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Dutch Women are Liberated, Migrant Women are a Problem: The Evolution of Policy Frames on Gender and Migration in the Netherlands, 1995–2005

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Abstract

Over the past decade, there has been a major shift in Dutch gender equality policy to an almost exclusive focus on migrant women. Simultaneously, the focus of 'minority policies' has shifted more and more towards gender relations. The appearance of migrant women at the top of the political agenda is remarkable. In this article we examine how this construction of migrant women as a political problem has come about, and consider its implications. As we argue, the dominant policy frames of emancipation and individual responsibility are reinforcing a dichotomy between the autochthonous 'us' and the allochthonous 'them'. As the problem is increasingly defined as a cultural one, it is implicitly stated that there is no problem with the dominant culture and society. Barriers for participation are exclusively located in the migrant (Muslim) culture. In this view, Muslim migrants should first change their culture before they can fully integrate in Dutch society.

Keywords

Migration policy; Gender; Integration; the Netherlands; Policy framing; Policy effects

Introduction

Throughout the 1990s gender equality and multiculturalism were seen as compatible policy goals. In both policy logics diversity was proclaimed as an important value.

Multiculturalism as a policy goal and project has, however, increasingly come under attack (Joppke 2004; Kofman 2005). It has been contested as essentialist and reifying cultural groups. Others have pointed to the danger of cultural separatism and segregation. From a feminist perspective it has been argued that there is a tension between multiculturalism and gender equality (Okin 1999). According to feminist political theorist Susan Moller Okin, the multicultural exhortation to respect all cultures often conflicts with

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the liberal values of freedom and gender equality, because some practices and values of cultural minorities are reinforcing inequality and violating the rights of women (1999: 14). According to Okin, granting multicultural rights to these minorities will perpetuate patriarchal cultures that subjugate women. Okin's position has triggered many reactions opposing the idea of an intrinsic opposition between multiculturalism and feminism (Cohen *et al.* 1999).

The growing critique voiced by actors with very different political positions has resulted in a retreat from multiculturalism as a policy goal in many European countries in the late 1990s (Modood 2003; Joppke 2004; Kofman 2005). September 11 and subsequent events (Bali, Casablanca, Istanbul, Madrid, London) have given an impetus to this shift. The attacks on civilians led to a widespread questioning about a presumed 'clash of civilizations', culminating in suspicions about the possibilities and willingness of Muslims to be integrated in 'Western' societies (Modood 2003: 101). One reaction in different parts of Europe and the United States has been a reassertion of national identity (Kofman 2005: 455; Modood 2003: 114) and stricter integration demands (Doomernik 2005; Joppke 2004).

The Netherlands is frequently mentioned as a clear example of this policy shift (Entzinger 2003; Modood 2003; Joppke 2004; Kofman 2005). In recent Dutch integration measures it is stipulated that people must integrate and understand the norms and values of Dutch society. One of the central values defended as 'Dutch' is gender equality. Remarkable in this process is how some political actors, who have never been strong advocates of gender quality before, now use the argument of gender equality to reassert national identity and place more restrictive demands upon immigrants and resident minorities.

As we will argue, migrant women have become an 'emblematic' policy problem (Hajer 1995) in the Netherlands. Unequal gender relations in minority groups (particularly among Muslims) are now seen as a core problem, demonstrating the 'backward' character of Islam and the gap between the 'modern' Dutch culture and the imported culture of immigrants. This problem is principally located in men and a negative masculine culture. Contradictions prevail when it comes to women. Migrant women are not only represented as victims of this misogynous culture, but – surprisingly – also as the principal key to solving problems of integration and emancipation. This is because the emancipation of migrant women is viewed as a crucial step towards the emancipation of the 'migrant community' in general.

In this article we analyse how and why gender has become the key issue in policy frames on the integration of ethnic minorities. We examine how a parallel shift has occurred in Dutch gender equality policy to an almost exclusive focus on migrant women or women from ethnic minorities. In focusing on this double shift, we ask questions such as: What gendered cultural practices are seen as a problem? What is the gender model that immigrants need to adapt to, and what is defined and promoted as a national gender regime? To answer these questions, we reconstruct the policy frames on gender and migration over the last decade, and investigate what actors have been involved (which coalitions) in shifts in framing, what arguments are used and what possible counter-arguments/frames can be traced?

Reconstructing Policy Frames

The policy process is often a policy contest where the actors involved compete over different definitions of a problem (Hajer 1995; Stone 1998; Bacchi 2005). What is at stake in policy contests is what is represented as the problem, and by whom, and the different assumptions that underpin these representations. Some definitions of issues are organized into politics while other definitions are organized out, some aspects of social reality are included and others are left undiscussed (Hajer 1995: 42–3). In the policy process the actors involved give a particular shape to social problems in the ways they speak about them and in the proposals advanced to address them (Bacchi 2005: 224). A careful analysis of this process aims to understand the ways in which a social problem is represented in the political domain, what particular understanding gains dominance at some points and why, and what understandings are discredited (Hajer 1995: 44). Also, it is of central importance to examine which actors form a coalition on the basis of a certain policy representation.

To explore how the debate on migrant women has evolved and what representations of migrant women as a 'policy problem' have gained dominance over time, we reconstruct the framing of this issue within the political arena. For this reconstruction we adopt insights from frame-analysis, an approach that has mainly been used to study political communication, media discourse and social movements, and more recently has been extended to study policy-making processes. We use the concept of framing to stress the action component (Rein and Schön 1996). Actors may 'use competing or convergent frames to (re)construct a specific cultural orientation which favours and justifies their own policy position' (Triandafyllidou and Fotiou 1998). Policy frames have several important political functions that may be used deliberately and strategically by the different actors involved (Stone 1989: 295): (a) challenging or protecting social order, (b) identifying causal agents responsible for the problem, (c) legitimizing and empowering problem-'fixers', and (d) creating new political alliances. In our understanding of policy-framing, we do not see all framing in the political realm as strategic and intentional.

The policy frame method seeks to discover dominant and/or competing frames in the discourse of political actors that make sense of different situations and events, contribute blame or causality, and suggest lines of action (Rein and Schön 1996). Frame analysis can help identify how discursive strategies – be they intentional or not – modify the process itself by excluding certain frames or actors and promoting others. We use a critical frame analysis approach (Verloo 2005) to reconstruct policy frames on migration and gender, based on diverse methods of frame analysis as developed to analyse social movement framings (Snow and Benford 1992), policy texts (Graaf and Hoppe 1992) and gender impact assessment (Verloo and Roggeband 1996).

Snow and Benford (1992) structure social movement frames according to their definition of the problem (diagnosis), the proposed solution to the problem (prognosis), and their call for action (who is responsible for solving the problem). These elements of frames can also be found in policy texts and

debates. Within policy analysis, Van de Graaf and Hoppe's breakdown of policy texts into their respective explicit and implicit causal, final and normative chains is particularly useful. Causal chains are the connections between what is seen as a cause and what is seen as an effect of a certain policy problem. Final chains are the connections between what is defined as goal and what as means to reach this goal. Normative chains are the connections between various levels of what is seen as right and what is seen as wrong (Graaf and Hoppe 1992). To analyse the dimension of gender in the framings, gender impact assessment (GIA), which distinguishes between structures and processes of gender inequalities, provides a useful framework (Verloo and Roggeband 1996).

The above-mentioned elements of diagnosis, prognosis, roles, causality, normativity, finality and gender have been translated into an analytic framework that consists of a coding scheme with a set of sensitizing questions on each element (Verloo 2005). The first category is about voice or standing and asks which actor speaks, on which occasion, to what audience or forum, and in what form (interview, policy document, letter, essay, etc.). This element is important to identify who is involved in the construction of a new frame and who supports this frame (frame-coalition). The second category of diagnosis asks what is represented as the problem, why it is seen as a problem, and what is mentioned as causes of the problem. It also analyses the attribution of roles in the diagnosis, such as who is seen to have made the problem, and who is the problem-holder, who are possible victims and perpetrators. The third category concerns the prognosis that contains what is represented as the solution to the problem, what goals are formulated, how these goals should be achieved. It also analyses the relationship between ends and means. The fourth category is the call for action (or non-action), who is given a voice in suggesting the course of actions, who should act and who is acted upon.

These sensitizing questions are used to code different positions on the above-mentioned dimensions for each analysed text, starting from the assumption that different frames may be presented within one policy document. The analytic tool helps to group ideas into policy frames that typically differ in what is presented as the central problem or as solution to this problem.

We take Snow and Benford's concept of strategic framing (1992), or frame-alignment strategies, to analyse the evolution of frames over time. Although the state acts as one actor towards its citizens, it is by no means a monolithic actor. The pluralism of the state becomes visible in the policy-making process when different, sometimes inconsistent or even excluding, frames may be articulated within one policy document. The state is also a changing actor over time as different coalitions may take office to govern the state. Snow and Benford's concept of frame-alignment strategies, although originally developed to analyse the dynamics between movements, audience and adversaries, can be usefully applied to analyse the dynamic nature of framing by the state. Frame-alignment strategies like frame-bridging, frame amplification, frame extension and frame transformation, may be used by ruling governments either to stress a certain continuity in state policies, while looking for policy change, or to suggest change even while doing business as usual.

A reconstruction of policy frames on gender and migration in the Netherlands is complicated by the almost continuous shifts in policy labels and categories. In the Netherlands, gender equality policies are called 'emancipation' policies (*emancipatiebeleid*), but in the 1990s this policy was increasingly called 'diversity' policy (*diversiteitsbeleid*), so as to stress intersections with ethnicity, class and sexuality. Policies directed at migrants have also been labelled differently over time. In the 1980s, they were called policies on ethnic minorities (*ethnische minderheden*); in the 1990s the new label became integration policies (*integratiebeleid*). Also, the label of foreigners policy or aliens policy is used in relation to regulations on entrance and permits.

Since then, migrant women have been labelled differently over time. In the period under study the group has been referred to as 'allochthonous' women (*allochtone vrouwen*); black, migrant and refugee women (*zwarte, migranten- en vluchtelingvrouwen*); women from ethnic minorities (*vrouwen uit etnische minderheden*); and non-Western immigrant women (*niet-westerse migranten*). These different labels are meaningful as they each give a specific representation of the group and its characteristics.

The term most often used in policy texts and debates is that of 'allochthonous' women. *Allochthonous* literally means 'different in relation to' and is used to distinguish migrants from the 'autochthonous' population. The label 'allochthonous' in the Dutch context means 'of foreign descent' and implicitly refers to mainly Moroccan and Turkish migrants and their offspring. Second- and third-generation migrants, although often naturalized, are still labelled allochthonous. In this article we alternatively use the policy label allochthonous women and the internationally more common label of migrant women, although we think that neither of these labels is accurate to describe the specific position or the rootedness of these women in Dutch society.

Political context and data

The data studied are policy documents and transcripts of parliamentary debates on the integration of minorities and the emancipation of women between 1995 and 2005. In this period, four different coalitions governed. From 1995 until 1998 the first 'Purple' cabinet took office, consisting of the Social Democrats (PvdA), the Conservative Liberal Party (VVD), and the Progressive Liberal Party (D'66). This was the first Dutch cabinet after the Second World War that did not include the Christian Democrats (CDA). The Purple coalition continued for a second period from 1998 to 2002. In 2002, a new right-wing populist party (Lijst Pim Fortuyn [LPF], named after its murdered charismatic leader) entered the Dutch electoral arena after a major victory in the elections. This party formed a coalition with the Christian Democrats and the Liberal Party, headed by Prime Minister Balkenende, which only lasted for 87 days. In the following elections, the LPF lost votes and a new centre-right coalition of CDA, VVD, and D'66 took office in May 2003.

The texts were selected to include all relevant policy shifts addressing migrant women. *Gender equality policies*, as developed in the Netherlands from 1976

onwards, only marginally addressed the issue of migration and ethnicity before 2003. One important exception to this was the so called VEM (women and minorities) projects that ran between 1984 and 1992. These projects aimed to improve the labour market participation of women from ethnic minorities. In the period under study, 1995 to 2005, most gender equality programmes did not include separate chapters, paragraphs or references to ethnicity, migration or integration. The 1996 policy plan 'Emancipation under construction' marginally addresses migrant women. In the 1997 policy report there is a paragraph on ethnicity and gender. The gender equality policy documents issued in 1998, 1999 and 2000 do not contain a separate chapter or paragraph on ethnicity, migration or integration and were therefore not selected for our analysis. The policy programmes of 2001, 2002 and 2003, on the other hand, do include separate paragraphs on migrant women. The programmes discuss the opportunities and obstacles that these women face when participating in labour and politics. A special action plan concerning migrant women, requested by the Parliament, was presented in 2003. Both this plan and the parliamentary debate on this plan are included in our analysis.

Parallel to this, the older *policy programmes and yearly reports on ethnic minorities* only occasionally addressed women. The minority reports of 1997, 1998 and 1999 include separate chapters on the emancipation of black, migrant and refugee women. The 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003 reports do not address women from ethnic minorities separately. In March 2003 the Directorate responsible for integration and minorities moved from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the Ministry of Justice. In the same year a special action plan concerning migrant women, in cooperation with the Minister for Equality Policies, was developed, and a high-profile commission to stimulate the participation of migrant women was installed (Commission Rosenmöller or PaVEM).

In this article we first examine which frames have dominated in the policy documents on migration and emancipation of the different governments that were in office between 1995 and 2005. We also look at alternative frames presented by other actors involved in the political debate on these issues. Then we take a closer look at the changes over time in the different elements of policy frames: diagnosis, prognosis and call for action. Finally, we analyse how the dominant problem representations affect migrant women as the central subject of these policies, and present some ideas to understand the changes that have been found.

The Evolution of Dutch Policy Frames on Gender and Migration

1995–1998: stressing the value of diversity

Policy frames on integration and emancipation presented by the two Purple Coalitions echo a rhetoric of *multiculturalism*. In the proposed policies cultural diversity is presented as a source of richness for society:

> In the conviction that optimal use of the existent social diversity will enhance the quality of society, social diversity as a source of quality is taken as

> the point of departure for emancipation policy. (TK 25601, no. 2: 95 [references to deliberations in Parliament are listed in the Appendix])

This accent on diversity as a quality is introduced as a new orientation of emancipation policy: 'the emphasis has shifted from the backward position of (groups of) women to the recognition of the value of diversity for society as a whole' (TK 26815, nos 1–2: 95). Multiculturalism is also formulated as a goal in migration policy. The 'Integration Policy Plan 1999–2002' states:

> There is nothing wrong with expressing the hope and expectation that our society is becoming a multicultural society . . . The government does not have the right to deprive minorities from expressing their cultures. In integration policy it should be recognized that our society has become multicultural and that this bears its consequence, also and more fundamentally for our democratic state. (TK 1998–1999, 26333, no. 2: 7)

The emphasis on diversity and multiculturalism appears to be ambivalent. While the authorities want to recognize the value of cultural difference, they see the 'diverse' population groups mainly in terms of a range of social problems (poverty, unemployment, low educational level). Migrant women are presented as not being as emancipated and 'advanced' as 'Dutch' women and should therefore change in order to be more similar to the autochthonous population. In contrast to the multicultural rhetoric 'different backgrounds', 'different perspectives' and 'diverse cultures' are mentioned by the government not as sources of advantage or wealth, but rather as sources of disadvantage.

During this period there is little political contestation between the different political parties over the dominant multicultural frame. Typically, the Minister responsible for Minority Policies, Dijkstal (VVD), notes that 'we all agree that minorities should be given the perspective of full participation in society and that pluriformity, mutual respect, and maintenance of cultural identity, solidarity, tolerance and integration should be the core concepts of our policy' (HTK 1995–1996, 24 401, no. 15: 7). The parliamentary committee for minority policy focuses strongly on labour market participation, education and delinquency as policy issues and pays little attention to migrant women as a specific target group. Left-wing parliamentarians within the gender equality committee instead emphasize the difficulty migrant women have in accessing the labour market.

Overall, migrant women are not yet an important policy subject in this period; various measures are proposed to stimulate their participation in labour and decision-making, but no structural policies are developed to improve their position. The dominant government frame is a *participation* frame, with the (left) opposition stressing problems of *access*.

1998–2002: diversity becomes problematic

At the end of the 1990s, two other frames emerge in the policy documents presented by the Purple II cabinet. These can respectively be characterized as a *restriction* frame, which focuses on how a wave of new immigrants

through marriages can be prevented, and a *vulnerablility* frame that seeks to protect legally migrant women who have dependent residence permits but seek to leave their violent partner. These frames emerge when discussing a proposal for a new law on the integration of migrants. This law, which came into force on 30 September 1998, obliges immigrants to undergo an assessment when applying for a residence permit. This assessment determines which programme the migrant should follow to get a permit. The settling programme consists of three parts: Dutch language, orientation on Dutch society (including gender relations), and orientation on the labour market. In the parliamentary debates on this bill it becomes clear that the immigration issue causes considerable tension within the Purple Coalition. This is particularly visible when the legal position of women is discussed. While the left (PvdA) emphasizes the vulnerability of women who legally depend on their partner, and advocates a less restrictive law that gives women an independent permit after three years of marriage, in case of decease of the partner, or in case of violence, the right (VVD) wants to discourage the entrance of new migrant women as marriage partners. They fear that a more permissive law will result in more abuse of the law. This position is shared by the Christian Democrats (CDA) in opposition, who even argue that the period of dependence should be prolonged from three to five years, as it was in the old law (TK 89, 21 June 2000).

A contrasting frame, in which the emphasis is on emancipation of migrants, appears to be present in the constitution of Commission AVEM in 2001. The focus of this committee is to study the issue of labour market participation of women from ethnic minority groups and to develop policy initiatives to stimulate their participation. In line with this participation frame, there is a growing criticism by mainly left-wing MPs within the gender equality committee (and partly also within the committee on integration policy) of the lack of structural policies to improve the position of migrant women, resonating with the earlier *access* frame. PvdA MP Bussemaker urges the state secretary to develop specific policies to stimulate the participation of migrant women (HTK, 27 061, no. 7); she fears this group will be ignored by both gender equality and integration policy. The state secretary responds to this petition by sending an inventory of cabinet policy for allochthonous women to Parliament in March 2003 (SZW03–194), which according to her demonstrates that sufficient measures are taken.[1]

Another remarkable shift is how the Liberal Party VVD starts to draw attention to cultural obstacles to integration, more specifically obstacles in Islamic culture: 'Traditional roles predominate within allochthonous families. In certain Islamic cultures boys are placed on a pedestal. In these cases we need an extra change of culture' (VVD MP Weekers, HTK, 1999–2000, 26 814, no. 5: 4).

In the late 1990s there was a growing political divide between left- and right-wing parties in relation to the issues of immigration and integration, with the centre party CDA siding with the right. During this period migrant women become politicized, both as vulnerable subjects in migration law, and as a group that needs more specific measures to increase its participation in society. The emphasis is no longer on the added value of migrant women to

increase social diversity, but instead migrant women become a social problem, framed as *having a problematic culture* by the right and centre parties, and as having an *access* problem by the left.

2002–2005: a neo-liberal approach to migration

The coalitions Balkenende I and II mark an important change in the Dutch political landscape. During the parliamentary elections of 2002 populist politician Pim Fortuyn and his party Lijst Pim Fortuyn (LPF) won much support with their critique of Dutch integration policies (Doomernik 2005: 35). The LPF joined the Balkenende I government (with Liberal and Christian Democratic coalition partners), focusing on the explicit policy goal of changing existing immigration and integration policies. This government soon ended with new elections, and the LPF did not join the Balkenende II cabinet that was built on the basis of a Liberal/Christian Democrat coalition. The new government continued the former coalition's effort to reform integration policies.

The Balkenende I and II governments emphasize the *individual responsibility* of migrants to emancipate and criticize earlier integration policies that define multiculturalism as a central value.

> For a long time integration policies have put too much emphasis on the acceptation of differences between minorities and the autochthonous population. Nothing is wrong with that, but often this was understood as if the presence of foreign ethnic groups represented an inherent value, an enrichment *tout court* [emphasis in original text]. This means that one loses sight of the fact that not everything that is different therefore is valuable. (TK 29203, no. 1)

According to the Balkenende II cabinet, former minority policies failed to integrate minorities into Dutch society. This conclusion is drawn before the special Parliamentary Research Commission,[2] appointed to evaluate minority policies, published its findings. It is remarkable how the blame for this failure is attributed to former governments – neglecting the participation of two of the coalition partners (VVD and D'66) in these governments. The proposed solution is not to reorganize the principal agent, the state, but to withdraw the state as an active player in integration policy.

> Integration policies run the risk of treating minorities as a category that needs care. The accent then is too much on providing facilities, provision and arrangements. The cabinet is determined to change this course . . . The cabinet wants to stress that citizens, civil organizations and institutions themselves should be held responsible for their integration. (TK 29203, no. 1)

The citizens referred to as primarily responsible for solving the problems of integration are the migrant citizens. The government seeks to stimulate integration no longer through specific policies or stimulating measures, but through demands and obligations on migrants.

In this period a joint plan of the Minister of Social Affairs and Employment and the Minister of Foreigners' Affairs and Integration is launched to address the emancipation of women and girls from ethnic minorities. This plan links emancipation to integration and puts increasing emphasis on socio-cultural obstacles to integration and participation. The cultural heritage and religion (Islam) of migrants are increasingly mentioned as an essential part of the problem. The imported culture of migrants is associated with unequal gender relations, and with violence as a means to reinforce this inequality, notably with honour killings, domestic violence and forced marriages (Minister Verdonk, HTK, 2004–2005, 29203, no. 18: 9).

Accentuated by a similar move in integration policy, where migrant women are seen as the key to the integration of minorities, migrant women become the central subject of gender equality policy. As a result, minority policies become gendered, whereas emancipation policies become 'ethnicized'.

The dominant framing that focuses strongly on issues of culture and religion is backed by the right-wing parties VVD and LPF, and to a lesser extent CDA. VVD Parliamentarian Hirsi Ali states that: 'the largest obstacle that women from ethnic minorities find on their way to emancipation and integration is so-called culturally legitimized violence' (TK 58, 16 March 2004: 58–3840). Minister Verdonk acts as an important coalition partner in Hirsi Ali's struggle to put the issue of 'culturally legitimized violence' on the political agenda. Interestingly, Hirsi Ali's framing, which largely coincides with the dominant government framing, is increasingly contested by other female allochthonous parliamentarians of more leftist parties. MPs Azough (Groen Links) and Koser-Kaya (D'66) criticize the almost exclusive focus on culture and urge the government to change its focus again to socio-economic participation of migrant women and discrimination as a central obstacle to participation (TK 71, 12 April 2005).

From 2003 onwards, migrant women have been at the top of the political agenda. Interestingly, it has been mainly left-wing parties that have urged more attention to the position of allochthonous women and specific policies directed at them, but it is right-wing parties that have determined the direction of these policies. Rather than the leftist emphasis on labour market participation, cultural change is now the key issue.

As we argue below, rather than a radical shift in framings, the changes could be labelled as frame extension. Migrant women were already defined as a policy problem, with an emphasis on their socio-economic position, but this problem is amplified by adding a cultural dimension. This amplification of the diagnosis is accompanied by a new neo-liberal master frame that, as we will see, has important implications for the proposed solution or prognosis.

A Closer Look at the Changing Debate

Amplification of diagnosis

The central problem as defined between 1995 and 2005 is changing from a mainly social structural problem – that focuses on the 'backward' position of migrant women in education, labour market participation, social security

and childcare – towards a more and more strictly cultural problem, where Muslim culture is defined as an obstacle to the emancipation of migrants, and hence, as a problem in Dutch society.

Discrimination is hardly mentioned as a problem, nor are Dutch society and culture presented as problematic for migrants. In 1998, the Purple II coalition states that 'in general, Dutch society has incorporated new populations from different cultural circles well. Social tensions have not occurred' (TK 26333, no. 2: 12). In 2003, the Balkenende II cabinet is far more pessimistic about this incorporation: 'there is a social and cultural gap between minorities and the autochthonous population that is difficult to bridge' (TK 29203, no. 1: 6). However, it is mainly the migrant population that is held responsible for bridging the gap. The autochthonous Dutch population is only marginally seen as a target group, in that it should get more acquainted with minorities and learn more about their culture in order to reduce prejudices that may hinder integration of migrants. The Balkenende II cabinet aims to stimulate cross-cultural dialogue. However, only the minority population is expected to reduce cultural differences and assimilate to Dutch standards and values.

In policy documents issued between 1995 and 2005 migrant women become a 'growing problem'. Until 1999, the central problem is defined as the lagging behind of migrant women in labour market participation, which results in limited access to decision-making, economic and social resources and dependence on the social security system. In a later phase, principally from 2003 onwards, new problems are added. Minister Verdonk mentions traditionalism and the lack of social participation which makes migrant women invisible in society, as barriers to emancipation (Speech on 1 September 2003). The policy plan for the integration and emancipation of migrant women and girls highlights (domestic) violence, forced marriages, honour killings, trafficking and isolation as problems affecting the position of migrant women.

In sum, rather than a shift in the definition of the problem, there is an extension of the problem: a cultural dimension has been added to a pre-existing socio-economic problem definition.

As the problem of migrant women is amplified, the definition of the origin of the problem shifts from individual causes – such as knowledge/education and language skills – and socio-economic causes like mechanisms in the labour market, to cultural causes – mainly a traditional culture that privileges men and subordinates women, and legitimizes violence. By increasingly defining religious and cultural practices, but also intimate relationships and the sexuality of ethnic minorities as problematic, the government suggests that it is not primarily structural conditions of Dutch society that hinder the participation of migrants, but rather the organization of the sphere of intimacy within the migrant community.

This suggests a reversal of the causal logic in the problem definition. Whereas until 2003 social and economic integration was defined as the precondition for cultural integration, a new causal mechanism is proposed in which cultural integration is a necessary precondition for full social and economic integration.

As the problem of 'migrant women' grows, the problem of the emancipation of 'Dutch' women dissolves. Whereas in early emancipation policies, Dutch men were the implicit norm for the emancipation and participation of Dutch women, migrant women become the new group of reference. In the earlier emancipation frames Dutch women were lagging behind men (in labour market participation and decision-making); the new frame instead stresses the advanced position of Dutch women, compared to migrant women. This change in focus even makes the government (Balkenende II) conclude that emancipation of Dutch' women is accomplished. The 'liberated' Dutch woman becomes the norm and role model for the 'traditional' migrant woman. Simultaneously, the non-participation or low participation of autochthonous women is neglected or not seen as a problem, as their dependence is on their partner and not on the state. The emancipation of Dutch men (attention to a stronger role for men in family care responsibilities) also, implicitly, seems to have disappeared from the policy agenda. Instead, migrant men surface as a new target group, although no concrete measures at all are formulated to stimulate their emancipation at all. Migrant women are seen as the primary responsible persons for the emancipation of allochthonous men (and children): 'If you educate a woman, you educate a family' (PaVEM Commission 2003 [available at http://www.ageplus.nl/downloads/AGEplusworkshopPAVEMcommission.ppt]).

Shrinking prognosis

While the diagnosis is extended, the prognosis or proposed solution shrinks. In the multicultural frame, and in the restriction and victimization frames, the state figures as the principal change agent during the period 1995–2002, but in the individual responsibility frame, promoted by the Balkenende II government, migrants are held primarily responsible for their integration. In line with neo-liberal thinking, the government no longer opts for welfare state measures and anti-discrimination policies to promote integration. Instead, stricter demands are placed on immigrants to learn the language, accept a common political culture and respect values labelled 'Dutch', such as tolerance, gender equality and freedom of expression.

In the policy frame of the right-wing Balkenende II coalition the special emphasis is on (Muslim) women who are put forward both as principal policy targets and principal agents of change. This change of perspective is most clearly voiced by the Minister for Integration, Verdonk, who argues that 'migrant women must reproduce the steps taken by autochthonous women to emancipate'. This representation of Dutch autochthonous women as having emancipated themselves, neglects the extensive state support for this group since the 1970s. Implicitly, the achievement of autochthonous women is attributed to individual efforts rather than to any active intervention by the state. This allows allocating a duty to allochthonous women to emancipate themselves also, without any duty on the state to support them. The state thereby withdraws its responsibility to solve the problem.

The range of goals also shifts. Whereas in earlier policy documents goals were mainly formulated in the realms of labour market participation,

decision-making and education, in the 2003 'Action plan on women and girls from ethnic minorities' only two of the seven goals address labour market participation and education. The other aims focus on cultural obstacles such as forced marriages, genital mutilation, honour killings, sexual relationships, and the emancipation of migrant men, instead of socio-structural barriers for participation, and do not involve substantial resources.

In the evolution of frames there is a convergence of individualization and 'culturalization' of the central problem, resulting in inconsistent policy. The individual is responsible for the problem, but also the culture is responsible. In this tension, it remains unclear how the individual should or could change a dominant culture. The means are increasingly symbolic measures like consciousness-raising and dialogue. There is an inconsistency between the goals formulated, on the one hand, and how the problems are constructed, on the other. For example, while the government aims to fight negative stereotypes, it simultaneously reproduces and actively constructs stereotypes like that of the subordinate migrant woman. While stimulating dialogue between migrant and 'Dutch' women, the government actively (re)produces dichotomies between women. Another example of such inconsistency is the emphasis on the individual responsibility of migrants for their emancipation, while at the same time prescribing the norms of emancipation.

Migrant women: the creation of a homogeneous category

At the end of the 1990s, the definition of migrant women in emancipation policy texts not only includes Turkish and Moroccan women, but also Surinamese, Antillean and refugee women, and differences in cultural background, age, socio-economic position, and in available resources are acknowledged (see, for instance, 'Emancipation under construction', HTK 24406, no. 5). Implicitly, however, the policy almost exclusively focuses on women of Turkish and Moroccan descent. In later frames these women are equated with Muslim women. Moroccan and Turkish women, and later Muslim women, are labelled as having the most 'backward' position compared to 'Dutch' or autochthonous women, who represent the reference group. Other migrant women from Surinamese or Antillean descent are increasingly seen as 'more advanced' in their participation. In this sense the category of migrant women is shrinking. The category of Dutch women apparently cannot include allochthonous women, even if they are born in the Netherlands or have Dutch nationality, installing a dichotomy where neither of the two opposing groups is clearly defined, but where the Dutchness of women from Turkish and Moroccan descent is denied.

Special attention is paid to new migrants who marry someone of Turkish or Moroccan descent living in the Netherlands. Although both women and men of Moroccan and Turkish descent marry partners from Morocco or Turkey, far more attention is paid to new female migrants who enter the Netherlands as a consequence of their marriage. Apparently, the problem is gendered. 'Imported brides' are perceived as a problem, whereas 'imported grooms' receive only scant attention. Imported brides are labelled as even more 'backward' than allochthonous women who have lived in the Netherlands for

some time already, referring to their low educational level, their difficult access to the labour market, their poor language skills and poor knowledge of Dutch cultural norms. Their marginal participation on the labour market may result in economic dependence on the Dutch state, which implicitly appears to be one of the central problems concerning migration.

Within the category of 'Dutch' or autochthonous women few distinctions are made, mainly their labour participation and independence from the welfare system are brought forward as the norm for the participation of migrant women. Paradoxically, in the debate on migration and integration, equal gender relations are represented as a key characteristic of Dutch identity and culture, whereas in reality traditional gender arrangements (breadwinner/caretaker roles) still hold strong in the Netherlands. Only 40 per cent of Dutch women between 15 and 65 are economically independent, predominantly as a result of part-time work.

In sum, the category of migrant or 'allochthonous' women is gradually reduced to that of Muslim women, mainly Moroccan and Turkish women. Within these categories remarkably few distinctions are made. Migrant women are generally presented as rather traditional, poorly educated and passive. Some exceptions to this rule are mentioned and put forward as role models, but overall there is very little attention to the heterogeneity of the group. Differences in age, class, education, cultural and religious orientations, ambitions, lifestyle or choices, are not made visible.

Explaining the politicization of migrant women

How can we understand that migrant women have become such an emblematic policy 'problem' in the Netherlands? We suggest that the institutional context, more specifically the prevalent citizenship and migration regime and gender regime, may provide an explanation.

At the end of the twentieth century, the Dutch citizenship regime was a civic territorial one where migrants had fairly easy access to citizenship, and a culturally pluralist regime where the cultural and religious institutions of migrants were publicly recognized and supported (Koopmans *et al.* 2005). To an important extent, the institutional framework for integration and multicultural rights in the Netherlands is based on the heritage of pillarization (the segmentation of Dutch society along confessional lines originally intended to accommodate conflicts between different native religious groups, and extended to Muslims). Immigrants were targeted as a group and the government facilitated self-organization of immigrants along ethnic and religious lines with access to the state in a corporatist system of advisory bodies (Koopmans *et al.* 2005: 71; Doomernik 2005).

At the start of the new millennium some important regime changes were made. In April 2001, a new Aliens Law restricted the admission of new immigrants and asylum-seekers (Doomernik 2005). Since 2003, a new law on Dutch Citizenship has introduced stricter criteria of integration. Whereas previously integration was first and foremost related to employment and education, at present it is more about loyalties and making an unequivocal choice for Dutch society by giving up dual nationality (Doomernik 2005: 35).

Measures like a compulsory integration course for immigrants are thought to help integration and to ensure loyalty to the central values of Dutch society. The focus on cultural integration as a prerequisite for social and economic integration has facilitated the attention to gender relations within ethnic groups. Some gendered cultural and religious practices of ethic minorities, e.g. arranged marriages, sex-segregated education and veiling, are seen as conflicting with liberal 'Western' values. Gender relations are at the centre of this apparent value conflict. Since women are often represented as symbols of racial and ethnic boundaries and as guardians of specific cultural and ethnic traditions (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989), this may explain the policy shift to women as a central problem and as important agents of cultural change in minority policies.

The Dutch gender regime can be characterized as a male-breadwinner, female-caregiver model that has gradually moved to a '1.5 model' in which one partner combines caregiving with a part-time job. Recent policy measures take the family income as a point of departure, while diminishing the individual social security rights of those who depend on this family income. Women who lose their breadwinner have an economically very weak position. Since migrant women have an even higher rate of economic dependence and lower levels of labour market participation, gender equality policies have also targeted this group since the 1980s. Since 2003, the implicit frame of the government has been that autochthonous women have accomplished gender equality, but that allochthonous women still do not fit into the Dutch gender model. This frame has put migrant women centre-stage in gender equality policies. In accordance with the Dutch '1.5 model', both their roles as earners and caregivers (and educators of their families) are central in these new policies.

The shifts that put migrant women at the centre of both integration and gender equality policies can also be explained in a classic way as the result of a shift from a government including the left to a centre-right government. The position of the right (VVD) fits strategically both with neo-liberal frames of 'restricting' state intervention and (nationalist) positions opposing immigration. For the Christian Democrats their position on gender equality has always been ambivalent, as they are the party mostly stressing 'family values'. The shift to ethnicizing gender equality policies eliminated the need for them to give attention to gender equality among their own constituency.

However, as our analysis shows, party dominance in government only provides a partial explanation, because even when the left was a coalition-partner, the restriction frames were already present, and the alternative access and vulnerability frames were weak. Moreover, the left parties have been inconsistent advocates of gender equality since the 1990s, when they abolished their own women's organization. On migration issues, the left also hosts a wide set of opinions, ranging from a shrinking group of adherents of multiculturalism to a growing group in favour of restriction. In the dynamics between the parties, the few voices from the left advocating more attention for migrant women were successful in getting this attention, but lacking a strongly articulated party position, they were unable to decide on the direction of the policies that resulted from this. Rather, the unexpected result was

that gender equality policies were emptied out in terms of content, target groups and resources, and that migrant women became the emblematic group responsible not only for their own emancipation but for the integration of a whole category of migrants.

Conclusions

As our reconstruction of Dutch minority and gender equality policies demonstrates, there are two major shifts in these policies. Minority and integration policies change from degendered to gendered policies, where unequal gender relations become a core focus of attention. Emancipation policies in the same period have become 'ethnicized', focusing primarily on the emancipation of allochthonous women. In these policies, Muslim women are singled out as a group in particular need of emancipation. While migrant women long remained invisible as the wives and daughters of immigrant workers, Dutch society and politics have recently discovered them as the other 'other' and placed new demands upon them. It is argued by policymakers that since women are principally responsible for taking care of and educating their children, it is mainly the women that can and should educate their family towards (cultural) change. This gives migrant women a special place in governmental policies and suggests that the practices of Muslim women might create an important bridge between liberal citizenship and Muslim identity.

The dominant frames of modernization and individual responsibility are reinforcing a dichotomy between the autochthonous 'us' and the allochthonous 'them'. As the problem is more and more defined as a cultural one, it is implicitly stated that there is no problem with the dominant culture and society. Attention has shifted from structural to cultural barriers to participation, and these cultural barriers are exclusively located in the migrant (Muslim) culture. This means that Muslim migrants should first change their culture before they can fully integrate and participate in Dutch society.

Moreover, the dominant framing also reinforces existing power relations. The specific framing in Dutch policies creates and reproduces social dichotomies and oppositions between Dutch and 'others', between men and women, and between traditional (Muslim) and modern ('Western') cultures. These categories are clearly asymmetric in power and status. Also, presenting migrant women as a problem allows the government to take the role of well-intentioned helper of these women. The government, however, limits itself to formulating criteria and demands in relation to migrant women, without granting them the necessary resources or access, or removing obstacles to participation. As a result, the state becomes a paternalistic but powerless player that limits itself to a restrictive, but no longer proactive, role.

The negative representations of migrant women as traditional, backward and (potentially) victims may limit the discursive opportunities for identification and participation of migrant women, and thus may have the opposite effect from what government aims to accomplish.

Appendix: Primary Sources

	Policy text/title of debate	No.
1.	Emancipation Policy 1996: Emancipation under construction	24406 no. 5
2.	Act integration newcomers, 9 April 1998	25114, no. 1
3.	Minority Policy 1998. Annual report [Chapter 8: Black, migrant and refugee women in emancipation policy]	25601, no. 2
4.	Integration policy 1999–2002	26333, no. 2
5.	Report Integration policy ethnic minorities 1999 [Chapter 7: Black, migrant and refugee women in emancipation policy]	26815, no. 2
6.	The legal position of women in immigration policy. Letter of the State Secretary of Justice, April 2000	27111, no. 1
7.	The legal position of women in immigration policy. Report of a general parliamentary meeting, meeting year 1999–2000, June 2000	27111, no. 8
8.	Speech by minister Verdonk at the starting conference of the Commission Rosenmöller, 1 September 2003	
9.	Report on the Integration Policy of Ethnic Minorities 2003. Integration policy new style.	29203, no. 1
10.	Plan for the emancipation and integration of women and girls form ethnic minorities. Letter of the ministers of Social Affairs and Employment and of Immigration and Integration, 28 October 2003	29203, no. 3
11.	Speech by minister de Geus: Migrants central in new phase emancipation policy, 15 November 2003	
12.	Parliamentary debate on the emancipation of ethnic minorities, 16 March 2004	29203 no. 9 and no. 18 en 22
13.	Parliamentary debate on religious manifestations of civil servants, 17 March 2004	
14.	Law on prevention of marriages of convenience	26276 26862 no. 3
15.	Emancipation monitor 2004	26862, no. 32
16.	Parliamentary debate assistance for women at risk (honour killings), 10 February 2005	TK 49, 49-3170-3180
17.	Plan domestic violence Report ethnic Minorities	29203 28345 no. 38

Notes

1. Available at: http://docs.szw.nl/pdf/34/2003/34_2003_3_3547.pdf
2. This Commission was charged with answering a question that had been raised in a parliamentary debate in 2002 by the Socialist Party (SP), namely, why immigrant integration in the Netherlands had failed. Its main conclusion was that minority policies have not failed completely and that younger generations are far more integrated into Dutch society than first-generation migrants.

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