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## Multilingual moves

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# Chapter 3

## Inclusion, Assimilation and Integration

The degree and nature of the linguistic inclusion of migrants and their descendants in their country of residence is a crucial factor in understanding their degree of motility, because it is closely connected with, and in some cases even partially determined by, the organisation of the linguistic infrastructure. In order to understand the current usage of 'integration' as a concept, it is necessary to delve into post-war scientific contributions on the adaptation process of minorities in majority cultures. Scientific and public understanding of concepts such as 'integration' and 'assimilation' has shifted over the years. One of the major texts on this topic was written by the sociologist Milton Gordon (1964). In his *Assimilation in American Life: the Role of Race, Religion, and National Origins*, Gordon analyses the socio-economic and cultural adaptation of immigrants in North America. He concludes that immigrants proceed through seven stages of assimilation:

1. Acculturation[5] newcomers adopt language, dress, and daily customs of the host society (including values and norms).
2. Structural assimilation: large-scale entrance of minorities into cliques, clubs and institutions in the host society.
3. Marital assimilation: widespread intermarriage.
4. Identification assimilation: the minority feels bonded to the dominant culture.
5. Attitude reception assimilation refers to the absence of prejudice.
6. Behaviour reception assimilation refers to the absence of discrimination.
7. Civic assimilation occurs when there is an absence of values and power struggles. (Gordon 1964).

Gordon considered his seven-stage model an empirical reality rather than a normative policy ambition. His view on assimilation could be seen as a natural law: it is *inevitable* that all minority groups, both autochthonous minorities (e.g. black people in the U.S.) and immigrants (e.g. Puerto-Ricans) go through these seven stages of assimilation.

Gordon's view has been criticised on both normative and empirical grounds. Starting with the latter category, social psychologist Berry observed that the adaptation process of immigrants is more complex than suggested in Gordon's theory. He formulated an alternative model, which he referred to as the 'four strategies of acculturation' (Berry 1980). Acculturation needs to be understood as 'the dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contact between two or more cultural groups and their individual members' (Berry 2005: 698). Contrary to Gordon, he argues that if different cultural groups come into contact, potential cultural clashes

might emerge, which need to be solved through negotiation in order to achieve outcomes that are acceptable for all parties involved. Immigrants can opt for four different acculturation strategies, namely 'assimilation', 'separation', 'marginalisation' and 'integration'. Integration is in Berry's model thus strictly separated from assimilation. The individual's chosen strategy will be determined by (1) a preference for the majority or for the heritage culture, and (2) a preference for having contact with and participating in society with other cultural groups (Berry 1980).

Assimilation generally still has the same meaning as in Gordon's work: complete adaptation of the minority to the majority culture. Those who opt for this strategy have a preference for the majority culture and actively wish to engage with other groups. Separation means that individuals wish exclusively to orient themselves towards their heritage culture, having little desire to come into frequent contact with other groups. Marginalisation occurs when new arrivals deny both their heritage culture and other cultural groups in society, resulting in a solitary cultural existence. The integration strategy on the other hand is preferred among those individuals who wish to preserve their cultural heritage but at the same time attempt to connect with the majority group in society.

### The acculturation model

Berry was one of the first to define the concept of integration, which has been widely used in the public and scientific debate ever since. For example, the Dutch integration policy of the 1980s, that promoted 'integration with preservation of one's identity', could have been inspired by Berry's work. By carrying out survey research, he investigated the effect of each strategy on 'acculturative stress', loosely defined as the psychological, somatic, and social difficulties that may accompany acculturation processes, often manifest in anxiety, depression and other forms of mental and physical maladaptation (Berry 2006). Integration yielded the 'best' results: those who opted for this strategy suffered the least from acculturative stress. In contrast, marginalisation and assimilation were the source of relatively high stress levels (Berry 2006).

Berry's theory is not undisputed. His model has been criticised both on theoretical and empirical grounds (e.g. the 'marginalised' group has never been found). One point of criticism is particularly relevant for our analysis: namely, Berry's original assumption that individuals have a considerable amount of agency to 'pick' the acculturation strategy of their choosing. In other words, the core of Berry's model is based on a degree of free choice. However, in practice the range of choices is frequently quite limited, as Berry later agreed (Berry 1990, Berry 1997). It is questionable whether cultural minorities in general are in a position to choose freely their own acculturation strategy. The society in which they live might already have pre-established norms on how to manage diversity and could (gently) force its newer members to adapt to them, effectively limiting freedom of choice.

Bourhis et al. (1997) succeeded in making a model which accounts for the contextual factors that are underdiscussed Berry's theory. They designed the 'Interactive

Acculturation Model' (IAM) to explain changes in norms on diversity by looking at the stance of the majority culture, the minority cultures and the government. A modern version of the model can be found in Figure 3.1.

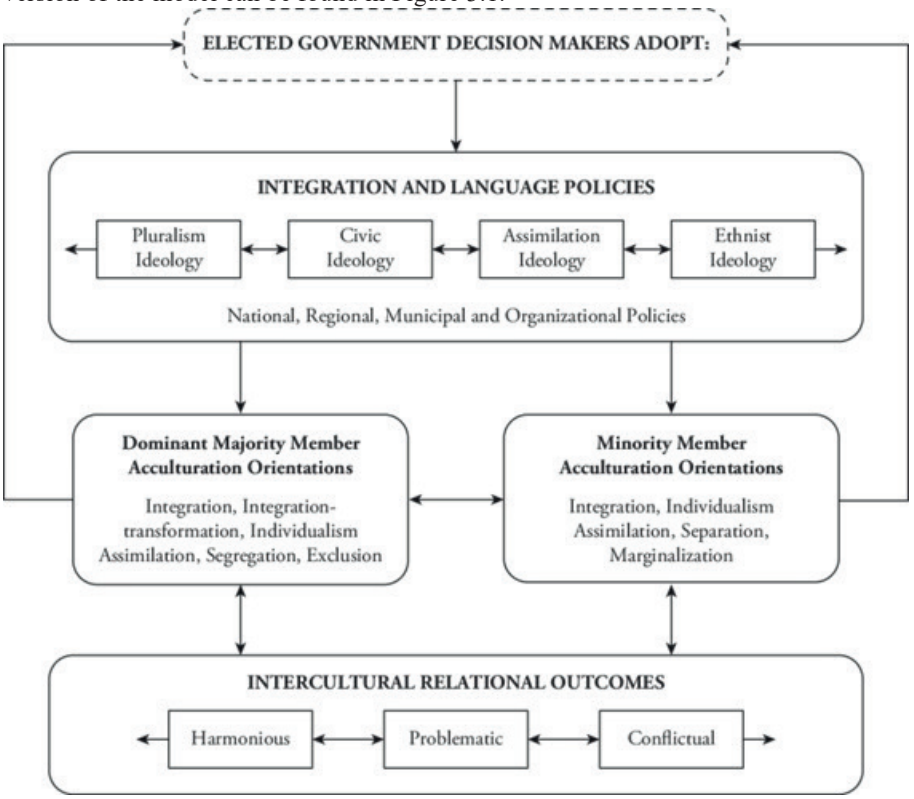


**Figure 3.1.** Interactive Acculturation Model of Bourhis and Montreuil, 2017.
*Source: Bourhis and Montreuil 2017: 53.*

The model offers a perspective on how factors other than the immigrants' own preference can influence their acculturation process. Without elaborately discussing all the different concepts mentioned, it is important to realise that Bourhis et al. view the norms and values on dealing with diversity as intrinsically dynamic and interactive. Norms concerning the best way to manage diversity are not set in stone and the three main actors (the government, members of the majority and members of the minorities) constantly influence each other's stances.

The model can provide clarification in the conceptual debate on 'integration' if we take into account two empirical findings. First of all, members of the immigrant community generally have a strong preference for 'integration' as a desirable acculturative strategy (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2003, Hehman et al. 2012, Rojas et al. 2014**)**. Secondly, members of the majority culture usually favour immigrants following the 'assimilation' and in some instances the 'integration' strategy (Horenczyk 1996, Van Oudenhoven, Prins and Buunk 1998, Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2003). Some analyses found a clear connection between the preference for assimilation and the degree of prejudice towards minorities (Kosic et al. 2005, Zagefka et al. 2014, López-Rodríguez et al. 2014, Rojas et al. 2014). It seems inevitable that these different stances of majority and minority group members will spark and conflict. An important question then would be what kind of state ideology, the government being the third major actor, is in place on the management of diversity. Answering this question takes us a step closer towards tracing the evolution of the concept integration, and thus also the role of language and language policy therein, in the public and scientific debate.

## Four state ideologies[6]

To address this issue we need to review briefly the four state ideologies as distinguished by Bourhis et al. (1997). The philosophy of *Pluralism* promotes cultural diversity. Citizens' freedom to express their cultural identity, or identities, is essential for the pluralist ideology. A major difference between pluralism and the other three ideologies is that in the former, the state should play an active role in fostering minority cultures, thus effectively helping them gain a foothold in society. Pluralism is inspired by the ideas of communitarian philosophers such as Charles Taylor, who is a strong advocate of a 'politics of difference' in which minority culture vitality is guaranteed by the state (Taylor 1994**)**. The *civic* ideology, which seems inspired by Jürgen Habermas' 'politics of dignity' (Habermas 1994), shares almost all premises with pluralism. Cultural minorities have the freedom to organise themselves within the 'civic' framework. However, unlike pluralism, this ideology advocates a strict policy of non-intervention in the cultural identity of all citizens, and thus financially supporting them is not an option.

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[6] This section draws heavily upon two articles published by the present author to develop the theoretical foundation of this dissertation: Houtkamp, C. (2015). Beyond assimilation and integration: the shift to 'national 'and 'transnational' inclusion. Acta Universitatis Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies, 8(1), 73-87; and Houtkamp, C. (2016). Inclusion in the 21st century: an exploration of policy opportunities and challenges. In Ozolina, Z. (Ed.). Societal Security: Inclusion-Exclusion Dilemma: a Portrait of the Russian-speaking Community in Latvia (pp. 29-43). Riga: Zinatne.

[7] See for example the contributions in Sonntag and Cardinal (2015)

The *assimilation* ideology expects the state to intervene in some areas of its citizens' private values**.** Minorities are expected to forsake their cultural and linguistic identities and adapt themselves to the reigning norms and values of their country of residence. This adaptation could happen naturally (in line with what Gordon observed) but can also be imposed via laws and regulations. Lastly, the *ethnist* ideology, which is related to ethnic nationalism, also expects immigrants to adapt themselves completely to the norms and values of the cultural majority. However, in some cases it is impossible for 'outsiders' to ever become a genuine part of the nation. Policies of *ius sanguinis* (i.e. citizenship is awarded based on ancestry) can prevent immigrants being fully accepted, for they do not share the same ethnic kinship as the autochthonous population.

Analysing a country's state ideology, or state tradition, is of crucial importance in understanding its policy towards minorities. Similar to the acculturative preferences of minority and majority group members, ideologies at the state level on acculturation can be subject to change. However, there is also evidence of many cases where a state's historical preference explains its current policy practice very well.[7] Many European states are currently converging towards an assimilation ideology. Since about 2000, mandatory citizenship courses in most European states have aimed to teach immigrants the host society's language and the presumed highlights of the dominant culture (e.g. important national historical events, norms and values). The citizenship regime in Europe has been described by Van Houdt, Suvavierol and Schinkel (2011) as 'neo-liberal communitarianism': immigrants are expected to assimilate willingly and completely within the dominant culture. Still, despite the shift towards assimilation ideology, most countries still refer to their approach as 'integration policy'. These changes partly explain why the concept of 'integration' has deviated from Berry's original definition (engaging with both the heritage and majority culture) in the public debate, and thus consequently why a new concept may be more appropriate.

**Beyond 'integration', towards 'inclusion'**

The shift towards linguistic and cultural assimilation as a policy principle in our current time is remarkable. In order for assimilation to succeed, immigrants need to forsake their cultural identity. This has always been complicated, but as we have seen in recent times, assimilation is becoming even more difficult, primarily due to the increasing importance of transnationalism.

Transnationalism is a crucial concept in the analysis of minority adaptation processes. Vertovec (1999) points out that due to the connectivity of individuals through increased physical mobility but also via the internet, telecommunications and satellite T.V., notions of 'place' and 'locality' are reconstructed: current communication technology allows individuals to form their own transnational 'fora' to communicate and express their identity. This evolution has consequences for concepts such as integration and inclusion, which are tightly intertwined with the nation state.

Looking at these outlined concepts, it seems that from a normative point of view, 'inclusion-friendly' policy would provide minorities with sufficient room to express their heritage culture and language, whilst not neglecting their connection to the host society culture. For instance, when reflecting upon language policies, an inclusionary policy would be favourable towards the adoption of minority language education in the official school curricula, next to host society language acquisition. In official government institutions, minorities could be addressed in their language of heritage, should they opt for it. However, such policies may not necessarily have in all cases and time periods exclusively positive consequences. For instance, if a minority is backed up by a powerful, potentially aggressive kin-state, designing the most effective inclusion policy can become even more complex. In what follows, we will reflect upon several issues that may arise when pursuing a policy of inclusion. In the past several states have implemented policies that contain some elements of an inclusion-friendly policy, such as those that are inspired by a multicultural ideology. These policy elements have faced empirical scrutiny. The following paragraphs will draw upon these existing empirical studies to outline several potential problems which diversity policies may cause. This list of problems is not exhaustive; however, it should give a general understanding of the type of issues that may arise.

### Empirical confusion on the effects of multicultural and assimilationist policies

Multicultural policies contain some elements of our definition of inclusion policy: they allow for cultural diversity and specifically give minorities the opportunity to express their cultural identities. In this section we will briefly discuss research on the effects of these kinds of policies and their assimilationist counterparts, taking inspiration from several scientific disciplines. Research covers, among other topics, the effects of ethnic community building, statistical material on the connection between diversity policy and labour market outcomes, and the influence of policy on the psychological disposition of minorities. Starting with the latter, socio-psychological research into the effects of assimilation policies on the mental health of minorities shows that forced assimilation generates a considerable amount of 'acculturative stress', sometimes leading to mental health problems (Sirin et al. 2013, Goforth et al. 2014, Yoon et al. 2013). Furthermore, it has been found that there is no connection between assimilation policy and the individuals' feelings of belonging to the host society (Wright and Bloemraad 2012). In addition, some minority groups, especially recent immigrants, can benefit from the presence of a strong community of co-ethnics in the host society. This is often called 'ethnic bonding' in minority studies literature (Putnam 2007): newcomers in society use their ethnic niche to ease their access into society. Their ethnic community can provide them with all sorts of assistance, such as finding a job or accommodation. Afterwards, once minorities have settled in, the next step of 'ethnic bridging' will start. Minorities then proceed to build up contacts with members of the majority population. This sequence of events has proved to be successful, for example regarding Polish immigrants in the

U.K. (Ryan et al. 2008). However, other research highlights the possible negative effects of multicultural policies on the adaptation of minorities. Koopmans (2010) concludes for example:

> The results suggest that multicultural policies, which grant immigrants easy access to equal rights and do not provide strong incentives for host country language acquisition and interethnic contacts, when combined with a generous welfare state, have produced low levels of labour market participation, high levels of segregation, and a strong overrepresentation of immigrants among those convicted for criminal behavior. (Koopmans 2010: 1).

He specifically mentions Sweden, the Netherlands and Belgium as countries that either have or had a policy tradition of multiculturalism, but at the same time score very low when it comes to labour market participation of immigrants. By contrast, he finds that countries with a policy leaning towards assimilation, such as France, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, have considerably more success integrating their migrants into the labour market. This strand of research would thus suggest that promoting diversity is in fact detrimental to the position of minorities, and that it would be in their best interest to assimilate in the culture of the host society. As this brief look at existing research shows, empirical results do not always paint a clear picture. This makes it difficult to draw a general conclusion on the practical effects of multicultural and assimilationist policies.

### The integration and inclusion paradox

The integration paradox concerns how majority and minority groups envision the 'ideal' acculturation strategies of minorities. Research has shown that these preferences can differ greatly. In many cases majority members wish for minority members to assimilate (Horenczyk 1996, Van Oudenhoven, Prins and Buunk 1998, Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2003), whilst minorities often opt for the strategy of integration in the sense of Berry (Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver 2003, Hehman et al. 2011, Rojas et al. 2014).

These opposing preferences from the majority and minority groups have at least two possible consequences. The first one is what has come to be referred to as the 'integration paradox' (Buijs et al. 2006; Van Doorn, Schepers and Dagevos 2012; Ten Teije, Coenders and Verkuyten 2013). This concept entails that those minorities who make an effort to integrate (sometimes even to a large extent assimilate) into the majority society are also the ones who have a relatively strong (compared to co-ethnics) perception of discrimination and suffer most from the mental health problems mentioned in the previous section. The efforts of this particular group are, according to themselves, not rewarded by the members of the majority. For instance, when CVs of two candidates for a job are comparable, employers often will not hire someone with a 'wrong' last name, a last name that has a clear migrant origin (Dolfing and Van Tubergen 2005, Lancee 2019). Research in the Netherlands shows that Afghan women who have obtained all the

highest Dutch language acquisition certificates, meaning that their knowledge of Dutch is very advanced, still have trouble on the job market, due to the fact they still have the wrong accent and do not speak perfect 'ABN'(Algemeen Beschaafd Nederlands, standard Dutch) (Ghorashi and Van Tilburg 2006). Majority members sometimes ask for an extreme degree of assimilation, to the point where there is no perceivable difference between majorities and minorities. This is a demand that many minorities do not wish to, or in some cases simply cannot, meet. Thus we can speak of an 'integration paradox': more successful integration can lead to frustration and feelings of rejection. Minorities may be disillusioned with the majority society, which may be a hindrance to achieving social cohesion.

The other consequence of the opposing preferences among majorities and minorities is not based on empirical evidence, but can still be argued as a likely hypothesis. Let us imagine a situation where a policy of inclusion is to be implemented. Minority languages are fully supported. Mother-tongue education is included in the official education curriculum and government institutes offer their communications in all the 'bigger' minority languages as well. Minorities will have the full opportunity to 'integrate' in the Berryan sense: adaptation to the host society whilst also maintaining their own cultural identity. Such a policy would naturally be the best way to achieve social cohesion, since it leaves much room for all members of society to celebrate their own cultural identities. In such a scenario, at least one major question needs to be asked: would such a policy indeed lead to social cohesion, given the fact that majority members usually strongly prefer minorities to assimilate? Majority members might actively oppose this inclusion-friendly policy. Their perception of minorities may deteriorate instead of improve. In the most common situation where the majority not only holds the numerical, but also the political and economic advantage, such a policy could weaken the position of minorities. In other words: a policy of inclusion will then be a detriment to social cohesion. This possible contradiction between inclusionary intentions and segregation-inducing consequences is what we could call the 'inclusion policy paradox'.

**(Relatively) powerful minorities**

When reflecting upon what constitutes a 'minority', most would first look at population figures. Minorities are always at a numerical disadvantage. However, the question is whether a numerical disadvantage necessarily implies a political or economic disadvantage. This firstly depends on the actual size of the minority: it can be imagined that a minority of 30% would in general be in a stronger position than one of 5%.

Secondly, the political and historical context is of great importance. In some countries, ethnic minorities hold, or have held, positions of political and economic power for decades. A third consideration is whether the given minority has a powerful kin-state that is actively involved in the wellbeing of its co-ethnics across the border. Some scholars analyse the dynamics of minority relationships vis-à-vis their nation state using the

framework of the 'quadratic nexus' (e.g. Smith 2002, Marácz 2014). In this framework it is argued that there are four important actors to consider: the minority group, the nation state, the kin-state (sometimes also referred to as 'external homeland) and an emerging 'Euro-Atlantic space' that mostly consists of supranational organisations such as the EU and NGOs. The interplay between these four actors would influence the position and attitude of minorities within their nation state: actions taken by one of them can disturb the relationships between the other actors as well. For instance: assuming the nation state implements assimilationist policies to promote social cohesion, this might provoke a reaction from the external homeland(s) of the targeted minorities. These minorities, aware of the support of their kin-state, would feel empowered actively to resist the policies of the nation state. In other words: taking into account the complex interplay of many different actors is of crucial importance when reflecting upon the 'ideal' minority policy. The goal of inclusion policy is usually to promote the social cohesion within their borders. It is apparent that the actions of a kin-state can co-determine whether this goal can be achieved.

Fourthly, smaller nation states housing sizeable minorities may fear that their own language and culture is under threat, if there is no policy in place to preserve their own heritage at the expense of minority cultures. In general, globalisation increasingly reduces the economic relevance of smaller languages in favour of the global ones. The influx of migrants is seen as a clear manifestation of advancing globalisation. This would be the case especially when a minority group's mother tongue is a larger, more economically relevant language than the national language. Market forces may then encourage many individuals to focus on learning the larger language instead.

## Conclusion

This theoretical exercise leads to at least three main conclusions. Firstly, even though language is understudied in current migration theories, there are venues within their current framework to fit it in as a separate factor. It seems evident that language skills are an intrinsic part of human capital, which is the main explaining factor for neoclassical migration theory. Similarly, language has great importance in setting up and maintaining transnational migration networks. This theoretical observation logically leads to two hypotheses. First, a multilingual language policy, that facilitates the language acquisition of immigrants and their descendants, can increase both the inflow and outflow of immigrants. Such a policy could increase the transnational connectivity of different immigrant groups, which in turn could lead to increased mobility between these communities. Multilingualism would be a catalyst for the already existing mechanism where migrants tend to follow 'beaten paths'. The second observation relates to the hierarchy of languages. We have already seen such a hierarchy in Fishman's GIDS and Lewis and Simon's EGIDS. Another author who designed such a hierarchy is Abraham de Swaan. In his *Words of the World* (2001) he argued in favour of a political-economic analysis of language hierarchy. De Swaan introduced the notion of 'Q-rankings',

which categorises languages based on their number of speakers. Languages ranked higher on the scale have a higher quantity of speakers, and are therefore considered more economically valuable. Those languages would thus have a robust position in the international linguistic landscape. The reverse applies to languages with a lower rank. Formulating the notion of hierarchy in neoclassical terms, speaking a higher-ranking language equals access to more human capital, compared to speaking a lower ranking language. Depending on the social context of the destination countries, speaking high-ranking languages thus obviously leads to better mobility options (i.e. motility).

The second main conclusion concerns the differences between the core concepts of migration/mobility/motility and assimilation/integration/inclusion. It has been argued that mobility, motility and inclusion are more suitable concepts than their counterparts in the present day and age. Assimilation and integration, which are quite similar according to politicians and scholars alike, are becoming distant goals in the age of ever-developing transportation and communication technological advancement. Free access to cheap internet and travel means for everyone in society render assimilation both as a natural process and forced by the state a complex, if not impossible, endeavour. A similar argument can be made regarding migration vs mobility/motility. The classic distinction between 'migration' and 'residential mobility' is based on the notion of 'uprootment'. Processes of migration would always involve a decoupling of the current economic and social context, and immersion into a different one. For instance, migrating from Turkey to the Netherlands involves leaving behind friends/ relatives in Turkey and immersing oneself into the Dutch social and economic context. Again, the technological advancements and the growing importance of transnationalism among migrant communities raise the question whether this 'uprootment' still takes place to the same extent for immigrants as it did half a century ago.

Thirdly, there is a possible interaction between mobility/motility and inclusion. Some scholars suggest that regarding language policy a trade-off exists between mobility and inclusion (Grin, Marácz, Pokorn and Kraus 2014). It claims that promoting more mobility normally leads to less inclusion and vice versa. Motility can be a necessary bridge to gain a better understanding of the intricacies of this presumed trade-off. Motility acknowledges that language policies will not directly impact an individual's desire to be mobile, but 'merely' expands his/her mobility potential. This means that from the perspective of physical mobility, it is unlikely that language policies will have a tremendous impact on the mobility-inclusion trade-off. However, the notion of motility also calls the idea of a static trade-off into question, since motility and inclusion are by no means antagonistic concepts. In fact, in many instances a strong form of linguistic inclusion, meaning that an individual has a solid grasp of both his/her mother tongue and the host society language, is a prerequisite for a high degree of motility. Motility in a sense thus encourages us to think beyond the idea of a static trade-off as a general rule, replacing it with case by case situational analyses.