

**Citizenship, Multiculturalism and Immigrant  
Integration from a Kymlikarian Perspective: The  
Case Study of The Netherlands****INTRODUCTION**

In expressing what leads to a healthy and stable democracy, Kymlicka opines that, "the health and stability of a democracy depends, not only on the justice of its basic institutions, but also on the qualities and attitudes of its citizens: e.g., their ability to tolerate and work together with others who are different from themselves; their desire to participate in the political process in order to promote the public good and hold political authorities accountable; their willingness to show self-restraint and to exercise personal responsibility; and their sense of justice and commitment to a fair distribution of resources. There is growing fear that this sort of public-spiritedness may be in decline, and if group-based claims would further erode the sense of shared civic purpose and solidarity, then that would be a powerful reason not to adopt minority rights policies." (Kymlicka 2001, p.36). But Rogers and Tillie note that "the relative lack of immigrant and ethnic minority participation in policy-making is significantly conditioned by the fact that many do not have the legal status of citizenship." (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.2).

Considering the observation made by Rene Cuperus et al., "Migration

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has come to stay and immigration is the driver of population growth in the EU." (Cuperus, 2003, p.12). One wonders if it would not be unfair to deny citizenship to these immigrants most especially when, as Rogers and Tillie assert, the "foreign-origin population have contributed much to their host societies through their labour, taxes, commercial services, and enriching urban landscapes." (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.1).

It is widely held (as already implied by Rogers and Tillie) that acquiring citizenship is a major incentive for integration since it implies being a member of the community and having equal recognition and participation in public decision making. This sense of equality is at the core of integration policies. But if the immigrant is to be regarded as a citizen, I believe, he definitely has himself a role to play in the integration process. I shall take a look at this reciprocal process inherent in voluntary integration and examine why integration in Europe (with focus on the Netherlands) is still a problem. However I deem it appropriate to first take a brief look at what immigration is.

#### **IMMIGRATION: A GENERAL PERSPECTIVE**

Immigration is the movement of people from one country to another. The emigrants of one country, become the immigrants of another. While human migration has existed throughout human history, immigration, as referred to in this discourse, relates to long-term permanent residence which often culminates in immigrants attaining citizenship. Tourists and short term visitors are not considered immigrants. Immigration in contemporary times is vertical in structure as people move from LDCs (Less Developed Countries) to

EDCs (Economically Developed Countries).

Roskin and Berry posit that population is one of the factors prompting people in LDCs to immigrate to EDCs, but more importantly, they also argue, is the push-pull effect; “Any rich country you can name has poor immigrants. Can you blame the poor immigrants? Typically, they come from lands where jobs, food, land, water and even firewood are scarce. Prospects at home are dismal ‘such that’ even the dirtiest, lowest-paid work in the EDCs looks pretty good. And there are jobs in the EDCs whose aging work force cannot staff its agricultural and industrial base.” (Rosking and Berry, 1997: p.188). In summary, while poverty and limited opportunities push citizens of LDCs out, wealth, unlimited opportunities and dreams of a better future pull them into the EDCs.

In recent times, as noted by Rourke and Boyer, “the tide of refugees and immigrants, legal and illegal, has been greeted in the EDCs with increasing resistance. There has been broad political pressure to reduce legal immigration.” (Rourke and Boyer, 1998: p. 383). The EDCs seem to have had their fill of immigrants. While these governments contend with how best to curb migration from the LDCs, an issue of equal importance is how best to effectively blend these immigrants into mainstream society. This latter part is integration and the focus of our discourse.

#### **INTEGRATION AND THE NEED FOR EQUALITY**

While most humans, whether as groups or individuals would want to have an advantage over others, none would want to have himself or his group

disadvantaged. This is the principle of 'self preservation' expressed in the philosophy of Hobbes in his theory of the state - the development of the community. Hobbes argues, according to Skirbekk and Gilje, that "since we need material goods to survive and since there is a scarcity of the goods that we must have, at the same time that we all, by nature, try to survive, there is bound to be competition for these goods. No one can be safe in this individual struggle for survival because no one is invulnerable, and there is a relative equality in strength and shrewdness among human beings." (Skirbekk, 2001, p.183). Between these two poles of dominating and being dominated, liberal democracy comes with a desirable middle point of 'equality for all' (where equality refers to equal recognition of basic needs and protection of basic rights). In a system that breeds equality, individuals or groups do not have to fight to possess the upper hand to avoid being deprived or disadvantaged. In so doing, conflict is minimised or eradicated altogether and peace becomes a trademark of this system. Such is the ideal of liberal democracy which is why it has won wide appeal.

#### **INTEGRATION IN THE NETHERLAND**

Before going into integration policies in the Netherlands, it would be necessary to have a brief look at its immigration history.

Beetz contends that migration to the Netherlands can be divided into three stages. "In the first stage, mainly workers from the Mediterranean Area, Turkey and Morocco came to the Netherlands. In the sixties, they were actively

recruited by the Dutch government to work on a temporary basis.” (Beetz, 2000, p.1)

The second stage occurred in the seventies when “large groups from the colony of Surinam came to the Netherlands.

In the third stage, the current situation, the immigrants are mainly refugees and asylum seekers from countries in the Middle East, Africa, former Yugoslavia and Kosovo.” (Beetz, p.1) (It is worthwhile to mention that the third stage in no way negates the fact that enhanced mobilization as a result of globalization still is the major factor for migration as depicted in stages 1 and 2. Refuge and ‘asylum seeking’ in recent times, without doubt, have contributed significantly to the number of migrating peoples.) Beetz notes however that ‘target groups’ of Dutch integration policy are “persons from the former Dutch colonies of Surinam and the Dutch Antilles and former labour migrants from Turkey and Morocco.” (Beetz, p.1) who together make up about 1.5 million of the 15.6 million inhabitants in the Netherlands.

During the migration trend to the Netherlands in the early sixties, the Dutch government assumed that the labour migrants (in this case, the Turks and Moroccans) would stay temporarily. Policy focused on the integration of these groups was not under discussion. Beetz points out that; “In practice, however, it became apparent that they stayed, had their families come over and their children grow up here. As a result, governments perception of the assumed temporary stay of these people gradually changed.” (Beetz, p.2). Thus the issue under review will be the major integration policies adopted by the Dutch government to cope with the large number of immigrant

population, a situation which is the offshoot of the first and second stages of migration mentioned above. This review approximately covers two decades (1980-2000).

In its bid to address the issue of integration of the already large and still growing resident immigrant population within its borders, the Dutch government commissioned a 'minorities report' published in 1983 of which had according to Beetz, the following objectives.

- i. Creating the conditions for minorities necessary for being able to freely and effectively participate in society.
- ii. Reducing social and economic difference.
- iii. Prevention of and fight against discrimination as well as trying to improve the legal positions where needed. (Beetz, p.3) .

To achieve these objectives, the government focused on the following policy areas: Education; Employment; Non-Discrimination; Easy/quick settling of new immigrants.

Based on the (correct) assumption that prejudice, discrimination and racism will have as an effect that groups are left behind, such that persons who belong to these groups are not given the opportunity to benefit fully from their stay and thus thwarting their integration in society, Article 1 of the Netherlands constitution (which is the General Act Equal Treatment) indicates that "no one is to be discriminated against on the basis of religion, convictions of life, political preference, race, gender, nationality, sexual orientation or

marital status. The Act applies to labour relations and free professions.” (Beetz, p.6) Hence, “minorities of Non-Dutch Nationality (under specific conditions, such as for instance being residents) are entitled to vote and stand for election at city-council level.” (Beetz, p.6).

Lukes maintains that power is one of those concepts which is unavoidably value-dependent, that is, “both its definition and any given use of it, once defined, are inextricably tied to a given set of (probably unacknowledged) value-assumptions which predetermine the range of its empirical application” (Lukes, 2005: 30). For the scholar, using this concept involves disputes about its proper employment: “Indeed, to engage in such disputes is itself to engage in politics” (*Ibidem*).

It is worthy to note that conditions for participation in Dutch politics by residents of non-Dutch origin are quite minimal. In March 1986, Netherlands residents were allowed the right to vote and to run for office on a local level. Jan Rath states, “Under certain conditions, any person entitled to vote has the right to found an independent political party and run for office.” (Rath 1985, p.3). (Rath’s article also explains that command of the Dutch language is also a requirement, just as knowledge of Dutch politics is an asset.)

The Newcomers establishment Act (WIN - Inburgering Nieuwkomers) which came into effect on 30<sup>th</sup> September 1998 focuses on ensuring that new immigrants are able to manage for themselves as quickly as possible.

As Beetz opines, “settling down is a first step in the integration process. Through settling down procedures, newcomers learn the language, acquire a first insight into the social-political relationships in the society and get some

knowledge about the labour market” (p.7) Beetz observes also that: “ In the Newcomers Establishment Act (WIN), the two sidedness of the ‘integration’ relationship is expressed. The municipality has the task to help new-comers who are in the Netherlands with the intention of permanent residence to find their way in society. The new-comers have the obligation to make use of the opportunities offered them.” (p. 7). Commenting on Dutch policy and the settling of new immigrants, Jeroen Doornik states: “As to migration policies, it was understood that the integration of those newcomers would require security of residence, easy access to Dutch citizenship and as many political rights as possible”. (Doornik, p.7).

The following are policies (acts) contained in the Newcomers Establishment Act (W.I.N.):

- Promoting Labour Participation of Minorities (Wet Stimuleren Arbeidsname Minderheden [et Samen, 1998]). This act is focused on a substantial reduction of unemployment among ethnic minorities. “This act encourages companies to employ minorities. The staff of an organisation should reflect the labour market in the region. The point of departure is that within the organisation there is a proportional representation of persons from the target groups of the Act, if their share within the company corresponds with the regional proportional percentage.” (Beetz, p.7).
- Discussing ‘Policy With Minorities Act’ (WOM - Wet Overleg Minderhedenbeleid) Beetz notes that “In these meetings, policy intention can

be discussed and minorities can express their views on issues that they consider important for the development of a harmonious multicultural society. The discussion contributes to enhancing the participation by minority groups that are as yet insufficiently represented at different (economic, social and political) levels and consequently have fewer possibilities to exercise their influence" (Beetz, p.8). (It is my presumption that what Beetz refers to as 'meetings', would consist of symposiums and fora between government officials and representatives of minority groups. The outcome of which he claims have yielded positive policies implementation).

- On education, Beetz contends that the education policy is manifested in the Youth Action Programme whose objective is to ensure that "children from minority groups, through elementary and secondary education are sufficiently equipped for society." (Beetz, p.6).

No doubt all these policies are meant to create preconditions for the minorities, with the aim of removing barriers which hinder their participation in the socio-economic and political process of the state. They also show Dutch integration policies to be accomodating and fair from a normative/ideal perspective. Doornik is of the opinion that Dutch integration policies have been based on a culture of accomodation and tolerance which are products of Dutch history.

He argues that "The Netherlands have a strong tradition of differences within the native population, where neither the Catholics, the Protestants,

liberals or social-democrats were in themselves large enough groups to dominate the others. This had resulted in policies and political moves that aim at compromise and pacification rather than at conflict” (Doomernik, p.6). These attitudes of compromise and pacification still form the basis of Dutch integration policy which is why the Netherlands has been relatively peaceful when compared to other European countries. Doomernik contends that “The Dutch government has never pursued any policies that aim to exclude legal immigrants from society or of expelling immigrants who become unemployed. Thus the message towards the native population and the immigrants has always been that those who have settled, belong to society. As a result, ethnic conflict in the Netherlands is rare, especially when compared to Germany or France.” (Doomernik, p.8). If the essence of integration, as Doomernik opines, “would be to maintain and increase social cohesion within society, especially in times where immigration has become part and parcel of a globalised world, the Dutch approach would seem more successful, costly as it may be” (p.9).

Empirical facts however tell that all is not well as these policies have seemingly failed to achieve their purpose. Here, Beetz agrees with Scheffer and Koopman that “A disproportionately large part of the minorities remains (long-term) unemployed, and a large group of youngsters is lagging behind in education. Also, regular organizations are lagging behind within their own organizations in implementing processes towards intercultural developments.” (Beetz, p.3).

In other words, these policies mentioned above that were meant to deal with these problems, have not been successful in meeting their objectives. It

becomes pertinent therefore to turn attention at this point to an analysis of Dutch integration policies to examine reasons for their failure.

#### **EFFICACY OF INTEGRATION POLICIES IN THE NETHERLANDS**

I will begin with what I feel has been and still is the biggest setback to Dutch integration policies. A successful integration programme is dependent on the ability of the government to infuse the citizens into what Kymlicka calls the 'societal culture'. The benefits of knowing the language of the society cannot be overemphasized, nor can it be underestimated. It is a vital step to forging ahead in society and having equal access to equal opportunities. In this light, the essence of integration which is tied with equal opportunities is lost if, as Doomernik observes, with reference to the Dutch policy of compromise "The legal framework resulting from this tradition is still in place and facilitates the establishment of such institutions as Islamic and Hindu primary schools and an Islamic broadcasting corporation, all of which are state funded." (Doomernik, p.7). This is an apt example of Koopman's claim that "Good intentions sometimes make bad policy." (Koopman, 2003, p.163).

Kymlica argues against policies that encourage the promotion of group language over that adopted by the societal culture since it retards the socio-economic progress of members of the group. He says "it is appropriate to encourage or even pressure immigrants to integrate into the existing societal culture. One might think that liberalism should allow or encourage immigrants to establish their own society - with their own institutions operating in their own language - rather than pressuring them to integrate

into institutions which operate in the dominant language. But for a variety of reasons, such a policy is not appropriate or workable for groups formed by individual and familial migration who lack the sort of territorial concentration or historical institutions needed to sustain a vibrant societal culture." Kymlicka continues: "Immigrant groups would just have a shadowy existence at the margins of society, denied both equality in the mainstream, and the means to develop and maintain a flourishing societal culture alongside the mainstream. They would therefore be disadvantaged economically, educationally, and politically, and unable to support the autonomy of their members" (Kymlicka 2001, p.54).

It would not be illogical to hold this ethnic/group language reduction policy as largely responsible for the disparity between the minorities and the dominant group in the Netherlands. As Scheffer acknowledges, "On average, children from minorities lag behind in cognitive development and linguistic skills, which shuts off access to better jobs." He continues, "There is a 'considerable reservoir' of talent. Yet the gap between children from minorities and the rest remains large, and some research suggests it is growing. There is a danger of an intergenerational transfer of disadvantage." (Scheffer, 2003, p.23). This is not surprising. Of what use would Hindi be in the Netherlands where the prior mode of communication is Dutch and government institutions are also run in the same language? Outside the sphere of economics and politics, there are also serious social disadvantages since communication with the larger part of society becomes very difficult or virtually impossible. Expression

of needs or wants and participation in social engagements of the wider society becomes a tedious task.

Then again, while the Dutch integration policy talks about early settling of immigrants through language courses, empirical evidence shows that these courses are usually expensive and therefore usually out of the means of the newcomer who is still struggling to find his way around to adapt to his new surroundings. Even where the fee for language classes comes cheap, the materials are usually expensive. Finally is the fact that inhabitants of the major cities in the Netherlands are bi-lingual since most speak Dutch and English. If an immigrant can get around using English which enjoys wider international appeal, it reduces the pressure to learn the national Dutch language. This often deprives the immigrant of lots of opportunities. This latter factor however, is not as much an issue as the other two since the target minorities (Turks, Moroccans and Surinamese) are generally not English speaking. All these factors make learning the language a lot more difficult and places immigrants at a disadvantage in the labour market and thus makes the goal of equality for all much more elusive. It is little wonder that unemployment is four times higher among the minorities than it is among the native population.

It would have been hoped that the 'Discussing Policy with Minorities Act (WOM - Wet Overleg Minderhedenbeleid)' would have helped bridge the gap between the immigrant minorities and the dominant native population, but Scheffer opines otherwise. He argues that the minorities have gradually become wary of those members of their communities - the well to do/successful - who have been known to represent them in such discussions. He

says: "Many members of this new middle class have ceased to be concerned with the problems of their minority group. Others in the migrant community see the attitude of this new middle class as dangerous. They are critical of the undue willingness 'of this class' to adapt to the 'white' majority." (Scheffer, 2003, p.24). In a situation where the people distrust their representatives, policies arising from negotiations brokered by them would be viewed with suspicion if adhered to all.

A recent phenomenon also militating against integration is the terrorist threat and its relation to Islam. Though now a global problem, it is one that is increasingly faced by Western democracies and the Netherlands is not left out. It is mentioned here since it is estimated that half the minority population in the Netherlands are muslims. In its report on 'Policies for the Integration of Immigrants in the Council of Europe Member States', the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography of the EU Parliament declares: "Integration policies for immigrants have been the object of the attention of the Council of Europe since its very creation. The events of September 11, however, have threatened to undermine the progress achieved in this area. Governments have changed their political priorities: the legitimate aim of the fight against terrorism has been accompanied by a tightening of immigration policies while integration has taken second place. Besides, 11 September has affected the public opinion's perception of foreigners and national and religious minorities, especially those issued from immigration, who are now often seen as a potential threat to national security and to fundamental values of host societies." (EU Committee on Migration, Doc. 988, 24 July, 2003. p.2).

Taking the above report into consideration, there is little or nothing government policies can do to stem the negativity of public opinion towards foreigners, no matter how positive or admirable they might be.

In conclusion, one can say that while integration policies in the Netherlands are normatively desirable due to the fact that they are meant to foster social cohesion, equality and provide a sense of belonging to immigrant minorities, the implementation of these policies leaves a lot to be desired. So far, I have tried to examine possible reasons for this failure, for the marked difference between what these policies ought to achieve and what they have achieved. Next, I shall try to examine ways in which policy performance can be enhanced to bring empirical results closer to policy expectations.

#### MEANS TO IMPROVING INTEGRATION

*In a well ordered society then self-respect is secured by the public affirmation of the status of equal citizenship for all. (Rawls, 1973, p.545)*

The politics of equal dignity is based on the assumption that human beings, just because they are human, have a dignity. Human dignity, according to this assumption is the same for every human being. No one has more dignity than any other (Taylor, 1994: p.27). Jefferson expressed a very similar idea in the American Declaration of Independence when he wrote “all men are created equal.” “It is these assumptions that led to such concepts as ‘human rights,’ equal rights to participate in government, and equality before the law.” (Singh, 1996, p.22).

Now in their second and third generations, descendants of post-war migrants have become essentially permanent residents throughout Europe. Furthermore, there is every indication that the absolute and relative significance of this population will increase. In November 2000 the EU Commission formally recognised this situation and started a debate on a common European immigration and integration policy. Alisdair Rogers et al. note: "This foreign origin population has legitimate needs, demands, rights and duties with respect to the (national, and local) 'host societies'. These needs are legitimate because they have contributed much through their labour, taxes, commercial services, participation in schools and neighbourhoods, and enriching urban cultural landscapes. However, in every country of Europe, immigrants and ethnic minorities have suffered disproportionately from a variety of forms of exclusion. As a result, they often endure among the worst social-economic circumstances of all of Europe's inhabitants" (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.1).

"In some German provinces, until the late 1980s, the government kept Turkish children out of German classes, and instead set up separate classes for Turks, often taught in Turkish with a curriculum focused on preparing the children for life in Turkey." (Kymlicka 2001, p.170). This form of multiculturalism (as it was called) opines Kymlicka, "was not seen as a way of enriching German citizenship. Rather, it was adopted precisely because these children were not seen as German citizens. It was a way of saying these children are aliens not citizens." (p. 170-171).

We can recall here Vink's position: "Generally only citizens have

unrestricted admission to the territory of the polity, as well as to its welfare institutions, to which they de jure belong (and usually are expected to affiliate with in cultural terms as well). Aliens on the other hand, need specific permission by immigration authorities to enter the territory of a foreign state, and special permits to take part in its socio-economic life." (Vink 2003, p.7). The restricted access to certain facilities no doubt hinders the full participation of immigrants in public life which is a necessary element for integration. Thus we see how, in principle, citizenship is meant to foster integration. Since citizenship is offered on the fulfillment of certain conditions such as residing for a minimal number of years in a certain state, or after marriage with a citizen, appropriate steps ought to be taken to ensure that the full benefits of citizenship is reaped and true inclusion into society prevails and not exclusion. To bring this about, certain policies have been formulated which shall be considered.

#### **MINORITY PARTICIPATION AS MEANS TO SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION**

Rogers and Tillie remark: "The relative lack of immigrant and ethnic minority participation in policy-making is significantly conditioned by the fact that many do not have the legal status of citizenship." They note, however, that "even in those states where some form of citizenship is available, other social and political factors prevent their full public participation." (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.2). With this latter observation here, it could be argued that the acquisition of citizenship by these ethnic minorities would still not accord them its full benefits. This, they write "means that the concept of citizenship

can be successfully deployed to analyse the position of immigrants and ethnic minorities in a broad range of societal domains. If citizenship is considered as being full participation in the public domain and the exclusion from citizenship is seen as the exclusion from participation, the concept of citizenship is not only relevant in the political-judicial sphere, but also in the social-economic and social cultural sphere. That is, in all three societal domains the citizenship concept raises the issue of integration through participation." (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.6).

Rogers and Tillie argue that in the "social-economic sphere the issue concerns questions of equal participation, for example, restricted access to the labour market or limited possibilities for self-employment. In the political-judicial domain the concept of citizenship relates to issues of political participation, the fight against racism and discrimination, but also the juridical position of immigrants as members of the national community." They contend that: "For each domain, channels of mobilisation can be identified. Through these channels immigrants can be mobilised in order to participate in the public domain, and so mitigate forms of social, economic and political exclusion." They opine further: "In the social-cultural sphere one can think of, for example, religious or cultural organizations of immigrants; participation in primary or secondary school activities; participation in various educational programmes or the development of specific policies directed towards the expression of identity." (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.6).

"In the social-economic domain channels of mobilization may be immigrant owned small businesses, economic self-organizations and trade

unions.” (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.6). Concerning the political-juridical domain, they contend that immigrants and ethnic minorities could be encouraged to participate in existing political parties, establish immigrant parties, action groups or consultative fora/bodies. (ibid., p.6).

According to Rogers and Tillie, Andersen (1990) lists five modes of consultative fora:

- i. Contact and co-ordination (groups created for the inclusion of all majority and minority groups with a broad remit to improve relations).
- ii. Working and co-ordination groups (comprised mainly of government departments dealing with immigrants and ethnic minorities for the purpose of sharing information and co-ordinating programmes and activities).
- iii. Parliament or fora of migrant workers or ethnic minorities (made up of representatives of immigrant/ethnic minority groups only, in order to articulate their interests and press for the implementation of policies).
- iv. Advisory councils (perhaps the most common type of institution, including representatives of both immigrant/ethnic minority groups and members of government, with broad scope for sharing information, expressing concerns, distributing resources, and lobbying for interests).

- v. Committees on migrant or ethnic minority affairs) established by government, with variable makeup but sometimes with decision-making powers (Andersen in Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.7).

### CONCLUSION

The steps highlighted by Andersen are means through which immigrants can press for and improve their citizenship standing, but as Rogers and Tillie note, “numerous policies, resources and recommendations have arisen at all levels of governance in all of the EU member states that address these conditions. Municipal authorities are included in this process. Yet all too often immigrant and ethnic minority groups have had little say in the public decisions that affect them.” (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.1-2) Even where members of immigrant minorities are consulted in decision making, other factors such as the credibility and the degree of legitimacy possessed by their group leaders, mar the process. “Therefore, such decisions, and their consequent policies and resources often do not meet the needs of, or are not sufficiently engaged with or made use of by, immigrant and ethnic minority groups. This is a major obstacle to the successful ‘integration’ of millions of *immigrants*.” (Rogers and Tillie, 2001, p.2).

Apparently, while improved participation in decision making is laudable and encouraged among minorities, immigrant apathy to this same participation becomes another major obstacle.

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