Valorization Addendum

The valorization describes the process of value creation from knowledge by making it accessible for societal or economic activities (National Valorisation Committee, 2011)\(^1\). The aim of this section is a reflection on the societal and scientific relevance of the tasks executed for, and the results of this dissertation. For that, the following issues shall be discussed: The societal relevance of this dissertation and each separate research chapter; the target groups; and concrete activities and products resulting from the research.

**SOCIETAL RELEVANCE**

This dissertation deals with the questions how different societal actors position themselves regarding cultural integration, which opportunities and barriers they encounter and how these findings influence the discourse on integration. Inquiring on the different positions taken is especially relevant since assimilation discourse, which recently gains prominence, assigns responsibility for adaptation solely on *culturally different* minorities. In this respect, it is crucial to understand how these minorities picture their integration process.

On another note, one of the premises of a liberal democracy is that people should have the freedom to contribute to public discourse and participate in the political process. For that reason, this dissertation assumes that the incorporation of different perspectives on a level playing field is an important source of legitimacy for a liberal democracy. Identifying opportunities and barriers for the positioning of actors in the different societal spheres can help us to discover power imbalances between actors and alert us to lack of representation. Furthermore, it may allow us to realize the potential for the full inclusion of actors from all societal spheres in the deliberation about integration.

Finally, the public discourse of integration influences how people think about the space given to cultural diversity and the expression of cultural identity. The findings of this dissertation help us to understand how the discourse will develop in the future and which role the different actors can play in the unfolding discourse and related policies. In the following, the societal relevance of the separate researches shall be illustrated.

*Chapter II: Politics of ritual slaughter*

The research in Chapter II brings up two central questions that need to be addressed in liberal democratic societies today. The first one is in how far minorities have the right to

---

\(^1\) LANDELIJE COMMISSIE VALORISATIE 2011. Waardevol: Indicatoren voor valorisatie. Utrecht: STW; Technopolis; Rathenau.
execute their practices and to what extent the majority needs to respect those rights. In the debate, the question was posed in terms of “how much unnecessary suffering of animals is justifiable in order to assure the right to ritual slaughter?” Secondly, the question is posed whether religion should play a role in the public sphere and in how far religious practices should be regulated by secular states. The Chapter illustrates how much politicians struggle to take a position with regards to these complex and normative questions. Furthermore, it creates transparency concerning the motivations and interests that are taken into account while taking a stance. Transparency about the complexity of decision making in the arena of power involving the political game, legal requirements, science, history and economic interests, may create more understanding in society for the position of politicians. Furthermore, making implicit motivations explicit can also help politicians to take more balanced stances regarding normative and sensitive issues.

Chapter III: Private governance of halal food

Chapter II has the objective to understand the extent to which halal CBs fulfil the needs of the Dutch Muslim community and the influence of international halal governance. Thereby, it gives insights in the governance challenges arising from a globalized food market combined with the heterogenization of values in multicultural societies. The results of the research show that halal certification in the Netherlands is weakly institutionalized and barely responsive to the needs of the Dutch Muslim population. This Chapter entails concrete suggestions to improve the halal certification network based on the ISEAL standards. Examples are increased transparency and accessibility of standards and procedures, efficiency through orchestration, accountability and stakeholder participation. Thus, the results of this research may be translated into an improved certification system or other forms of regulations for halal trade, e.g. meta-governance or governmental policy.

Chapter IV: Influence of Populism on Tolerance

The objective of this Chapter is to analyze the influence of anti-Islam populism on the meaning of tolerance in Dutch public (newspaper) debate. Several conclusions of this Chapter may be relevant for the peaceful coexistence of culturally diverse groups in the Netherlands: First of all, the tolerance discourse has led to a broader range of subjects of (in)tolerance that can be held responsible by governance actors for a peaceful coexistence. Cooperation between these groups could be stimulated in order to create more tolerance. Likewise, framing a broad range of possible objects of tolerance may show that each actor in society relies on tolerance by others which may create more mutual tolerance. Yet, we need to be careful that the objects of tolerance are not used for further polarization and segregation in society. Uncovering artificial contradictions between different values that society seemingly needs to settle on can help to return to the original idea of individual emancipation and religious tolerance forming two sides of the same coin. In order to maintain societal peace, in cases where actual conflicts between values exist mutual understanding should be created between those affected and a tolerant
middle ground should be found. Making one’s own hierarchy of values explicit may help
to create mutual understanding. With regard to the power to interfere, we see that while
mainstream opinion leaders receive a greater platform for ventilating their ideas, popu-
lists manage to influence the debate by introducing their terminology and setting their
agenda. This chapter may create consciousness among mainstream opinion leader about
their role in reproducing the populist discourse. Finally, this chapter may stimulate the
debate about the limits of tolerance as it has proven that no tolerance for intolerance is
no clear delineation. While in the legal system the limits of tolerance are defined by law,
societal limits of tolerance may be defined in day-to-day interactions.

Chapter V: Ethnic/Islamic Organizations between Multiculturalism and
Assimilation

As mentioned above, the strengthening assimilation discourse places responsibility for
integration solely on the ethnic/Islamic minorities in the Netherlands. Therefore, it is cru-
cial to understand how these groups envision the integration process. The results of this
research show that ethnic/Islamic organizations start engaging in the discourse about
their integration and that their frames reflect the different approaches that have been
taken by the government regarding integration since the 1980s. Even though the idea of
assimilation is rejected, agreement exists that socio-economic, political and institutional
integration are necessary. Even concerning cultural and emotional integrations, sub-
frames exist that advocate partial adaptation, e.g. the development of an interpretation
of Islam that may be combined with Dutch culture. However, there is a contradicting sub-
frame that defends the preservation of the connection between foreign ethnic traditions
and Islam and thereby hamper the development of a Dutch Islam. Most ethnic/Islamic
organizations reject the one-sided responsibility for assimilation and request a space for
their cultural identity. This research is societally relevant, because it shows that the eth-
nic/Islamic community is diverse and has differing ideas about its ‘post-integration’ pro-
cess. Placing responsibility for one-sided assimilation on these minorities may not be a
feasible option that will be embraced by these communities. Concretely, this research
may help the ethnic/Islamic communities to create an internal debate about how to re-
pond to the external pressure of assimilation. Furthermore, it may create understanding
in society for the position of these communities.

TARGET GROUPS

The target groups result from the three societal spheres that have been analyzed for this
dissertation. Firstly, it focuses on politicians and policymakers, who take decisions regard-
ing new legislation answering questions regarding the spaces allowed for the expression
of cultural identity in the public sphere. Besides, politicians may strongly influence the
public discourse. Secondly, this dissertation appeals to business actors, such as halal cer-
VALORIZATION ADDENDUM

tifiers or producers, who may have the aim to facilitated the presence of religiously appropriate food for the Dutch Muslim community. Thirdly, this research targets all members of Dutch society who feel responsible to contribute to a peaceful coexistence of different cultural, religious, ideological groups of all genders and sexual orientations, especially those who participate in the public debate about tolerance. Fourthly, this dissertation focuses on the ethnic/Islamic organizations and communities, who are directly or indirectly affected by the integration discourse.

ACTIVITIES/PRODUCTS

Participatory process

Participation is an important aspect of a democratic society. Participation of societal actors in research and policy making increases legitimacy of the decision-making processes and provides creative potential by allowing space for different perspectives. This dissertation is based on the involvement of various societal actors, who shared their perspectives on issues related to integration. It has an emancipatory function by also granting a platform to those actors in society that are often blamed for non-integration, but that are hardly involved on research regarding integration.

Societally relevant publications

The research done for this dissertation has resulted in three peer-reviewed journal publications and one submitted paper. In this way, these articles may contribute to the social scientific debate about integration, especially emphasizing the need to take into account different societal spheres and actors. Furthermore, each of the articles includes specific research and/or policy recommendations for the different actors involved.

Media coverage

Part of the research executed for Chapter 3 about Halal governance has been followed by a camera team. The video recordings and an extensive interview about my experience during the field work has contributed to a documentary on Dutch public TV. This documentary had the aim to inform Muslims, but also society at large about the circumstances under which standardization of halal food takes place. The video can be watched on https://www.npo.nl/hoe-halal-is-halal/28-06-2015/VPWON_1244711.

Workshop on qualitative interviews

Besides the content-related outcomes, the experience during the field work in combination with a Summer course followed at the European Consortium for Political Research has led to the development of a workshop on qualitative interview techniques. This workshop has been included in the curriculum of the MSc Sustainability Science and Policy at ICIS, Maastricht University.