

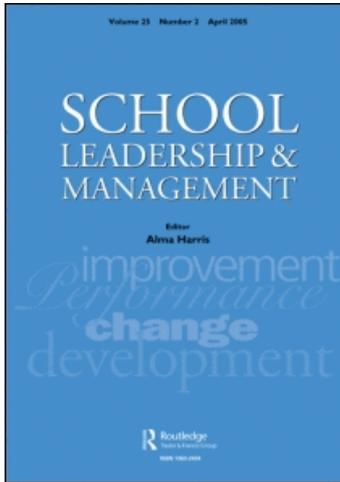
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### School leadership and equity: Dutch experiences

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# School leadership and equity: Dutch experiences

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There is little empirical evidence describing how school principals respond to the changing socioeconomic position and ethnic identities of the urban population. In this paper such empirical evidence is presented in respect of three primary school leaders in the Dutch cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The schools selected were identified as having an intercultural profile. The evidence shows the tensions connected with inclusive strategies in the social and cultural complexities of the present Dutch society.

## The Dutch context

Immigration to the Netherlands grew in the second half of the last century and consisted of labour migrants from the south of Europe, Turkey and Morocco. People came from the former colonies of Surinam and Indonesia, which had special relationships with the Dutch and the Dutch language, and refugees came from all over the world. As a result immigrants differ from each other and from the majority 'Dutch' along religious, linguistic, colour and ethno-cultural lines. Immigrants differ in official status and in rights to settlement (Leeman & Reid, 2006).

At the start of the new millennium the Netherlands has a population of 17 million. Of the current inhabitants 17.5% were born abroad or had at least one parent who had been. Of these, half originate from other Western countries such as Germany. The rest, the so called 'ethnic minorities', come predominantly from Turkey (21.9%), Morocco (18.6%) and Surinam (21.5%) (CBS, 2002). In 2003 the number of emigrants was higher than the number of immigrants for the first time since 1982.

The Netherlands did not have an elaborated immigration policy because of the ideological hegemony of temporary immigration. Dutch policies on immigration have developed rapidly during the last decade and have become increasingly restrictive. These policies are part of the European Community policies on immigration.

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*The legislative context*

National rules, resources and facilities restrict the autonomy of schools in implementing their own policy regarding equity, pluralism and inclusion.

One of the policy frameworks schools are confronted with is that on educational disadvantages, the *Onderwijsachterstandenbeleid*. Educational disadvantages are learning disadvantages students face that are related to their socioeconomic position. Cultural factors play a role in this. Poor performance in the Dutch language is cited as the most intractable problem. Educational inequality has a stubborn fixed hierarchy: Dutch pupils of well-educated parents score highest while lower down on the performance ladder we find the pupils of immigrant descent (Tesser, 2003; Ledoux, 2005). Dating from the 1970s national policy measures to address this comprise extra resources and facilities to appoint more staff at schools with many disadvantaged students; resources and facilities for 'community language education' and teaching 'Dutch as a second language'; and resources and facilities for pre-school and early childhood education. There were also extra resources and facilities for schools in disadvantaged areas.

Recently the policy has changed considerably in line with the new wind of realism that has been blowing in the Netherlands since the 1990s, a realism that depicts the ideal of the multicultural society as soft and politically correct. Pim Fortuyn, the Dutch politician murdered in 2002, was an exponent of this new realism. Almost 20% of the voters supported his party in the elections of spring 2002. As a consequence of this policy, there are fewer resources to counter the educational disadvantages of immigrant pupils and special language and cultural provisions in schools are no longer financed because they are no longer considered necessary. Provisions such as community language education are seen as the old policy of the 1970s and 1980s and since 2004 community language education has not been financed any more. This decision was not based on an evaluation of the results but on a stronger emphasis in policy on immigrants integrating more fully (Meijnen, 2004).

Teachers in the Netherlands are predominantly of Dutch descent. As a consequence of the discontinuation of community language education, many teachers of Turkish and Moroccan background are disappearing from schools and with them the ready possibility for cultural consultation and interpreter services. Owing to the financial cuts in primary education and the new neo-liberal economic policy of the current government, another category of immigrant teachers will disappear from schools. They, the so-called 'cultural intermediaries', are losing their jobs. These intermediaries are predominantly Moroccan and Turkish women who operate as a bridge between the school and the immigrant community. The first intermediaries were employed about 16 years ago on a special contract basis (Van Dam, 2004) but the temporary funding for this project is now being discontinued. For the staff of schools to become more multicultural, the Netherlands will have to wait for those immigrant youngsters to complete their studies who are beginning to register at the Dutch institutions for primary school teacher education.

Educational pluralism (article 23 of the Constitution) justified by value differences is a basic principle of the Dutch education system (Vermeulen, 2004; Dijkstra *et al.*, 2004). Since the 1980s, policy regulations have insisted that teachers pay attention to mutual respect and tolerance through *intercultural education*. With the increasing uncertainty regarding the integration of religious and ethnic minorities and the emphasis on assimilation, new policy proposals have been developed. According to a policy document from April 2004, the government introduced a bill to strengthen integration by teaching the basic values of Western society as one of the key goals of education. In line with the Dutch tradition of pluralism in education, the content and pedagogies of this integration education are not officially prescribed. Schools and teachers have considerable freedom in the way they achieve the official targets.

There is a long tradition of division along socioeconomic and cultural lines in education. The number of primary schools where more than half of the students are from an immigrant background is more than 580 out of a total of more than 7000 schools. These schools are mainly in the big cities, not surprisingly, given the number of immigrant students in these cities. There is a trend towards more segregation on ethnic lines. This trend seems to reflect demographic and housing patterns and the freedom in the Dutch system to establish schools on a confessional base (Vermeulen, 2004). Some evidence suggests that parental choice and the policy of the schools, such as marketing certain profiles and practising all kinds of gate-keeping methods, are leading to greater ethnic segregation (Karsten *et al.*, 2003). Parents have a real choice of public-authority schools and of private schools with a distinctive religious or philosophical character. These private schools are government funded and operate within the national education system. They have to meet educational standards, such as the minimum number of students required, national standards on the curriculum, national examinations and conditions of employment. Public-authority schools are freely accessible to all students. Providing a 'neutral curriculum', they are open to all students who wish to attend. More than two-thirds of all children, including a large number of immigrant children, go to a private denominational school.

The existence of Islamic and Hindu schools since the 1990s influences ethnic segregation too. There are currently 42 Islamic schools, all but two of them primary schools. About 8000 of the 130,000 Muslim children of school age attend these schools. The number of Islamic schools has been growing continually. Recently they have come under attack. The issues here are the integration of Muslim children and social cohesion.

The large cities have no statutory authority to influence the composition of schools. They use persuasion, a policy that is considered to be ineffective. The Ministry of Education has forbidden another policy, the use of quotas for students from the Dutch majority population and immigrant students per school. This is based on the argument that an ethnic differentiation must not be made.

*Cities where the study was conducted*

The study was conducted in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, the population of these cities being less than a million. In both cities the percentage of children of school-going age from a non-Western background is 60%. The urban environments of cities like Amsterdam and Rotterdam have become most multi-ethnic. Immigrants prefer to live in these cities, whereas the Dutch who lived there have moved to other areas, and often to nearby towns. At the same time, the birth rate of the Dutch majority population is lower than that of immigrants. On the basis of these figures, CBS (2004), the central office of statistics, expects the percentage of non-Western school children in the large cities to continue to rise until 2015. Precise predictions, however, are difficult to make.

On the outskirts of the cities are found areas where predominantly immigrants live, whereas there are concentrations of Dutch people in the city centre and in the towns and villages surrounding the big cities. In the city centre and 'the ring around the centre' the composition of the population is mixed both socioeconomically and ethnically.

**The study***Description of schools*

The schools in this study are primary schools (children aged 4–12) in Amsterdam (2) and Rotterdam (1). They are situated in 'the ring around the centre'.

The *Droom* is situated in Amsterdam. It is a public-authority school with a special pedagogic orientation (Dalton, Helen Parkhurst). For more than a decade the student population comprised 40% from an immigrant background (Moroccan, Turkish and many other nationalities such as Pakistani, Russian, Chinese and Surinamese-Dutch) and 60% of Dutch descent. This started to change about three years ago. Now the ratio is about 25% to 75%, due to a change in the composition of the youngest children. Most of the immigrant families living in the area no longer have children of primary-school age. To improve the socioeconomic mix in the area, rented social housing has been demolished and replaced by owner-occupier housing. As a consequence the original lower socioeconomic groups have made way for middle-class professionals who want to remain in the city.

The *Reis* is also situated in Amsterdam. It is a private (mixed Catholic and Protestant) school with an emphasis on the arts. The school has an active policy to change from being a predominantly Moroccan student population of low socioeconomic status to a mix of children from Dutch and immigrant descent, and with children from the middle class. The actual mix is 78% immigrant (half Moroccan) and 22% Dutch; 90% low and 10% high socioeconomic status (Dutch and some refugees from Afghanistan, Iran and Sudan).

The *Bloem*, a public-authority school, is situated in Rotterdam. Four years ago the school had very poor results and a bad image with parents. An experienced principal has been appointed to make major changes. In three years the school has changed

from being 100% black into an ethnically and socioculturally mixed school. In groups 1, 2 and 3 a balance of almost 50/50 immigrant/Dutch students has been achieved. The school has many Turkish and Moroccan students. Like the Dutch parents, the Surinamese and Cape Verdian parents are returning their children to the school having previously taken them away. At the moment the number of students is growing. The school is situated in an area with a lot of social housing. Owner-occupied houses line the avenues on the attractive perimeters of the neighbourhood. The neighbourhood is changing with some of the social housing being replaced by private houses. Better educated people who make a conscious decision to stay in the city, the political and cultural elite, are moving into the area. The middle groups left long ago. It is unlikely that they will return, as the private houses are too expensive for them.

### *Methods*

The choice of schools is a key consideration. The three schools chosen do not represent the average Dutch primary school. I selected schools that have an ethnoculturally diverse student population and were identified as having an interculturally inclusive profile. The three schools are in 'the ring around the centre', in areas that have both non-immigrant and immigrant schools, thereby providing a context to study the schools' policies in an arena of competition with other schools. I selected the Droom with a long history of being ethnically mixed and the Reis and the Bloem that are in the middle of a process of changing from black into mixed schools.

All the schools invited to participate in the research accepted immediately. (In the Netherlands ethics approval is not part of the research process.) I had a semi-structured interview with the principal of each of the schools in the principal's office. All three were male and of Dutch descent. Each interview lasted about 90 minutes. The interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed by the interviewer and sent for approval to the principals. In addition to the interviews I collected and analysed relevant policy documents and had short conversations with two parents of children at the schools and with four teachers in one of the schools. To complete the data collection I collected a variety of observational data such as signs to visitors (languages), and the types of cultural artefacts that were present in the school. Data collection was completed in October 2004.

## **Findings**

### *School policies*

The three schools developed a whole package of strategies to safeguard an ethnoculturally mixed composition of the student population. The strategies focus on marketing certain profiles and gate-keeping.

Marketing a profile is absolutely vital for Reis: 'The school is on the edge of a black island in a sea of white. It's the only black school in the area. People from the "black island" all come to the school but almost nobody from the "sea of white" has found their way here.' To attract the well-educated white Dutch parents, the school hired the services of communication experts. The school presents itself to the outside world with an 'art profile'. Droom has another strategy. The school is very proud to be a Dalton school and an ethnically and socioeconomically balanced school and wants to stay that way, which attracts a broad group of parents. Bloem promotes the image of a good quality school providing education at different levels and of an active neighbourhood school, buzzing with activities that everyone can participate in. The public-authority schools Bloem and Droom have to accept all children. They are allowed to refuse students if the maximum number of students per class has been reached. Private schools like Reis do not have to accept all children but cannot simply refuse children admission. A refusal has to follow a detailed procedure.

For all three schools the admissions policy is complicated. Groups of parents register in different ways. Dutch parents register their children when they are young to be assured of a place at the school of their choice. They are aware of their rights and are not easily deterred by vague answers. A lukewarm reception, however, can be sufficient for ethnic-minority parents to go to another school. They tend to register their children late. Double waiting lists (one for Dutch children and one for immigrants) are not allowed (on the grounds of differentiation by origin) but according to the school principals are secretly used by other schools to achieve or maintain the desired composition. The three principals do not use separate waiting lists. Reis and Bloem do not even have waiting lists but Droom does. The admission regulations are explained in the school's prospectus: 'Children are placed in order of registration but brothers and sisters of children already at the school have priority. If only 10% of the available places are still free, children living in the area with the same postal code as the school have priority. Children moving from another Dalton school also have priority.' The school has opted for this regulation to maintain the mixed character and to attract sufficient parents who actively support the Dalton method. The admission regulations have resulted in the desired mixed composition – Dutch parents are admitted by registering early and immigrant children via brothers and sisters. None of the three schools uses the popular method of adjusting the level of the voluntary parental contribution to regulate the composition of the student population.

As there is growing concern in society regarding ethnic segregation, schools are increasingly involved in consultation with municipal and cross-school administrative boards on this subject. They all have stories to tell about the policy of other schools that influence their possibilities. The principal of Bloem pointed out that other schools in the area ('schools that are deliberately slightly mixed on an extremely selective basis') act in a very calculating way and try to use his school as a sort of waiting room. They refuse children who register after the date when the financing is settled for the whole school year and send them to Bloem, as it will have spare places. The following year they invite these same children to register again but on time. In

the context of their selective admissions policy, the competition sends immigrant parents with a low level of education to Bloem, using the argument that the 'structure of care for the child' is better developed there. Droom has competition from black schools in the neighbourhood and a white (Montessori) school on the edge of the district. The principal: 'As a school you can implement an admissions policy but external circumstances, such as the policy of schools in the neighbourhood . . . will always influence that policy. Denomination also plays a role as schools merge along denominational lines, not on the basis of geographical location. Their philosophical profile is very changeable. If there's a shortage of students it'll be diluted; when there're sufficient students registering it can become stronger and more selective again.'

### *Recognition of differences*

The principals all strive for an ethnically mixed school. They base this on different arguments. The two schools in Amsterdam say that attending an ethnically mixed school is important for the future qualification of children as citizens and employees in a multicultural society. Droom: 'If you profess to teach children to get on well with each other . . . then you must make sure that children from different cultures attend the school.' The ideal of the principal of Bloem is that the school should reflect the population of the neighbourhood. In an ethnically mixed neighbourhood the school should be so too: 'A school must be at the centre of the community . . . . If you don't want to have a feeling of "us and them" in a community but a feeling of "us", then you've got to have contact with each other. Schools can do something about this by organizing the school as an active community of learning where we undertake activities together.'

According to the principals, to achieve and maintain a good balance in the background of the student population it is important that different groups of parents can feel a bond with the school. The Reis does everything possible to form close ties with the local immigrant community. A crèche is located in the school building and there is also a separate parents' room where immigrant parents can follow Dutch courses. The principal of Reis has studied the differences between the parents to meet their needs: 'People think that mixed schools automatically promote mutual integration. That's definitely not the case . . . . If you want to give information to immigrant mothers, you have to start with tea, coffee and homemade biscuits. An interpreter has to be present and a topic like "Who's the boss at home, you or your child?" has to be presented with the help of role-playing. If I organize such a session, the well-educated Dutch parents will arrive at 9.30 and five minutes later say, "Aren't we going to start, I've got to leave at 10.30, as I've taken time off work." Those parents do like role playing but say, "I don't want to see that every year. It's nice to see once."'

Droom has studied cultural differences in the style of upbringing between parents and school. In the Netherlands it is the custom that parents organize the care of the

children during the lunch break. At Droom, Moroccan and Turkish mothers primarily do this. They have their own culturally determined approach to child-rearing. This regularly results in problems for the children and the team: ‘Sometimes children find themselves in an extremely strict regime, while during lessons there is great emphasis on self-reliance and a certain measure of freedom. Sometimes the rules are not really clear and children experiment with the huge freedom they have, also during lessons. This causes problems and at the same time provides plenty of opportunity for dialogue. It’s a substantial form of parental participation by immigrant parents, which until now hasn’t been achieved in other ways.’ Another example concerns the reaction to problem behaviour by children: ‘We recently had a problem with a group of children. It was about extorting money and threatening each other. We invited the parents in question to the school. The parents reacted very differently. Children from a Pakistani family started to greet every day very stiffly. Apparently at home they’d been told: “Now you’ll behave yourself, you’ll follow the rules and that includes saying hello to the principal.” Another immigrant parent said: “I want to send my child back to my own country; it’s going to go wrong here.” One of the Moroccan parents denied that his son had been involved, while we knew (from what other children said) that he was up to his neck in it. These different reactions from parents make it difficult to tackle the problem with the cooperation of all parents.’

‘Coexisting but also not coexisting’ is typical of the daily life of parents and children in the neighbourhood and at school, according to Bloem. The school organizes activities for the immigrant community such as courses on upbringing and Dutch-language courses. In addition, ‘we try to get parents in mixed groups to help each other. We talk to each other. We sit on consultative committees together. The immigrant parents aren’t the most highly educated. That’s not always easy. It’s a question of a long process. You don’t achieve this just like that. But we’re working on it.’

The principals are acquainted with social and cultural differences between children and have developed somewhat different policies in recognition of these. They all for example push a Moroccan girl to think of doing pre-university education, the highest academic level of secondary education in the Netherlands. They differ in their attitude towards cultural sensitivity. Droom: ‘Boys from an Islamic background find it difficult to strip off and shower, even from a very young age. We’ve said, we’re not here to change Islam, if he doesn’t want to shower naked then he must bring swimming trunks with him. No problem. At first we thought, we’re against that, we don’t want that, it makes the child stand out. The only one in the group who’s showering in his swimming trunks but at a certain point you just put that behind you.’ The principal at Reis told us about cultural tensions at the time of exceptional political events: ‘The reactions of the team to an event like September 11th are totally different from those of the majority of Moroccan children.’ Such tensions are not noticeable on a daily basis but it is important that the team takes these into account cognitively and emotionally. He says that it is difficult to find a balance between accepting diversity and setting boundaries in the name of communality and personal

autonomy. The principal of Bloem takes another stance. He is not really a proponent of great cultural sensitivity. Ethnic diversity is simply a fact. It does not need extra emphasis. Good quality education and cooperation is all important. The principal of Droom, like Reis, struggles with balancing diversity and communality. Another difficult point for him: 'If you want to settle a conflict in a group, the word "discrimination" often comes up. Nine times out of ten, this doesn't happen, but if it does, if you're accused of discrimination, it really gets to you. Anyway, not all teachers are that tactful. Teachers can discriminate too.'

### *Inclusion strategies*

Inclusion strategies focus on the pedagogic approach, the curriculum and social safety.

The schools developed different pedagogic approaches to meet the needs of pupils of mixed ability in Dutch. Droom favours the Dalton approach for the accent on cooperative learning and for the possibility of individual attention to the students. Reis, bearing in mind that it wants to become a school for a diverse group of students, has looked for didactic systems that will give all students the attention they need. If students drop out, a six-week individual education plan is immediately drawn up. The school has appointed internal supervisors and remedial teachers for these activities. Bloem took comparable measures regarding the content and organization of the education they offer. Given the diversity of the student population there is virtually no whole-class teaching. They try to serve the weak, the strong and the average groups and have adopted new methods to achieve this.

The three schools deal differently with cultural diversity in their curriculum. Droom does not want to favour any of the population in the celebrating of religious festivals. 'Christmas dinner' is called the 'end-of-year dinner' and they do not celebrate any religious festivals but there is a children's festival for everyone. Bloem tackles this differently. They celebrate Muslim and Christian festivals. 'Christmas is simply called Christmas. It's wrong to call it something else. The Netherlands is too soft about this kind of thing', the principal said. It is usual at the three schools to give the children the day off on their special religious festivals.

There is a difference between the two state schools and the private school regarding value-forming education. Reis is by origin a Protestant school. The old group of teachers always conveyed the Protestant identity by, for example, reading the Children's Bible. They are looking as a team for a new approach. They pay attention to values like safety, mutual trust, love and happiness, making links between picture books and the Bible and the Koran. Droom's most important message is 'learning to work together'. The principal avoids religious education: 'After all these years [he has worked at the school for 15 years] it's still difficult to give shape to diversity. I don't do very much, for example, about teaching philosophy. Precisely because all too often you approach things from a Christian or secular background without realizing it. As a public-authority school, at the moment we

don't go further than "associating with each other, playing with each other, working together and telling each other about what certain religions mean and trying to get respect for this. But respect is such an empty term. In any case, don't judge in advance. I notice that I have trouble with this. Religions often try to "restrict the possibilities of the body". Think of circumcision, fasting, living soberly as a Calvinist. I think, keep your hands off the body and start enjoying life. I think it's hard to give form to this and to deal with such diversity. There are numerous taboos and only little in common. This is possibly why a certain caution has developed, a reluctance to inform students even about the Christian religion.' Cooperation is also crucial for Bloem. And integration into Dutch society: 'If you can cooperate with others, without necessarily liking them and realizing that it's easier with some than it is with others. We also want to instil in them that we're educating them for the Dutch situation.'

Intercultural activities in the sense of informing pupils about different cultures in the countries of origin are out of fashion at the three schools. They focus on the present diversity in Dutch society. Bloem is the most explicit about this: 'We're now doing an artists' project about the Rotterdam area. Children have to learn about that. The textbooks provide the necessary information on the countries of origin. We don't need to do anything extra about that.' It is striking that the principals do not mention a 'social reconstructionist' approach to intercultural education, an approach that develops a political literacy that links the recognition of diversity to issues of wider social justice leading to social transformation (Sleeter & Grant, 1987; Banks *et al.*, 2001; Leeman, 2003).

Social safety is, according to the principals, crucial for children and parents. The pictures in all schools reflect the ethno-culturally diverse student population. All schools have a Surinamese group teacher and assistants from different backgrounds. To demonstrate that everyone is welcome, the principal of Droom is at the door of the school every morning to greet parents. In this way he also keeps an eye on safety in the playground. Droom organizes various extra cultural activities at the school to form a bond with well-educated as well as with less well-educated parents. It alternates an art market (with performances by children and the sale of children's artwork), which is popular with well-educated parents, with a bazaar (with games and tombola), which less well-educated parents enjoy more and also participate in more. For the same reason Reis varies activities for parents. The three principals said that they get little response from immigrant parents. Parents do steadfastly attend parents' evenings though. Each school encourages active involvement in the Participation Council and Parents' Council. All three schools have written material only in Dutch. In the past they also used material in Turkish and Moroccan. This is no longer considered to be socially desirable in the Netherlands. Moreover, the parents have gradually acquired sufficient knowledge of Dutch. If they get into difficulties they can always ask for help from someone they know or through the interpreters' telephone, although the latter is exceedingly expensive.

## Discussion

Research question: *In what ways do principals facilitate access to school for all children?*  
Our specific interest is in inclusion and avoidance strategies and in the recognition of difference and communality.

The three schools have a diverse (cultural, religious and socioeconomic background) student population and an intercultural profile. They see it as their task to recognize difference and to give all students equal opportunities for success at school. This task has to be undertaken in a hard political climate in which the emphasis is on assimilation and citizens' own responsibility for the quality of their lives.

There is a strong tendency to segregation on ethnic lines in the Netherlands. It is extremely difficult for schools to reach and to keep a good balance between the Dutch/immigrant/socioeconomic status of the students. The school principals interviewed represent two types of reasoning concerning their desired ethnically mixed composition. Two of the principals actively strive for a good balance in ethnic-cultural and socioeconomic background. The other emphasizes community relations and therefore opts for a student population that mirrors the mixed area in which his school is located. For all of them the mixed composition of the student population is an important part of their active school policy and strategy, both official and unofficial. The three schools are situated in areas of Amsterdam and Rotterdam where the population is mixed, thereby providing plenty of need and scope for policy on the composition of the student population. The three principals have developed their own policies to include different groups of students.

The principals use external and internal strategies to achieve the ideal composition and to offer children safety and good quality education. Given the population density in the cities, the good transport facilities and the minimal differences between schools in terms of government funding and parental choice, external policy such as marketing a profile and the gate-keeping methods of the principals are rather important. Internal measures to bond groups of parents and children to the school complement these strategies. These measures focus on the pedagogic approach, the curriculum, social safety and the composition of the team. The stories of the three principals show that a school with a well-balanced ethnic mix and socioeconomic composition is exceedingly difficult to maintain. It is much simpler to be and to remain a black or white concentration school. With their direct policy of maintaining a balance, the three principals are pioneers. Managing diversity and communality is an art about which there is still very little shared knowledge.

One of the factors influencing the ability of principals to respond to diversity is the scarcity of teachers from minority cultures in the Dutch school system (Leeman & Ledoux, 2003). The schools have virtually no group teachers from an ethnic-minority background, although immigrants do fulfil more marginal positions such as cultural intermediary, assistant and subject specialist.

In the Netherlands the ideal of the multicultural society is considered nowadays to be soft and not realistic. Superficial tolerance and indifference to ethnic diversity

reign. The official policy emphasis is on assimilation. The principals interviewed took a somewhat different stance. Although argued on different grounds they all favour a mixed community in their schools. They care for success for all children and explain that it takes a real effort to reach these goals. They are aware that mixed schools are increasingly arenas for the sociocultural tensions in society. The principals talked about their successes and concerns in this field. Their stories show that distributive justice alone is insufficient to engage with the cultural complexity of today (Vincent, 2003). Concepts of cultural exclusion need to be part of social justice and hence of the cultural and relational dimensions of social justice. It is striking, however, that the principals do not mention a 'social reconstructionist' approach to cultural diversity.

### Notes on contributor

**Yvonne Leeman** is a senior lecturer and researcher in education at the Universiteit van Amsterdam and professor in education at Windesheim University of applied sciences in Zwolle, The Netherlands. Her fields of interest include diversity in education and the professionalism of the teacher.

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