Integration – the Tool for a Better Future?
– A Descriptive Ethical Analysis of the Dutch Integration Policy

Lisa Grooteman

Supervisor: Elin Palm
Examiner: Göran Collste
Abstract

This master thesis in applied ethics is a descriptive ethical analysis of the current integration policy in the Netherlands. The main purpose is to describe and critically discuss the Dutch integration policy. In the recent years there has been a major shift in the Dutch integration directive, from a liberal to a harsher integration policy. This thesis contributes with a characterization of integration by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, European Commission and within the Dutch context, particularly a characterization of values and ideals in integration policies. Also, an attempt is made to analyze what the underlying motives and core values are, and which values should be fostered. Moreover, an overview is given of the various dimensions of integration. The second part of this thesis explores the Dutch integration policy in light of the European Commission’s eleven common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the European Union. In addition, ethical implications concerning the Dutch integration policy will be stated. Finally, the consequences of failing integration will be identified and some practical recommendations for the Dutch integration policy will be provided.

Key words: Applied ethics; common basic principles; Dutch integration policy; European Commission; immigrants; integration; Netherlands; policy; UNHCR; values
# Table of Contents

Abstract ................................................................................................................................. 1  

1. Introduction .................................................................................................................... 3  
   1.1. Research aim and questions .................................................................................. 5  

2. Integration ....................................................................................................................... 6  
   2.1. Three definitions of integration .......................................................................... 6  
   2.2. Characterization UNHCR, EU and Dutch integration directives ......................... 10  
      2.2.1. Motives underlying integration ..................................................................... 10  
      2.2.2. Values promoted in integration .................................................................... 12  
   2.3. Feasibility integration ........................................................................................... 14  
      2.3.1. Analyze definition integration ..................................................................... 14  
      2.3.2. Dimensions of integration .......................................................................... 16  
   2.4. Conclusion chapter integration ............................................................................. 17  

3. Analysis .......................................................................................................................... 18  
   3.1. Conclusion analysis ............................................................................................... 26  
      3.2. Ethical implications Dutch integration policy .................................................. 27  

4. Conclusion ...................................................................................................................... 29  

5. Bibliography .................................................................................................................. 31
1. Introduction

The so called ‘migration crisis’ is creating tensions among the European Union (EU) member states. Under the current waves of immigration, integration has become a highly contested issue. The European Union today has the integration of migrants as a major issue in its policy agenda, at the time of the greatest crisis hitting capitalism since the 1930s: it is somehow ironic the controversy over migrants, integration is one the most controversial issues during a crisis threatening the disintegration of the Eurozone. (Trimikliniotis, 2014, p.1)

Every EU member state has its own integration policy that should adhere to the European Commission (EC) integration directives. In this thesis I will focus on the integration of immigrants in one particular EU member state, namely the Netherlands. The reason for this is that the Dutch integration policy has changed significantly in the recent years. “The objectives of Dutch integration policy have shifted quite dramatically in the past four decades” (Entzinger, 2015). These four decades demonstrate four significant stages in the Dutch integration policy.

In the late 1970s the general understanding was that immigrants would stay temporarily in the Netherlands, and therefore an integration policy was not required. In the 1980s it was acknowledged that not all immigrants would return and a ‘minorities policy’ was developed. This policy provided support to immigrants so that they can preserve their cultural identity. Nonetheless, the ‘minorities policy’ did not include the element that to some extent immigrant adaptation is essential, at least if one needs to avoid the social and economic marginalization of immigrants. Eventually, in the 1990s the ‘minorities policy’ was removed and the preservation of immigrant cultures was no longer perceived as a responsibility of the Netherlands. Instead, employment, equal opportunity and citizenship became the three main purposes of the Dutch integration policy. During that time, the Netherlands was the first country in the EU that introduced the compulsory integration examinations for newcomers. In 2002, just before the elections, Pim Fortuyn, the head of a new populist political party was killed, and the dominant approach became much more assimilationist. It is to say that the Dutch integration policy became much stricter: Special programs for migrant communities were abolished, and integration requirements, as well as those for naturalization, became much stricter. In addition, new immigration was made more difficult by the establishment of income, age, and language requirements for those wishing to enter the country from outside the European Union. In its essence, this policy has continued until the present day, irrespective of the political composition of the government. With the exception of the mandatory integration exams, all specific measures aiming at immigrant integration have been abolished in the meantime. (Entzinger, 2015, p.2)

Also there has been a major shift in the change of attitude of how integration should be coordinated and represented in politics. From 2002 till to 2012 the Netherlands had a Minister for Integration, but afterwards the position was abolished by the ruling liberal government (Pietersen, 2012).
The Dutch integration policy can be perceived as rather extreme, for instance; integration is broadly seen as the immigrants’ own responsibility (Lucassen & Lucassen, 2011). The Dutch government states on their own website that immigrants have to make an effort to integrate: “The government consistently monitors the effort migrants make to integrate. If you do not make enough effort, you may lose your residence permit. This will not happen if you have a right to asylum but even then you must still make an effort to integrate” (Government of the Netherlands, 2016).

The current Dutch integration policy emphasizes on the self-reliance and participation of immigrants. This means that immigrants themselves are responsible for their own integration (Asscher, 2015, p.1 ). Some NGO’s, for instance Vluchtelingenwerk, the Dutch refugee organization voice their criticism¹ about the current Dutch policy. Although Vluchtelingenwerk and the Dutch Government agree on the value of participation, there might be a conflict considering the understanding of integration. Nevertheless, both Vluchtelingenwerk and the Dutch Government acknowledge that during the recent years the integration of immigrants did not go so well (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2014). In January 2016 the Dutch Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Asscher articulated on a television show that it should be acknowledged that something went wrong concerning integration in the Netherlands (Jinek, 2016). Nevertheless, the Minister does remain hopeful and anticipates better integration of immigrants with the current Dutch integration policy.

Having said that, what does, more specifically the Dutch integration policy entail? Does the Dutch integration policy correspond with the European and international integration directives?

In this thesis I will present a descriptive analysis of the Dutch integration policy and discuss its normative aspects. First, I will describe different definitions of integration that are relevant for the integration in the Netherlands in particular. Second, I will assess the extent to which the Dutch integration policy is in accordance with the European Commission (EC) eleven common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU. Additionally, I will present ethical implications concerning the Dutch integration policy. In the final and concluding part of this thesis I will discuss some of the consequences in case integration fails and provide practical recommendations for the Dutch integration policy.

¹ “Integration has to come from both sides, both the refugee as the society. Further, integration is not only the responsibility of individual refugees and Dutch citizens, but as well as institutions, businesses and governments. According to Vluchtelingenwerk, participation, communication and emancipation are the three supportive pillars in the integration process” (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, 2016b).
1.1. Research aim and questions

The main research aim is to describe and critically discuss the current Dutch integration policy. To satisfy the research aim, the following questions will be addressed:

- What does the Dutch integration policy entail?
- To what extent is the Dutch integration policy in accordance with the EC’s eleven common basic principles?
- What elements ought to be promoted in the integration of immigrants?

To answer these research questions, the Dutch integration policy will be described and compared to the definitions of integration provided by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and EC. Particularly, the focus is going to be on the assessment of the Dutch integration policy, namely to what extent is it in line with the EC’s common basic principles.
2. Integration

In this chapter I will present three definitions of integration from UNHCR, EC and the Netherlands. There is no consensus over the definition of immigrant\(^2\) integration. Instead, the understanding of integration policy and integration support vary considerably between governments, policymakers and stakeholders (UNHCR, 2013, p.10). Therefore, I will characterize and examine the UNHCR, EC and Dutch directives of integration, and I will answer the research question; what does the Dutch integration policy entail? Furthermore, I will highlight what the underlying motives and what the core values are, and I will provide an overview of the various dimensions of integration.

2.1. Three definitions of integration

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHCR is part of the United Nations (UN), an intergovernmental international organization founded in 1945, which promotes international cooperation. In 1945 the Charter of the UN was ratified, the founding treaty of the UN, a binding legislation for all of its states parties. In Article 2 (2), the following principle is stated: “All Members, in order to ensure to all of them the rights and benefits resulting from membership, shall fulfill in good faith the obligations assumed by them in accordance with the present Charter” (United Nations, 1945). The quote of Article 2 (2) refers to the purposes\(^3\) of the UN as stated in Article 1. If a UN member state fails to respect the purposes, Article 6 lays down the consequences: “a Member of the United Nations which has persistently violated the Principles contained in the present Charter may be expelled from the Organization by the General Assembly upon the recommendation of the Security Council” (United Nations, 1945).

UNHCR is the UN refugee agency and is governed by the UN General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) (UNHCR, 2016a). The UNHCR directives are officially not legally binding, however the UNHCR remains an influential organization that can

---

\(^2\) An immigrant is a person undertaking an immigration. This means in EU context, the action by which a person from a non-EU country establishes his or her usual residence in the territory of an EU country for a period that is, or is expected to be, at least twelve months” (European Commission, 2016c). In a Dutch context an immigrant is a person from whom at least one parent is born abroad. Also, there is often made a divide between non-western immigrants and western immigrants. Non-western immigrants are immigrants whose ethnic background is one of the countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia (excluding Indonesia and Japan) or Turkey. In this thesis I will apply the EU definition, so in the Dutch context this means a non-western immigrant (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2012).

\(^3\) “1. To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and removal of threats to the peace, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment or settlement of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace; 2. To develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples, and to take other appropriate measures to strengthen universal peace; 3. To achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character, and in promoting and encouraging respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion; 4. To be a center for harmonizing the actions of nations in the attainment of these common ends" (United Nations, 1945).
pressure governments to respect and live up to the UNHCR directives. Also, the UNHCR agenda is in line with Article 1 (3) that insists to achieve international co-operation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural, or humanitarian character. That is to say that if a UN member persistently violates the UNHCR agenda, which is the derived from the Principles, shall face the repercussions. Moreover, the UNHCR agenda is established upon the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is customary international law. This means that it is binding on all states in the World regardless they have ratified it or not. In addition, as of today UN member states have also ratified at least one of the nine core international human rights treaties. Consequently, one could argue that the UNHCR directives are to some extent indeed legally binding (United Nations, 1948). The following definition of integration is employed by UNHCR:

Integration is understood as the end product of a dynamic and multifaceted two-way process with three interrelated dimensions: a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension. Integration requires efforts by all parties concerned, including preparedness on the part of refugees to adapt to the host society without having to forego their own cultural identity, and a corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population. (UNHCR, 2013, p.14)

The UNHCR emphasizes that integration is a two-way process, and therefore it relies on the premise that it is a mutual adaptation. Integration differs from assimilation, since it does not require the individual to relinquish their cultural identity and related norms and values (UNHCR, 2013, p.14). Furthermore, the definition of integration is perceived both as an end product or aim, and as a long-term and multi-faceted process (UNHCR, 2013, p.14).

European Commission

Another widely acknowledged definition regarding integration is articulated by the EC. To clarify, the EC is the executive body of the European Union (EU). It represents the interests of the EU as a whole, so not the interests of particular EU member states. The main roles of the EC are: to propose legislation, to enforce European law, to set objectives and priorities for action, implementing decisions, upholding the EU treaties and managing the EU policies and budget, and to negotiate trade agreements between other countries and the EU (European Commission, 2016a).

The EC definition of integration provides the foundation of the meaning to the EU member states. It states that: “Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all

---

4 UNHCR employs the definition of refugees, this means according to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees that a refugee is someone who: “Owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality, and is unable to, or owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country” (UNHCR, 2015, p.14). So, this definition is fairly limited and concise, this means that immigrants who are eligible for a residence permit based on reasons such as family reunification are not included in the definition by UNHCR. It is significant to bear this mind, while discussing the UNHCR directives.
migrants and residents of Member States. Such a process requires efforts from both migrants and receiving societies and is critical for tapping into the potential of migration and for enhancing social cohesion” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.2). This definition by the EC is a very broad understanding of integration and emphasizes the importance of a two-way process of mutual adaptation between the migrants and the citizens of EU member states.

In addition to the above described definition there are the eleven common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU, which were adopted in November 2004 and form the foundations of EU initiatives in the field of integration. This means that the common basic principles constitute a framework for policy cooperation on integration in the EU. Also, they can be applied as a framework or guidance in light of which Member States can evaluate and assess their own efforts (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.2). The common basic principles for immigrant integration policy in the EU are:

- CBP 1: Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States.
- CBP 2: Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union.
- CBP 3: Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible.
- CBP 4: Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration.
- CBP 5: Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society.
- CBP 6: Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration.
- CBP 7: Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens.
- CBP 8: The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law.
- CBP 9: The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration.
- CBP 10: Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation.
- CBP 11: Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective (European Commission, 2016b).

The EC definition of integration is very important, since it is indeed the basis for integration directives for other EU member states. EU member states have to respect and are bound by these common basic principles. It is stated on the European Website for Integration that: “The EU
Member States reaffirmed their commitment to implement the Common Basic Principles” (European Commission, 2016b).

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands there is no clear-cut comprehensive definition of integration, yet there is a Dutch integration law. The Dutch integration law provides an overall framework for integration. The Dutch integration law states that:

Immigration policy is restrictive, just and geared toward integration. It is a policy that will take account of society’s absorption capacity. For migrants themselves and for society as a whole, it is important that those who come to this country can stand on their own two feet, support themselves through work, integrate swiftly and help contribute to this society. On that basis, EU residents and highly-skilled migrants are also welcome. (Government of the Netherlands, 2012, p.39)

Throughout the past years the Dutch integration policy has changed significantly, and there is no centralized integration procedure anymore, instead integration has become mainstreamed. This means that there are no target policies. For instance, there are neither policies for certain groups of immigrants5, nor an overall specific integration policy. Integration policy has become absorbed into general policies within various domains, for instance housing, social affairs and education. The current Dutch integration policy can be perceived as decentralized, mainstreamed and individualized (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.18). The Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment is responsible for the Dutch integration policy and the Ministry of Security and Justice is responsible for asylum and immigration.

In a Dutch report about integration, requested by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, research institute (CBS) conducted a nationwide study to investigate the social position of various ethnic minorities in Netherlands. In this report integration is defined as a process in which immigrant groups and the native population converge and both participate actively in society. It also underlines the importance of integration as a two-way process between the two parties. Due to the fact that immigrants come from a different cultural and economic background, integration is very important for their position and increased participation in the Dutch society (CBS, 2014, p.20). The main aim of the Dutch integration policy is to promote the participation of immigrants in the society, through fundamental institutions like labor, education, health, as well as civil society. Attention is required concerning the inclusiveness of social services, and to increase transparency and quality, so that citizens can benefit these services, irrespective of their origin (Verwey-Jonker instituut & Movisie, 2014, p.35). There is a strong emphasis on participation in the

5 The application of the definition ‘immigrant’ is problematic in various ways. For instance, the group of immigrants is so vast and plural, that it is very troublesome and challenging to say something substantial, without generalizations. Furthermore, the notion of ‘immigrant’ is gradually losing its meaning, and in addition there are various interpretations, consequently a clear statement of this is very important.
Dutch integration policy. Participation is considered as a tool for immigrants to integrate through the fundamental institutions in the Dutch society (Asscher, 2015, p.1).

2.2. Characterization UNHCR, EU and Dutch integration directives

In this section I will analyze what motivation underlies the three descriptions of integration. What values do these three understandings promote? Also I will present some of the measures used in order to facilitate integration. Particularly, I will characterize these definitions and focus on the aims and the need for integration in these definitions.

2.2.1. Motives underlying integration

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

In order to analyze the main motivation behind the UNHCR definition of integration, it is first important to understand the main objective of the UNHCR. “The primary purpose of the UNHCR is to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees. It strives to ensure that everyone can exercise the right to seek asylum and find safe refuge in another State, with the option to return home voluntarily, integrate locally or to resettle in a third country” (UNHCR, 2016b). In other words, the UNHCR is seeking for permanent solutions to safeguard the rights and wellbeing of refugees, and integration is the most relevant durable solution. It is clearly expressed in the UNHCR report, regarding the integration of refugees in Europe;

UNHCR’s interest and involvement in integration stems from its mandate of seeking solutions as it is enshrined in Article 34 of the 1951 Refugee Convention, which sets out that states shall, as far as possible, facilitate the integration and naturalization of refugees; as well as various soft law and policy documents related to integration, such as UNHCR’s ExCom Conclusion No. 104 on Local Integration and the 2009 note on strategic approaches for combating discrimination. (UNHCR, 2013, p.11)

This means that the motivation underlying the UNHCR definition of integration is derived from UN policy documents, for instance Article 34 of the Refugee Convention’s and UNHCR’s ExCom Conclusion No. 104 on Local Integration. The UN policy documents are established on the Universal declaration on Human Rights therefore they all have a strong legal basis. To conclude, the UNHCR’s definition of integration is derived from the motive for safeguarding the rights and wellbeing of refugees, the premise of which is found on the human rights convention.
The main motivation that underlies the EC’s definition of integration is that although there is an overall integration policy, the integration measures shall be of a supportive nature to the EU member states, which still preserve immigration and border control as a demonstration of national sovereignty (European Commission, 2015). Another significant motive that underlies the EC definition of integration is the fact that integration is a process, a tool for achieving the Europe 2020 growth strategy goals. For instance, given the demographic decrease in member states and the related shortages in certain sectors of the European labor market (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.2). To state very briefly the Europe 2020 growth strategy goals are presented in three mutually reinforcing priorities:

– “Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
– Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
– Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion” (European Commission, 2010, p.5).

Integration can contribute to these goals; therefore, the definition of integration should be in harmony with them. As depicted in common basic principle three: “Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible” (European Commission, 2016, p.3). This common basic principle will contribute and is in accordance with the Europe 2020 growth strategy. To be more specific, one of the main targets is “to raise the employment rate of 20 to 64-year olds in the EU to 75 %. One of the means by which to do this is by better integrating legal migrants”(European Commission, 2015).

The Netherlands
The motivation underlying the integration policy is to promote participation in the Dutch society. In the current Dutch integration policy there is a strong emphasis on the self-reliance and participation of immigrants. Participation is one of the most important values that the Dutch integration policy promotes, besides freedom, solidarity and equality. Participation is very significant and the Netherlands presents itself as a society of participation. It is stated in the integration policy that: “The government believes foreign nationals must participate in Dutch society, for example by working or receiving education. A command of the language is a condition for this” (Government of the Netherlands, 2016). This means that all citizens have an obligation to contribute to a pleasant and safe society, for example by working, going to school or doing volunteer work. This is clearly articulated in the report about the fundamental values in the Dutch society and in the participation
statement that newcomers have to sign when they arrive in the Netherlands. The statement informs newcomers of their rights and duties. Regarding the core values in the Dutch society, these values are both written and unwritten social rules (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2014, p.11). So, if the current Dutch integration policy should be described in one word, participation is the answer.

2.2.2. Values promoted in integration

In this part I will analyze which values the UNHCR, EC and the Dutch understanding of integration foster, and what the underlying motives are. Furthermore, I will briefly mention some of the measures used in order to facilitate integration.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

The main values that the UNHCR definition of integration foster are autonomy, dignity, distributive justice, equality, inclusiveness and wellbeing. In the definition there is an emphasis on inclusiveness, for instance when it is stated that “corresponding readiness on the part of host communities and public institutions to welcome refugees and to meet the needs of a diverse population” (UNHCR, 2013, p.14). The values that are used as a motive, as a reason for being concerned about integration are according to the UNHCR: equality and distributive justice. As the UNHCR states: “A society with large under-productive segments will not only be economically divided, but also socially and often geographically segregated. Getting integration right is therefore key to both a successful Europe and to an effective protection system for refugees in Europe” (UNHCR, 2013a, p.10). So, here the values equality and distributive justice argued for as a reason for the importance of integration. To conclude, according to the UNHCR: “Put simplistically, the goal of integration is equality, inclusion and achievement” (UNHCR, 2013a, p.13).

Furthermore, it is important to be aware of the UNHCR measurements for integration. In 2012 the UNHCR launched a refugee integration evaluation tool to help governments measure the impact of their integration policies. This comprehensive integration evaluation tool contributes to create a database with over 200 indicators requiring inputs from governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. As stated by the UNHCR “The tool covers every aspect of refugee life, from the use of skills and qualification in their current employment or school enrolment of children to more administrative issues such as government budgets for cultural orientation” (UNHCR, 2013b, p.1).

---

6 The motives are in this context understood as the rationale behind the integration policy. And values are perceived as the ideals promoted through the integration policy.
European Commission

The main values that the EC definition of integration and the common basic principles foster are economic welfare, equality, democracy, justice, independence, sovereignty, and self-reliance. These values are communicated in the definitions of integration and other related policy documents. For instance, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) stated in a policy document: “Democracy in the European multicultural cities of the 21st Century must be improved through the participation of residents whose rights of political participation are restricted: residents from third countries” (Pariza Castanos, 2011). In this statement there is an emphasis on the importance of democracy and participation, as one of the values that should be promoted through integration.

The values that are used as a motive, as a reason to be concerned about integration, according the EC are economic welfare and wellbeing. It is stated in the EU strategy 2020 that “it’s about more jobs and better lives. It shows how Europe has the capability to deliver smart, sustainable and growth, to find the path to create new jobs and to offer a sense of direction to our societies” (European Commission, 2010, p.2). Integration is part of the EU 2020 strategy, and the EU 2020 strategy values are incorporated and communicated in the understanding of integration. Moreover, it is important to be aware what the measures are for integration. The EC perceives that integration measures are within the competence of Member States. Since these integration measures differ per EU member state, and it reflects and takes into account specific requirements; history and legal framework (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.2). However, based on the common basic principles, the EC developed several instruments: “number of EU financial instruments, the European Integration Forum, the European Web Site on Integration, handbooks, indicators and modules covering diverse aspects of integration” (Council of the European Union, 2014, p.2).

The Netherlands

The core values that the Dutch integration policy promotes are of a individualistic nature, more specifically self-reliance, independence and economic welfare. As stated before in the previous section, participation is very significant in the Dutch society. The values explained above are in line with the Dutch understanding of participation, and therefore these are communicated in various integration policies. For instance, the participation statement that newcomers have to sign, emphasizes the Dutch fundamental values and underlines the importance of participating in the Dutch society and to be self-reliant.

Economic welfare, independence and self-reliance are values that are at the core of the Dutch integration policy. In Dutch integration law, it is indicated that it is expected that people who come to the Netherlands can stand on their own two feet (Government of the Netherlands, 2012).
The Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment affirmed in a policy document that a lot of immigrants already received or will receive a Dutch residence permit, and that therefore Dutch people should support them to quick and effective integrate into the Dutch society. However, it is the responsibility of the newly arrived immigrants to integrate, for instance by learning the language and by finding a job. As the minister emphasizes: “We have to make clear what we expect from them, and disseminate our values and to insist on participation” (Asscher, 2015, p.1).

Due to the fact that the Dutch integration policy is fragmented across various domains, there are no specific general integration measures. The lack of integration measures and coordination are a major challenge for the consistency of policies. Therefore, it has been argued by Leerkes and Scholten to set up a committee in the Cabinet, specifically for the coordination of integration interventions (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.25).

2.3. Feasibility integration

In this section I will discuss the feasibility of the previously presented definitions of integration. This means I will compare the definitions to each other, criticize and relate to relevant literature. Furthermore, I will emphasize what are the important values and ideals that should be fostered in the definition of integration. In addition, I will also provide an overview of some dimensions of integration.

2.3.1. Analyze the definition of integration

The UNHCR definition presented on page eight is a comprehensive definition of integration. It has a strong emphasis on integration as a multifaceted two-way process. As stated before, the purpose of this definition is to remain general and therefore applicable in various country settings. Consequently, it is not clear what the three dimensions – a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension – precisely entail. Hence, this definition provides a certain ‘room for interpretation’.

In line with the UNHCR, the EC definition on integration on page nine, also emphasizes on the importance of a two-way process of mutual adaptation, and unlike the UNHCR, indicates the parties, specifically the migrants and the residents of EU member states. Still, the EC definition of integration too, provides a very broad understanding. Albeit, it is in line with the aim of the definition since it intends to be supportive to EU member states and applicable in various country settings.

The Dutch integration policy as described on page ten, is to some extent in line with the EC’s definition of integration. However, it does not express the importance of a two-way integration process as clearly. The Dutch integration policy puts more emphasis on the role of the
immigrant, instead of a balance between the two parties. The Dutch integration policy strongly underlines what the role of the newcomer is and highlights the importance of participation. Therefore, the Dutch integration policy is more one sided, which is in accordance with what other scholars articulated, namely that the Netherlands made radical shift toward assimilationism (Entzinger, 2015).

To conclude, the three descriptions provide a clear understanding of integration, yet the EC’s definition, specifically the eleven common basic principles are the most comprehensive. The two-way process of mutual adaptation is presented in all the three descriptions; however, it is underlined the most in the UNHCR definition. This element could more strongly emphasized in the EC and Dutch understanding of integration. Concerning the Dutch integration policy there are certain elements, which I think should be more clearly communicated: For instance, the role of the various parties, what can be expected from the Dutch Government, its citizens, and the immigrants. In order for integration to be effective it is important to understand what is needed and expected from both sides. Also, it is not communicated how integration should be monitored and who would or should be held responsible.

Here, I would like to introduce an interesting definition of integration by Elizabeth Anderson, which emphasizes the equality between the various parties involved. Anderson states:
Integration is the negation of segregation: it consists in comprehensive intergroup association on terms of equality. This requires the full inclusion and participation as equals of members of all races in all social domains, especially in the main institutions of society that define its opportunities for recognition, educational and economic advancement, access to public goods, and political influence. (Anderson, 2010, p. 112-113)

The definition of integration as defined by Anderson provides a clear understanding of the concept of integration, and underlines the importance of full participation on terms of equality, regardless of gender, race, class, religion and ethnicity in a society. In addition, she emphasizes some of the main domains for equal opportunity and recognition. I think this is a very well-constructed definition that provides a very significant element, specifically ‘the full inclusion and participation as equals of members’.

In another definition of Anderson, she underlines the element of full inclusion even more strongly, and emphasizes that immigrants are not the only ones who need to change: “Integration does not view disadvantaged groups at the only ones that need to change. Integration aims to transform the habits of dominant groups. It is a tool for breaking down stigmatization, stereotypes and discrimination. Most important, it aims at constructing a superordinate group identity through which its members regard one another as equals” (Anderson, 2010, 116).
In line with Anderson, Richard Evanoff also stresses the importance of the two-sided character, the mutual adaptation in the process of integration. Evanoff, describes this process of mutual adaptation in his article *Integration in cultural ethics* as follows: “Integration concerns itself both with the psychological process by which individuals begin to incorporate values from the host culture into their own system of values and with the process by which the host culture may also be influenced by the values of sojourners” (Evanoff, 2006, p.422). In this definition Evanoff underlines the two-sided character of integration, that is to say that both parties; the host country and the newcomer are both in a psychological process of incorporating each other’s values and norms. This is a very important element and should not be underestimated. Although the importance of the two-sided character of the definition of integration is underlined in other definitions, to my understanding the definition of Evanoff as more nuanced and richer than the others.

To conclude, although the elements of full inclusion, participation as equals, and the two-sided character of integration are to some extent present in the UNHCR, EC, and the Dutch integration policy, I think they should be further emphasized. These elements are of great importance for an effective ethical and fair integration policy.

2.3.2. Dimensions of integration

In this section I provide an overview of some of the main dimensions within integration. It is important to have an understanding of the various dimensions within integration, since it portrays the complexity of integration.

As stated in the UNHCR definition there are various areas of integration, specifically a legal, an economic and a social-cultural dimension. In *Benchmarking in Immigrant Integration* by Han Entzinger and Renske Biezeveld a fourth area is recognized, namely ‘attitudes of recipient societies’. They argue that integration is always a two-sided process and therefore they distinguish a fourth area. It goes without saying that “attitudes of recipient societies play a role in each of the other three domains as well. As this tends to be forgotten sometimes, we will give this aspect some extra emphasis” (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, p.19). Here I would like to utilize the fourth dimensions for integration as analyzed by Entzinger and Biezeveld and present some its indicators.

- Socio-economic integration includes: employment, income level, social security, level of education, housing and segregation.
- Cultural integration includes: attitude towards basic rules and norms of the host country, frequency of contacts with host country and country of origin, choice of spouse, language skills, delinquency.
- Legal and political integration includes: numbers of migrants naturalized annually or who obtain a secure residence status, numbers of migrants with dual citizenship, participation in politics, participation in civil society.
Attitudes of recipient countries includes: reported cases of discrimination, perceptions of migrants by the host society, incidence and effects of diversity policies, role of media. (H. Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, p.32-36)

As stated above there are some dimensions and major indicators of integration, for instance employment, income level social security, etc. These indicators can be applied to measure integration. Some of these areas presented by Entzinger and Biezeveld are related or similar to the migrant integration policy index (Mipex)\(^7\) who developed eight integration policies areas. These policies areas are: labor market mobility, education, political participation, access to nationality, family reunion, health, permanent residence and anti-discrimination policy (Huddleston, Bilgili, Joki, & Vankova, 2015). Giving an overview of the various dimensions and major indicators of integration provides an understanding of the diversity and complexity. This is key to get a better understanding of the various dimensions that integration embodies.

### 2.4. Conclusion chapter integration

In this chapter I examined what the Dutch integration policy entails, and what elements ought to be promoted in the integration of immigrants. Therefore, I outlined the UNHCR, the EC definitions of integration and the Dutch integration policy. Furthermore, I demonstrated the motives underlying the definitions, and the values and ideals that are communicated in these definitions. Furthermore, I discussed the feasibility of the understandings of integration and emphasized significant elements. Finally, I provided an overview of the various dimensions within integration. Now I will continue to the next chapter to examine the research question; to what extent is the Dutch integration policy in accordance with the eleven common basic principles?

---

\(^7\) MIPEX is an online tool which measures policies to integrate migrants in all EU Member States, Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey and the USA. As stated on the website: “The index is a useful tool to evaluate and compare what governments are doing to promote the integration of migrants in all the countries analysed. The project informs and engages key policy actors about how to use indicators to improve integration governance and policy effectiveness” (Huddleston et al., 2015)
3. Analysis

In this chapter I will analyze the extent to which the Dutch integration policy is in accordance with the eleven EC common basic principles. The Netherlands is an EU member state and therefore it is obligated to respect the common basic principles.

CBP 1: "Integration is a dynamic, two-way process of mutual accommodation by all immigrants and residents of Member States" (European Commission, 2016b).

The first principle implies that integration involves two parties: immigrants and residents of Member States, and indicates that both parties concerned are actors with responsibility in the process of integration.

Although the EC definition of integration is defined as a two-way process, overall it mostly stresses the role of the member states in the process of integration, for instance what the state has to arrange or provide for ‘successful’ integration. For instance, it has been stated in a comparative study concerning migrants’ labor and prospects for integration in EU member states, that the vast majority of immigrants barely perceive the general integration directive as a two-way process. Instead, most immigrants perceive integration policies as measures and conditions to exclude, marginalize and subordinate them. It has been also stated that “current integration policies declare integration as a two-way process that should equalize migrant’s opportunities with those of the “nationals”. However, these policies often remain at a descriptive level, lacking mechanisms that would enable and accelerate integration” (Pajnik, Bajt, & Herič, 2010, p.2). Therefore, one could argue that the EC integration directives are more inclined to a one-way process of integration, despite the attempt to underline the dual character.

In the Dutch integration policy, the two-way process concerning integration is also emphasized. However, in the letter from the Minister of Social Affairs, Asscher and other Dutch policy documents it appears that there is more emphasis on the active participation of the immigrants. For instance, the Dutch integration law articulates; it is expected that newcomers need “to make effort to eliminate obstacles to employment such as an inadequate command of Dutch. Only then will they be eligible for social assistance benefit” (Government of the Netherlands, 2012, p.41). That is to say that in the Dutch integration policy statements, there is more emphasis on how the immigrants should participate, rather what the role of the civil society or the state is. This is in line what Entzinger argues: “Some lip service was paid to the idea that integration should be two-sided and that the established population should also leave some space to the newcomers, but only few concrete policy measures pointed in that direction” (Entzinger, 2014, p.699).
To conclude, in accordance with the common basic principle one, the Dutch participation model underlines that integration requires a two-way process (Verwey-Jonker instituut & Movisie, 2014, p.35). However, it is primarily communicated in Dutch reports and policy letters that it is all about the participation of the immigrants. Therefore, the Dutch integration policy and other Dutch communications are conflicting. The EC’s definition shows a similar conflict, so both the EC the Dutch integration directives are more inclined to a one-way process of integration. Consequently, the current Dutch integration policy is closer to a one-way process; assimilation, as earlier communicated by Entzinger, instead of the ambition to promote a dual process.

**CBP 2: "Integration implies respect for the basic values of the European Union" (European Commission, 2016b).**

The second principle refers to the basic values of the European Union: human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights (European Union, 2016). It is stated that:

Any European State wishing to become a member of the Union must respect these values in order to be considered eligible for admission. Secondly, failure by a Member State to respect these values may lead to the suspension of that Member State’s rights deriving from membership of the Union (Article I-59). (European Union, 2016)

These fundamental values are incorporated into the Dutch society and are also clearly presented in a Dutch policy document, namely the “Core Values in the Dutch Society”. In this document the core values are described and explained, and these are in line with or similar to the basic values of the European Union. The Dutch core values are: freedom, equality and solidarity, also fundamental rights and other important social rules are presented in this document (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2014, p.3). However, are these EU fundamental values also incorporated into the Dutch integration policy?

Dignity is a comprehensive value and embodies many different topics. One of these topics is labor integration, which is a significant dimension in the process of integration. It is stated by the UNHCR that “stakeholders noted employment makes people feel part of the community and respondents said they did not feel part of society without employment and that employment was seen a path to acceptance by others” (UNHCR, 2013a, p.98). That is to say that labor integration or being economically self-sufficient leads to dignity, self-reliance and social interaction, and is beneficial to individuals as well as the receiving country (UNHCR, 2013a, p.118). So, labor integration is an important indicator for dignity and related values.
In a report about integration in the Netherlands it was stated that 50 percent of the immigrants has a paid job\(^8\), this means that the other 50 percent of the immigrants are unemployed (CBS, 2014, p.50). That is to say, that the unemployed immigrants do not feel part of the society, and do not experience dignity to the fullest extent. The Dutch Government could intervene more extensively to emphasize dignity, for instance by supporting immigrants to find employment.

Equality is a value promoted in the Dutch integration policy. The main aim of the Dutch integration policy is to promote the participation of immigrants on an equal basis in the Dutch society. This means that there are no specific policies concerning employment or housing for immigrants. In contrast this could also be understood as unequal, since immigrants might need certain support to provide them with the same opportunities and chances in the Dutch society in comparison to Dutch nationals. The latter is understood as equity, which is a different concept than equality.

The values liberty, democracy, the rule of law and respect for human rights are not specifically emphasized in the Dutch integration, yet they are strongly communicated in the core values of the Dutch society. So, the common basic principle two is to some extent incorporated, respected and acknowledged by the Dutch State.

**CBP 3:** "Employment is a key part of the integration process and is central to the participation of immigrants, to the contributions immigrants make to the host society, and to making such contributions visible" (European Commission, 2016b).

This principle implies that employment of migrants is key in the process of integration, also it is a method to measure the participation of migrants and to make their contributions visible.

In the Netherlands, employment or labor integration, specifically in the Dutch context of labor participation is the key domain of the Dutch integration process. It has been stated by the Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment that when labor participation is not prioritized, it becomes very difficult to accomplish active participation in the Dutch society (Asscher, 2015, p.2). Principle three is incorporated into the Dutch integration policy. It is stated by the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment that the previous Dutch integration policies, where housing and financial security were prioritized, the participation in the labor market was much lower (Asscher, 2015, p.2). So, this was one of the reasons for the Minister to put emphasis on labor participation. Therefore, the current integration policy is founded upon the notion that participation, especially labor participation is key in the Dutch integration policy (Asscher, 2015, p.1) (Verwey-

---

\(^8\) In this context it means a paid job with more than 12 hours of work every week. This study included people between the age of 15-64 years old (CBS, 2014, p.50).
This is also made visible in the MIPEX results, since labor integration receives the highest score in the Netherlands regarding the integration process of immigrants (Huddleston et al., 2015).

In the Netherlands there are some interventions to promote employment, for instance K!X Works. This is a project from Movisie, a Dutch national knowledge institute and consultant concerning social affairs. It is a three-years program financed by the Asylum, Migration and Integration fund from the European Union. K!X Works is a one year project for young migrants between the age of 13-23 to support and help them to connect better to the Dutch labor market or to find a suitable education. The K!X Works project does this through various activities, for instance by visiting businesses and schools together with the K!X Works participants. Moreover, they provide trainings to the participants on communication, presentation and networking skills. Furthermore, the participants develop ‘soft skills’ and to get a better understanding of their own strength and capabilities. In addition, the participants are coached by a special business coach who helps them concerning labor market and to establish a network. At the end of K!X Works project the participants receive a certificate of their participation (Movisie, 2016).

CBP 4: "Basic knowledge of the host society’s language, history, and institutions is indispensable to integration; enabling immigrants to acquire this basic knowledge is essential to successful integration" (European Commission, 2016b).

This principle stresses the importance of member states to provide and support migrants to attain basic knowledge about the country. This knowledge is key for migrants to participate in the respective society and to get a better understanding of the culture.

Since 2013 there is a law in the Netherlands, which states that migrants themselves are responsible for their integration. The Dutch integration policy states: “If you settle in the Netherlands, you have a duty to integrate and must take a civic integration exam” (Government of the Netherlands, 2016). This means that immigrants have to pass the Dutch integration examination within three years. Furthermore, they have to search for themselves an integration course that suits them. The immigrants have to apply for a loan on their own, however, they only receive the loan if the school is noted on a list with selected schools. If the immigrant passes the integration examination within three years, the loan is converted into a gift. However, if the migrant fails to pass the integration examination within three years, the person receives a penalty, with exception of special circumstances (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, 2016).

The Dutch Refugee organization Vluchtelingenwerk argues that the integration process is too complicated for immigrants to arrange this all by themselves (Vluchtelingenwerk, 2014). This opinion is shared by Mohamed Said from the Federation of Somali Associations in the
Nederlands (FSAN) as well. He claims that requesting a loan from the responsible institution, (DUO) is already complicated for Dutch nationals themselves. Therefore it is clear that for newly arrived immigrants it is a very confusing and difficult assignment (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2016). This might be the reason why the amount of people succeeding the Dutch integration examination is very low (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2016). The Dutch Refugee organization ‘Vluchtelingenwerk’ argues that the Dutch government should provide and support immigrants more concerning integration examinations. That is to say that the Dutch government should provide free good quality integration courses within a reasonable travel distance for immigrants (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, 2016a). Another issue is that incidentally there is a waiting list at the language centers, as a result it takes extra time before immigrants can even start learning the Dutch language (Engbersen et al., 2015, p.32).

To conclude, the Netherlands does provide tools to support migrants to some extent to learn basic knowledge about the Netherlands, yet it is questionable if this support is enough and effective to fulfill this common basic principle. I think the Netherlands enables immigrants to learn the Dutch basic knowledge to some extent, but this could be done more extensively and with better guidance.

**CBP 5:** "Efforts in education are critical to preparing immigrants, and particularly their descendants, to be more successful and more active participants in society" (European Commission, 2016b).

Here the emphasis is on the importance of education and the relationship between effective educational interventions and successful integration of immigrants and their descendants.

Education is acknowledged in the Dutch integration participation model as a key element, since it provides the basis for integration. The Dutch Minister for Social Affairs and Employment, Asscher highlighted it in a policy document that education is very important and that the guidance towards suiting education or the connection between education and the labor market is significant. This is something that is currently being prioritized in the Dutch integration policy (Asscher, 2015, p.3). There are several initiatives by NGO’s and the Dutch government to support immigrants with their education. For instance, newly arrived highly educated immigrants receive support from a Dutch student foundation UAF. The foundation provides language training, financial support and guidance during the study and during the transition to the labor market. Also, there are efforts in the Dutch educational system to improve the connection between the educational background of the newly arrived immigrants and the Dutch educational system, for instance by establishing a preparatory year, language trainings, and buddy projects (Engbersen et al., 2015, p.27). Nevertheless, there is a factor that impedes the process of effective integration, which is a missing linkage between learning and working, since there are hardly any dual processes. This
means that it is either learning or working. As this delays the process, a combination of learning and working would be very beneficial to accelerate integration (Engbersen et al., 2015, p.31).

**CBP 6: "Access for immigrants to institutions, as well as to public and private goods and services, on a basis equal to national citizens and in a non-discriminatory way is a critical foundation for better integration" (European Commission, 2016b).**

Common basic principle six underlines the equal access to public and private goods and services. This means that migrants should be treated as equals to the nationals of the particular member state.

At the conference “Integration and Society” the Dutch Minister for Social Affairs and Employment stated that in the Netherlands we treat people as equals, and therefore people are entitled to social security and education and should receive the possibility to participate (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2016). Here the Minister emphasizes that one of the core values in the Dutch society is equality (Ministerie van Sociale Zaken en Werkgelegenheid, 2014, p.3).

In the Netherlands there seem to be no data that would show that immigrants are discriminated when it comes to their access to public and private goods and services. At least this has not been expressed and acknowledged by immigrants, for instance as a justification to their weaker social economic position. However, this still does not exclude that there is no discrimination regarding the access of immigrants to these services (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.15).

Therefore, I assume that immigrants in the Netherlands have access to public and private goods and services, on an equal basis to national citizens and most probably in a non-discriminatory way.

**CBP 7: "Frequent interaction between immigrants and Member State citizens is a fundamental mechanism for integration. Shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and stimulating living conditions in urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Member State citizens" (European Commission, 2016b).**

Interaction between immigrants and the citizens of the member states is here underlined as an important element in the process of integration. Furthermore, it is also stressed that member states should stimulate this process, for instance in relation to living conditions in urban environments, or by providing education for nationals about immigrants and immigrant cultures.

As stated before in this thesis the Dutch integration policy is scattered between various domains and levels of the society. The organization of shared forums, intercultural dialogue, education about immigrants and immigrant cultures, and the promotion of living conditions in
urban environments enhance the interactions between immigrants and Dutch nationals is organized by local NGO’s and municipalities mostly. As far as I know the Netherlands is not very concerned about providing education for its nationals about immigrants and immigrant cultures. The Dutch attitude towards this is, that immigrants are responsible themselves for their own integration and therefore also for the interaction with the native Dutch. This claim is supported by Vluchtelingenwerk which argues that the Dutch government needs to facilitate conditions for successful integration and that municipalities should be able to provide additional support (Vluchtelingenwerk Nederland, 2016b).

Different municipalities do have projects dealing with contact between immigrants and nationals, but these are initiatives are often local, for instance in neighborhoods. There is an example of this is a peer-to-peer project in Rotterdam. The idea of this project is to provide newly arrived immigrants a personal buddy, an immigrant who lived for several years in the Netherlands. This buddy supports the newly arrived immigrant with daily life activities, for instance learning the language, or to provide guidance and support how to arrange certain things. This project is financed by the municipality of Rotterdam (Engbersen et al., 2015, p.29).

CBP 8: "The practice of diverse cultures and religions is guaranteed under the Charter of Fundamental Rights and must be safeguarded, unless practices conflict with other inviolable European rights or with national law"(European Commission, 2016b). This principle stresses that the practice of diverse cultures and religions must be safeguarded, unless it violates European rights or national law.

This principle is articulated in Article 6 of the Dutch Constitution on the right to freedom of religion (Grondwet voor het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden, 1815). The Netherlands respects common basic principle eight, and the practice of diverse cultures and religions is also mentioned as one of the core elements in the Dutch society (Kernwaarden van de Nederlandse samenleving Inhoud, 2014, p.6).

CBP 9: "The participation of immigrants in the democratic process and in the formulation of integration policies and measures, especially at the local level, supports their integration" (European Commission, 2016b). Participation in the democratic process, especially at the local level is here underlined as an element that supports the integration of immigrants.

As stated earlier immigrants are officially perceived as equals in the Dutch society, and because of this they are entitled to the same rights. In practice, however, due to the fact that the
specific integration policies for immigrants were abolished, inclusion of immigrants remains even more significant. Nevertheless, social workers from NGO’s have a hard time to convince municipality staff concerning interventions for immigrant inclusion and participation. The municipality staff remains skeptical and somehow it is not being seen as evident that the inclusion and participation of immigrants in the democratic system is important for the process of integration (Kennisplatform Integratie & Samenleving, 2016, p.16). That is to say, that although participation is strongly communicated in the Dutch integration participation policy, in practice, for instance at local level it remains a challenge to include and let immigrants participate in the democratic process

CBP 10: "Mainstreaming integration policies and measures in all relevant policy portfolios and levels of government and public services is an important consideration in public policy formation and implementation." (European Commission, 2016b).
This principle stresses the relevance of mainstream integration measures and policies on various domains, so that it becomes part of the general policy.

As stated in chapter two ‘Integration’ the current Dutch integration policy developed into a more and more mainstream policy throughout the last 10 years. The thought behind this was that general policies should also be able to reach migrants, and therefore potential stigmatization of a specific target policy could be avoided. This was one of the reasons why specific integration policies for migrants were abolished, so that Dutch nationals would not refer to these specific integration policies as a preferential treatment for immigrants. To conclude, integration measures are mainstream in the Dutch Government, and are absorbed into general policies on various domains, for instance housing, social affairs and education (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.18).

CBP 11: Developing clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms are necessary to adjust policy, evaluate progress on integration and to make the exchange of information more effective. (European Commission, 2016b).
The last common basic principle relates to clear goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms to measure and evaluate the integration process. This is very significant for further improvements for the integration of migrants.

As stated before, integration is decentralized in the Netherlands, which means that knowledge about integration issues are spread throughout various dimensions and levels, so there is no central Dutch coordination policy body in the Netherlands. It is stated in a report from the Erasmus University concerning integration in the Netherlands that coordination of the Dutch integration policies will be a major challenge, as compared to a decennium ago. This is due to the fact that there is a strong fragmentation of the Dutch integration policy. Many budgets and specific
instruments for integration policy, for instance language support, have disappeared (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.28).

Although, there are various institutions conducting research, often commissioned by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, to evaluate the progress of integration, there is still no clear consensus about the meaning of integration and other significant terminology, and due to the diverse application of indicators by various institutions, the results differ. This is problematic, since “effective monitoring and evaluation of the common immigration policy it is deemed crucial that the data used actually reflect the relevant aspects of immigration and integration and that they are sufficiently comparable” (Entzinger & Biezeveld, 2003, p.4).

Consequently, it can be argued that regarding the coordination of integration policies in the Netherlands there is certainly room for improvement because there is no central coordination body and the ways in which different (governmental) institutions measure and evaluate integration varies. It is important to establish distinct goals, indicators and evaluation mechanisms, since they are necessary to adjust policy and evaluate the progress of integration. The Government of the Netherlands could put more emphasis on this principle, since common basic principle eleven is not fully incorporated in the Dutch integration policy.

3.1. Conclusion analysis
To conclude, I compared the Dutch integration policy to the EC common basic principles. I discussed each principle and examined whether the Dutch integration policy is in accordance with the EC directives. It can be argued that most common basic principles were incorporated into the Dutch integration policy, however there were some principles, which were not fulfilled. Common basic principle one was not satisfied, since the current Dutch integration policy indicates more towards a one-way process, instead of the ambitions for a dual character. On the other hand, it can be stated that this problem also seems to hold for the EC integration directives. Furthermore, principle four is only partially fulfilled, since the Netherlands enables to some certain extent immigrants to learn the basic Dutch knowledge. Due to the prevailing attitude that integration is all about individual, independent participation, this complicates the process for immigrants to integrate. In practice, immigrants have a lot of difficulties to find the right information in the Dutch legal maze. Furthermore, common basic principle eleven is only partially fulfilled, since there is no central coordinating policy body, for instance as concerning the integration of immigrants in the Netherlands. Also, the way in which different (governmental) institutions measure and evaluate integration contradicts and varies. Therefore, common basic principle eleven is not fully incorporated into the Dutch integration policy.
To conclude, from the analysis it seems like the Netherlands does not entirely fulfill and incorporate all the eleven EC common basic principles for integration. In the following section, the main concern will be on the ethical implications of the Dutch integration system.

3.2. Ethical implications Dutch integration policy

In the Dutch integration policy there is a lot of emphasis on the participation and self-reliance of immigrants. For instance, it is stated in the Dutch integration policy that:

Aliens’ efforts to integrate into Dutch society will be consistently monitored from the outset. Those who do not make a sufficient effort will lose their residence permit, with the exception of people holding asylum residence permits. But the latter group will also be expected to make an effort to eliminate obstacles to employment such as an inadequate command of Dutch. Only then will they be eligible for social assistance benefit. (Government of the Netherlands, 2012, p.41)

This is quite a radical statement from the Dutch Government that raises ethical concerns. For instance, can the Dutch Government’s expectations on participation by the immigrants be justified? Can the immigrants who newly arrived in the Netherlands and are not familiar with the Dutch system be expected to take the steps necessary for integration on their own? Also, in the Dutch integration law it is stated that you need to make enough effort to integrate otherwise you may lose your residence permit (Government of the Netherlands, 2012). However, how should and could sufficient effort to integrate be measured? And is it ethical to set the same standards for everyone to measure the sufficient effort to integrate?

“Individuals who cannot speak Dutch will not receive social assistance benefit. This principle will be applied consistently: to EU nationals, third-country nationals and Dutch nationals” (Government of the Netherlands, 2012, p.42). This quote highlights equality for all Dutch citizens in the society, and I acknowledge that speaking the Dutch language is essential for all Dutch citizens. Hence, this quote could be perceived as arbitrary discrimination based upon birthplace, since how can the Dutch Government expect that everyone can equally participate if there are the same expectations for both immigrants and Dutch nationals? That is to say is it fair to require newly arrived immigrants to speak Dutch, otherwise they will not receive social assistance benefits?

The Dutch integration system perceives every immigrant as a moral agent with rational capability. While it is a positive thing to understand immigrants as capable agents, it is important to acknowledge that the situation of being a migrant can be stressful and that many immigrants have difficulties to function as independent agents. Furthermore, the Dutch integration law does not underline and acknowledge enough the various differences between immigrants: the law indicates that it generalizes immigrants as one group of rational, capable, bodily abled people. For instance,
many immigrants who have escaped from war have been subject to trauma and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The asylum process is often perceived as stressful and may reinforce PTSD and prevent effective integration (Schock, Rosner, & Knaevelsrud, 2015). Although, the Dutch Government does state that: “Some newcomers are not required to take the civic integration exam, for example if they have a mental or physical disability” (Government of the Netherlands, 2016). Yet it is not always possible and it is not so easy to prove if someone has a mental ‘disability’. Therefore, this exception is most probably not a solution for all people suffering from a mental ‘disability’.

Another issue is that many immigrants from war-torn countries have had little access to education. Illiterate persons from different cultural backgrounds will face serious difficulties to learn Dutch sufficiently well to integrate. Even if immigrants have qualifications and certificates, these are often not accepted. Also, newly arrived immigrants regularly do not have the resources (or the age) to reeducate themselves. In addition, immigrants have to wait at least five years until they will be allowed (or not) a permanent Dutch residence, until then the situation remains very unsure and this makes it very difficult to plan. Therefore, the first five years of the newly arrived immigrants are very much focused and dedicated to fulfill the integration requirements to receive Dutch permanent residence. So, there is often very little time to also be concerned to reskill or to reeducate (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016).

To conclude, the main critique is that the Dutch integration policy is not an ethical, fair and transparent process. The ethical questions raised above are a starting point for further ethical analysis.
4. Conclusion

In this thesis I provided a descriptive analysis, and highlighted some ethical implications of the Dutch integration policy. I characterized and examined how integration is defined and communicated in key policy documents at different levels in the Netherlands. Also I presented how the definition of integration is communicated by the UNHCR and the EC. Furthermore, I compared and characterized the understandings of integration, and analyzed what were the underlying motives, and core values. Furthermore, I discussed the feasibility of the UNHCR, EC and Dutch integration policy and related it to relevant literature. Besides, I provided an overview of some dimensions within integration. In the analysis I examined to the extent in which the Dutch integration policy is in accordance with the eleven EC common basic principles.

To conclude, as stated in the introduction, integration is very important for a country and the wellbeing of its citizens (UNHCR, 2013a, p.10). In the Netherlands, the Dutch integration policy is highly contested, due to the fact that there is no consensus concerning a national definition of integration. The lack of a clear-cut definition impedes effective integration, since it is required in order to present clear integration goals and indicators. Therefore, I strongly advise the Dutch Government to define its understanding of integration and to put more focus on the elements that ought to be promoted concerning the integration of immigrants. For instance, the two-sided character, the dual nature of integration, as presented by in the UNHCR definition of integration and by Anderson. The mutual adaptation element is necessary for an effective sustainable integration policy. As stated by the UNHCR:

Integration policy which complements a protection status in the EU and which allows all newcomers, including refugees, to become economically productive leads to self-reliance, dignity, and social interaction and is beneficial to individuals and the receiving society. A society with large under-productive segments will not only be economically divided, but also socially and often geographically segregated. Getting integration right is therefore key to both a successful Europe and to an effective protection system for refugees in Europe. (UNHCR, 2013, p.10)

To answer my research question, that to what extent the Dutch integration policy is in accordance with the eleven common basic, I concluded in this analysis that every EU member state is left with the discretion to devise their own immigration policies. Nonetheless, EU member states have an obligation to satisfy the eleven common basic principles. The Dutch integration policy did not incorporate all the eleven common basic principle, and therefore they are not all fulfilled. These are common basic principle one, four and eleven. I would like to instruct the Dutch government to prioritize common basic principle one, four and eleven, as further consideration is required. See below the practical recommendations derived from the eleven common basic principles.
- CBP 1: Establish a Dutch definition of integration, in line with the UNHCR definition, and other elements I emphasized in this thesis.
- CBP 4: Acknowledge that the current integration examination process is not well functioning and the Dutch government should provide free good quality integration courses within a reasonable travel distance for the immigrants.
- CBP 11: Establish one central coordinating policy body concerning the integration of immigrants in the Netherlands, for instance set up a committee under the cabinet, specifically for the coordination of integration interventions (Leerkes & Scholten, 2016, p.25).

The importance of integration is stressed throughout this thesis, whereas what are the risks of a failing integration system? Segregation is often perceived as the contrary of integration, and seen as the fundamental cause of injustice. Anderson articulates three domains in which this is manifested: “social economic opportunity, public recognition, and democratic politics. Its stands to reason that integration should help dismantle these injustices” (Anderson, 2010, p.134). Injustice and inequality are perceived as one the major risks of a failing integration system, accordingly inequality is related to the prevalence of many other problems, for instance poverty, criminality, etc. So, a failure to integrate leads to inequality in the society. “The effects on inequality are not confined just to the least well-off: instead they affect the vast majority of the population” (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009, p.181). So, a poor or lacking integration policy enforces inequality in a society. To conclude, an effective integration policy is the tool for a better future!
5. Bibliography


Council of the European Union. (2014). *Council conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States on the integration of third-country nationals legally residing in the EU.*


Kernwaarden van de Nederlandse samenleving Inhoud. (2014).


