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Meeting and mobility. Ethnic diversity in the Dutch welfare state*

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This article deals with the question to what extent welfare states help or hinder inter-ethnic cohesion. Derived from socio-psychological theories, two indicators are proposed: meeting and mobility. The first points towards the possibilities of real and repeated contact, while the second refers to the absence of insider/outsider boundaries. The Dutch welfare state is presented as an illustration of how to analyse social policy when looking through this lens. In both dimensions the Dutch welfare state is acting poorly. Educational policies as well as labour market policies reduce the possibilities of meeting and mobility.

1. *Introduction: the right question*

So far, political and theoretical debates have portrayed welfare states and ethnic diversity simply as each other's opposites: the more diversity the less the welfare state. The American welfare state has always been put forward as the exemplary case to «prove» this «causal relation». In this country, resistance to redistribution is related closely to the belief that beneficiaries are «undeserving» (Gilens, 1999). People from higher and middle class backgrounds do not wish to spend money on a welfare state that caters primarily for people with a black or Latino background who have not tried hard enough to get work. Alesina and Gleaser's (2004) recent study attempts to generalize from the Us experience and concludes that the negative impact of ethno-racial diversity is a more general phenomenon. They report a strong negative cross-country correlation between racial diversity and social welfare spending across a wide range of affluent and less developed nations. They add a serious warning to Europe: if social security recipients change colour, the legitimacy of European welfare states will erode.
A second strand of research focuses on the inverse causal relation and argues that comprehensive welfare states are unable to integrate foreigners well while countries with residual welfare states are well equipped to give possibilities to

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ethnic minorities. While in Germany the Netherlands and France employment rates of ethnic minorities are low, the labour markets of – again – the United States but also of the Uk seem to have more possibilities for ethnic minorities to gain status through making money (Wrr, 2006).

The relationship between ethnic diversity and welfare states is indeed an important topic but it deserves a more precise, micro- and multi-disciplinary welfare-state approach than those described above. There are two reasons for a different approach. Firstly, welfare states should not be studied in terms of «big» and «small», «residual» or «comprehensive»: that is far too simple. In addition, spending data on a macro level gives us no insight as to which policies hamper or hinder inter-ethnic social cohesion. Since the publication of Esping-Andersen's *The Three Worlds of Welfare Capitalism* (1990) it is clear that the study of welfare states needs to include domain-specific analyses as well as qualitative dimensions of welfare states (see also Myles and St-Arnaud, 2006). For instance, when the American or British welfare states are presented as successful integration machines, this probably relates to specific dimensions of social policy, such as the lack of institutional barriers in the labour market and the lack of adequate social security. Employers are motivated to hire people – as they can fire them easily – whereas employees desperately need income and are as a result highly motivated to work. At the same time, we know little about the effects of housing policy or education policy in these countries. The main question in welfare state research should then be: to what extent do specific policies hinder or improve inter-ethnic social cohesion.

Looking more precisely at specific policies also forces us to define what are successful outcomes and for whom. This is the second reason for a new approach. In welfare state theories, the debate has concentrated on the empirical and theoretical advantages and disadvantages of the concept of decommodification (Esping-Andersen, 1990), which can be summarised loosely as: the less dependence on the market, the better. The question is whether this indicator is also fruitful in the area of ethnic diversity. First of all: in most countries of Europe, employment has changed meaning. The active labour market policies that are now in place all over Europe indicate that people want to be employed – being dependent rather than independent – on the labour market. Secondly, the concept primarily has been developed to analyse *class* differences and stratification, and it is doubtful whether it also has the potential to serve as an indicator for other social differences. Researchers studying gender for instance, argued that it would be preferable for women to depend on the labour market than on the family. Therefore they introduced new concepts such as «de-familialisation» (see Kremer, 2007).

How should we then define positive outcomes when it concerns ethnicity? Social policy outcomes should not be judged exclusively in terms of the status of ethnic minorities. Too often welfare state studies focus too much on the (citizenship) rights of migrants, either whether they were able «to get in the country» or whether they achieved the same rights as natives (e.g. Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005). As gender studies are not only about the position of women but aim to focus on men too, the study of ethnicity should not focus only on the position of «outsiders». Consequently, the crucial indicator is ethnic *relations*, which also includes how ethnic *majorities* are faring. In short: the issue at stake is not the integration of one group into the larger society but the way society is dealing with diverse ethnic groups as a whole.

This article proposes two indicators of inter-ethnic social cohesion: mobility and meeting. These indicators are derived from micro-sociological and social-psychological theory, which will be described in section 3. The central question in this article is therefore how welfare-state policies may hinder or produce possibilities of meeting and mobility. Although this question needs a comparative framework, this article will focus on one exemplary country to test the fruitfulness of such an approach: the Netherlands. In the next section, section 2, I will explain why this country is interesting, whereas sections 4 and 5 analyse two domains of the Dutch welfare state: social security and labour market policy and the educational system. To what extent do these policies contribute to or undermine possibilities of meeting and mobility?

2. *The Dutch case*

In a recent survey of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living Conditions (2005), people were asked whether they experienced tensions between groups. Strikingly, all over Europe ethnic tensions were felt much more strongly than tensions between rich and poor, men and women, elderly and young. In the Netherlands, around 60% experienced ethnic tensions, a percentage similar to France, Belgium and Greece. A survey of attitudes of native Dutch showed – already prior to 2001 – that the majority were afraid of Muslims, not so much because they would take over their jobs, but because they would threaten the cultural identity of the nation (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007). Finally, during the 1990s, contact between native Dutch and people from ethnic minorities decreased substantially: the process of segregation at school, at work and in neighbourhoods continued (Gijsberts and Dagevos, 2005).

What has happened in the Netherlands? The Netherlands has always had the reputation of treating immigrants well. Multicultural policies acknowledged different identities. In the 1980s, children of immigrants, for instance, had the

right to five hours of mother-tongue teaching per week, the inclusion of ethnic representation in the media (ethnic minorities could have their own broadcasting companies), funding to support cultural activities, and the right to establish schools on the basis of religion (Entzinger, 2006). For some, the Netherlands could be considered as «a multicultural heaven» on earth.

This practice was attacked in the early 1990s, fiercely and firstly by the Liberal (in European terms) Minister Bolkestein, who warned against the culture of Islam that threatened the Dutch modernisation pathway. A second hall-mark was a much-debated article in the Dutch newspaper entitled *The Multicultural Tragedy*, written by Paul Scheffer (2000). According to him, Dutch multicultural policies had failed: immigrants were marginalised on a large scale. Due to the focus on identity politics, too little policy attention had been given to stop ethnic segregation, and improve qualifications of first- and second-generation immigrants. A new ethnic underclass was emerging, an underclass of people who did not feel attached at all to Dutch society. Scheffer's article met a lot of opposition, but it turned out that he had expressed what a lot of Dutch people had felt. In the Netherlands in the 1990s, we saw a steady decline in acceptance of multiculturalism in the Dutch population (Dagevos, Gijsberts, and van Praag, 2003). When Fortuyn – a right-wing commentator and a not very successful academic – decided to participate in the 2002 election, it became clear that many people in the Netherlands had felt that their resistance to a multicultural society had gone unheard. Fortuyn – who could not be compared to other European right-wing populists such as Le Pen or Haider as his populist movement was based on a more comprehensive ideology – was murdered before the election. His party became nevertheless the second largest in the Netherlands, although the number of seats dropped to only 8 in 2003 (Entzinger, 2006).

These three political hallmarks revealed the end of the belief in a multicultural dream. When in 2003 the parliamentary commission which was set up to study the effects of the multicultural society announced its conclusion – the integration of immigrants has failed – most political parties agreed. In the meantime, at policy level, a shift occurred from multiculturalism towards assimilation: support for courses in one's mother tongue evaporated, and new immigrants have to follow integration courses (and pay for them themselves) in which they have to learn the language and the rules of Dutch culture.

This article will look more closely at the broader policy framework: the welfare state. The Dutch welfare state is often considered as a mixture of the Social Democratic and Conservative-Corporatist welfare regime in which insider-outsider borders are well preserved (Esping-Andersen 1990; van Kersbergen 1995). To what extent does the Dutch welfare state produce or hinder connectedness and identification between diverse ethnic groups? Is it true that a new ethnic underclass has emerged? To what extent has social policy contributed to the multicultural resentments of native Dutch people? To be able to answer these questions, I will first develop a framework for analysing inter-ethnic cohesion. In the next paragraph we will show why meeting and mobility are crucial indicators to analyse society as well as social policies.

3. Connectedness: meeting and mobility

What makes people being able to live together peacefully, have positive images, and identify with one another? In a famous anthropological study *The established and the outsiders* Elias and Scotson (1976) describe a town called Winston Parva, which is the imaginary name of an English suburb. According to them, the establishment developed a kind of *group fantasy* about themselves in which they ascribed better characteristics to in-group members than to out-group members. This process of exclusion was not very blatant but very subtle: gossip especially turned out to be the oil of the exclusion machine. What struck Elias and Scotson is the fact that outsiders even started to feel negative about themselves, and eventually the exclusion process led to self-exclusion. The outsiders were unable to make a collective and strong stand against the establishment.

Elias and Scotson also showed that insiders developed implicit exclusion tactics especially at the moment the power difference between outsiders and insiders became smaller. So when differentials became less blatant, boundary setting became more important. This is also a rule that can be derived from social psychology theories. When people feel threatened, politically, socially, economically, culturally or physically, they search for self-esteem, safety and recognition, and this can be best offered by being part of a group (e.g. Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007). Being included in one group – Putnam (2000) has labelled this as bonding – can thus be very convenient for individual group members.

The problem for social cohesion is the fact that group members may feel negative about people from other groups, as was the case in Winston Parva. Strong positive in-group feelings may go along with strong negative out-group feelings. Besides, when people see other people as primarily ethnic, this often means they have difficulty in acknowledging other identities of the person and believe that this identity is not going to change. Ethnic identities are often perceived as static. People are then locked up in a less-valued, unchangeable, negative characteristic (Tajfel, 1981). Moreover, in a much debated article, the sociologist Robert Putnam (2007) has recently argued that ethnic diversity

causes the loss of trust between ethnic groups as well as trust in society as a whole. People in ethnically diverse neighbourhoods «hunker down». They behave like turtles and are not involved in society at large. In the short run, Putnam claims, there is a trade-off between diversity and community, whereas in the long run, and on a more national level, diversity generates economic wealth and creativity. He writes: «At the end we shall see the challenge is best met not by making «them» like «us» but rather by creating a new, more capacious sense of «we», a reconstruction of diversity that does not bleach out ethnic specificities, but creates overarching identities that ensure that those specificities do not trigger the allergic, «hunker down» reaction (Putnam, 2007, pp. 163-164).

The question is therefore how to overcome ethnic tensions that evolve from multi-cultural societies. The first answer is meeting, although not all encounters will produce good inter-ethnic relations: unknown, unloved is not always true. Already in 1954, Allport – the founding father of the contact hypothesis – showed that contact in itself would not per se result in positive feelings. Positive effects were most likely to develop when four conditions were met: equal status among the groups who meet (1), intergroup contact requires cooperation between groups (2) and common goals (3), and the contact situation should be legitimised through institutional support (4). For more than fifty years Allport's conditions remained unfalsified, but a fifth one has been added: the importance of friendship potential (5). This entails the potential of meeting each other more than once (preferably repeatedly), and in a friendly way (Pettigrew, 1998). Contact under these conditions leads to a process of decategorisation in which the other person is seen as an individual and not as a group member. After extended contact people began to see themselves and the other as part of a redefined larger group that comprises both in-group and out-group members (Pettigrew, 1998). This means that the other is seen and judged on functional grounds – as an employee, citizen, mother or student – whereas ethnic backgrounds have been pushed into the background. This may in fact lead to what Putnam has labelled as «the construction of a new us», a «new us» that is not based on ethnicity but on functional grounds (see also Wrr, 2007).

Few places, however, can really meet the conditions necessary for positive contact. Historically the army used to be the meeting point where men of all ethnic backgrounds could meet. It is the most racially integrated of all America's basic institutions (Estlund, 2003; Putnam, 2007). Another place to meet are schools, as children have to cooperate, see each other regularly and are supervised. Labour organisations are also crucial. In *Working Together*, Estlund (1998: 9) argues that we are working together more than ever before. «We may be bowling alone, but we are working together.» She argues that people are compelled by their organisation, and by the governing rules and authority structures, to trust

and cooperate with others – others whom they might not choose as associates in a voluntary setting – in the intensive and concerted pursuit of concrete, shared objectives. Labour organisations increasingly contain the necessary conditions to produce fruitful inter-ethnic contact.

Whereas contact is the first route to interconnectedness, the second route relates to mobility. This is a lesson drawn from social psychology and especially the so-called identity theory (Tajfel, 1981; Verkuyten, 2006). This theory can be summarised as follows: people retreat into their own group when they believe they cannot penetrate the other group or do not believe the position of the group as a whole will improve. These terms are coined as the conditions of *permeability* and *stability*. This entails that when people from Turkish or Moroccan origin have the feeling they will never achieve similar positions as native Dutch people (as a group or as an individual) they will turn inwards and focus on their own group. This also applies to the more powerful group. If native Dutch people have the feeling they will never be part of the other group they would not feel connected. In other words, identification increases when people feel «it could be me». This has also been argued in theories of the welfare state: collective arrangements could only develop when people saw their (long-term) self-interest (van Oorschot, 2006).

Social identity theory also stresses a third condition: if people believe it is legitimate that some groups have more status and power than other groups, status differentials are accepted. This has been coined as the condition of *legitimacy*. If it is considered just that highly educated people earn more money than the less educated, no intergroup tensions will exist. The condition of legitimacy also explains why discrimination often causes an in-group focus – people cannot identify with more powerful groups when they feel they are discriminated on the basis of ethnicity. The condition of legitimacy also urges us to rethink social policy: multicultural policies are now less legitimate than they were in the past and this may cause inter-ethnic tensions.

In short, meeting and mobility can both be used as indicators of inter-ethnic social cohesion or connectedness. Rather than focusing on one group – the status of immigrants – mobility and contact focus on society as a whole and also include the way ethnic majorities are dealing with new groups. In the next two sections we turn to the Dutch welfare state: how does social policy undermine or produce inter-ethnic contact and mobility.

4. *Social security and the labour market*

When immigrants moved to the Netherlands on a large scale, the social security scheme was more generous with less strict eligibility criteria than it is now.

The economic crisis of the 1980s made many male industrial workers redundant, a lot of them of Turkish or Moroccan origin. Now, two decades later, people from Turkish, Moroccan, but also Surinamese and Antillean backgrounds are still much more likely to receive benefits than natives, as table 1 reveals. People from ethnic minority background are especially dependent on Social Assistance, which is less generous than work-related benefits, although the Wao (Disability Benefit) has served as an important trajectory out of the labour market, especially for Turks. Turks often worked in heavy industries which wear them out at a relatively young age. Employers used this route for abundant employees and doctors cooperated as they also believed these male migrants would not get a job in the new service economy (Dagevos et al., 2006).

Table 1 - Persons on benefits 15-64 years old (year 2003)

	Benefits total*	Disability (Wao)	Social security (Abw)	Unemployment (Ww)
Non-western (total)	24,6	7,6	13,9	4
Turks	29,1	13,6	11,5	5,4
Moroccans	28,7	9,7	15,9	4,6
Surinamese	22,1	8,7	10,2	3,9
Antilleans	23,7	4,5	16,2	3,6
Other non-western	21,4	2,9	16,1	2,9
Native	12,9	8,7	2,1	2,6

* Disability benefits (Wao, Waz and Wajong), social security (Abw) and unemployment (Ww, Ioaw and Ioaz).

Source: Cbs, StatLine

If we just looked at the use of benefits from a social rights perspective, the main issue would be whether people from ethnic minority backgrounds have the same rights as native people (see Morissens and Sainsbury, 2005 for such a perspective). We could then come to the conclusion that it is relatively easy to obtain social rights in the Netherlands, although more generous work-related benefits such as Unemployment Insurance and Pensions (but not Disability Benefit) have been more out of reach. However, such a perspective does not acknowledge the changeover in the legitimacy of social security schemes. In the 1990s, a shift occurred from passive to active labour-market policies; employment became the key to social inclusion. In fact, «de-commodification» as a concept to measure the decency of the welfare state is nearly superseded by new ideologies and policies. As in many European welfare states, the right to social security has become stigmatised and is not offering a positive, common identity to receivers. In other words, «being on the dole together» is not counting towards social cohesion.

The meeting deficit

For ethnic relations, high unemployment of ethnic minority groups is the major problem. If you are out of the labour market, you cannot work together. In 1990, 24 percent of ethnic minority groups were unemployed. When labour-market shortages rose the unemployment rate declined to 9% in 2002 (Scp/Wodc/Cbs, 2005), but this recovery was not structural. When a small recession occurred in 2005, the unemployment rate of people with ethnic minority backgrounds rose again to 16%, whereas this percentage was 5 for native Dutch people (Scp/Wodc/Cbs, 2005).

Table 2 - Net participation according to ethnicity, and gender 2003/2004 (percentages)

	Media	Maschi	Femmine
Turks	46	59	33
Moroccans	37	45	28
Surinamese	62	67	58
Antilleans	52	57	46
(prev.) Yugoslavs	49	58	39
Iraqi	28	35	15
Afghans	27	38	10
Iranians	43	52	32
Somalians	26	40	9
Natives	67	76	56

Source: Scp/Wodc/Cbs, 2005

There are indeed differences in participation according to ethnicity and gender. Table 2 shows that Surinamese and Antilleans have a higher participation rate than Turks, Moroccans and other groups (mostly political refugees). This is partly due to the fact that Afro-Caribbean women are much more likely to be in paid employment. Somalians, Afghans and Iraqi (refugee groups), are not participating well in the labour market, and this especially holds for women of these origins. Unemployed people have no chance to meet native Dutch at work.

Even if they are employed the chance of people of ethnic-minority origins meeting native Dutch and vice versa is small, even though two-thirds of native

Dutch people say they are not against working together (Scp/Wodc/Cbs, 2005). Native employees work in organisations with on average only 6% non-western colleagues. Moroccans and Turks are much more likely to work together: the rate in their organisations is 20% (Scp/Wodc/Cbs , 2006). Moreover, some branches employ many non-western immigrants, such as cleaning services, whereas other branches are more exclusive such as the construction industry (Roosblad and van der Meer, 2004). Besides, the more highly educated people are, the less chance they have of meeting people from another ethnic background. Less educated natives have more chance of meeting people from another ethnic origin. This is the more ironic because more highly educated people are generally more positive towards ethnic diversity and less educated employees feel more resistance. In fact, it is at the lower end of the labour market that cultural diversity is more likely to result in tensions and conflicts (Schaafsma, 2006).

Mobility deficit

What can be considered as most worrying is the lack of upward mobility in the younger generation. The children of immigrants are not doing well either, compared to the Us or some other European welfare states. In 2005, 25% of them were unemployed, which is twice as high as the figure for native youngsters.
What causes such high unemployment is first of all their lower educational level. Most immigrants in the Netherlands were not well-educated; many of them were even illiterate. Compared to their parents, the younger generation is indeed much better educated, yet the level of education is still not as high as that of «native» Dutch youngsters, even though many of them are born in the Netherlands. In 2005, out of all youngsters with an ethnic minority background, only 36% had a start qualification, compared to 49% of native youngsters, which is already a low level compared to other European countries (Oecd, 2006). When the economy is doing well, young people can get a job without a start qualification, but it may be difficult to keep the job when the economy is going down. Non-western youngsters are also over-represented in the lower league of the educational system (Vmbo), which on top of that has a very negative image. On the other hand, we can also observe a slow increase of Turks, Moroccans, Surinamese and Antilleans youngsters in the higher educational scheme: while in 1995 they only represented 5% of the students, in 2005 this percentage increased to 9.1.
Parents play a vital role in enabling their children to move forward in the educational system. Although many immigrant parents focus on the school career of their children, many of them do not have enough cultural capital to actually

support their children. The Dutch educational system clearly does not fill this gap, but reproduces socio-economic and ethnic inequalities. This part of the welfare state is not well-equipped to raise immigrants and their children, either individually or as a group. This will be further discussed in the section on educational policy.
Moreover, the level of education of ethnic minorities is only half of the story. Highly educated people from ethnic minority groups do not reach the same professional level as native Dutch either. Highly educated refugees are unemployed en masse (Klaver et al., 2005). Cultural factors, which also relate to power, are also important. Both employees and employers have strong group fantasies about the ideal worker. These images are often implicit, but sometimes explicit. Half of Dutch employers, for instance, do not want to hire a woman with a veil. Half of them prefer Eastern European immigrants as they are supposed to be more motivated and better adapted to Dutch culture than the ethnic minorities present now (Motivaction, 2004 and 2006). In addition, a quarter of employers of small and medium-sized enterprises do not want a person with a different ethnic background (Kruisbergen en Veld, 2002). This resistance of employers is related to the reduction of uncertainties. In diffuse, unpredictable periods, employers want to know exactly what they are bringing in. They show less trust in employees who look different, so they employ someone who looks like themselves or the personnel already at work. Employees are sometimes against minority members too, especially when they feel territorially threatened and feel «they are taking over». Employers do not want to put social cohesion at risk in the workplace.

Soft skills

Often exclusion of ethnic minorities is less blatant and relates to social codes that newcomers do not know of. The recent policy trend towards assimilation is already in place at the workplace: half of native employees want ethnic minorities to adapt to Dutch (workplace) culture before entering the firm (Schaafsma, 2005). A crucial concept in this epoch is that of «soft skills». Employers often argue that people from ethnic minorities do not have the right soft skills (Klaver et al., 2004; Schaafsma, 2005). Soft skills are skills that relate to cooperation and communication within the organisations (with managers and colleagues) as well as with clients. Motivation, presentation, communication are considered as soft skills. In a service-based economy, these skills are indeed of growing importance. People from minority groups are seen as lacking such skills, both managers and employees argue (Shaafsma, 2005). «I think that generally, in my experience, they are not very good team players» and «they

don't show any enthusiasm» or «they are not sufficiently independent». This is what native Dutch employees said about ethnic minority members. Other remarks relate to being insufficiently open to criticism, impolite, overly submissive and reserved, or reluctant to take the lead. In a few cases, however, (mainly in organisations with high-skill work) minority members were regarded as too assertive or as expressing «a wrong kind of assertiveness». (Schaafsma, 2005, p. 48).

Achieving soft skills should be an important task of the educational system. Pisa scores as well as Dutch educational policies are preoccupied with language and mathematical skills, but soft skills are just as important for achieving labour-market status. One remark has to be made, however. The study of Schaafsma also shows that skills are never «good enough». Soft skills are also part of the cultural codes that are setting group boundaries and as a consequence exclude people. It may well be that as soon as the less powerful have adopted these codes, the codes will change again.

Ethnic minorities also discussed the Dutch culture at work. Schaafsma records that native Dutch were often considered too rude, impolite and overly direct. They often wanted to have friendly talks about private matters. And the only thing they wanted to know is whether the Turkish or Moroccan employee is «one of them». A Turkish woman: «In their view, we are still backward. Even though they like me as a colleague. But for them, I am, and will remain Turkish. The first question they asked me was «have you been married off, too?» Then you really don't fit in even you think you do. (31-year old woman of Turkish origin, skilled manual worker in a service organisation) (Schaafsma, 2005, p. 88). For some migrants the employment organisation can become a source of pressure and lead to integration stress as both colleagues and managers always show extra attention. Therefore these ethnic minorities are sometimes labelled as integration warriors (de Vries and Pettigrew, 1998). But in general Dutch ethnic minorities are satisfied about the workplace: it is important for them to feel socially and economically integrated. Yet they feel better when there is space for their own identity, their wishes and ideas and they do not have to fully comply with Dutch codes (Schaafsma, 2005).

Labour-market policy

To what extent do labour-market policies contribute to or undermine «working together». Labour law and social security should help create upward (and downward) mobility as well as contribute to bridging diversities between people. As a medicine against immobility, in Europe a major discussion is taking place about the importance of «flexicurity». Originally copied from Denmark, it

refers to a system in which people can be hired and fired easily while people are covered well by relatively generous social security and motivated through active labour-market policies. This system offers flexibility to both employers and employees. Mobility is then seen as a result of labour-market law as well as social security, in which social security is not seen as a restriction on people's motivation to work – as it is though in the Usa – but as a stepping-stone for people to change jobs. Compared to other countries, including the Usa, Dutch employees are moderately mobile. They are more mobile than in France, Germany and Sweden, less than in the Uk or Denmark. But a closer look reveals that some people are more mobile than others: while some are forced to be mobile, others move jobs voluntarily. Less educated people with short-term contracts are often mobile, and also encounter downward mobility. People from ethnic minority backgrounds are also «forced» more into mobility. Older people are definitely less mobile, especially when they are highly educated. In other words: older, highly-educated men are the immobile insiders, people from ethnic minority backgrounds are mobile outsiders (Scp/Wodc/Cbs, 2005; Visser and van der Meer, 2007)

In the Netherlands labour law is relatively stringent compared to other countries: it is relatively difficult to fire people who have life-long contracts, many of them are older employees. The social security scheme offers generous, relatively long-term benefits, although this has changed in the last few decades. Labour-market policy is also increasing, but has no long tradition in the Netherlands. This can partly explain the lack of mobility. For inter-ethnic cohesion, an increase of mobility would be helpful. This could be a mixture of changing labour law as well as more active labour-market policy and mediation. Employers need to be stimulated to hire people from ethnic minority backgrounds. This needs not only investments to bring employers and employees together but also giving employers the possibility of firing people easily. Dutch research showed that after the first contact employers were much more positive about ethnic minorities: unknown, unloved. In addition, a specific generation of older workers needs to be more mobile, also because they are in charge of the cultural codes in organisations.

Positive action, quota systems or contract compliance have never been implemented in the Netherlands. The Conservative-corporatist model has limited space for clear-cut state intervention: it may harm the fragile balance between employers and employees. Instead in 1993 a law obliged employers to report regularly on the breakdown of their staff by ethnic origins as well as their efforts to increase the number of employees with a minority background. There were no quota's or sanctions and it was a kind of naming without shaming. As employers refused to send the annual reports, the law was withdrawn in 2004

(Entzinger, 2006). The so-called poldermodel which is based on cooperation may also perhaps be the reason why anti-discrimination policy has not developed well. Discrimination on the basis of ethnicity undermines social cohesion and feelings of empathy. Most migrants in the Netherlands have the feeling they are discriminated against, often not personally but as a group. Although the number of complaints in general has not risen, this does not apply to complaints about the labour market. Moroccans in particular feel they are discriminated (Scp, 2006). In the Netherlands clear discrimination policy is not well developed. The Commission for Equal treatment has hardly any effective sanction possibilities and anti-discrimination policy on local levels has hardly developed (Wrr, 2007).

So far we have seen some of the reasons why the labour market as a crucial societal institution is unable to engender connectedness between inter-ethnic groups. The educational system is one of the reasons why meeting and mobility does not occur. The next section will show why the Dutch school scheme is very segregated.

5. The education system

Another important site of meeting and mobility is the educational system. In the Netherlands segregation starts between the age of zero and four. Because the labour-market participation of Turkish and Moroccan mothers is much lower than that of native and Surinamese mothers (see table 2) children go to different places. While nearly 41% of Dutch children of working mothers go to a child care centre, this percentage is higher for Antillean (62) and Surinamese children (46) but much lower for Turkish (22) and Moroccan (7) children (Scp, 2006; Keuzenkamp and Merens 2006). When their mothers work they are cared for by their grandmother, otherwise they are at home or attend early education programmes. As the table below shows (3) the majority of Turkish children (51%) and 41% of Moroccan children attend such programmes, which is a huge increase compared to the end of the 1990s. These programmes are important for the upward mobility of the children: under a set of (hard to fulfil) conditions children actually profit from early education as most children from a Turkish or Moroccan background started with a learning deficit when they entered school. But at the programme they will not meet any native Dutch children. The way these services are financed and subsidised creates segregation rather than integration. Childcare centres cater for working parents (and are therefore expensive) while early education caters for children with language deficits. Although the latter may engender mobility, it hinders meeting.

Table 3 - Participation in early education (percentages)

	Turks	Moroccans	Surinamese	Antilleans	Native less educated	Native highly educated
1996	32	26	11	19	3	1
1998	42	24	10	22	6	2
2000	39	28	12	30	4	2
2002	51	41	24	17	13	5

Source: Scp/Wodc/Cbs (2005)

Primary schools

Segregation is also visible when children grow older. The social psychologist Verkuyten studied social cohesion at primary schools. He argued: «Contact may help to break through the exclusive emphasis on one identity. Ethnic differences can be pushed towards the background when shared interests, shared motives develop. On top of that, a shared feeling of «us» on the level of the school can have positive effects on intergroup relations. «His empirical study showed that native Dutch children had a more positive attitude towards children with other ethnic backgrounds at black schools than children at white schools had (Verkuyten and Tijs, 2002).

Since the 1970s the percentage of black schools (where 70% of children come from a low-educated minority background) has increased from 15% to 35%. Only a minority of schools in the Netherlands is mixed and on many schools only one ethnic population is dominant: the school is either Turkish, or Moroccan, or native Dutch (Karsten et al., 2005). Two thirds of this segregation can be explained by ethnic segregation at neighbourhood level (Musterd and van Kempen, 2000). Native Dutch left the inner cities (the so-called white flight) while new immigrant groups came in these old neighbourhoods. And since most parents want to take their child to the neighbourhood they live in, schools became either «white» or «black». The other one-third of the explanation is caused by the fact that the Dutch school system offers parents the constitutional right to choose freely the school they want. In 2002 33 percent of the Dutch primary education was too «white» and 22 percent too «black» compared to the neighbourhood population (Onderwijsraad, 2005).

White, highly educated parents in particular cause segregation, as they take their children to schools outside their neighbourhood. Coenders et al., (2004) show that highly educated parents show resistance when the majority of the class turns into a different colour. Although highly educated people are often

seen as more tolerant (which also came to the fore in the section on the labour market) this is not the case when it concerns their children's education. But highly educated parents do not want to experiment with their children, precisely because they know the selection mechanism in the educational system. They know the cultural codes very well and will make sure their children have the same privileged position they have themselves.

In the Netherlands an ongoing debate is taking place about the constitutional right to freedom of education. Already from 1848 onwards (although 1917 is often seen as the exact year) parents have had the right to establish schools and to choose a school which fits their religious beliefs. In the Netherlands, but also in Belgium, this was the result of the Schoolstrijd in the 19th century. Christians demanded the right to organise education themselves and wanted parents to be able to choose the school that fitted their worldview while the state paid. This has been labelled as «subsidised pluralism» and helped to pacify different religious and liberal groups. Today freedom of education is laid down in art. 23 of the Constitution. On top of that, art. 1 of the Constitution lays down that discrimination on ethnicity is not allowed. This means that schools cannot refuse children on the basis of ethnicity but this also entails that no school or municipality can develop policies or practices to mix children. The Dutch Constitution can be seen as a sword of Damocles: every time a school or municipality wants to take the initiative to mix pupils, parents can go to court and demand freedom of education: they always win.

Mobility without meeting?

It may well be that mobility is raised without meeting. In other words, black schools are just as good as white schools. According to the Pisa statistics the Netherlands is doing very well compared to many other Western countries (Oecd, 2006). Dutch pupils show high rates in all Pisa scores while the budgets for education are relatively low. A closer look however shows that the variation between children who are doing well and those who are not is very large, especially compared to Scandinavian countries. The fact that the Netherlands is doing well on average is caused by a small group of children who are doing extremely well. In short, the Dutch school system may not be successful in lifting children from less educated parents, many of them children of migrants (see also Wrr, 2006).

One reason may be that when children from lower economic backgrounds do not meet children from middle-class backgrounds they do not learn the middle-class values necessary to integrate into society. In addition, if too many children from lower-economic backgrounds have to learn together the learning environment is often more stressful and concentration is harder (Paulle, 2005).

Secondly, what happens after primary school is important. In the Netherlands the educational system is very differentiated. Children have to choose at a relatively young age (twelve) which trajectory he or she wants to follow. This is different from the Scandinavian comprehensive schemes where children remain together longer. The problem is not only that children are no longer mixed, selection also means that children may be trapped in the wrong track. This is relatively often the case for immigrant children, as their qualities are often underestimated, (and more recently overestimated) and they are not given sufficient advice as to which choices they should make. In addition, it is not always easy to move from one track to another.

Maurice Crul (2007) studied different pathways of an ethnic group, the Turks, in different welfare states. While children in France, and to a lesser extent Belgium and the Netherlands seem to be attaining higher levels of education than in Germany and Austria, the drop-out rates are much higher, hence the lack of start qualifications in the Netherlands. This could be related, he writes, to the fact that the educational system is too theoretical. School in the Netherlands is thus not the place to meet, but it does not produce mobility for children from lower socio-economic backgrounds either.

6. Conclusion: learning and working together in the Dutch welfare state

Welfare states have always tried to bridge social distances between various groups of people. Social Democratic welfare states – and Conservative welfare states to a lesser extent – have been very successful in reducing *class* differences (Esping-Andersen, 1990; van Kersbergen, 1995). More recently, welfare states have focused on softening *gender* differences, although some welfare states have been more successful than others (see Kremer, 2007). Welfare states also affect ethnic relations, but this has had less attention in welfare state theory. This is the more necessary as in European societies ethnic tensions are increasingly felt, particularly in the Netherlands.

This article has sought to study welfare states and ethnic relations through two dimensions: 1) mobility: to what extent social policies reduce insider/outsider boundaries and 2) meeting: to what extent welfare states encourage people from different ethnic groups to cooperate together. Mobility and meeting – psychological theories show – increase the possibility of identification between individual group members. On both dimensions the Dutch welfare state is performing poorly.

Labour-market policy is not dynamic enough to include ethnic minorities well. In the past, social security was used as a route out of employment, although

more recently employment has been considered to be the key activity for integration. Due to the low level of qualifications of people from ethnic minority groups, strong cultural codes within organisations and legislation that makes it difficult to fire the insiders, neither mobility nor meeting is established in the Dutch labour market. Because of the Conservative-Corporatist model (the balancing act between employers and employees) no fierce anti-discrimination or positive action policy has developed.

The educational system also falls short: due to ethnic differences in labour-market participation of women and different programmes for children, segregation in the Netherlands already starts before children reach the age of four. When children go to primary school they often go to «white» or to «black» schools. The growing segregation in education can be explained by neighbourhood segregation and the constitutional right for parents to choose a school. This right has been established to pacify religious groups, but is now, ironically, undermining identification between members of ethnic groups. An increasing number of highly educated white parents avoid schools with large percentages of children from an ethnic minority background. This practice undermines the possibility of going to school together, so that both native and ethnic-minority children would be able to identify with each. Moreover, since children of lower socio-economic background are put together they often suffer from a bad learning environment and they have fewer opportunities to learn the middle-class values that are necessary for mobility. Finally, children have to choose their educational path relatively early (at the age of 12), which not only produces (again) segregation, but they are often put on the wrong track. Hence the high level of drop-outs, especially among ethnic-minority youngsters.

This is a rather gloomy picture of the Dutch welfare state. The positive news is that we know what should be on the agenda of the 21st century: policies that produce inter-ethnic meeting and mobility. Such a welfare state may also increase public support: not only amongst the native people, but also among immigrants and their children.

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