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Workshop title: **Negotiating Migrants' Identities: from Policy Narratives to Lived Experiences**

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Shifting frames and (de) constructing meanings. From (Dutch) Identity to (Multiple) Identification(s) with The Netherlands

Abstract

In the context of the refugee crisis and the intensified rhythm of global migration, national governments became reluctant to host newcomers and share goods with 'the strangers', with all those perceived as 'out-siders' of their society.

At the European level, we are witnessing a revival of the national identities. The Netherlands is one of the countries experiencing a strong polarization of opinions and attitudes vis-à-vis migrants, holders of different ethnic and religious stories. The Dutch Government made explicit statements regarding failed multiculturalism and took explicit distance from the 'relativism' characterizing multicultural society. In 2011, the Dutch Government claimed that 'Dutch people do not experience ethnic and cultural diversity as an enrichment but as a threat' (IBB Nota, 2011:1) arguing that 'the Dutch society must be seen as the one in which 'those who settle, must learn to live and adapt to' (IBB Nota,2011:5). The language used 'divides worlds' and constructs polar realities: the world of 'our citizens' versus the world of 'others', the 'threat'.

Following M. Verkuyten(2014:2), 'there is said to be confusion and uncertainty about what the Dutch identity is ('who We are') and what the national standards are ('what We stand for ')'. The current debate about a Dutch identity implies in the author view 'a discussion about proper sentiments and emotions attached to it' (ibid) while affirming the Dutch identity and showing loyalty to its nation and its citizens is seen as pre-condition to 'a warm feeling of security and unity, feelings that should not be weakened by dual loyalties and multiple identities' (Verkuyten 2014: 3).

The urgent call for developing a greater sense of national consciousness appeared in Dutch politics especially since 2000-2001, after the publication of the 'Multicultural Drama' (Scheffer 2000). Since then increased attempts were made to define 'what Dutch Identity is' and what the Dutch stand for.

In 2007 The Scientific Council of the Dutch Government Policy (WRR) published the report 'Identification with the Netherlands'. Despite its publicized need to clarify the theme of (Dutch) *Identity* the Report turned its original intention into discussing '*Identification*' with The Netherlands. This conceptual shift-promised to give room for the recognition of diversity and the valuation of multiple identities.

C1. We argue that the 2007 WRR report provides policy warrants with confusing arguments, stitched into a problematic argumentation frame, which cannot be converted into policy tools serving migrants' accepted identities.

C2. Our claim is that the WRR's conceptual frame is weak. The report discusses normative, functional and emotional identification in a descriptive way and it neglects basic concepts such as psychological integration and mutual accommodation; it remains also superficial in giving insight into social identities construction.

We test the force of our claims (C1-C2) by using two documents for text analysis: the Policy Note Integratie, Binding, Burgerschap (2011) and the WRR Report (2007).

Using tools from social psychology and discourse analysis (rhetoric, argumentative, interpretive) we provide insights regarding gaps and tensions in Dutch Immigrant Integration Discourse. We clarify how the concept of identification can work counter-productively and can even contribute to migrants' segregation and social exclusion.

Key words: national identity, identification, social categorization, immigration, segregation

References

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