic minorities in the Netherlands is nowadays often discussed in terms of assimilation. The underlying idea is that social integration requires that ethnic minorities adapt themselves to the culture of the Dutch. Paul Scheffer wrote: ‘Integration while preserving the ethnic minorities identity is a white lie that should not be encouraged by the government’. The importance of the social integrative function of values were also stressed in an earlier debate on the growing decline of moral standards in Dutch society. On this occasion, Dutch politicians like Hirsch Ballin (1995) and Bolkestein (1995) agreed that Christian and humanistic values were of great importance for social cohesion. This point of view made the representatives of Islamic movements raise the question of whether, in a multicultural society, the State may rely exclusively on Christian values.

The debate on assimilation is not a specifically Dutch debate. Until today, heated debates are held in the United States between the ‘assimilists’ and ‘pluralists’ (Waters, 1990, pp. 4-6). The former are convinced that integration is impossible without full adaptation to the culture of the dominant society. The latter assume that a plurality of cultures is possible and that maintaining a specific ethnic identity does not need to obstruct integration. Empirical reality shows that assimilation – also among European migrants – has only taken place to a limited extent (cf. also Portes and Zhou, 1994). This is even more true for groups of migrants from Mexico, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Portes and Rumbaut (1990, p. 141) state: ‘Assimilation as the rapid transformation of immigrants into Americans “as everyone else” has never happened (…) Ethnic resilience has been the rule among immigrants, old and new, and represents simultaneously a central part of their process of political incorporation.’ The assumption that immigrants who abandon their own ethnic culture are easier integrated is also put into perspective by Portes and Rumbaut. They point to the importance of ethnic identification and transnational communities for integration into American society (cf. Waters, 1990; Portes et al., 1999).

The integration model that I am discussing here shows why the proposal for an assimilation policy is deficient. Supporters of the assimilation policy do not fully take account of the difference between the moral dimension and expressive dimension of integration. The moral dimension relates to the standards that enable
human interaction, and the expressive dimension to the lifestyles that express the identity of people. In a multicultural society, it is important that, for social integration, standards are developed that enable interaction between people with very divergent and rapidly changing (transnational) orientations and lifestyles. These standards must have the approval of all the citizens that belong to the political community. Rawls (1989) therefore also stresses the importance of an ‘overlapping consensus’ on the standards that should enable social integration in a multicultural society. In a democracy, these standards need to be determined within the sphere of politics.

The model of social integration developed here presupposes a differentiated and reflexive policy in respect of ethnic minorities. By this I mean a policy that takes account of the extent to which ethnic minorities have been integrated into various spheres of integration as well as of the tensions and incompatibilities that exist within and between spheres of integration. The model presented fulfils two functions of social policy.

First of all, the model can be used to localize excluded persons and groups. Those who fall outside any or most of the spheres can be identified as non-integrated. Localization of this category subsequently raises questions as to its social composition. Differentiations according to class, ethnicity and gender (and their interrelatedness) will play a role in this. In this way, it is possible to arrive at a more specific identification of excluded groups and prevent wrong ethnic classifications of groups. After all, the current classification of target groups in the policy regarding minorities proves much too rough. The accuracy of the minorities policy is not improved when whole groups of the population (such as the Surinamese and Turks) are labelled as target groups, while many members of a certain group succeed in achieving an integrated position independently. Localization of excluded persons and groups also offers the opportunity to further examine the sources of exclusion and the relations between the spheres. Walzer himself recently pointed to the consequences when groups fail within the spheres of education and social provisions: ‘failure in these areas has spread to the spheres of market, politics, and family, where it caused an accumulation of failures that together led to exclusion’ (Walzer, 1994, p. 191). However, other chronologies of segregation are also visible, for example, the problems of illegal immigrants and asylum seekers as a result of a total exclusion or semi-exclusion from the spheres of politics and law, or the problems of established migrants as a result of exclusion from the sphere of labour.

Secondly, the model provides an analytical framework for a systematic inventory of the integration and disintegration processes and possible tense relations. However, no unequivocal policy recommendations can be inferred from it. A harmonic, functional relation within and between various dimensions and spheres of integration is rarely visible in social reality. Nevertheless, despite all normative and pragmatic objections, the ideal of functional cohesion may be a worthwhile goal for the policy in respect of ethnic minorities. The position of many minority groups shows that social disadvantages and segregation processes can be identified in various spheres. To paraphrase Walzer: segregation follows them
from sphere to sphere (Walzer, 1994, p. 186). A worthwhile objective for the Dutch policy in respect of ethnic minorities might therefore be to find a new balance between the functional, moral and expressive dimensions of integration, and between the various spheres of integration. For a country that – despite its immigration history – has only recently acknowledged that it de facto has become an immigration country, the American ideal of E Pluribus Unum is much too ambitious. The Netherlands would do wise to seek that balance with the help of institutional arrangements that were developed when the Dutch welfare state was given shape. Given the current signs of an imminent crisis, those institutional examples are, of course, no longer sufficient, but they do offer reference points for an integration policy.

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